Pusztai Bertalan

Between National and Touristic Landscapes

The meaning construction of attractions and landscapes in the context of the semiotics of tourism

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1.

In the summer of 1998, I was visited by some acquaintances of mine from abroad. The context for the visit and our lengthy conversations was a trip to Szeged and its environs. One of our excursions took us to Ópusztaszer, where we called in to the heritage park to see the panoramic painting of the Hungarian conquest by Árpád Feszty. As we waited to go inside, my friends read through the English-language guide to the painting.

2.

We joined another group of Hungarian tourists and set off in the mystical half-light to see the painting. Observing the obliquely lit statue of Feszty out of the corner of our eyes, and stumbling along the spiral walkway in the semi-darkness, we approached with anticipation the domed room in which the panoramic painting is displayed. Having walked through the heritage park in the blistering heat, past the distillation of Hungarian national traditions, and having paid our respects to the accumulated strata of remembrance, the culmination of the visit in this ritualised encounter with the park's principal attraction, staged as it was in a dedicated space amid powerful light and sound effects, generated something akin to a state of rapture. Following this veritable spiritual experience, the tourists departed, some of them with tears in their eyes. Although this was not the first time I had seen the painting, even I was caught up in the group experience. Afterwards, as we stood outside the building that houses the panoramic painting, my bewildered foreign friends made the following comment, suggesting a certain amount of incomprehension and "insensitivity": "I don't understand: Why does the guidebook call it a place of pilgrimage?" [1]

3.

In what follows, I examine the relationship between national landscape and tourism. My aim is to demonstrate that the relationship between the two is instructive not only because of its historical interdependence. Although the two processes typically take place within the same space, they are still extremely divergent in terms of their integrating effect and cultural references, while their mechanisms of action show distinct similarities. The national and touristic exploitation of the same spaces provides a good illustration of how individuals are guided not by the objective reality of the spaces in which they move, but by internalised versions of the group-level conceptions of those spaces. It follows that the individual conception of space, referring as it does to the group-level conception, is able to generate divergent readings among individuals who move in the same spaces.

What is a tourist attraction, and what gives it its meaning?

4.

In one of my earlier papers, in which I approached the question primarily from the cultural theoretical foundations of constructivist anthropology, I demonstrated that tourist attractions are always cultural constructs. In the absence of meaning that is recognised at the collective level, no geographical feature, historical monument or cultural phenomenon can become a tourist attraction. Tourist attractions are not in themselves the reason for their transformation into attractions. They become attractions as the outcome of a creative process in which they are charged with meaning and significance. As such, their transformation into attractions necessarily draws on the culture that engenders this meaning. It is for precisely this reason that the process is extremely group dependent and relative, despite the globalisation of the tourist canon (Pusztai 2009). In the present paper, I chiefly examine how this meaning is bestowed — that is, the origins of the meaning of the attraction and how it is engendered in the tourist industry. To answer these questions, I review some of the fundamental questions related to the interpretation of the semiotics of tourism and introduce the theory of site sacralisation in the context of the transformation of sights into tourist attractions. In the second half of the paper, I direct the reader's attention towards the processes that play a role in the creation of the national space. In conclusion, I point out the potential consequences when the two divergent interpretative processes are applied to the same space.

5.

One of the most important drivers of tourism is the promise of attractions and experiences. Travellers are motivated to leave the comfort of their homes by the idea of as yet unfamiliar but essentially interesting, pleasant, and new encounters. The range of available attractions is not permanent: it is clear that tourism, even during its brief history, is a permanently expanding field, as new locations, objects, and events are transformed into tourist attractions (Singh 2004). It is for this very reason that the creation of attractions has become one of the most important tourism-related research areas in the context of cultural studies, raising questions, for example, about the way in which attractions are created; who plays a role in the creation of a particular attraction; what gives the attraction its meaning; and what affects this meaning.

6.

One programmatic publication related to the investigation of the processes via which tourism is charged with meaning and significance is *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* by Dean MacCannell (MacCannell 1976). Understood in the wider sense, MacCannell's work can be seen as a critical examination of the late modern age and remains relevant today. Although in many places it challenges Daniel Boorstin's early and ambitious criticism of the post-modern period, his publication *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-events in America*, which was first published in 1961, it is in fact in many respects a direct continuation of Boorstin's work (Boorstin 1987). [2] MacCannell examines several theories that are still hugely influential today in terms of an understanding of the relationships among tourist attractions, tourists, and authenticity. He is in fact motivated in his efforts by a decidedly late modernist attitude. Although the publication deals definitively with tourism, it nevertheless ultimately laments the loss of authenticity, or, more precisely, the loss of immediate access to the authentic (Shepherd 2002:188). Seen from this angle, tourism is both the reason for this change and at the same time, through its investigation, a suitable object for generating an understanding

of the change. The quest for authenticity that is manifested in tourism is, according to MacCannell, the quest for a forfeited perfection and for the ultimate meaning of life, which endeavours to counterbalance the diverse existential instability of late modernity (MacCannell 1976:2–3).

7.

For MacCannell, the tourist attraction that represents the essence of tourism is a cultural experience. In his book, he first examines the role of the cultural experience in modern society, before elucidating its construction. According to him, a cultural experience is made up of two essential parts. On the one hand, there is the *model*, the representation of a particular manifestation of reality, for example on the stage or on film. This is not an accurate reproduction or copy of something that exists, but rather the visualised model of an idealised, imagined phenomenon. The other part of the experience is its *influence*, which is the belief or feeling engendered by the model. According to MacCannell's examples, the spectacle of a car race is the model, while the thrills generated among the spectators are its influence; the fashion model advertising a swimsuit is the model, while the desire for a girlfriend that looks just like her is its influence. According to MacCannell, these two essential parts are connected by the medium. To clarify what he means by the medium in this wider sense, he calls attention to the fact that, although they are the most important, the media are not the only medium. The media, as medium, strive to connect model and influence in a neutral way. As soon as we have second thoughts about the medium, for example about the media, as an impartial agent, we start to be suspicious. According to MacCannell, our mistrust is a sign of our adulthood. He considers a proper appreciation of the role of the media as medium, or a kind of critical reflection on this role, to be necessary for an understanding of advertisements and for their appropriate interpretation (MacCannell 1976:23–24).

8.

Among the hugely influential theories proposed in *The Tourist*, it is the semiotically based concept of the creation of tourist attractions that is the most important for our purposes. As we have seen above, MacCannell identifies the tourist attraction as a cultural experience. For him, the tourist attraction is based on the empirical relationship between *tourist*, *sight*, and *marker*. In this approach, the sight is the essence of the tourist attraction devoid of meaning. To better illustrate this essence, Leiper later referred to it as the *nucleus* (Hem, Iversen and Grønhaug 2003:50). Since the sight is of no interest in itself, and is typically ordinary and run-of-the-mill, in this model, which is based on the concept of the symbol as employed in classical semiotics, the marker is of paramount importance. MacCannell insists that the sight must always have a marker: no sight has meaning in itself. The tourist attraction is ultimately a marked sight that is observed by the tourist (MacCannell 1976:41).

9.

In MacCannell's model, the sight is an object, place, or phenomenon that has no meaning in itself for the tourist. The marker is ultimately a piece of information that tells the tourist why they should be looking at the sight. MacCannell uses the example of a moon rock, which, in the absence of a marker, would be indistinguishable to the layperson from any other similar-looking stone from Earth. In this conception, the marker might easily be confused with the informational texts or panels placed alongside tourist sights, which explain what the visitor is seeing. MacCannell makes it clear that he is not thinking of these, and that he understands the marker not as a label but as something that bestows meaning: markers

are to be understood not in their existence as objects, but in terms of their function. The essence of the marker, in his interpretation, is therefore precisely not the object that carries the information but the information itself. Markers are far from being exclusively informative plaques on monuments. The scope of these phenomena is extremely wide, and besides informational plaques they include guidebooks, advertisements, the texts of guided tours, the stories told by tourists on their return home, lectures, and even books on art history (MacCannell 1976:110–111). From this mass of identical sights, the marker highlights the one that will be an attraction, and it is these markers that give the sight its authenticity and uniqueness.

10.

In light of the above, it is clear that by far the most important component in the tourist–sight–marker triad is the marker. Several research approaches have attempted to systematise the extraordinarily large mass of markers. In Leiper's triadic division, the *generating marker* is the information that we obtain before departure and that motivates us to travel. The *transit marker* is the knowledge acquired during the journey. Lastly, the *contiguous marker* is the meaning directly attached to the sight (Hem, Iversen and Grønhaug 2003:50). It is clear from this model that the generating marker that provides the direct motivation for travel is extremely important in tourism. Furthermore, from the perspective of communication, generating markers differ radically from the contiguous markers that are attached directly to the sight, and they must function according to an entirely different logic and attention-grabbing tactics in order to generate interest in a sight that cannot yet be experienced at first hand. The relationship between representation and empirical experience is fundamentally different in the case of the generating marker and the contiguous marker. Furthermore, tourism-related anthropological research highlights the essential differences in perception that characterise tourists when at home, while travelling, and once they have reached their destination. This obviously has an impact on how markers are perceived. MacCannell and Culler divide markers into *on-site* markers (e.g., commemorative plaque), *mobile* markers (e.g., tourist brochures), and *off-site* markers (e.g. souvenirs) (MacCannell 1976:1 10; Culler 1990:159). Internet content related to travel has yet to be examined from this perspective. Thus, without investigating the question of whether Internet content that is relevant for our purposes comprises new manifestations of reality or is merely representative of reality, if we interpret that content as representation then in this model it can be considered as a generating marker and as an off-site marker. Since Internet content nowadays has an incalculable role in the creation of travel motivation, the origin of that content, and thus its communication strategies, are extraordinarily diverse and their research would be hugely edifying.

11.

Culler called attention to the role of the off-site marker when visiting a sight. According to him, the off-site marker loses nothing of its importance in this context, since it is on the basis of the off-site marker that we observe the features of the sight. The marker — the aesthetic quality of which is entirely immaterial in this model — influences our experience of travel to such an extent that in an immediate comparison of sight and marker we peruse the sight for the traits that we have read about in the marker (e.g., ”It's not as big as it looked on the picture”; “It's even more fascinating than I imagined”). In addition, tourists take pictures or write accounts of the sight, thus the tourist experience is turned into active

participation in the relationship between the marker and the sight, sometimes even immediately creating, or producing, the tourist attraction (Culler 1990:160).

12.

Markers are endowed with content in the interpretative processes engendered by the locations. The brief history of tourism shows there has been a rapid change in markers, whereas in their physical reality, the sights themselves are not greatly liable to change: mountains, statues and buildings exist as ordinary things that do not stand out from their environments until markers are attached to them. As Wang accurately points out, changes in fashion and taste can devalue classic destinations, such as the English coast, while elevating and transforming industrial cities such as Bradford into attractions, even though the locations do not change significantly in terms of their physical reality (Wang 2000:174).

13.

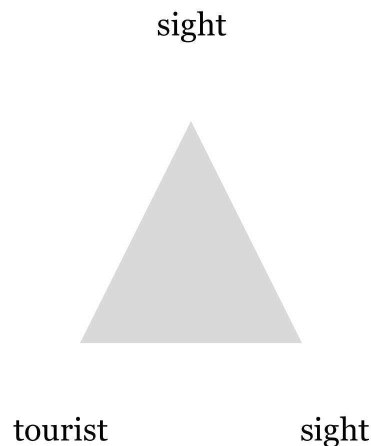
Importantly, the above, somewhat formalised model of how attractions are created can readily be combined with contemporary interpretative approaches, thus maintaining the relevance of this semiotic model. In order to understand the content of the marker, we must subject it to a detailed examination. It should be emphasised that the content of the marker is far from permanent and certainly not uniform. The content of the marker varies not only in time but may also be extremely divergent in social terms, in the case of a given, concrete sight at a concrete point in time, since tourists form an extraordinarily heterogeneous group.

14.

To understand this, we must recognise and acknowledge the heterogeneity of tourists, which is something on which many contemporary concrete interpretations (e.g., Hannerz 2004:182) and symbolic interpretations (e.g., Bauman 2004:192–206) do not dwell. Among others, Eric Cohen (e.g., Cohen 2004), Stanley Plog (e.g., Plog 2001), Eugenia Wickens (2002) and Pasi Hannonen (2003) have attempted to systematise the heterogeneity of the hundreds of millions of tourists according to a tourist typology. Following fieldwork carried out at the Acropolis, Tom Selänniemi draws on lessons learned from anthropological cultural theory to call attention to the divergent inter-subjective realities concealed in the background of this heterogeneity. However, this inter-subjective reality can be apprehended precisely via the content of the marker, in the background of which lies the issue of social and cultural fragmentation raised by cultural studies.

15.

Selänniemi presents MacCannell's model of the tourist attraction in the form of a triangle. Acknowledgement of the marker's existence exclusively as an agent of meaning, and the combination of contemporary cultural theories make it clear how different tourists connect different markers to the same objects — in other words, while they are looking at the same thing, tourists essentially see different things in the given location as a function of their own culture (Selänniemi 1999:346–347).



16.

In this understanding, based on MacCannell, tourists are genuine semioticians, albeit unwittingly so: they visit sights hungry for signs and eager for interpretation, seeking out, for example, evidence of Frenchness, characteristic Italian behaviour, typical English pubs, etc. Tourists read cities, landscapes and cultures as systems of symbols, from their own cultural background (Culler 1990:155). In Selänniemi's example, it might thus be the case that among the tourists visiting the Acropolis are quasi-pilgrims keen for a more profound knowledge of a location that symbolises the beginnings of European civilisation; tourists with extensive cultural knowledge; as well as holidaymakers who are simply putting a tick against one item on their list of must-sees. In the case of these tourists, the marker has an extraordinarily diverse content. For the holidaymaker, the only marker will be the tourist advertisement or guided tour, in contrast to the many other relevant markers in the case of the other two groups, such as guidebooks or works of literature associated with the world of the Ancient Greeks.

17.

The same physical location (or object), the Acropolis (or any other sight), might thus be a boring ruin or a meaningless object for some tourists, and an international place of pilgrimage for others (Selänniemi 1999:346–348).

18.

The study of tourism brings to light the nature of the articulated system that can be used to classify tourist attractions. MacCannell uses the example of Americans who travel to Europe from the United States: If one goes to Europe, one must see Paris; if one goes to Paris, besides Notre Dame and the Eiffel Tower one must see the Louvre; if one goes to the Louvre, one must see the Mona Lisa. According to MacCannell, within this articulated system is a twofold process that results in the creation of an attraction: *sight sacralisation* and a *ritual attitude*. [3] Ritual attitude can best be understood in the context of city sightseeing. Sightseeing has its own moral structure: a collective sense that certain sights must be seen. The guided tour undertaken by sightseers, or in the wider sense tourists, is essentially an item on the travellers' ceremonial agenda. A fundamental element in these ceremonial experiences comprises the string of obligatory rites associated with the viewing of the sight. This itself is the medium in the cultural experience: it transmits some aspect of reality to the participants. Unsurprisingly, because of its ritual nature, this approach to the tourist experience generates an association between tourism and pilgrimage. MacCannell argues that anyone who has ever travelled will inevitably have felt the pressure of the "must see" (MacCannell 1976:42–43).

19.

Attractions that are interpreted by means of markers do not exist without an institutional background that expresses and cements their associative significance. Institutional facilitation is also a requirement in sight sacralisation. The first stage in this process is the selection of the sight from among other, similar phenomena and its declaration as worthy of preservation. MacCannell refers to this as the *naming* phase. It is sometimes preceded by a great deal of work to authenticate the sight. This may often even involve official procedures: proofs may be issued confirming the sight's aesthetic, historical, recreational or social significance. The second phase in sacralisation is *framing and elevation*. Elevation refers to the displaying of the object, while the two important components of framing are *protecting* and *enhancing*. Protection refers to the physical safeguarding of the object, while a perfect example of enhancement is lighting. It can sometimes be hard to distinguish between the two components, of course: the security guards on duty around a highly valuable work of art, for example, are both protecting the object and calling attention to it. When the landscape around an object or building is transformed in the interests of creating the attraction, it is referred to as *advanced framing*. This is a typical procedure in relation to the surroundings of highly important monuments or buildings of international significance (MacCannell 1976:44).

20.

The third phase in the process is *enshrinement*, when the material surrounding and delineating the sight itself becomes an attraction. By way of example, MacCannell mentions the Gutenberg Museum, where the sight is the Gutenberg Bible, although the museum now preserves other valuable items, too, which complement this most important sight while being attractions in themselves. Seaton mentions the example of the transformation of the church in Waterloo after 1815 (Seaton 2004:235), while a Hungarian example might be the Rotunda in the Ópusztaszer National Heritage Park. The fourth phase in sight sacralisation is *mechanical reproduction*. According to MacCannell, the beginning of this phase is indicated not primarily by the dissemination of souvenirs but by the spread of copies that are valuable in their own right. In relation to this, Seaton calls attention to the fact that, in contrast to Walter Benjamin's view (Benjamin 2003), according to which mechanical reproduction destroys the unique authenticity of an original work, for MacCannell these copies merely enhance the value of the *real* sight in its original setting. By expanding the original concept, researchers who make use of the sight sacralisation model tend also to include here mass-produced copies that are not valued in themselves, or that appear in the media (Seaton 2004:239). The final phase in sight sacralisation is *social reproduction*, when groups, locations and regions begin to name themselves after a famous attraction (MacCannell 1976:45). The slogan "Baja: The fish soup capital" is a good example of social reproduction.

21.

By connecting the power of markers and sight sacralisation, Culler demonstrates how an unmarked place can be transformed into a tourist attraction by being given a marker. In his example, the introduction of a plaque reading "Site of the Bonnie and Clyde shootout" next to an ordinary, unmarked piece of ground defines an otherwise unremarkable sight, which is later incorporated into a museum and subsequently into an amusement park with shooting galleries. After a time, the markers themselves become the attraction (Culler 1990:165–166).

22.

Markers thus point to the tourist attraction. Markers might arise from anywhere, and by making a case for the uniqueness and originality of the sight, they are part of the system by which meaning is bestowed in tourism. It is for this very reason that their argumentation follows the general, one might say global, logic of tourism and symbolises the attitude to, and use of, space generally observed in tourism (Szíjártó 2008:195–219). A place may be extraordinarily important to a particular small community, but what is interesting from the perspective of tourism is generated by the content of the marker, or, in other words, the unique features with which a tourist, coming from anywhere in the world and acquainted with a worldwide logic, is able to identify, and by which they are able to recognise and accept the importance of the sight. Any sight that falls outside this logic inevitably remains a group-level phenomenon and does not become a tourist attraction, or does so only to a marginal extent.

The nation's sacred sites: Canon, myth making and education

23.

Phenomena that are regarded as tourist sights and that are transformed into attractions in the manner outlined above, serve as important raw material not only for tourism. Several other systems for the creation of social meaning also endeavour to interpret these same locations. Religion and national culture often make pronouncements about the same events or spaces. In the case of these systems, the semiotic model outlined above is also of use in interpreting the mechanisms by which meaning is bestowed, although, compared to tourism, we have a significantly more extensive knowledge regarding the concrete functioning and content of the systems that give national culture its meaning and significance.

24.

In an earlier paper, I demonstrated how landscape became the object of an emotionally based interpretation in the Romantic era. The coupling of the Romantic way of looking at landscape with the emergence of modern national culture gave rise to the development of a kind of group-level interpretation of landscape and landscape and space awareness (Pusztai 2009). Before providing a brief overview of research in relation to manifestations of the construction of national culture, I will here discuss the concept of landscape awareness, also referring to the principal trends and standard works in the associated investigations.

25.

Systematic research into representations of the landscape and landscape-related concepts was first proposed by Stephen Daniels and Dennis Cosgrove (Cosgrove and Daniels, eds. 1988; Cosgrove 2008). Their examination of representations of the landscape from a point of view other than that of art history was directed chiefly to the investigation of what it is in the landscape that legitimises a given nation. Cosgrove and Daniels refer to this interpretative approach as *iconography*. Besides the content of the representations, they examined specific details, such as the choice of colour, texture, technique and perspective. Their aim was to reveal what the artists intended by painting their pictures. Iconography, true to the interpretative methodologies of natural history, does not aim to uncover only one kind of great truth. Instead, its goal is to reveal strata of meaning that are not self-evident. In a similar way to the iconographic approach, Malcolm Andrews examined how nineteenth-century landscape painting gave rise to the social reproduction of the landscape. According to his approach, it is not the visualisation of

the landscape that is of interest so much as the meanings that the representation of the landscape generates concerning the landscape — that is, via their examination, these representations interpret the landscape for us rather than familiarise us with it (Andrews 1989). [4] The representations are ultimately communications of collective meanings and thus manifestations of a unique form of social communication.

26.

Maunu Häyrynen's research into representations of the landscape led him to the conclusion that the concept of landscape shaped by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century representations is part of a more extensive system of meaning creation, the goal of which is the establishment and popularisation of the concept of the nation. According to Häyrynen, it is important to examine the entire "landscape" discourse in its widest possible context (e.g., regional divisions, travelogues, guidebooks), and, via these, to explore how they each relate to the national ideology. From them, it is possible to obtain a knowledge of national landscape awareness: the imagined topography of the given country. This national landscape awareness is mobilised by modern nationalist ideology (Häyrynen 2000:5).

27.

One of the key concepts in national landscape awareness research is *imagery*, which, according to its fundamental meaning, refers to the thematically connected mass of pictures. It can also be understood in relation to literary texts as pictures, metaphors and symbols that point beyond their own significance. According to its secondary meaning, imagery also refers to the pictures and concepts consciously shaped by this real and metaphorical mass of pictures, which are connected by some kind of interpretation. *Landscape imagery* — the mass of pictures and concepts related to the landscape — comprises a set of thematically connected representations and a deliberately created cultural meaning. By extension, it is these images and concepts — which are connected by an organisational logic in a narrative context — that give rise to landscape awareness. Landscape awareness ultimately means representations of the landscape transformed into symbols and the narrative that can be read via these representations. The period of the creation of specific landscape imageries can be defined more or less accurately (Raivo 1999:2; Häyrynen 2000:6–7).

28.

Landscape awareness nourishes patriotism, a sense of belonging, respect for the past and confidence in the future. The images that serve as its basis may be published in printed form, as stills or moving images, in contexts that range from painted and photographed landscapes, through guidebooks, to textbooks and printed albums. According to Häyrynen, there were three phases in the transmission of these images. Firstly, unique works of art appeared, created by the elite, which were permeated with powerful national pathos. Members of the middle class then encountered concepts associated with the national landscape via tourism and travel-related literature. For society as a whole, however, the content was disseminated in the form of compulsory basic education and the press (Häyrynen 2000:9–15). Via these channels, a unique reading of the landscape became a standardised aspect of the collective consciousness of emerging modern nations (Raivo 1999:2). As part of these pan-European processes, the nineteenth-century Hungarian elite defined those locations within the geographical environment that were important from a national perspective, as emphasised by Júlia Szabó in her extremely perceptive studies, which, while written exclusively from the perspective of art history, are nevertheless of enormous help in the understanding of this

issue (Szabó 2000). Besides the delineation of the location, the emotional and spiritual content of the landscape was also explored, after which sentiment and attitude were "schooled". The praise of Lake Balaton penned by Hungarian author Mór Jókai (2001) accurately illustrates the contemporary awareness of the creator's role: "[Balaton] Where higher spirits teach the poet to sing; and teach those who are not poets to feel what the poet sang."

29.

The nineteenth-century upsurge in modern national culture was kindled by far more than the landscape awareness generated by pictorial representations of the landscape. The concepts of national landscape and national space were organically connected to the nineteenth-century construction of national consciousness. The basis for the symbolic collective consciousness of the unprecedentedly diverse community was the national culture that also created the context for the development of landscape awareness. In contemporary cultural studies, national culture was regarded as a conscious creation. In our current approach, the relevant points of convergence are the construction of historical consciousness, the manifestation of the symbolic creation of collectivity, the establishment of modern nations, and the role of created traditions.

30.

It is not only in our own region but in all human communities that historical consciousness has an important role in the development of national identity in the case of particular group cultures and group identities and complex, modern societies. In recent decades, attention has been directed towards the interconnections between historical consciousness and historiography. Critiques related to the objectivity of historiography, such as the ideas of Hayden White in relation to the narrative nature of the writing of history (White 1996), have been fundamental to our understanding of the canonisation mechanisms in modern historiography. Recognition of manifestations of the selective and discursive processes of historiography have turned these constructive processes into objects of interpretation. From this perspective, past deeds can be interpreted as raw material to be shaped creatively in the hands of the historiographer. Criticisms related to the objectivity of historiography refer to the nature of the raw material that is formed by past deeds in terms of group-level interpretations of the past (see, among others, Hobsbawm 1994:27–30). (For an analysis of this issue from the point of view of historical scholarship, see Gyáni 2007 [in Hungarian]).

31.

Anthony Cohen's book *The Symbolic Construction of Community* created the basis for an understanding of the symbolic dimension of concrete community creation processes (Cohen, A. 1985). If we compare the various national historiographies in our region, their significant differences are obvious despite the fact that they describe ethnic groups that have been living together and alongside one another for centuries. The development of local belonging that serves as the basis for larger-scale group identity or identities requires a local consciousness of the past. During the past two hundred years, canonical historiography has successfully given rise to a kind of local past and local history in which it is rarely apparent that people from different cultures lived alongside one another. History that is written, taught, and popularised in this way may be among the most solid bases of connection and national identity (Anderson 1991). The groups living within a space that is thus subject to differing interpretations endeavour to position their own symbols within it and to use these symbols to occupy, take possession of, and dominate these spaces (Bodó and Biró 2000).

32.

Following the recognition of the constructed quality of identity and its dynamic and situational nature, a natural object of research today is the process of the creation and management of local, group and national identities. As an outcome of the investigation of these processes, historiography and cultural studies in the 1980s devoted increasing attention to the phenomenon of tradition invention and tradition creation. Among the initial results of this research, which remains of fundamental importance today, was the collection of studies *The Invention of Tradition*, edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Hobsbawm and Ranger, eds. 1983). In several of the studies, the authors illustrated the process of tradition invention. The researchers' findings are summarised in the closing essay in the collection, written by Hobsbawm. According to his analysis, the creation of traditions and the use of invented traditions are characteristics of a period in which, due to the rapid changes taking place in society, the feeling of continuity that serve as the basis for identity may disappear, and old traditions, symbols and customs no longer fulfil their earlier functions. Symbolic or ritual-like invented customs can establish a connection with the past and thus offer broad strata of society the feeling of security that comes from a familiar past, ensuring social cohesion. The success of the mass production of traditions at the end of the last century was naturally also dependent on the extent to which the inventions appealed to the targeted masses. For this reason, it was not only symbols but also rituals and heroes that were used in the forging of identity. The new elements of identity, however, were popularised by the unifying means of general education (Hobsbawm and Ranger, eds., 263–264). It is not hard to recognise that it was not only the late nineteenth century that was significant in terms of the invention of tradition: fresh impetus can also be observed in terms of the generation of traditions in Eastern Europe, after the fall of communism.

33.

Invented traditions and the myths that serve as their foundation are important from the perspective of community construction because, with their help, people review and interpret the past. For the layperson, history is something that is transmitted and evoked selectively, according to its aims in the present. History is a kind of raw material in the hands of historians and non-historians alike. It always rests on *interpretative reconstructions*, with no intention to falsify. However, this does not mean that there is no such thing as historical facts. This so-called popular use of history does not distance it from the present. Quite the contrary: the past often merges with the present. The past is evoked symbolically in everyday discourse.

Frivolous tourists in sacred places: The relationship between national and touristic landscapes

34.

Tourism has introduced the nation's sacred landscapes to new communities, the unique values of which the elites of these communities have recently claimed to have discovered in precisely these locations. Locations that are not simply delineated in this way but caught in the crossfire of reflections thus quite naturally became the representatives of the new subject, the nation, and thus obligatory destinations among those outside the community, too. Ulf Hannerz calls attention to the fact that, from a historical point of view, culture can be seen as a system of

meanings and interpretative structures connected with a particular area. In contrast, the cosmopolitan way of looking at things means feeling at home and becoming integrated in radically divergent localities; the straightforward adaptation elsewhere of knowledge obtained in a particular locality; and a kind of cultural competence. Hannerz carefully distinguishes between types of traveller (tourists and cosmopolitans), pointing out that tourists have no wish to understand the alien system of meanings but are primarily drawn by a location's natural endowments, and for this very reason cannot be regarded as cosmopolitans (Hannerz 2004:179–188). While there would be a case for challenging this facile and otherwise superficial criticism of tourists, we should perhaps nevertheless devote some thought here to the relationship between tourism that functions according to a national culture interpretable in connection with one specific area, and tourism that functions according to global formulas. Global tourism adapts the locally meaningful internal interpretative structures of specific national cultures according to a certain logic and integrates them into its own system. In place of the local identity-creating role of certain canonised national traditions that are believed to be unique, these traditions are presented in tourism as exoticisms, cultural quintessence, or performance. The content of certain phenomena and their empirically experienced meaning may differ from place to place, but in tourism's system for the presentation of foreign cultures, they appear in the same place. Thus, tourism can be interpreted as a kind of metaculture that lies over and above individual national cultures.

35.

The sacralisation of place in national culture, and the subsequent appearance and interpretation of these same sites in tourism, inevitably engenders a connection between tourist sites and sites that are important from a national point of view. (This is also true, of course, when it comes to the relationship between tourist sites and religious sites, and between national sites and religious sites; furthermore, it touches on the complex issue of culture and its institutionalised presentation. On this, see Fejős 2000:236–252). Among the visitors to a given place we find the carriers of the imagined space, the "pilgrims", generated by the national cultural processes described above, who visit the quasi-sacred centres of national culture (on this, see, e.g., Feischmidt 2005:7–35; Vörös 2005:69–85). At the same time, others, not being part of the imagined community (Anderson) that is held together on the basis of symbolism (Cohen), recognise other content in the processes that give tourism its meaning. Amateur semioticians are strolling around sites all over the globe: not simply tourists but also members of communities that are based on a variety of cultures, and they believe themselves capable of discerning divergent meanings (Culler 1990:155). Tom Selänniemi came up with an apposite English play on words to convey the similarity in these phenomena. Different visitors are drawn to the same place by almost identical things: tourists visit a sacred *sight*, while the members of a nation visit a sacred *site*. Following MacCannell's semiotics, Selänniemi elaborated the relationship between tourist attraction and place of pilgrimage, as shown in Table 1 (Selänniemi 1999:343).

36.

In 1983, the very year in which Victor Turner died, Bryan Pfaffenberger published the paper *Serious pilgrims and frivolous tourists: The chimera of tourism in the pilgrimages of Sri Lanka*, in which he criticised Turner's concept of pilgrims as a unified community outside the structure of society. He pointed out that the sacred journey, or pilgrimage, does not necessarily unify pilgrims, thus they do not constitute the ideal community postulated by Turner, but instead their diversity and

divisions persist. From the early 1980s, a growing volume of community criticism drew attention to the internal construction of the pilgrimage experience, while emphasis was increasingly giving to it in the context of research (see, among others, Eade and Sallnow 1991). This research sheds light on the fact that the experience obtained during a sacred journey largely depends on the pilgrim's existing knowledge, motivation, and fleeting observations – in other words, on the markers that explain to them what they have seen.

Marker	Sacred site	(Sacred) sight
Meaning	Manifestation of traditional values	Indication of the value of the journey and its symbol (the value of being worth looking at)
What bestows meaning	Local culture, religion	Western (tourist) culture
The canon (the source of meaning)	Narratives, tradition, sacred texts, mythology	Guidebooks, advertisements, education
Rite	Pilgrimage	Tourism (directed towards a concrete destination)
Forms of contact (other rites)	Religious rites, ceremonies, offerings, songs	Tourist rites, explanations given by tour guides, sightseeing, taking photographs, reading guidebooks
Objective	Transformation; the renewal and reinforcement of value categories	Transformation; the renewal and reinforcement of value categories

37.

It was the past that initially made present-day tourist destinations sacred, and only later did they became attractions. Today's frivolous tourists essentially stroll around the sacred sites of the past, mingling among the "pilgrims." They spend time in the same places, but what they see and what they experience are fundamentally different.

NOTES

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2 In Hungary, Boorstin's work is referred to as a work of tourism research due primarily to its secondary references to tourism research, although on reading it, it becomes clear that the work is about the past of modernity and that all references to tourism contribute to the understanding of the period.

3 For Hungarian-language interpretations of the theory, see Jedzinák 2002:73–75; Seaton 2004; Bódi 2007:1, 77). Hungarian ethnographers have also written about the sacralisation of space (Bartha 1992; Keményfi 2002:106; 2004:33–40). However, these approaches are not based on semiotics but rather analyse the landscape-structuring role of religious objects and buildings situated in the landscape. The theoretical model presented here, which contributes to an understanding of the development of the tourist space, is obviously closely connected to the processes of the religious and national imagining of space.

4 Hungarian geographers have also noted the relationship between works of art and place/landscape: Karancsi and Hann 2006; Boros 2007).

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