

## Introduction: Traveling Paradoxes

*Claudio Minca and Tim Oakes*

This is a book about the paradox of travel. It is a topic that perhaps conjures images of the ambivalent outsider, the wanderer who is at home everywhere and nowhere. But we wanted to work against simply laying down another take on the well-rehearsed theme of modern mobility and its associated restless anxieties. We began instead with the idea that any study of travel must also raise questions about the meaning of home, about belonging, about how places get made and remade. Travel, we thought, occurs in places, places that are homes to others. And travelers have homes that they have left for some reason but to which they will most likely return. While we like to think of travel as an escape from place, we have come to believe that such an escape is at best a comforting myth and at worst an ideology of control. Raising these questions about travel has led us to consider the placed nature of identity and subjectivity in the highly mobile cultures of modernity. While we considered the experience of travel as part of the broader problem of “being modern,” we mainly wanted to think about travel as part of place instead of thinking about travel as something that only happens between places. Travel, we believe, is part of place-based experience, and in this sense entails negotiations of meaning, identity, and otherness in specific places. Travel is about experiencing and making sense of place, of many places (rather than the rejection of place). We wanted to think about “being modern” as a particular kind of experience in place, one in which place-making is fundamentally infused with travel and all the baggage that gets shipped along the way—difference, strangeness, alienation, nostalgia, homesickness, inspiration, fear, frustration, hopes and expectations fulfilled and dashed.

So that we might get a better *feel* for these ideas before sitting down to write about them, we took a trip to Venice. It was a very short trip for Claudio, who

at the time was living very near and working within the city, and a much longer one for Tim, who lives in Colorado. How appropriate, we thought, to start writing this introduction in one of the world's most traveled-to places, a place so clearly "infused with travel." We found, however, that walking around Venice with, as Claudio called it, the "ghost of reflexivity" following us at every turn, made us realize anew the impossibility of thinking about travel without thinking about home. It is not just that travelers must pursue their craft always in the home of someone else, but also that one's own sense of home is so often informed by travel. And this is the *problem of modernity* that we're after: being at home, being in place, these become a kind of traveling consciousness, a reflexive act informed by travel. The paradoxes of travel are also the paradoxes of place, of home. That much was abundantly clear to us after a day in Venice.

Our dual narratives of that day—first Tim's account, and then Claudio's—are offered here as a way of introducing the themes of the book. The narratives are followed by what some readers will recognize as a more "proper" introduction, picking up the threads and tying them to the broader fields of scholarship on travel, tourism, and modernity.

## FISHING IN AN AQUARIUM

### A Trip to Venice with Claudio

The afternoon of my arrival, Claudio and Luiza take me to Trieste, where Claudio grew up—the place he still considers home. I think visiting Trieste creates an opportunity for Claudio to perform his Italianness. "This is what Italians do," he says a number of times, with that nod of his head, a slight gesture of the hand. In Trieste, we do what Triestini do on a hot Sunday, swimming in the Adriatic, strolling around the pier as the sun dips into the bay and sets the city square aglow with twilight. Claudio points out the architecture of the city: this one fascist, this one "liberty," this one deco. The historical layers in the landscape are astonishing—amid the dominant nineteenth-century neoclassical architecture, interspersed with an occasional fascist building hides a Roman theater, while above the town towers a fifteenth-century castle. Claudio and Luiza comment on how the city's public spaces are genuinely democratic, claimed and used by the people who live there. Spaces that invite people to come out in the evenings, to enjoy the bay and the sunset, to drink and talk in historic outdoor cafes ("this one's leftist, this one used to be the place for Italian nationalists at the beginning of the twentieth century") and in the vast town square—spaces, in other words, not privatized, not seducing

one's consumption. Our walk through the city streets delivers us to a neighborhood pizzeria. "This is what Triestini do," says Claudio, "they eat pizza on Sunday night after a day on the beach." We sit down and order beer. "Beer is for pizza," he continues. "Beer is the only thing we'll drink with pizza, never wine." The pizza is delicious, and we finish the evening with a late night gelato and a sleepy drive back to the house in San Dona' di Piave.

It occurs to me that Claudio may have wanted me to experience Trieste as a kind of prelude to Venice. Trieste doesn't really *look* Italian, at least not in any touristy way. It looks more like Prague or St. Petersburg, which is perhaps why very few tourists go there. And maybe it's also why some public spaces appear so democratic and uncommodified. Trieste has a kind of *realness* and a normalcy about it; Claudio presents it to me as a place where you can go and simply see everyday life. People occupy the city space just doing what they do, and they are, for the most part, residents. There are others too—Slovenians, Croatians, Serbians, Albanians, Senegalese—shopping, looking for work, smuggling goods, selling trinkets, or just hanging out on the street. But it is as if the normalcy of Trieste has been offered as a contrast to the abnormality of Venice. And here things get confusing for me. After visiting Trieste, Venice—which *looks* so "Italian"—strikes me as very *unreal*, not really an Italian city at all. Venice, in fact, looks *too* Italian; it looks like a theme park. And so, here's the irony and the paradox. Venice *is* a real city; residents still live there (although only about 65,000 of them are still hanging on); there are two universities, with students and faculty, markets selling fruit, vegetables, and fish, and plenty of "everyday life," just as in Trieste.

It is perhaps the oddity of Venice, more than the normalcy of Trieste, which encourages Claudio to perform his Italianness. In the morning of our visit, we ride his Vespa to the train station in San Dona' di Piave. Breakfast is an espresso or cappuccino—standing—at the station, with a croissant. "This is what Italians do," he says. "Have our morning coffee standing up, in a hurry, on the way to work." Claudio has finished his cappuccino before I can barely get my first sip in. The train arrives on time, from Budapest, and whisks us away to the city in the lagoon. Claudio's first task is to generate the right first impression of the city. To that end, we take the ferry along the Grand Canal to Piazza San Marco. Here the paradox of Venice reveals itself most clearly to me. The Piazza is full of people, thousands and thousands of people, *and they're all tourists*. It gives me that feeling—Claudio says it's common for visitors—that the whole city had been built for tourists, and tourists are the only people inhabiting the space of the city. And the tourists get to do their touristy things freely and with abandon, just as in a theme park. Everywhere they turn is another beautiful facade, another charming scene, another stunning vista; all seemingly created just for the camera. There is no unevenness

about the Venice landscape. It is *all* beautiful, *everywhere*. Claudio calls it a fantastic laboratory. Being a tourism scholar in Venice is like fishing in an aquarium, he says.

And yet, this is also Claudio's city. It's where he has lived (for four years, until getting fed up and moving to San Dona' di Piave) and where he has worked. And so he is the destabilizing element to my visit; Venice is not just a theme park, much as the tourism industry might like it to be. It is a place where people live and work. Claudio doesn't try to show me the *real* Venice because, of course, the real Venice is everywhere. It's not that the real Venice is a fake, a theme park, but rather that there is a *tension* between the theme park and the everyday, the habitus of "what Italians do." And Claudio embodies this tension; he performs it when I arrive to visit his city for a day.

We walk the usual tourist circuit and then visit his department, where he gives a radio interview about the war in Iraq. The interview intrudes on my day in the theme park in a most welcome way, reminding me that yes, people do live and work in Venice. We have a quick lunch—sitting down this time—before walking around some more. Claudio tries to show me some kinds of "backstage" spaces in Venice (the fish market, the shipyard where gondolas are built, alleys where tourists are seldom seen, where laundry hangs and where facades need rebuilding). But it's an ambivalent effort, because we both know that the backstage idea is a false construction. These spaces are no more or less "real" than the junk market at Rialto Bridge, the occasional pigeon here is no more "real" than the thousands flocking to San Marco as if they're paid to be there (although in some senses they are paid, since tourists regularly purchase the seeds to feed them there).

### In Venice with Tim

Tim is coming to Italy: what should I do with him? He is an academic, he works on tourism and we are collaborating on a book on modern paradoxes. I think (with some concern) about having to re-interpret "my" places for an "outsider," because it obviously involves both my judgment on the visitor's background and what I want to show of Italy, Trieste, Venice, and myself in all those spaces. And in this case, it was as though a ghost was traveling with us: the ghost of self-reflexivity, the syndrome of the post-structuralist tourism scholar.

After some hesitation about what would be the right start, we decide to have lunch at Venice airport: not a very Italian/Venetian beginning. Or maybe it is. But we are hungry and Tim is not naïve, "like we think most tourists are."

Now, the very problem is how to represent myself to a post-structuralist scholar who has never been to Italy before, on what is supposedly "my turf."

What did he have in mind? And how important should this be for my choices about what to do in Venice? How were our shared taken-for-granted understandings of tourism and traveling influencing my feelings? How would he perceive my planned path through Venice and its surrounding region? Should I think of him as an American first, or as a fellow scholar? How could I translate my experience of meeting Tim in Italy and showing him around into a language that would not be banal? How could I translate into English my own rather strange and ambiguous Italian-ness? How would I see myself in Italy—and in this somewhat uncomfortable role? Would I be able to be “spontaneous”?

Luiza, my partner (and also a geographer), suggested that Tim should see Trieste, my hometown, “because it is beautiful and different.” I was not completely convinced about this choice but I accepted and we drove away. One thing was sure: Trieste was a city where Tim (and we along with him) could have a completely different experience compared to the quaintness of Venice. In our paradoxical anxiety of being different from the tourists, it turned out to be a good choice (certainly very few foreigners would start their first Italian experience in a place like Trieste, not quite enough “Italian” for a landscape seeker).

But despite the fact that I was born and had spent most of my life there, I do not live in Trieste anymore. Only recently have I begun to enjoy it with a strange and somewhat disturbing aesthetic detachment: I like it because I know it very well, but I would not be happy—or able—to live there fulltime anymore. I allow myself to have an almost paternalistic vision of the city’s problems and the very particular ideas of the Triestini. What I once perceived as unbearable constraints, I now find reassuring: signs of continuity with the past. Exploring this context with a sophisticated mind like Tim’s is proving an interesting enterprise. Throughout, I try to keep a very low profile: showing both the spectacular side of the city, but also some less attractive corners in order to do *what many Triestini usually do* (it would be interesting to question why these hints of reality became so subconsciously important during that experience). Despite my attempt to avoid traditional tourist routes—which are very few, anyway—we end up walking through the historical center and up to the hill where the cathedral and the castle stand. Beforehand, we stop in Miramare, where the city’s student population hangs out on hot days, sunbathing and swimming. The “beach” is actually not a beach, but a long stretch of waterfront sidewalk along the main road into the city where people walk, jog, and sunbathe in the summer. For some reason, I find it particularly important to stress to Tim the democratic nature of this space, of this piece of “sidewalk-riviera,” implicitly comparing it to the rampant privatization of the American city. A pinch of European pride lies beneath my explanation of the workings

of this space, and perhaps this is why I had chosen it as an overture to the city. I do not realize how much I actually stress the *normalcy* of Trieste—only Tim’s comments make me think about this—and all my efforts to offer him a concentrated set of fragments of “real life” (“this is what the Triestini do,” which I apparently repeat quite a few times throughout the evening).

Venice, after a Vespa ride and a fast “standing” breakfast at the train station bar, is literally *waiting for us*. I realize that we are getting ready for the shock of Venice—Venice is always a shock—because we joked about the “perfect Italian experience” that Tim is being treated to in such a short visit. We both know that there are prejudices and expectations that we cannot escape. We are also both concerned about avoiding the tourist language. But, at the same time, the two of us are clearly not in the same position: in the process of essentializing the Italian experience produced by the tourist literature and the tourist economy, I am thrust into the rather uncomfortable position of being—by definition—part (an object?) of that experience; I am a representative, after all, of *Italianness in place*, since I am Italian.

So Venice is between us even before arrival, and I prepare myself to get into the right mood to experience my reading of Venice, the quintessential tourist city, aware that, after all the articles and books that we have both written on tourism, modernity, and subject formation, it would not have been easy to find the “right” way to be there *together*. A partial and somehow dangerous way out is offered by my work commitments that day and by the fact that we have to spend some time talking about the book—a great opportunity to go back to “real” things.

I decide to play with the ways the tourists experience Venice and to approach the city from the water. The water bus stop is packed with tourists. It is unseasonably warm and I am immediately tempted to show Tim the difficulties that tourism creates for many residents: our “tour,” in fact, takes place on a regular public bus/boat, and despite the different fares paid by residents and tourists for the service, all of Venice’s transport system is essentially kidnapped by the tourist army of image seekers. This, of course, is not a new issue in tourist literature, but now I am wearing (as I had been wearing during the four years that I lived in Venice) a double mask: that of a tourist scholar as well as that of a resident, that is, member of an (often idealized) “local community” that some scholars have been so concerned about protecting and preserving, but also the same “local” that, here in Venice, tourists are eager to frame in their pictures, and to approach in order to get some hints of real Italian-Venetian life. After strolling through the predictable landscapes of Piazza San Marco and the Rialto Bridge, I was tempted to take Tim to the backstage—but in Venice, as we all know, the backstage is simply another “special effect.”

The only thing left for me to do is to try to ironically depict the Venetian tourist experience and to distance us from it—a very modern attitude, I admit. At the same time, we are both aware of the fact that the “Venice performance” is an amazing and unique spectacle—and that there is no way of escaping from it.

Some interesting questions come up during our final break at an outdoor café (“where my colleagues usually go,” I announce in order paradoxically to reassure Tim about the fact that we managed “to step off the scene,” maybe, for a few minutes or so). The questions are: how had the tourist scholar and the former inhabitant of Venice interacted in shaping my performance that day with Tim? Who was I that day in Venice? Why was I so concerned about showing what “typical” Italians do? Why was I so preoccupied about distinguishing tourist behavior from what “real” Italians do? Why did Venice provoke—as it has always done—such disturbing and intriguing feelings for a semi-resident like myself? Could I have refrained myself from falling into the traps of my modern language and its paradoxes, especially when performing my subjectivity on my own turf? What really happened that day between Tim and myself? Why did we feel the need to write about this—actually realizing that we couldn’t start our book without narrating such a schizophrenic experience? What could we learn from this experience in order to better understand subject formation and modern tourism in place? What did the relationship between us and the tourists in Venice consist of? Why did I feel the need to compromise my self-reflexivity as a scholar with a set of very modern assertions about what Italians do and what tourists do, just to spatially mark this distance?

It is perhaps understandable, then, that I feel more comfortable when we leave Venice and return to San Dona’, feeling literally overwhelmed by the unavoidable weight of the countertourist experience of the tourist city par excellence, and by the difficulties in positioning ourselves that this experience created. We end up eating dinner in a restaurant out in the country where, after a great meal, I apparently stress to Tim (again . . . ) how un-gentrified that space was (and how different from Italian restaurants abroad) and, of course, how we are doing again something that . . . “Italians usually do.”

### PLACES TRAVELED-TO

The visit is always easier for the traveler. Claudio’s account of our day in Venice narrates the ambivalence of those who must make homes out of places traveled-to. In the case of Venice, of course, ambivalence may be too soft a word. For many locals, the disaster of tourism in Venice generates powerful

feelings about which there is little ambivalence. But it remains true that travel turns locals into ambivalent and self-conscious place makers. In her account of “*heimat* tourism,” later in this volume, Soile Veijola captures a similar ambivalence with a set of questions:

How do you know and experience a place you knew as a child; and how does that place know you? At which point do strangers turn into friends, tourists into neighbours, locals into visitors and places into tourist destinations? Can *Heimat* be revisited? How is ontological security, guaranteed by being at home and having a home, produced and managed in the modern world? How does one trust a place?

Tim did not really *trust* Venice, but that is perhaps to be expected. Most tourists don't trust the places they visit—at least not on their first date. That Claudio could trust neither Venice nor himself *in Venice* is both more troubling and more revealing of the paradox of travel. Travel, it seems, turns locals into self-appointed packagers of place. But in packaging place for travelers, locals tend to acquire a kind of schizophrenic subjectivity, scrutinizing themselves and their own homes from an outsider's perspective. Locals often turn themselves into ambivalent objects, and it is precisely this schizophrenia that strikes us as peculiarly modern and paradoxical. When Veijola takes a friend to her native place she finds that “all I could do was gesture at the visible, picturesque landscape, like a tourist guide—lost for words, information and concepts.” Turning her place into a viewable object for others renders it impossible to experience as home. She becomes an inside outsider and an outside insider, a paradox. In the Venice narratives, this paradox reveals itself on at least two levels.

One is on the level of place-making. A dualism creeps into Tim's account of the difference between Trieste and Venice, in which the traveler measures places with the yardstick of authenticity. For the modern traveler, places can be real or fake, or they can be real and “hyperreal,” that is, so “fake” that they seem real (Eco 1986). In either case, travelers find themselves wondering what places visited are “really” like. What must it be like to live there, to be at home there? This is because the traveler—almost instinctively—does not at first *trust* the places s/he visits, and so assumes that there is a hidden realness somewhere just out of view. This is because, just as we all define ourselves according to a world of others, the traveler applies a binary of *real* and *unreal* to evaluate the world she travels through. At the same time, places traveled-to get remade with a self-consciousness about this lack of trust. This results in places that are increasingly packaged versions of themselves, “hyperreal” places. And so, “reality” is put on show for the traveler, to gain her trust, to *convince* her that this place is indeed authentic. But its authenticity



must be marked as such (Culler 1981). Yet while places may be consciously marked and packaged with a particular kind of authenticity—that is, an authenticity explicitly sought by the visitor—they continue to be remade through the daily practices of the subjects living within them. Such places thus experience a schizophrenic dualism of paradoxical modernity. People both living in and visiting such places must negotiate this paradox in one way or another. Indeed, it is the very quality of place that the paradoxes of modernity make manifest and palpable (Oakes 1997). And while a phenomenology of place would argue that such is the quality of *any* place (Casey 1997, 240–41), we find that places receiving a greater share of travelers reveal this quality all the more clearly.

A similar level of schizophrenia is revealed by the Venice narratives in terms of subject-formation. Travel is often thought to induce what Victor Turner has called a “performative reflexivity” for both locals and travelers alike. Turner defined this reflexivity as a condition in which sociocultural groups or particularly perceptive representatives of such groups “turn, bend or reflect back upon themselves, upon their relations, actions, symbols, meanings, codes, statuses, social structures, ethical and legal rules, and other sociocultural components which make up their public selves” (Turner 1986, 24). Such reflection is especially inspired at moments of intersubjective encounter between travelers and locals, when both find themselves to be the objects of the other’s contemplation and gaze (Urry 2002b, 156). Through such encounters both locals and travelers consciously experience subjectivity and objectivity simultaneously, an experience that often produces Turner’s “performative reflexivity,” as locals become self-conscious place-packagers and guides, while visitors assume the role of consumers.

Invoking performance theory at this point risks a detour into a complex and diverse body of work, but more needs to be said about how performativity speaks to the question of paradox and travel. As Schein (1999, 369–73) indicates in her brief review of the field, performance theory has genealogies in philosophy and linguistics, performance and theater studies, and sociology and linguistic anthropology. In cultural studies, though, it has been the work of Judith Butler that has perhaps most inspired a sustained questioning of the often taken-for-granted categories of social being. Butler (1990; 1993) develops the idea of gender as a kind of reification of social norms about difference, a consequence of repeated performative enactments of male and female conventions in a given society. As Schein (1999, 369) summarizes it, “The significance of this argument lies in the notion that there is no essence, origin, or reality prior to or outside the enactment of a multiplicity of performances. It is the recurring regularity in performances that makes certain social norms acquire their authority, their aura of inevitability.” Extending from this,

one could further argue that recurring enactments might transform, in addition to gender categories, other binaries from arbitrary distinctions into seemingly essential conditions. This would include subject and object, mind and body, self and other, among many others that Western epistemology relies upon to order the world and make it knowable.

As Edensor (2001) has pointed out, there is nothing necessarily *reflexive* about such re-enactments. Indeed it is precisely the unreflective and habitual nature of repeated performances that assures the “realness” of the resulting binaries. Thus, Edensor argues that tourism is a kind of unreflective performance and that it is a *lack* of reflection that preserves the tourist’s sense of relaxation and “getting away from it all.” Yet precisely because it is an *enactment* of arbitrary categories (tourist-subject and exotic-object, be it a native person, an unusual landscape, or an exotic cultural event), performativity preserves the possibility that reflexivity *might* disrupt our taken-for-granted view of the world. Performativity both encrusts hegemonic social conventions *and* creates opportunities for the disruption of those conventions. What we notice about travel is that it often creates exactly those kinds of opportunities for reflexive disruption even while it provides the option of unreflective bliss on the beach (or in the shopping street, festival marketplace, heritage center, or wherever else tourists would go to “get away”) (see also Franklin and Crang 2001, 18). Jacobs observes this disruption, for instance, in her account (this volume) of European women tourists in the Sinai who “take on the supposedly masculine subjectivity of travel” by, paradoxically, turning local men into hypermasculine objects. Similarly, Veijola’s movement between “masculine countryside and feminine city” disrupts more conventional notions of “masculine mobility and travel as opposed to a feminine notion of dwelling and belonging.”

And indeed, the savvy of the tourism industry has even tried to turn this possibility of disruption into a commodity. Citing Featherstone (1991, 78–82), Edensor (2001, 78–79) argues that,

Tourism as performance can both renew existing conventions and provide opportunities to challenge them. Yet many stages devised by the industry are typically designed to promise a carnivalesque experience but are usually “sites of ordered disorder” which encourage a “controlled de-control of the emotions.”

This echoes Wang’s (this volume) analysis of tourist itineraries as the commodity form of tourist experience, in which the itinerary promises the freedom of escape but instead acts—as with all forms of consumption—more as a constraint on freedom. Wang is right in arguing that this marks the paradox of consumption itself. The above is also true for places like Las Vegas, as

shown by Raento and Flusty (this volume), where the commodification of placeness and of the tourist experience of place is taken to an extreme (see also Minca 2004). While commodified subversions of social convention may ultimately be merely another kind of conformity, commodification is nevertheless incomplete because, in tourism at least, it is places that must be commodified and places always will resist and disrupt the social closure necessary for absolute control. It is the placed aspect of travel, not its commodification, that provides for those moments of reflexivity that prove disruptive to our taken-for-granted ideas of subject-object distinctions. Thus, in Flusty's (this volume) analysis of Zapatista muñeca dolls, their value as commodities is continually disrupted according to the places—and thus the social contexts—which they travel through upon being dislodged from their production origins in Chiapas. As commodities themselves travel, their capacities of order and standardization are compromised.

Similarly, travel in places introduces new contexts that can threaten the unreflexive calm waters provided for by the industry (Urry 2002b, 152). “An unreflexive disposition characterizes much tourism and where this is not the case, where reflexive improvisation and a critical disposition are mobilized, the resultant ambiguity can threaten the sense of well-being that is one of the main aims of tourism—to relax and let go” (Edensor 2001, 62). While we may think of tourism as a performative enactment of the subject-object binary, that performativity means that such a binary is always vulnerable to disruptive reflection. In his analysis of ethnic village tourists in China, Oakes (this volume) thus argues that intersubjective tourism encounters reveal authenticity to be a void, momentarily exposing the real/fake binary as the arbitrary construction that it is. It is the embodied and paradoxical nature of places traveled-in and traveled-to that makes this possible. As suggested by Crang and Coleman (2002, 1) as well as emphasized by Crang in this volume, places should be viewed less as fixed and stable entities than as “fluid and created through performance.” Thus, while the performativity of tourist “places” seeks to make them unreflexive stages where subject-object binaries are maintained and where particular experiences are regularized and commodified, that performativity always renders this process of order and control incomplete and vulnerable to disruption, as Minca (this volume) also highlights in his discussion of the (re)construction of the Jamaa El Fna square in Marrakech as an idealized space for ordered consumption.

In commodifying places as stages for “ordered disorder,” tourism capitalizes on the traveler's need both to cognitively map or “freeze” the world (making it comprehensible through knowledge, order, and abstraction) while also “re-opening” the world (to reproduce the adventure, difference, exoticism, and risk that also lie at the heart of modern sensibilities), thereby creating new

frontiers worthy of exploration. The tourist is always looking for an impossible balance between the need of finding and establishing order in the world—that means mapping tourist spaces, landscapes, and cultures—and the desire (possibility) of transgressing that same order, of going beyond and behind the map. She is caught between an unavoidable propensity toward putting places and people in their “proper” order and a fatal attraction toward disorder, between rationality and desire, between an essentialized sense of place and a progressive sense of place (Massey 1993). The commerce of tourism promises an impossible combination of attractions that can only be sustained through performative re-enactments: an *objectification* of the world as a knowable space and a subjective *experience* of the world as a place of difference.

In seeking to commodify this paradox, tourism requires a place in which to ground and display its patterns and codes, and to provide the stage for the tourist experience. It is interesting to note that it is only through the existence of specific *places* that the tourist discourse can be developed and can become believable as well as desirable. This, of course, makes the paradox all the more palpable, since *tourism requires places to express the traveler’s apparent desire for displacement*.

In addition to the mobilization and commodification of places, tourism also repackages two characters, or “model subjects,” that embody the contradiction between objectification and subjective experience: the explorer and the anthropological field researcher. Both figures are incarnates of the modern Man whose positionality and use of power (through the gaze and the map) are well known and analysed (e.g. Mitchell 1988; Pratt 1992; Farinelli 1992; Minca 2001). Additionally, both Crick (1995) and Bruner (1995) have specifically addressed the disquieting yet striking similarities between anthropologists and tourists, suggesting that all scholars engaged in “field work” must consider seriously the implications of their own reproduction of binary categories of Western epistemology (Bourdieu 1990). Tourism, we believe, clarifies such issues quite effectively. Like Simmel’s stranger (1971), both the classical anthropologist and the explorer justify their existence through the assertion of a defined set of contradictions: being *outside* and *part of* the observed object at the same time; believing in the existence of the real thing “out there” and relying merely on representation of the same thing at the same time; defining order through the description of others’ disorder; a confidence in the binaries of subject and object, the map and the territories, the representation and the thing represented; the belief in the text as a means of narrating the world but also the ever-present readiness to “jump into” the real/world to experience it—and disrupt that order.

Tourism replicates on a mass scale the paths and the behaviors of these two modern heroes, making their paradoxes even more explicit and defining (in an

aware or unaware fashion) their desires. The success of the tourist experience is often measured according to these two referents. In particular, cultural and ethnic tourism reveal very clearly where the deep contradiction lies. It is enough to notice the way everyday life is converted into an object of observation, or how through heritage preservation we map, freeze, and frame the past, while simultaneously desiring a “living history” that provides a spectacular background for the present. The modern tourist lives these tensions between freezing and preserving something “alive” both in her/his attitude toward history, as well as social and cultural difference. The management of tourist places is obviously highly influenced by such contradictions since the never-tamed tension that derives from it is the real fuel of the tourist market. It is this tension that allows the sale of comfort and safety, exploration and excitement in the same “package”; that allows some “rough” travel guides to introduce millions of readers to the very same “off the beaten track” itineraries; that allows the alternative traveler to believe in the possibility of meeting and knowing the “locals,” to believe in an unspoiled “out there” to be found, to believe that there is a way to escape the ordered landscapes of the tourist traps.

What we’re suggesting is that travel-tourism derives its power by providing a stage upon which to act out the binaries by which we make sense of and order the world. Yet by definition the provisioning of such a stage must acknowledge the “constructedness” of such binaries. This is why travel-tourism makes such binaries vulnerable even while propping them up. That travel-tourism must occur in places is why this is so. For while places are objectified as destinations and scenes by travelers and commodified as tourist attractions, they remain at the same time inherently deconstructive of these processes. To return to the idea of “performative reflexivity” in tourism, we can perhaps characterize such reflexivity as not one that cognitively puts everything in order but rather does precisely the opposite. By producing the “special effect of order,” what is actually enacted is a process of *social ordering* (see Hetherington 1997), where the subjects involved are not properly “put in place,” as many postcolonial critics have argued, but rather are endlessly “replaced” through a subtle strategy of ordering.

The placed quality of travel and tourism—a quality that we are suggesting as a space of disrupted categories and universalisms rendered arbitrary and absurd—induces an embodied reflexivity that defies our more standard notions of cognitive reflection. It is closer to what Lash (1999)—referring to the “self-reflexive conscience” of modernity—has termed “aesthetic reflexivity.” But we prefer the term *paradox* to describe it, because it resists epistemological closure. And it is for this reason that Crang (this volume) calls for a “thinking through the ontology of tourist places rather than the epistemology of their representations.” This recasts the problem as an epistemological

paradox, rather than a problem of not knowing the “truth” about a place. “In other words,” Crang (this volume) continues, “we shall see the paradox of experiencing a place is that it depends on other absent places.”

In the Venice narratives, Claudio’s performance of “Italianness” marks the habitual way that travel induces us to perform the subject-object binary, as well as revealing the arbitrariness of such constructions when subjected to the reflection that travel (in places) *also* inspires. That Claudio resorts to performing Italianness perhaps indicates how such performances are the only option when we are confronted with the task of packaging a place for an outsider’s consumption. Performance, then, is a way of putting order in an otherwise disordered and unruly world. The narratives from Venice reveal a deeper desire to put order to the world, by both visitor and local alike, as a way out of our epistemological paradox.

Travel, we suggest, emerges from an impulse to order the world; it can be conceived as a kind of escape from the disorder that confronts us in place. To take to the road, to disavow, if only temporarily, one’s home place for the open space of mobility, is to pay homage to our need for order. And the space of movement, of travel, seems to offer a refuge of sorts. The apparently empty space of travel offers “a special form of comfort, a reassuring presence” (Casey 1997, 338). Travel seems to bring us closer to the abstract qualities of space as opposed to the lived messiness of place, to the universal categories that space allows for.

Thus, through travel we set the world right. We find the real lives, peoples, and places that we’ve expected to be there, and reify those abstract representations of the world we’ve expected to find.

All of this is, perhaps, counterintuitive. Doesn’t it seem more the case that we travel to introduce a bit of disorder to our regulated and routinized daily lives? Doesn’t travel refresh and revive us because our narrow views of the world become disrupted as we expand our horizons? Such views, we feel, constitute more an *ideology of travel* than actual traveling practice. As many observers have noted, tourism is a highly regulated and routinized activity that seeks to transform places into standardized and interchangeable attractions (Urry 1995; Hughes 1998, 20–21). Indeed, tourism has been referred to as “a vast system of social control” (Dann 2003, 468). Yet it also seems to succeed to the extent that consumers feel that they are *not* being controlled and that places are *not* turned into commodities. Travel must therefore maintain an ideal of freedom (and its many variants of risk, danger, transgression, disorder, adventure, exploration, discovery) while provisioning the consumer with the necessary amenities to make him or her comfortable. This becomes quite disturbingly evident in the practices and the fetishism of “war tourism” as shown by Adams in this volume. In that case, the tourists’ feeling of being

in touch with the real “event,” of being able to confirm and go beyond the mediated experience of death and destruction is accompanied by the implicit need to be able to come back home safely and to relocate/re-signify that experience in their own sociocultural context. It becomes just another way of negotiating (the traveler) identity and subjectivity through the experience of the paradox of/in place. Thus, it seems unavoidable to regard tourism, as Edensor (this volume) does, as an inherently ambivalent activity, reflecting both a desire to escape and an enjoyment of the pleasures of conformity.

This ambivalence begins to acknowledge that travel is on the one hand very much about ordering the world and making sense of it in epistemological terms, while on the other hand a rather unsuccessful project in these terms. If travel were to occur in some sort of vacuum of space, never touching down, we might actually be able to speak of the universal abstractions to which the escape from place aspires. But instead travel never really escapes places. Despite our desire for order, and despite relying on an industry that seeks to provide for this desire, travel nevertheless results in a paradoxical experience of *ordered disorder*.

The more we seek to order the world through which we travel, the more it confronts us with disorder. The result is an endless process of *ordering*; a process that is the product of this very tension—and of the real, ontological impossibility of ever reaching the desired order (Hetherington 1997). Subject formation, in the tourist experience, is based on a set of spatial special effects that impose their paradoxes *in place* by eternally *deferring the order* toward which the subject is drawn to find her/his place in the world. The modern transcendent knowing subject, by displaying categories of order, actually performs ordering strategies: not freezing each subject in its proper place, but endlessly producing the conditions for that subject’s emplacement in the world. The modern tourist thus constantly re-writes the world, while, paradoxically, trying to freeze it within a static image able to reflect his/her own Self.

## TRAVELING PLACES

“Travel” has held a prominent place in cultural studies scholarship for some time now, and this has in some ways come at the expense of a better understanding of place. But this is not necessarily always the case, nor do we seek to construct a dichotomy between traveling theory and place theory. Instead, we hope to bring these bodies of work together in fruitful ways. If the study of tourism is to contribute to traveling theory’s ongoing “revitalization” of the concept of culture, as called for by Sørensen (2003, 864, cited in Crang this volume), we believe that place must be a fundamental part of

such a contribution. Early work on traveling theory and traveling cultures sought to correct what was regarded as a privileging of dwelling over mobility in the human sciences (Clifford 1992; Pratt 1992; Wolff 1993; Robertson et al. 1994; Kaplan 1996). This diverse body of work has emphasized the erosion of boundaries as stabilized territories are replaced with hybrid and fluid borderlands where identities are forged through diaspora and mobility across space, rather than within a bounded place. While this work has directed our attention to the importance of mobility and porousness in conceiving the conditions of subject and identity formation, there is the danger of constructing a “straw-man” of place as a foil to make this point. Traveling theory rests upon an assumption of place as bounded and closed. Put in these terms, the spaces of travel take on a liberating quality—precisely the same quality, in fact, that attracts tourists to temporarily leave home and head down the road and jet through the skies.

But a large body of work on place has long dispelled the notion of place as necessarily bounded and enclosed (Pred 1986; Agnew and Duncan 1989; Entrikin 1991; Massey 1993; Casey 1993; Oakes 1997; Dirlik 1999; Gieryn 2000; Escobar 2001). All of this work tends to argue that place is a fundamental quality of human spatial experience and that, as such, it derives as much from conditions of mobility and linkage across space as it does from any *absence* of these things. This is why Crang (this volume) argues that any critique of tourism must take into account the open and unstable quality of places since “virtually every culture is constructed as much, if not more, by links and attachments with people in other places as it is by internal homogeneity.” Only when we fail to see place as a basic part of our *experience* of the world, and instead regard it as simply a sectioned and closed-off portion of space (that is, simply a smaller or derivative version of space), do we make the mistake of viewing it as parochial, isolated, or otherwise antithetical to globalization and all the mobility with which much of the world lives today (see Herzfeld 1991; Agnew 1993; Massey and Jess 1995; Feld and Basso 1996; Gupta and Ferguson 1997).

Again, rather than set up a confrontational dichotomy here between theories of travel and theories of place, we instead seek to reconfigure traveling theory to consider how we are always traveling in place. Rather than ask what travel tells us about post/modern identity and subjectivity, we ask what the experience of travel teaches us about place. This can be put in yet another way: what does placed experience teach us about travel? Place is a fundamental concept to start with because we hold that place is something in which the abstract dualisms and categorizations of modernity are rendered arbitrary and absurd in the face of complex local knowledge, bodily experience, and the disordered order of everyday life. This quality of place is noted both by



phenomenologists like Casey (1997) and materialists like Massey (1992), who has argued that “home places” are not the ordered secure worlds many (men) take them to be but are rather fraught with the ambiguities, tensions, and contradictions of modernity. In place, we are both subject and object. It is the seductive escape from place promised by travel that leads us to perform, to repeatedly reenact, a (subject-object, mind-body) binary that helps us make sense of the world in more generalized and abstract terms.

Travel is thought to be placeless, and as such has long been seen as evoking a distinctly modern subjectivity of freedom coupled with detachment and alienation. For Bauman (1991), the modern subject was an ambivalent stranger, an exile, pilgrim, someone out of place yet longing for a place, obsessed with anguish and fear yet seeking a sense of control and a unifying gaze upon the world. Simmel’s (1971, 145) mobile stranger, for example, was an exiled foreigner who was free from the obligations and repetitions of everyday (placed) life. Such freedom from routine and obligation was refreshing to the senses and mirrored the bracing freedom of modernity itself (see also Touraine 1995, 202). The stranger was thus an *objective* person, ideally positioned in a space “out there,” capable of abstract clarity where “placed” people were not. The stranger “examines conditions with less prejudice; he [sic] assesses them against standards that are more general and more objective” (Simmel 1971, 146). But the stranger also embodied a paradoxical synthesis “composed of remoteness and nearness, indifference and involvement” (Simmel 1971, 145). Travel allowed for an outside position that was the source of some comfort and control even while it conjured its own kind of existential anguish. The displacement of travel, exile, and exploration engendered a paradoxical and schizophrenic *experience of detachment* that was at once liberating, terrifying, and commanding of power (see also Pratt 1992).

This schizophrenic quality emerges from the process of subject formation whereby subjectivity is conceived as an articulation of self to others (Foucault 1978/1990; Butler 1997). This articulation marks the schizophrenic practice by which the subject always “objectivates” itself. Berger and Pullberg (1965, 199–200) thus argued that it is a necessary human condition to know the self by establishing a subject-object binary. We all “objectivate” our world, they claim. Objectivation is a process “whereby human subjectivity embodies itself in products that are available to oneself and one’s fellow men [sic] as elements of a common world.” Objectification is, therefore, “the moment in the process of objectivation in which man [sic] established distance from his producing and its product, such that he can take cognizance of it and make it an object of his consciousness.” Humans are thus continuously “making their world” as they act to modify the given, structuring it into a meaningful totality (a process

that is never complete). The object-world, in other words, must be made and remade over and over again. “The world remains real, in the sense of subjective plausibility and consistency, only as it is confirmed and re-confirmed” (Berger and Pullberg 1965, 201). As with the performativity of tourism discussed above, this continual reenactment of the world both makes it “real” and creates opportunities for our taken-for-granted views of ourselves and our world to be disrupted.

Such disruption might occur, for instance, when the distance of objectification is closed by an “other” asserting its presence in unexpected or even unwelcome ways. It is in these contexts that *representations* of the world achieve their power, for they promise a reenactment of the world without the threatening possibility of that reenactment being disrupted by the “other” world itself. This is why, as Timothy Mitchell (1988) has observed, Europeans of the nineteenth century were inclined to see their world of empire as an “exhibit” of something, rather than as the thing itself. This was, for example, illustrated in the “great exhibitions” of this period, which offered elaborate displays that sought to replicate as faithfully as possible the far-flung places of empire. According to Mitchell (1988, 12), the *world itself* was for nineteenth-century European metropolitans a kind of exhibition, objectified and displayed before them to gaze upon:

Outside the world exhibition . . . one encountered not the real world but only further models and representations of the real. Beyond the exhibition and the department store . . . the theatre and the zoo, the countryside encountered typically in the form of a model farm exhibiting new machinery and cultivation methods, the very streets of the modern city with their deliberate facades, even the Alps once the funicular was built . . . [e]verything seemed to be set up before one as if it were a model or the picture of something.

This speaks to the possibility that the great exhibitions drew upon a deeper need for a particular kind of *representation* which faithfully met certain expectations that were necessary to European subject-formation (as pointed out by Minca in this volume).

What this leads to, then, is the idea that while we may travel in order to transgress, if only for a day, the boundaries and routines that order our lives, we find that travel becomes more of a routinized homage to shoring up those boundaries; it merely reifies boundaries by reinforcing a subject-object binary. Indeed, such a reinforcing is extremely empowering in many ways. The search for order—for example, through the framing of a perfect tourist landscape or place—does not accomplish what it is there to do but, rather, produces a process of social ordering, changing the spatial rules of the place and its very geographies.

We perform this binary repeatedly through the practice of travel, and thus make it real. MacCannell (1976, 13) saw this when he argued that “sightseeing is a kind of collective striving for a transcendence of the modern totality, a way of attempting to overcome the discontinuity of modernity, of incorporating its fragments into unified experience.” That this sense of power comes more from visual aspects of travel than other senses is captured by Urry when he states that “focusing on the gaze brings out how within tourism the organizing sense within the typical tourist experience is visual. And this mirrors the general privileging of the eye within the long history of Western societies. Sight is viewed as the noblest sense, the most discriminating and reliable of the sensuous mediators between humans and their physical environment” (2002b, 146). Similarly, Tuan (1974) points out that the world perceived visually is more abstract and thus more amenable to order, objectification, and control (see also Berger 1972; Jay 1992). This issue is picked up by Edensor (this volume) who argues that,

visual techniques are widespread within both tourist production (in brochures, holiday program, guided tours, and guidebooks) and in tourist practice (through photography, video recording, and journal keeping). Such techniques tend to banish the ambiguity of the world, bringing “otherness” into representation in contradistinction to the unpredictable, indescribable effects of the sonic, the tactile, and the aromatic, which are far more difficult to visualize and textualize.

What is crucial to understand, then, is that such power and order are not so much illusory as incomplete and always vulnerable to disruption by other senses that are inherent in placed experience. This is because, despite the assumption or even hope that we might escape place to become “strangers” and thus achieve an ordered and empowered sense of the world, *place travels along with us*—it is never left behind. While we are trying to build our cognitive mapping of modernity and to achieve some sort of order within which we can place ourselves as relatively stable, immanent, subjects in place, we actually travel; and places and their representations travel as well, accompanied by the theories that attempt to make sense of them. By traveling, we challenge that same order, for the purpose of our travels is both the definition *and* the transgression of that mapping, of its reassuring stability and the fascination with what is not only behind, but also beyond the map.

What is important about place is the idea that it cannot be subsumed by the universal categories conjured to explain away chaos and paradox. We pick up and travel—we forsake place—in order to order disorder. But at every step of the way, because we always travel through places to other places, we re-encounter disorder.

Place is deconstructive of the binaries through which we seek to order the world because it is simultaneously subjective and objective. According to Casey (1996, 36), these binaries include:

pairs of terms that have enjoyed hegemonic power in Western epistemology and metaphysics. I am thinking of such dichotomies as subject and object, self and other, formal and substantive, mind and body, inner and outer, perception and imagination (or memory), and nature and culture themselves. It is always from a particular place that a person, considered as a knowing “subject,” seizes upon a world of things presumed to be “objects.” The reduction of persons to subjects—and, still more extremely, to minds—and of things to objects could not occur anywhere other than place. Yet to be fully in a place is to know—to *know* by direct acquaintance as well as by cultural habitus—that such a double reduction delivers only the shadowy simulacrum of the experiences we have in that place.

Place, in this sense, is the holder of paradox, the unifier of things held separate by abstract modern epistemology. But it takes movement, indeed travel, for us to really experience them as such. Movement of the body, for Merleau-Ponty (1962), is what constitutes place itself, and movement brings with it encounter with “the realist ontology of the larger place-world” of others. Places are at once the sedimented layers of historical experience, cultural habit, and personal and collective memory *and* continually remade by “lived bodily movement.” For Casey it is precisely this combination of the objective realism of history and habit, and one’s embodied subjectivity, that allows place to contain and hold paradox, rather than explain it away.

The world of places is densely sedimented in its familiarity and historicity and its very materiality while, at the same time, it is animated and reanimated by the presence of the lived body in its midst. In the end, *both* factors—one realist in significance, the other idealist or transcendental—are required for a full determination of what it means to be bodily in a place. If the body/place nexus allows us to conjoin realism with transcendentalism—itsself a deeply paradoxical combination—it also permits us to see that the bond between body and place is further paradoxical in being at once subjective and objective and, more especially, private and public. (Casey 1997, 241)

To the extent that these paradoxical aspects of place are the product of a combination of movement through space and experience through time, the condition of travel only heightens, and indeed makes more accessible, these paradoxes. Travel intensifies those moments in which we are at once shoring up the binaries of subjectivity and epistemology, making the world abstract and knowable, and creating opportunities for the disruption of these binaries and abstractions. Traveling in places, we seek out an object of difference to

reconfirm our sense of order, while at the same time opening ourselves to the possibility that others will not always re-enact their expected roles, and that our order will be transgressed and deferred.

### CODA

In Venice, we experienced *in place* the resilience of modern epistemologies that force us to travel, seeking an order that will never be. Traveling is not a choice, then, but a way of coping with the anxieties of the modern condition. By traveling to Venice and *in* Venice we did not escape; rather, we embodied the paradox, we found ourselves translated into mobile subjects faced with endless paradoxes every time we “touched down”; every time, by being in place, we were bound by its tentacles.

At the same time, the metaphysics of representation in which we were ensnared relied on the putative existence of some order in Venice, somewhere “out there,” waiting to be discovered and reached. For this reason our traveling had to go on, with its endless enactment of performances and the related production of paradoxes.

There is no such place as a “tourist Venice,” just as there is little sense in addressing the possibility of reaching a “non-tourist” Venice. Venice, after all, is nothing but a place where all the anxieties and difficulties of “living *with* and *within* the paradox” come to shore quite blatantly; it is just another modern place, where the recurrent regularity of tourist performances makes “things tourist” real (and often unpleasant); where we cannot help but fight the traps and cages of binary thinking. Venice is where we realized that while we were searching for a sophisticated and alternative order, that order could never be, but was always in the making.

Following our troubling experience of Venice, this book is just another modern journey—books, indeed, travel—a journey through the paradoxes of traveling, an exploration of how such paradoxes are enacted by tourists’ performances in place and how they travel and are reproduced within a specific set of epistemological fields, mobilizing the hearts and minds (and bodies) of hundreds of millions every year in the search for a liberating order, an order that is promised but, always, endlessly deferred.

