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TOURISM AS PLAY

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> 'Play becomes the root metaphor of the study of religion under the conditions of the 'death of God' (Miller, 1973: XXIX).
>
> At a time when some proclaim that God is dead, North Americans may take comfort in the truth that Mickey Mouse reigns at the baroque capital of the Magic Kingdom and that Walt Disney is his prophet' (Moore, 1980: 216)

INTRODUCTION

The message of Turner's opus is that whatever its concrete manifestations, the fundamental nature of the 'ritual process' is a universal one. Generalizing the long neglected ideas of Van Gennep, Turner argued that individuals, groups and whole societies move through various manifestations of a basic form of '*rites de passage*', fluctuating between normal, structured, mundane states and their dissolution into extraordinary liminal, antistructural situations of 'communitas'; these, in turn, eventuate in structural reintegration in the form of a new personal status or social state (Turner, 1974: 80–154; Turner and Turner, 1978: 2–3).

The middle, liminal stage of the process is crucial, since here is given 'recognition to an essential and generic human bond, without which there could be *no* society' (Turner, 1974: 83). It emerges from Turner's writings that this bond is effected through the incumbents' communion, in the state of liminal dissolution, with some 'sacred' transendent—reality an experience largely analogous to what R. Otto (1959) called 'numinous'. Indeed, like Otto, Turner's concern throughout is with the striking common, universal traits of liminal phenomena, which he discovers in a bewildering variety of situations, rather than with the particular traits of concrete manifestations of liminality.

While Turner's insights proved fruitful for surprisingly diverse areas of research—as this collection itself witnesses—the comparative dimension of his conceptual scheme has been largely neglected. His major comparative contribution was the distinction between full-fledged 'ludergic' liminal, and the more specialized and voluntary 'ergic' liminoid situations (Turner and Turner, 1978: 36). This distinction relates to the transition from relatively simple undifferentiated tribal societies to the more complex, differentiated historical and modern ones (ibid: 34–6). Liminoidity is, however, only a weakened or impoverished variety of liminality; its social significance remains

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unaltered and so does the nature of the ritual process. Liminality, in its strong or weakened variety, has thus the same 'function' in all societies—tribal, historical, or modern.

The tacit assumption of Turner's work is that all societies do recognize, in their own 'social construction of reality', some sacred, transcendental realm, a 'beyond', with which the incumbents are in communion, in their extraordinary state of liminality. This explains the power of such situations to effect personal or societal transitions in the ritual process. Hence a question of fundamental importance emerges: what is the nature of liminality and of the ritual process in societies, such as the modern, secular Western ones, which are based on immanentistic values, such as achievement, freedom and social opportunity, and whose construction of reality does not explicitly recognize the existence of an ontologically real, transcendent realm, a reality with which the modern individual may communicate.

It is this theme which I want to tackle, using the concrete example of tourism as play in modern secular society.

THE BACKGROUND[1]

While an earlier generation of social critics, such as Boorstin (1964: 77–117), tended to dismiss tourism as a frivolous activity, reflecting the superficiality of contemporary mass culture and devoid of any intrinsic significance, a later generation of social scientists, guided essentially by a structuralist approach tended in the opposite direction—and identified the tourist as the pilgrim of modernity in a serious question for authenticity (MacCannell, 1973, 1976). MacCannell's ingenious analysis of tourism provided an important correction of the earlier view, but his claims were too far-fetched. In particular, he failed to account convincingly for the fact that so many blatantly inauthentic attractions do, in fact, attract many tourists. His principal explanation, which doubtedless applies in many instances, is that the touristic establishment stages the authenticity of attractions, thus creating a contrived 'tourist space', which appears genuine to the unwary tourist (MacCannell, 1973). But many attractions are so lightly staged, and their inauthenticity is so easily recognizable, that one has to assume that tourists must be inordinately stupid or naive to accept them seriously as authentic. Moreover, there is one class of attractions, the overtly staged ones (Cohen, 1979b: 26–28), which make no claim to authenticity, and still attract great numbers of visitors: Disneyland and Walt Disney World are perhaps the most outstanding examples.

For social critics like Boorstin, the popularity of such attractions is just another manifestation of the superficiality of contemporary mass culture. MacCannell, however, would be hard put to explain this popularity, as long as he continues to claim that all tourists seek authenticity (MacCannell, 1973: 600; 1976: 104).

Recently, however, processually (rather than structurally) oriented anthropologists, taking their lead from Turner's analysis of ritual and pilgrimage, set out to explain the 'ludic' (playful) element in tourism which MacCannell missed. Their approach throws new light on the popularity of such phenomena as Disneyland—beyond the obviously 'staged' surface of which they claim to discover some deep symbolic themes.

In an earlier attempt to resolve the controversy between the socio-critical and the structuralist approaches, I suggested a distinction between the deep-structural and phenomenological levels in the analysis of tourism (Cohen, 1979a, 1984). I claimed that, while on a deep-structural level, tourism may indeed be analogous to the pilgrimage, different phenomenologically distinct modes of the touristic experience should be distinguished by the extent to which they reflect, in the tourists' 'desired mode of experience', the deep structural themes. It turned out that authors like Boorstin and MacCannell referred to phenomenologically distinct types of tourists. Here I shall further extend this analysis to incorporate the 'ludic' tourist of the Turnerians, and to distinguish his from the other types of the touristic experience. To do this, a brief recapitulation of my earlier typology (Cohen, 1979a) is in order.

The typology consists of five modes of the touristic experience. The 'Diversionary mode' (ibid: 185-6) was conceived as characteristic of the modern man who, though alienated from the 'center' of his socio-culture, does not seek a new, alternative center. His life is, strictly speaking, 'meaningless', and this meaninglessness also reflects on the mode of experience he seeks in tourism: he travels for mere entertainment or 'diversion' as an escape from boredom and routine, but does not actively seek 'authenticity'.

The 'Recreational mode' (Cohen, 1979a: 183–5) was conceived as characteristic of the tourist who altogether identifies with the mundane centers of modern, secular Western society—i.e. with the work-ethic, belief in techno-economic progress, personal achievement, etc.—but travels essentially in search of a physical and mental restoration from the stresses of modern life. The recreational tourist, therefore, is not much concerned with genuine authenticity, and may well thrive on 'pseudo-events' (Boorstin, 1964). In comparison with, e.g. the religious pilgrimage, recreational tourism is apparently a superficial, frivolous activity. Turnerian symbolic anthropologists have recently undertaken to uncover the deeper significance of such tourism—and it will be their analyses from which I shall depart in the body of this paper.

The 'Experiential model' (Cohen, 1979a: 186–8) was conceived as characteristic of those alienated modern men, who, in the spirit of MacCannell's conception of the tourist, look for authenticity, i.e. meaning (which they miss in their own world), in the life of others: 'The more the [modern] individual sinks into everyday life, the more he is reminded of reality

and authenticity elsewhere.' (MacCannell, 1976: 160). The quest for authenticity is, for MacCannell, essentially analogous to a religious quest, i.e. a quest for a Center or transcendent Reality. Though, in the tradition of structuralist analysis, MacCannell refrains from discussing the quality of the tourist's experience, he leaves little doubt that the tourist engages in a serious, rather than playful, quest: the tourist believes that the authenticity he seeks in fact does exist, '. . . only not right here, not right now, [but] perhaps just over there, someplace, in another country, in another life style, in another social class . . . there is *genuine* society' (ibid: 1955). To be precise: the experiential tourist is aware of the authenticity in the life of others and may infer from it that, at least for them, there still exists a transcendent Center, a meaning-conferring Reality, lost or barred for the moderns, who are hence condemned to live a spurious, meaningless life. But he does not seek to experience that Center directly—rather, remaining modern, he merely experiences it vicariously (MacCannell, 1973); at most he strives to 'museumize' the authentic pre-modern and non-modern into modernity (MacCannell, 1976: 8, 83–84).

In my own presentation of the varieties of touristic experiences (Cohen, 1979a: 189–192), I went beyond MacCannell in that I conceptualized two additional modes: an 'Experimental mode', characteristics of the tourist who, alienated from modernity, engages in a quest for an alternative lifestyle or 'elective center', outside modernity, which suits his needs and desires; and finally, an 'Existential model', characteristic of the traveller who 'arrived' at his goal—i.e. found his 'elective center' and underwent an experience of 'switching worlds' (Berger and Luckman, 1966: 144). By encountering Reality, he also discovers his real self and meaning in his life; he is reborn or 're-created' at the center, like the prototypical pilgrim. While he may not be able to stay indefinitely at his elective center, the existential tourist remains oriented toward it, feeling as if he were in exile when he returns to his ordinary place of abode.

In this paper I shall deal primarily with the recreational mode; but I shall contrast it to some of the others, in an attempt not only to clarify the subtle phenomenological differences between them, but also to relate them comparatively to the varying 'social constructions of reality' characteristic of the different stages of development of the modern world.

'PLAYING AT REALITY' IN RECREATIONAL TOURISM

My chief concern in this paper is with recreational tourism. I argue that this type of tourism is essentially, a 'play at Reality'—i.e. the tourist 'plays' *as if* the attractions, (even the overtly contrived ones) represented or symbolized some independent, ontologically present but transcendent Reality—even as he 'knows' that such a Reality does not or cannot exist anymore according to his

immanentistic construction of the world. Moore perceived this clearly in his analysis of Disney World:

> Traditional pilgrimage centers evoke the supernatural . . . Walt Disney World . . . evokes the supernatural in a context within which the supernatural has been banished. (Moore, 1980: 215).

The loss of transcendent Reality is perceived by many moderns as the price of the 'disenchantment of the world', the process of progressive rationalization and ever more radical secularization[2] which eventually eliminated 'transcendence' as an independent realm of being from the modern world view. Recreational tourism is thus essentially 'nostalgic', a playful pilgrimage to a by now fictive Center, experienced both joyfully and sadly as if it were real.

My argument concerning the nature of recreational tourism is construed in precise analogy to that of 'play theology' (Miller, 1983), which 'plays theology' *as if* its subject, God (who is in fact dead) really existed. The essence of both phenomena consists in their 'as if' character: it is this which distinguishes the play of recreational tourism from the mere entertainment of diversionary tourism on the one hand, and from the more serious quests of the experiential, experimental or existential tourists on the other. The essence of the 'as if' attitude of the recreational tourist consists of his playful acceptance of the make believe presented by the attractions—in contrast to the experiential tourist, who seeks to discover 'authenticity', i.e. some ontologically present, transcendent Reality in the life of others. To put it in the language of the later Schutzian phenomenology: 'play', according to this approach, could be seen as a 'limited province of meaning', (Schutz, 1973, vol I: 229ff), set apart from the surrounding 'paramount reality' by spatio–temporal boundaries (Huizinga, 1955). In the touristic 'play at reality', however, the situation of play, which, looked at from the perspective of the outside observer, is set apart from the paramount reality of everyday life, is experienced by the player for the moment as if it were real (Cohen, 1971a: 184–5); indeed a reflection or symbolization of some transcendent Reality.

It is this readiness for playful self-deception, the willingness to go along with the illusion that an often obviously contrived, inauthentic situation is real, or represents Reality, that escaped MacCannell in his analysis of the tourist as the modern pilgrim, whose sightseeing has the obligatory nature of paying homage to attractions as differentiations of (modern) Society (MacCannell, 1976: 42–3)[3]. Experiential tourism is thus a 'serious' quest, akin to that of the pilgrimage; recreational tourism, in contrast, is playfully 'frivolous' rather than 'serious' (Pfaffenberger, 1983: 61). Although, as Turner has shown, ludic activities may accompany a pilgrimage, the truly religious pilgrim never has a merely playful, 'as if' attitude to the 'Center out there' itself, his ultimate goal, which for him embodies Reality. Moore's (1980) analysis of Walt Disney

World as a 'playful pilgrimage center', is, phenomenologically seen, merely an analogy: the differences between a religious and a playful pilgrimage center is as significant as the similarities between them—and consists precisely in the difference between serious theology (i.e. one which proceeds from the belief in a living God), and 'play theology' (which 'plays theology', although God is, in fact, dead).

Even more interesting than the still formally bounded ludic space of Walt Disney World, is the 'play at reality' in some other, less formally segregated situations of recreational tourism, studied by authors who followed Turner's processual approach. Most enlightening in this respect are the studies by Wagner (1977) on Swedish mass tourism in a Gambian resort, Lett (1983) on character yachting in the Caribbean, Gottlieb (1982) on 'Americans' Vacations' and Buck (1978) on nostalgic tourism in Amish communes. Some of the themes raised in these studies can also be found, in an attenuated form, in my study of the beaches on the islands in southern Thailand (Cohen, 1982g). Here the grounds of recreational touristic play are apparently part of the surrounding 'paramount reality', with no markers to set them off as 'mere playgrounds'.

It is this ambiguous status of such places which enables the recreational tourist to savour his experience as if it was 'real'—while subconsciously aware of the fact that it is not so. This insight accounts for the success e.g. of touristic 'paradises': tourists enjoy the paradisiac play 'knowing very well that they cannot be but fictitious paradises (cf. also Cohen, 1982b).

To conclude, students following Turner's approach generally strove to show the analogy between religious ritual and ludic tourism, usually concluding that touristic play assumes in modern secular society a function similar to that of ritual or pilgrimage in traditional societies (Moore, 1980: 207). While I do not necessarily dispute their claim, its too general and sweeping nature led to the loss of what appears to me a tragic trait in the predicament of modern secular man: namely that for him transcendence can only be playfully imagined, but can no longer claim reality. By assimilating the analysis of touristic play to the Turnerian analysis of ritual, these authors erased the distinctive quality of secular 'recreational' tourism as against religious ritual or pilgrimage—which, in turn, derives from a crucial difference between secular modernity and traditional society, based on a religious world view. It is this difference which I shall attempt to explicate and illustrate below.

RITUAL, PLAY AND REALITY

Turner has repeatedly pointed out that there are important integral ludic (playful) elements in tribal ritual and historical pilgrimage (Turner and Turner, 1978: 35). Significantly, however, he claims that with growing social differentiation the ludic element recedes in favor of the ritual element; in the highly

differentiated post-industrial societies ritual and pilgrimage lose much of their ludic character, thus becoming 'liminoid' (ibid: 36–39). Simultaneously, play becomes a separate realm of human activity, which, according to Moore (1980: 207), achieves preponderance over ritual in contemporary secular society.

For our purposes the important difference between ritual and play rests on their respective underlying ontological assumptions; even for the modern religious individual, that which is experienced in ritual or pilgrimage is considered to be real; for the secular individual that which is experienced in play is not—although he may enjoy imagining that it was.

Let me briefly explicate the difference: the prototypical pilgrim at the Center has an 'existential' experience: he is renewed, rejuvenated, born-again—in brief re-created there. His visit to the Center can be interpreted in Eliade's (1954: 35) sense, as a projection of the mythical theme of Creation, a moment of eternity in time—on the biographical rather than the cosmological level. Such an experience is, phenomenologically seen, 'deep'—the ecstatic and mystical encounter at the Center with the numinous or 'Wholly Other' (Otto, 1959: 39–44). The 'existential' tourist undergoes a similar experience at his 'elective' center in the recesses of the Other (Cohen, 1984). His experience is, in an analytical sense, also religious; that of the 'recreational' tourist, however, is not. The difference in the quality of their respective experiences, in turn, relates to the different ontological status of the experienced, from the perspective of the experiencer's own world view.

In the religious world view, following Eliade (1954), only that which is non-contingent is really real. Such, indeed, is the Center as a transcendent singularity in space, the point of penetration of eternity into time. The Center may well be 'anti-structural' in Turner's sense, an antidote to the routine of the mundane world, but it has Reality, precisely because the religious world view admits the ontological reality of transcendence.

The modern secular world view leads progressively to the denial of transcendence, eventuating in the vew that there is nothing 'out there' in the recesses of the world but the void (Bell, 1977: 427), which, in contrast to e.g. Buddhism, is *not* given religious significance (and does not, therefore, as in Buddhism, paradoxically become *the* Ultimate Reality). Modern man is thus caught in a Sartrian predicament of 'no-exit' from the immanence of his 'disenchanted' world, while continuing to long for a transcendent Reality. I submit that, just as the 'death of God' theology plays as if a non-existent God was real, so the recreational tourist plays at the reality of a Center, the existence of which is denied by his own secular 'construction of reality'. The success of this 'play at Reality' is precisely what endows this kind of tourism with its distinctive recreational quality—in the sense in which this term is usually used in modern functionalist leisure studies. Such a view of recreational

tourism also distinguishes it, on the one hand, from ritual and pilgrimage—which explicitly relate to an ontologically affirmed transcendent Reality, and on the other, from the mere entertainment of 'diversionary tourism'—which does not 'play at Reality', and which is essentially meaningless.

This interpretation goes a long way to explain one of the outstanding characteristics commonly attributed to the mass tourist: his easy gullibility (e.g. Mitford, 1959). Tourists are said to be easily taken in by blatantly contrived sights; that they accept unquestioningly obviously fabricated accounts and explanations; and that they can be easily cheated. Several explanations have been proposed for this alleged gullibility: the most charitable is that by Adam (1972), who attributed it to the tourist's ignorance and confusion in a new and strange situation. The social critics of tourism tended to see in the gullibility a reflection of the superficiality of modern mass culture (Boorstin, 1964); while MacCannell attributed it to the prevarications of a tourist establishment which cunningly 'staged authenticity' (MacCannell, 1973; cf. Loeb, 1977). The approach here proposed permits an alternative interpretation which makes superfluous a recourse to either the tourist's ignorance and superficiality, or the cunning of the touristic establishment. The playful attitude of the recreational tourist creates a predisposition to believe, akin to that found in a theatricial audience which is wholly involved with the action on the stage. Both involve a suspension of disbelief, a readiness to give oneself up to the experience. There is, however, a crucial difference: in the theatricial performance, the separation of the playful situation from its surroundings is institutionalized; the concrete expression of such institutionalization is the spatio-temporal separation of the performance from the surrounding mundane 'paramount reality'. Such a separation still exists in some overtly staged tourist attractions, such as the Disneylands, which are 'bounded liminal spaces' (Moore, 1980: 216) and whose playful character is openly acknowledged. The distinguishing characteristics of covertly staged touristic attractions, however, is precisely that they are not, or, at least superficially, appear not to be, so separated from the surrounding environment—rather they are, or are made to appear, an integral part of it. Their touristic attractiveness consists precisely of their appearance *as if* they were real; though they may be half aware of their staged character, recreational tourists playfully accept their apparent reality. The tourist 'believes', not because he is ignorant, superficial or cheated, but in order to playfully experience that apparent reality—and through them a transcendent Reality beyond, which is symbolized or embodied by the attractions. Only thus can we understand the success of the game, prescribed by the expert on tourist management, L. G. Crampon, to transform a tourist into a Hawaiian in three easy steps:

'*Stage One*—Get the visitor to dress Hawaiian
Stage Two—Get the visitor to speak Hawaiian
Stage Three—Get the visitor to act Hawaiian'

(Crampon, n.d.: 53–4). The steps are accomplished, respectively, by having the visitor put on an *aloha* shirt, say 'Aloha!' instead of 'Goodbye', and make him love Hawaii (since that is the way the *kamaiina*, i.e. the locals, do) (ibid: 53–4). And there is probably no exaggeration in Crampon's statement to the effect that 'probably this visitor is not "acting". He does like Hawaii. He is convinced that Hawaii is a paradise' (ibid: 54). Vacationing tourists in the studiously primitive surroundings of a Club Mediterranée resort and other less formally informal 'touristic' paradises undergo similarly simplified rituals through which they playfully become natives or primitives for the duration of their vacation. Gottlieb has recently put such touristic metamorphoses in a comparative framework in her analysis of the process through which higher class Americans become a 'Peasant for the Day', while lower-class ones become a 'Queen (King) for a day' during their vacations.

C. Graña, in his spirited article on the modern museum as a palace (1971), uses the example of a little known picture by Louis Gabl entitled 'The Peasant Visits the Castle', to illustrate succinctly this playful touristic transformation of identity discussed by Gottlieb: The picture '. . . shows the interior of a baronial house which has . . . been recently opened to the public . . . in the foreground . . . a peasant woman sits in a monumental and splendidly carved chair . . . the expression on her face makes us partners in the game of "Look at me, I'm a Queen!" . . .' (ibid: 110). Graña continues: 'The anecdote related in the painting carries two implications. On the one hand there is a mocking of the vanity of princely pomp; kings and nobles are after all made of the same stuff as the rest of us. But on the other hand it clearly proclaims and relishes the glorious folly of playing 'Queen for a day' . . . . There is an appropriation of privileged glory by the popular customer-invader. But the thrill and the joy of this capture could not be what it is if it did not contain an act of secret veneration for a state of spiritual *and* material splendor which has never in actuality been part of our lives.' (ibid: 110). The last point is crucial, and can be further expanded: in Graña's view, the (recreational) tourist playfully acts out something which in actuality he is not or cannot be. One can generalize Graña's insight and apply it to man living in a secularized world; the recreational tourist strives to recapture and re-enact playfully the sense of enchantment of the encounter with some transcending Reality, even as he 'knows' that according to his own world view such a Reality does not, in fact, exist. In that he differs from the experiential tourist, who vicariously, but seriously, experiences other people's Reality. The experiential tourist 'knows' that there is such a Reality—for other cultures or in other times (MacCannell,

1973: 160), unaccessible to him as long as he remains modern; indeed, his efforts to make it accessible may turn him into an 'experimental' or 'existential' tourist; the recreational tourist, however can only mournfully regret the loss of that Reality, and enjoy its playful reenactment. This, I submit, is nostalgia in the deepest sense of the word. Students of recreational tourism, such as Moore (1980: 211) and Buck (1978) indeed dwelt upon nostalgia as a central theme in the touristic experiences of replications or stagings of the (American) past. But these are only concrete, minor instances of a general and profound nostalgia characteristic of modern man as recreational tourist; a nostalgia which is a modern version of Eliade's (1968: 57–71) 'nostalgia for Paradise'—just that their world view tells them that there is no such place—and the only recourse left to them, *within the confines of that world view*,is to recreate themselves playing *as if* there were—precisely like the play theologian plays *as if* God existed.

TOURIST EXPERIENCE AND MODERN SOCIETY

Recreational tourism is the most 'functional' of the diffferent modes of the touristic experience for modern, secular, society (Cohen, 1979a: 185): it permits a playful outlet to modern man's longing for Reality, without endowing the object of his longing with ontological substance and thus threatening the modern, secular world view. He may thus play at what is not, or is not any more, even as he preserves his allegiance to the mundane, immanentistic centers of modernity. Man is thus 'recreated' by his touristic activities, without becoming alienated from modernity.

Modernity, however, has a dynamics of its own: as the process of rationalization and disenchantment of the modern world ineluctibly proceeds, it eventually gnaws at the very centers of secular modern society: the modern secular religions of 'progress', whether in their capitalist or socialist varieties, are eventually undermined by that very process and lose their attractiveness (cf. Weisskopf, 1983: 98). Contemporary 'late modern' society is marked by growing alienation of its members, even as its center disintegrates; it faces the threat of becoming a centerless world, verging on nihilism (Ferrarotti, 1979). This development may eventuate in contrary outcomes: alienated man may either accept the meaninglessness of his predicament and 'give up'—a mood which, in the realm of tourism, leads to the 'diversionary' mode. Or contrariwise, he may strive to retrieve meaning in the face of the threat of ultimate meaninglessness: this leads to a renewed, serious (and not merely playful) quest for novel 'elective centers' (Cohen, 1979a; Cohen, Ben-Yehuda and Aviad, forthcoming). The first stirrings of this renewed quest find expression in experiential tourism: here the tourist seeks to ensure himself of the existence of a Reality—but elsewhere, beyond the limits of modernity. The experiential tourist, however, does not identify with the centers of other people's Reality,

which remain inaccessible to him; rather he merely experiences their lives vicariously, remaining throughout an alienated modern. The outcome of such tourism, as MacCannell (1976: 9, 83–4) shrewdly noted, consists of the incorporation or 'museumization' of the non-modern and pre-modern 'attractions' into modernity. They thus become 'living museums', guarantors of the possibility of Reality. As, however, in this very process of museumization, they lose their authentic character and become progressively 'staged', the experiential tourist loses interest in them. Such attractions, of which the Disneylands are perhaps the most extreme manifestations, become the playgrounds of the recreational tourist, who, since he accepts the modern secular world view, is satisfied with their 'as if' character. The serious seekers of authenticity, on their part, move further afield.

As the consciousness of their alienation and the decentralization of their world deepens, late moderns realize the insufficiency of the merely vicarious experience of the Reality of others, and set out to seek new 'elective' centers of their own; they become experimental or, insofar as they embrace such a center, existential tourists. Unlike experiential tourists, however, the latter do not incorporate their 'elective' centers into modernity—rather they abandon modernity themselves (e.g. Blakeway, 1980; Schneebaum, 1970). Thereby they create touristic models for alternative life-styles, which may in the future attract like-minded moderns. In this the 'existential' tourist who discovered or popularized an 'elective' center resembles the initiators or founders of 'countercultural' movements, such as sects, cults and communes, the emergence of which signifies the transition from an increasingly centerless late modernity into a multi-centered, post-modern, future world. For those who embrace a new 'elective' center, transcendent Reality has been recovered—and they cease to relate to it playfully, whether in religion or in tourism.

To conclude: ludic, recreational tourism characterizes those moderns who have lost their belief in a transcendent Reality and give allegiance to the mundane, secular centers of the modern world (i.e to the 'religions' of progress, achievement and similar secular utopias), but still long for an apparently unretrievably lost transcendent Reality; it is this longing which motivates them to play at Reality, thus giving substance to Moore's (1980: 207) statement: 'Play lost importance to ritual in primitive cultures and archaic civilizations . . . but in our post modern world (i.e. late modern in my terminology) play seems to be gaining importance at the expense of both organized religion and obligatory ritual'. Playful recreational tourism is an 'as if' substitute for serious ritual in a secular, modern world for which God is dead. Serious, ritualistic experiential tourism to the Reality of others characterizes those moderns who are alienated from their late modern world, as it increasingly inclines towards centerlessness. These individuals seek to experience authenticity in the life of non-moderns, while themselves

remaining (alienated) moderns. Experimental and existential tourism, finally, characterizes those who actively seek an alternative to modernity—an 'elective' center. By identifying with it, they may eventually contribute to the transition of the late modern to a pluralistic post-modern world, in which transcendent Reality will again be retrieved, albeit in a multiplicity of ways.

CONCLUSION: SECULARIZED LIMINALITY AND THE RITUAL PROCESS

The preceding analysis suggests an important general conclusion for the study of 'comparative liminality': unlike societies recognizing an ontologically separate, transcendent Reality, even structured, liminal (and not merely liminoid) situations in the modern secular, immanentistic world do not sustain a full-fledged 'ritual process'. To put it bluntly: the tourist's 'comfort in the truth that Mickey Mouse reigns at the baroque capital of the Magic Kingdom' is simply not the same as the pilgrim's existential rebirth through his communion with the Divine at the very Center of the world. Mickey Mouse may recreate but does not effect communion with transcendence; hence the third, crucial stage of the *rite de passage* is missing: the reintegration into a new (and higher) status in the mundane social structure. Moore's (1980) and Wagner's (1977) studies do not show that the alleged modern '*rite de passage*', whether through Disneyland or touristic paradise, leads to any perceptible change in the tourist's status in his home society. The attraction may feature 'passages' (Moore, 1980: 212–3), but these lead nowhere; there is no rebirth.

The recreational touristic play may help the tourist return, refreshed, to his mundane existence, but does not spiritually change his life. The playful experience is marginal in the life plan of the 'recreational' tourist, whereas the rite-de-passage is central to the life plan of the religious pilgrim. It is this crucial difference which I sought to capture in the title of my paper on tourism on the beaches on the islands of southern Thailand (Cohen, 1982). But the folksy wisdom of the anonymous German poet of the early modern age captured the same idea much earlier in his description of the 'recreational' attitude to religion of the fishes to whom, upon finding his church empty, St Anthony of Padua turned to preach:

'Die Predigt geendet
Ein jedes sich wendet
Die Hechte bleiben Diebe
Die Aale viel lieben
Die Predig hat g'fallen
Sie blieben wie alle'

(As the sermon ended
Each turned his own way
The pikes remained thieves
The eels made much love
They all liked the sermon
But remained like all (i.e. unchanged)

Arnim & Brentano (comp. 1921: 140)

NOTES

1 This section is a condensed and modified version of an argument fully expanded in my 'Pilgrimage and Tourism' (Cohen 1984).
2 This theme will be further elaborated by a paper on the 'radical secular breakthrough' of late modernity; see also Ferrarotti, 1979.
3 MacCannell, following Durkheim, means human Society in general, not any particular socio-culture. This is obviously a transcendent concept, which is, according to Durkheim (1954: 206) symbolized by the divine. MacCannell therefore does not distinguish between pilgrimage to the socio-culture's own Center (or multiple centers), and tourism to the Centers of others, which, in my view, is a most important analytical distinction (Cohen, 1984).

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