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Introducing the Cultures of Tourism

People travel for pleasure. They seek to explore and experience new places as well as to return to the familiar and the known. Some tourists are motivated to learn about other people and cultures, while others seek through travel to gain insights into the self. Many, of course, simply wish to take a 'holiday'. Each year, hundreds of millions of people around the world leave their homes for varying periods of time to experience the transience, movement and, perhaps, excitement of 'being away', of 'being there'. Tourism has expanded in recent years in both its scope and significance to become a major social, cultural and economic phenomenon. And yet at the heart of this expansion remain intriguing questions about the cultures of meaning, mobilities and engagement that frame and define the tourist experience and the traveller identity. There is a need, for example, to understand the subjective realities that are the experiences (imagined or otherwise) of the traveller/tourist – to delve into what it is that 'they' are looking for when they travel, be they embarking on a package tour, or immersing themselves in the places, cultures and lifestyles of the ecological or exotic 'other'. Indeed, the assumption that being a 'tourist' is qualitatively different from being a 'traveller' is one that continues to prevail in both the academic literature and popular imagination.

Nevertheless, it is known that irrespective of how or why someone travels, the traveller/tourist is frequently moved by the landscapes and the people they encounter in the travel space whether near to and or far from their homes and everyday experiences. It is also known that people seek to record or document their travels and travel encounters in some way – in particular, through photography, in diaries and travelblogs, or postcards and emails home. Travel and tourism have also long intrigued academics and there is now a considerable body of

research into such issues as tourism types and tourist motivations, the nature of the power relationships that exist between travellers, host destinations and the tourism industry, and the consequences of tourism for local environments, economies, societies and cultures. The results of these studies have been revealing but it was not until recently that attention turned to examining the nature of the tourist experience and its formation in the travel space. Indeed, it has only been in recent years that the theoretical tools have been available to delve into the lived complexities of travel and tourism.

To fully understand travel moments and practices it is necessary to consider both the experiences, perceptions and activities of the traveller/ tourist in the context of a range of overarching political, social and economic factors which frame contemporary tourism and travel. In other words, travel and tourism must be considered at both the micro and the macro levels. To this end, it is necessary to engage with the insights that have come from a number of different academic disciplines, including sociology, social psychology and geography as well as, most obviously, tourism studies. This is the task undertaken in this book, which seeks to consider many significant bodies of work in the study of tourism in order to contribute to the development of a nuanced and flexible understanding of tourist cultures and to highlight the ways in which different bodies of thought intersect with, rather than oppose, one another. In particular, the book argues that tourist cultures are a complex of relationships that occur with, through, and in space – both real and imagined. The book takes as its starting point the idea of the tourist as *flâneur*, from which to introduce the concept of the *choraster* as the traveller self. The framework is thus expanded from one concerned with a disassociated 'gaze' to emphasize a more engaged set of experiences and imaginings, which incorporate all the senses as well as both the imagined-real of the traveller space. The most rudimentary outcome of the book is a contribution to the development of a framework for an understanding of tourism that is subject-centred, and that is dynamic and capable of dealing with the complexity of contemporary tourism and tourist cultures.

Understanding Tourism

Tourism is a social and cultural phenomenon that has developed into a significant economic enterprise in cities and regions throughout the world. In both developed and developing countries, tourism is one of the fastest-growing sectors of the economy and a major source of

employment and investment. The growth of tourism is evident from World Tourism Organization (WTO) figures that show that world-wide international arrivals increased from 25 million in 1950 to 846 million in 2006 (an average annual growth of 6.5%) with a predicted growth to 1.6 billion in 2020 (WTO, 2007). In 2006, international tourism receipts accounted for US$733 billion, which is approximately 11% of global gross domestic product, and provided approximately 8% of global employment (WTO, 2007).

The significant increase in tourism following the Second World War was largely the result of various economic, technological, social and political changes that occurred in developing countries (Graburn, 1989; Urry, 1990). In particular, the significant growth in international tourism in the postwar period prompted Crick (1989: 310) to describe tourism as 'the largest movement of human populations outside wartime'. Similarly, Butcher suggests that:

> Over the last century and a half the achievement of the [tourism] industry has been nothing less than the democratization of leisure travel, from the few deemed worthy, and wealthy enough to partake, to an everyday activity for the majority in developed societies. (2003: 5)

The most spectacular increase in tourism took place in the last two decades of the twentieth century and has made it a 'quintessential feature of mass consumer culture and modern life' (Britton, 1991: 451; see also Wang, 2000). In affluent nations, the increase in tourism and in the sophistication of the tourism industry has occurred in conjunction with increases in leisure time, disposable income and mobility, technological improvements in communication and transportation, demographic changes, and a shift in the axis of personal identity and meaningful social action from production to consumption (Wearing and Wearing, 2001).

Corresponding with the growth of tourism and the development of a global tourism industry has been increasing scholarly attention in tourism emerging from various disciplinary perspectives. Tourism research and explanations have ranged from micro-social psychological accounts, focused on individual motivations and experiences, to macro-social approaches concerned with the globalization of tourism, which, in part, has occurred as a result of the increasing domination of the market by multinational corporations and the growth in international travel. Jafari (1989) identifies four 'tourism platforms' that dominated the study of tourism in the early stages of its development.

These platforms – labelled 'advocacy', 'cautionary', 'adaptancy' and 'knowledge-based' – have exerted considerable influence over the contemporary tourism research agenda in various conflicting and intersecting ways. The first stage of tourism research (the 'advocacy platform') was evident in earlier studies that viewed tourism as an inherently and, overwhelmingly, positive phenomenon. This positive outlook was adopted and promoted by business interests and national governments, in particular. However, researchers increasingly, and perhaps inevitably (Dann, 2000), began to acknowledge and stress the various negative environmental impacts and socio-cultural consequences of tourism (the 'cautionary platform'). Subsequently, there was the development of more critical tourism studies that explored these negative impacts and resulted in the promotion of alternative forms of tourism ('adaptancy platform'). Critical debates within these three stages of tourism research led also to the emergence of the 'knowledge-based platform … to fill the intellectual void left by the previous three platforms' (Dann, 2000: 368). This platform is generally considered essential for coherent and sophisticated theoretical and critical debate.

Academic reflections on tourism have thus become increasingly critical and sophisticated with the insights of social science disciplines, including sociology, anthropology, geography, as well as from newer interdisciplinary areas such as cultural studies (Cohen, 1984, 2004; Williams, 1998). Although, as Cohen (2004: 1) notes, the critical and systematic study of tourism from within the social sciences did not really commence until the 1970s and did not receive substantial attention until the 1980s. According to Wang:

> [F]or a long period of intellectual history, travel and movement have not been seen as essential features of the human condition. … [I]n the Western sociological tradition, travel, tourism and mobility have … long been treated only as *derisive* characteristics of human beings and society, and usually as economic indicators. … Even today the sociology of tourism is a marginal branch of sociology, and its relevance is doubted by quite a number of mainstream sociologists. (2000: 1)

Various advances in the study of tourism emerged from 'knowledge-based' analyses which Dann (1996: 6–29) identifies as being focused on 'authenticity', 'strangerhood', 'play' and 'conflict'. The first three perspectives are relatively well-established and accepted frameworks within tourism studies, with the notion of 'tourism as conflict' being a

more recent theoretical development. Indeed, the 'cultural turn' that has swept through social science research since the 1980s is also reflected in more recent analyses of tourism situated in the conflict perspective, as evident in discussions of travel texts and discourses. Morgan and Pritchard (1998: 12) suggest that perspectives focused on 'authenticity', 'strangerhood' and 'play' are not adequately grounded in an understanding of the significance of the travel and traveller experience. They argue that there is a need to gain a deeper understanding of the tourism phenomenon by considering the actual experiences of tourists as they travel. Their concern is to 'explain the tourist's reality' (1998: 12), to take into account the lived dimensions of tourism. Morgan and Pritchard further suggest that is necessary to: 'move away from the dominant characteristics of tourism … to look anew at the subject and at the relationships between those who visit and those who are visited'. (1998: 12). Thus tourism comes to be regarded as an 'arena of interaction' which is played out through the tourist's encounters and engagements with the spaces, places and cultures of travelled destinations. A number of other authors have also argued for nuanced approaches to the study of tourism which engage with the subjective and experiential (for example, Desforges, 1998; Harrison, 2003; Hom Cary, 2004; Noy, 2004; West, 2006; White and White, 2004). As Wearing and Wearing state:

> The theorization of tourism … needs … not only to recognize the interrelation of the site and the activities provided … at the tourist destination, but requires a fundamental focus on [the] subjective experience itself. While not being divorced from its sociological contextualization, the involving experience allows for the elaboration upon the role of individual tourists themselves in the active construction of the tourist experience. (2001: 151)

Considering tourism through the lens of experience is central to the approach taken in this book and our exploration of tourist cultures. In their work on the subject, Wearing and Wearing (1996) suggest that a useful starting point for prioritizing the experiences and interactions of tourism is to move from understanding the tourist in terms of the gazing *flâneur*, to imagining the tourist as an interacting *choraster*. While thinking within tourism studies has moved on considerably since that paper was published, it nevertheless made a useful contribution to debates at the time, and thus provides something of a touchstone for many of the ideas we present here. It is, therefore, necessary to revisit

some of the central arguments set out by Wearing and Wearing before moving on to explore in some detail the contours of an understanding of tourist cultures through the conceptual lenses of experience and space.

From *Flâneur* to *Choraster*?

Wearing and Wearing (1996) argue that early sociological perspectives of tourism largely reflected the dominant theoretical concerns of the emerging interdisciplinary field and assumed initially (at least) an implicit Anglo-centric, male view of the phenomenon. It is only recently that the importance of differences in class, race, ethnicity, age, sexuality and gender has been acknowledged. For instance, Wearing and Wearing suggest that in the tourism literature some of the initial sociological work was concerned with the tourist *himself* and the part that holidays played in establishing an identity and sense of self that was essentially male. Tourism as a subset of leisure was seen in relationship/opposition to the (male) world of work. One of the examples they cite is the work of Cohen and Taylor (1976), who drew on Irving Goffman's concern with the presentation of self in everyday life to argue that holidays are culturally sanctioned escape routes for Western *men*. One of the problems for the modern man, they say, is to establish an identity, a sense of personal individuality in the face of large anomic forces that compose a technological world. Holidays provide a free area, a mental and physical escape from the most immediate reality of the pressures of the technological society. Thus, holidays offer scope for the nurturance and cultivation of identity.

Cohen and Taylor (1976) go on to argue that the tourist uses all aspects of *his* holiday for the manipulation of *his* well-being. We will return to these ideas in the chapters to follow. It is important to note at this point that in the tourism literature, these arguments soon became diverted into a debate about the authenticity or otherwise of tourism and the tourist destination (Cohen, 1988; MacCannell, 1976). In many ways, these developments focused attention on the attractions of the tourist destination and away from tourism as experience (although MacCannell did draw attention to the tourist experience as a means of authenticating the self, see Chapter 2). Ultimately, however, such a shift objectified the destination – it became a specific geographical site which was presented to the tourist for 'his' gaze (Urry, 2002). Thus the manner of presentation became all-important and its

authenticity or otherwise the focus of analysis, with the objects of the gaze categorized in terms of a set of dualisms – romantic/collective, historical/modern and authentic/unauthentic (Urry, 2002). At the same time, the tourist came to be regarded as something of a *flâneur*. Indeed, according to Urry (2002 [1990]) the nineteenth-century literary construction of the *flâneur* can perhaps be regarded as a forerunner of the twentieth-century tourist in that both were generally seen to be escaping the everyday world for an ephemeral, fugitive and contingent leisure experience (Stevenson, 2003).

The original *flâneur* was regarded as a new kind of urban dweller who had the time to wander, watch and browse in the public spaces of the emerging modern city (Benjamin, 1973). The *flâneur* was a poet, an artist and a 'stroller'. He has been described as an amateur 'street detective' (Morawski, 1994; Shields, 1994) who moved effortlessly and, seemingly, invisibly through the shopping arcades of Paris. The *flâneur* spent his day simply watching the urban spectacle; observing people and window-shopping (Stevenson, 2003). But in the act of strolling, the *flâneur* did not just observe life but was engaged in an 'archaeological' process of unearthing the myths and 'collective dreams' of modernity (Frisby, 1986: 224). The *flâneur* was a gentleman who stood wholly outside the production process (Wilson, 1995). He was also away from home and in search of the unfamiliar (Lechte, 1995). All of these characteristics, it has been argued, seem to fit the contemporary tourist – or rather established conceptualizations of the tourist (Urry, 2002).

The *flâneur* was unquestionably male, and *flânerie* was a way of experiencing and occupying space that was available (if not only, then surely predominantly) to men. As Wolff points out: 'There is no question of inventing the *flâneuse*: the essential point is that such a character was rendered impossible by the sexual divisions of the nineteenth century'. (1985: 45). Alone, women could occupy public space in the guises of prostitutes, widows, lesbians or murder victims, but the 'respectable' woman 'could not stroll alone in the city' (Wolff, 1985: 41).

> It is this *flâneur*, the *flâneur* as a man of pleasure, as a man who takes visual possession of the city, who has emerged in postmodern feminist discourse as the embodiment of the 'male gaze'. He represents men's visual and voyeuristic mastery over women. According to this view, the *flâneur*'s freedom to wander at will through the city is essentially a masculine freedom. Thus the very idea of the *flâneur* reveals it to be a gendered concept. (Wilson, 1995: 65)

But while the signs and symbols he searched for through his use and observations of space may have been those of the collective, the *flâneur* remained detached from what he observed. He chose not to engage with either the people or the places he visited, thus his way of seeing and being in space was highly idiosyncratic and individualistic – it was not interactive. Moreover, as Wilson (1995: 73) points out, there is also a deep ambivalence towards urban life inherent in 'Benjamin's meditation on the *flâneur'*. It is, she claims, 'a sorrowful engagement with the melancholy of cities', arising 'partly from the enormous unfulfilled promise of the urban spectacle, the consumption, the lure of pleasure and joy which somehow seemed destined to be disappointed' (Wilson, 1995: 73). The *flâneur* then becomes 'a figure of solitude' and anonymity; in the 'labyrinth' he becomes passive and placatory – '[t]he *flâneur* represented not the triumph of masculine power but its attenuation', says Wilson (1995: 74). Moreover, the *flâneur*'s way of seeing is singular in its interpretation; his lens and thus understanding, is unchanging.

When applied to tourism, the tourist-*flâneur* is conceptualized as being at the centre of the phenomenon, observing on his terms. As a result, we are left with very little scope to develop from the idea of the *flâneur* an understanding of tourist cultures that can occur in an interactive experiential space and which is capable of explaining in more than a superficial, egocentric way the interactions and exchanges that occur in that space. Such an observation leads us to suggest that neither the male nor the female tourist will gain more than fleeting satisfaction from destinations dressed up to capture the gaze of the *flâneur*. It is necessary to move away from considering tourism solely in terms of the figure of the *flâneur* to recognize the lived complexity of modern life and to develop a framework for investigating the ways in which tourist cultural identities and histories are constituted and inscribed both in space and on the self. In particular, as is argued below, it becomes necessary to conceptualize the tourist space not as one-dimensional and monolithic, but as many places which are constructed through use, visual consumption, imagination and experience (Stevenson, 2003). The challenge, then, is to envision a more nuanced version of the tourist and the tourism experience – one which is capable of providing the basis for an understanding of lived tourist cultures. To this end, Wearing and Wearing (1996) argue that the idea of the *choraster* is potentially more fruitful than that of the *flâneur*.

As Wearing and Wearing (1996) point out, poststructuralist feminist writers (such as Grosz, 1986, 1995a; Irigaray, 1986, 2004; Lloyd, 1989)

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charged much theory in the social sciences with being 'phallocentric' – in that it privileged the perspectives and experiences of men over those of women and, indeed, the marginalized. Grosz (1986, 1995a), for example, argues for concerted resistance on the part of feminists to male-dominated knowledges and advocates the utilization of strategies which will allow for the development of women-centred knowledges. She argues that theories which begin from women's view and experience of the world, instead of the assumption that the male experience is universal, may more adequately include not only women but other minority groups as well. Grosz suggests a number of strategies for subverting male domination of knowledge, including the questioning of: an adherence to universal concepts of truth and methods of verifying truth; objectivity; a disembodied, rational, sexually indifferent subject; and the exploration of women's specificity in terms that continue to valorize and privilege the masculine. In its place, she advocates the development of alternative ideas based on women's experiences of the world. She herself employs these strategies in reconceptualizing public space (Grosz, 1986, 1995a). While we must be careful not to replace one form of essentialism with another, Grosz's work provides a useful starting point for developing a way of thinking about tourist cultures in terms of interaction and experience, rather than as objectified activities or sights. It is in establishing a dialogue in the conceptual spaces between what traditionally has been thought of as 'male' ways of seeing and those that Grosz and others regard as being 'feminine' that such a theoretical framework can be developed. Grosz's work on *chora* is useful here in that it may give tourism studies the scope to consider the tourism experience as involving both guests and hosts and the places within which encounters between them occur.

Grosz (1995b: 51) argues that *chora*, Plato's space between being and becoming or the 'space in which place is made possible', contains many of the characteristics which masculinist knowledge has expelled. Rather than being the object of the stroller's gaze, the concept of *chora* suggests a space which is occupied and given meaning by the people who make use of and interact in it, and as such, is open to many possibilities:

> *Chora* then is the space in which place is made possible. … It is the space that engenders without possessing, that nurtures without requirements of its own, that receives without giving, and that gives without receiving, a space that evades all characterization, including the disconcerting logic of identity, of hierarchy of being, the regulation of order. … (Grosz, 1995b: 51)

Wearing and Wearing (1996) suggest that, in reappropriating the implied maternal dimensions of space, as Grosz suggests, it is possible to orient the ways in which spatiality is imagined, lived and used, and thus to make way for the silenced/marginalized to reoccupy the places from which they (discursively) have been constrained, re/displaced or expelled. It may also expose men's appropriation of the whole of space. With regard to tourism, they suggest that the concept of *chora* is capable of providing nuanced insights into the tourist experience and opens the way for tourist destinations to be seen and understood as spaces in which people interact with places, peoples and cultures. In turn, the spaces (destinations) as they are lived and experienced take their meaning from the people who occupy them.

Tourism, Experience and Space

Space is deeply implicated in the experiences and processes of travel and tourism. Indeed, tourism is first and foremost about a series of direct and mediated relationships with, and in, the context of space/place (Young, forthcoming 2009a). The spaces of tourism are the spaces of movement, destination, experience, memory and representation. They are also spaces of desire, fantasy, creativity, liminality, reordering and enchantment. Increasingly, too, tourism is about the spaces of the virtual and the imaginary. By conceptualizing tourism and the tourism experience through a theoretical lens that situates the interactive and enveloping spaces of tourism at the centre of the analysis, it soon becomes evident that there are important and intangible dimensions to space and the spatial structuring of tourism. One of these dimensions is that which can best be described as having been informed by the 'structures of feeling' (Williams, 1961), or the interconnected configurations of meaning, that result from both individual and shared relationships to, and conceptions and experiences of, given spaces, including tourism spaces. Such sentiments also exist at the level of myth, forming networks of understandings, connotations and meanings that are particular to individual cultures (Barthes, 1973). The realization that the tourist space has powerful symbolic dimensions raises a host of related concerns and issues which render partial those analyses that are based solely on narrow, systematic understandings of society, space and tourism.

The idea of the travel space as *chora* suggests that the 'social value' of this space may be of greater analytic value than that of the 'image' associated with the gaze of the tourist *flâneur*. When the term is applied

to a place with, and in, which people interact, and to which they attach cultural meanings, it becomes a social process whereby a place acts as a resource that over time has significance for a group of people. Social value, then, refers to the meanings people attach to place. The experiential value derived from the history of a place and its representation sets the scene for its social worth; and its maintenance and the continual interaction of people with it ensure the persistence of this social value. As the social value of a space is process dependent on there being a dynamic relationship between the place and the people who use it, the meaning may change and develop over time. The people who give social value to the *chora* – the *chorasters* – are those who 'practise' the place, who use it, experience it and give it meaning. These are local residents and service providers, as well as tourists. And the meanings and values which are developed emerge through processes of interaction, negotiation, cooperation and contestation. Gustafson (2001: 5) found the meaning that is attributed to a place 'can be mapped around and between the three poles of self, others and environment', and therefore, the meaning of a place, especially that which residents deem to be 'home', is highly dependent on locals.

The promotion of tourist destinations as 'image' incorporates the fleeting, the ephemeral and the voyeuristic elements of the tourist gaze as well as suggesting a commodified, predetermined mass experience. As Lefebvre observes:

> Leisure spaces are the object of a massive speculation that is not tightly controlled and is often assisted by the state (which builds highways and communications, and which directly or indirectly guarantees the financial operations, etc.). This space is sold, at high prices, to citizens who have been harried out of the town by the boredom and the rat-race. It is reduced to visual attributes, 'holidays', 'exile', 'retreat' and soon loses even these. (1976: 84)

Social value, on the other hand, can incorporate the historical associations which have, over time, been given to a place by the diversity of people who have inhabited it; and it allows for individual tourist experience and the process of social exchange that occurs between the tourist and the host community. Eventually this exchange could become part of the image. Where the 'image' of the place traditionally has been dominant in tourism, we suggest instead a space for 'social value' where the interests and needs of local residents and local communities frame an interactive experience which extends for the tourist beyond that of

her/his temporary stay. While it is acknowledged that community participation in tourism development has historically been somewhat problematic and subject to numerous constraints, appropriate approaches that utilize creative, engaging and educational techniques have the potential to be applied (Haywood, 1988; Wearing, 2001). Furthermore, there is evidence that many of the most successful tourist precincts and sites are those that are populated and frequented by local residents (Markwell et al., 2004).

In conceptualizing tourism through a theoretical lens that is grounded in the spaces and selves of the tourist experience, we join other significant contributions to the field (for example, Crouch, 1999, 2000; Edensor, 1998; Rojek and Urry, 1997) to move beyond tradi-tional activity-based analyses of tourism to an approach that is space and subject-centred. The underpinning premise is that the interactions of the tourist in, and with, the spaces of tourism, and the relationships which tourists form with people and places as part of these interactions, are linked to the construction of the traveller self. Tourist cultures, and thus the traveller self, are multiple and contradictory, constructed and reconstructed through the negotiation of experience that occurs in the context of tourist space. This understanding of tourism assumes that in the first instance tourism is about engagement. Tourism comes to be viewed as a process of expanded social interaction whereby self-identity can be enlarged through the intersection of differing places, peoples, cultures and societies.

In framing this approach, we are operating within a definition of culture which locates the ways of life of a group of people as being intrinsically related to the spaces and places within which they conduct their lived (travel) experiences. Following the work of Henri Lefebvre (1991), culture is understood as being derived from lived experiences and the idea of home and attachment to place is a form of knowledge that is as much practical as discursive. Such forms of knowledge are challenged, modified and even reinforced by the spatial mobility characteristic of contemporary globalization (see, for example, Rojek and Urry, 1997; Sheller and Urry, 2004; Urry, 2000, 2003). Importantly, cultures cannot be thought of as single, delimited and homogeneous units that are simply and unproblematically equated with particular ways of life (Clifford, 1992; Friedman, 1994; Lovell, 1998; Tomlinson, 1999; Welsch, 1999). On the contrary, all cultures 'get remade as a result of the flows of peoples, objects and images across national borders' (Rojek and Urry, 1997: 11). As Sheller and Urry (2004: 3) note, 'almost no countries are not significant senders

and receivers of visitors'. It is thus necessary to move also beyond a monolithic singular notion of the existence of an identifiable 'tourist culture' to an understanding that there are multiple tourist cultures which simultaneously are varied, contradictory and overlapping. It is only within such a conception that it becomes possible to advance a nuanced and multilayered understanding of the experiences, places and selves of tourism.

The movement of people and groups, of course, predates tourism. Migrating groups and people bring with them cultural values and practices which are often subsumed or altered by the dominant host populations into which they move (Meethan, 2001). The term 'travelling cultures' was coined by James Clifford (1992) to describe this movement of cultures. He notes that:

> Travellers move about under strong cultural, political and economic compulsions and … certain travellers are materially privileged, others oppressed. These specific circumstances are crucial determinations of the travel at issue – movements in specific colonial, neocolonial, and postcolonial circuits, different Diasporas, borderlands, exiles, detours and returns. Travel, in this view, denotes a range of material, spatial practices that produce knowledges, stories, traditions, comportments, musics, books, diaries and other cultural expressions. (Clifford, 1997: 35)

Rojek and Urry (1997: 1) similarly suggest that travel involves the 'migration' of 'peoples, cultures and objects … [and that it] is now clear that people tour cultures; and that cultures and objects themselves travel'. Our aim is to investigate the contours of an approach to the study of tourism that is capable of considering the interactive and mobile spaces in which tourism occurs, and the variety and forms of the tourism experience and the traveller self that are shaped within and through an engagement with these real and imagined spaces and places.

The Structure of *Tourist Cultures*

Tourist Cultures sets out to frame an approach to understanding tourism that is focused on, and sensitive to, the experiential and the spatial. To this end, various social and spatial theories are explored in the book to unravel and reconstruct the ways in which tourist cultures

are imagined. This task was commenced in this introductory chapter, which has flagged some of the key assumptions shaping understandings and explanations of tourism. In particular, the chapter has suggested that the work of Wearing and Wearing on the tourist as *choraster* provides something of a starting point for the task undertaken in this book. The *choraster* becomes the traveller self constituted within the *chora* of the travel space and the travel experience.

The book is divided into two parts each comprising three chapters. Part I, entitled 'Tourist Selves', begins with Chapter 2, which highlights the contribution of a number of foundational works within tourism studies to the understanding of the tourist before moving on to situate the tourist experience at the centre of the analysis. Initially, tourism research was not concerned with the texture of the travel experience or tourist cultures but focused instead on tourism activities which could be classified with reference to an ever increasing number of typologies. Such typologies, not surprisingly, did not explain anything meaningful about tourism as it is formed through the interplay of the predictable and serendipitous encounters with the self and the other. The insights of Chapter 2 underpin the discussion of Chapter 3, which focuses on some of the key debates in the growing body of literature examining the issue of tourism and identity. This review expands on several themes introduced in Chapters 1 and 2 to examine such issues as the importance of the narrative to constructing the (auto)biography of the traveller self. Chapter 4, the final in this section, is focused on the Others of tourism – those who are encountered as part of the travel experience and are thus central to the construction of the traveller self. The significant relationships here, of course, are those that develop between the tourist as 'guest' and those who inhabit the visited destination – the 'hosts'. Particularly complex are the host–guest relationships that develop in the context of Western travel to non-Western or 'developing' places.

There is considerable evidence to suggest that host–guest relationships and forms of travel are uneven and often exploitative. But we suggest that this view is overly simplistic and the connection between hosts and guests, the traveller self and other, is multifaceted and dynamic. Indeed, it takes on a particularly revealing complexion when considered in relation to gender and travel, and specifically to international sex tourism, which is discussed in the chapter with reference to an emerging phenomenon – Western women whose travels to developing countries involve sexual encounters with local men. The selves of tourist cultures are thus shaped by the interplay between the traveller

identity, hosts and guests. The chapter concludes by noting the importance of space to the formulation of tourism cultures as experience and the traveller self as *choraster*. These are the issues discussed in the second part of the book, which extends the themes canvassed in Part I to consider the (real and imagined) spaces and places of tourism.

Part II of the book, entitled 'Tourist Spaces', commences with Chapter 5 and is concerned with tourists' interactions with, and experiences of, place and the relationship of space to tourist cultures and the traveller self. By deconstructing the self/Other dichotomy, which positions place as 'the other', it is possible to see that experiencing space through travel can play an important part in extending the boundaries for understanding the traveller self. Our discussion here outlines the importance of space in the tourist experience and in shaping the interactions that occur in the visited places. We suggest that a sustainable approach to tourism might be one where local environments and communities are treated with respect, and where human-to-human and human-to-environment interactions are given priority. In Chapter 6, the intersecting and competing 'forces' of contemporary tourism – the global and the local – are introduced and discussed as the chapter seeks to understand the impact of the global tourism on the spaces of the local – the 'other'. We acknowledge that globalization has the potential to erode local cultures and ways of life, and many tourism destinations risk becoming homogenized as the international tourism industry undermines their social fabric and cultural distinctiveness. The chapter argues, however, that homogeneity is never absolute and that local communities are able to exercise a degree of control over the effects of global tourism on their spaces and cultures. The chapter also considers the activities of the contemporary global wanderer in this process. These travellers – or backpackers (as they are increasingly called) – are often keen to experience the local and the other and to 'give something back' to the people and places they visit.

Space, of course, is as much about the symbolic and the representational as it is about the physical and the tangible (Stevenson, 2003), and this is true also of tourism space. The task undertaken in Chapter 7, therefore, is to consider the way in which tourist cultures, experiences and identities are constructed through the spaces of the media, image and imagination. The chapter suggests that what is 'real' for the tourist is not necessarily the physical experience or the 'authenticity' of a site, but the impact of the tourism experience on the self – which is often related more (or as much) to the way it is remembered through film, photography and travel writing. In this sense, the tourist creates the

'real' within her/himself in the form of new knowledge acquired through an engagement with the destination. Significant too are the various notions of authenticity, as they have been applied to tourism, and the manner in which the industry seeks to represent tourism desti-nations. We explore the emerging phenomenon of virtual tourism, as experienced in IMAX theatres and minute-by-minute updated pictures of tourist destinations posted on tourism websites. Important here is the intersection of the real and imagined dimensions of travel and the ways in which new technologies are reshaping what it means to travel and to be a traveller. They are fracturing established notions of the real and the imagined and home and away but we go further than this to suggest that it is now necessary to find a new language for talking about the travel space. To this end, the concept of 'thirdspace' is introduced in an attempt to reconceptualize the configuration of memory and imagina-tion that constructs the spaces and experiences through, and in, which the traveller self is constituted and exposed. Thirdspace is the imagined-real. Finally, the chapter argues that the concept of the thirdspace makes it possible (indeed necessary) to transcend the established dichotomies, such as real/imagined, host/guest, authentic/unauthentic, traveller/tourist, home/away, and self/Other, that continue to be influ-ential within tourism studies. The result, we suggest, is a more nuanced and sophisticated way of understanding contemporary tourist cultures. The concerns of the book thus come full circle and in the final chapter we reiterate the value of an approach to under-standing tourist cultures that is multidisciplinary and which places the spaces and interactions of the traveller self at the centre of the endeavour. Significantly, we argue that the key is not in moving conceptually from understanding the tourist as *flâneur* to the notion of the *choraster*. Rather, it is to conceptualize travel and the traveller self simultaneously through the interpretative and sensory 'thirdspace' of both.