

VICTORY OF PLEASURE AND DEFEAT OF PLACE.

POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF
CONTEMPORARY TRENDS IN TOURISM

Fleur Odylle van Wijck

BOĞAZIÇI UNIVERSITY

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Fleur Odylle van Wijck

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The thesis of
Fleur Odylle van Wijck
has been approved by

Assis. Prof. Dr. Zeynep Cağlayan-Gambetti.....
(advisor)

Prof. Dr. Nemin Abadan-Unat.....

Assis. Prof. Dr. Murat Akan.....

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Thesis Abstract

Fleur Odylle van Wijck, “Victory of Pleasure and Defeat of Place. Political Implications of Contemporary Trends in Tourism”

This study seeks to establish the political implications of contemporary trends in tourism assessed through a critique on capitalism. Literature on contemporary trends in tourism is linked with literature explaining and assessing (post)modern consumer society.

As part of the post-modern economy of signs, two trends in contemporary tourism can be identified: the rise of similar simulated, semi-public consumer-oriented attractions and the conscious consumption of signs despite their cognitive status in an attempt to reach happiness. These trends are denoted as the *defeat of place* and the *victory of pleasure*, which are shown to be part capitalism’s tendency to internalize of its outside.

The prescribed habits and communication associated with this internalization harm the critical capacity of the consumer. The pleasurable nature of consumption eases the consumer into acceptance of the status-quo leading to a defeat of critique. Also, the privatization in tourism and the internalization of politics into the economy of signs has changed the status of the public as the place of the political, leading to a defeat of place of political action. In conclusion, the political subject is paralyzed while the consuming subject is supported. Tourism should thus not be viewed as a neutral activity, but as part and parcel of post-modern consumer society and hence indicating political problems posed by society as such.

Tez Özeti

Fleur Odyllé van Wijck, “Zevkin Zaferi ve Mekânın Yenilgisi. Turizmdeki Güncel Eğilimlerin Siyasal Çıkarımları”

Bu çalışma turizmdeki güncel eğilimlerin siyasal çıkarımlarını kapitalizm eleştirisi çerçevesinden değerlendirmektedir. Turizmdeki güncel eğilimler üzerine olan literatür, (post)modern toplumu açıklayan ve değerlendiren literatürle ilişkilendirilmiştir. Günümüz turizminde, post-modern semboller ekonomisinin bir parçası olmak üzere, iki eğilim olduğu söylenebilir: birbirine benzeyen, taklit edilmiş, yarı-kamusal tüketiciye yönelik cazibenin ortaya çıkışı ve mutluluğa ulaşma çabasındaki algısal rolüne rağmen sembollerin bilinçli tüketimi. Kapitalizmin modernden post-moderne geçmesinin – ki bu kapitalizmin kendi dışının daha da içselleşmesiyle tanımlanıyor – bir parçası olduğu gösterilen bu eğilimler *zevkin zaferi* ve *mekânın yenilgisi* olarak ifade edildi.

Gerçek farkın yokluğu ve öngörölmüş alışkanlıklar ve bu içselleştirmenin bir sonucu olan iletişim, tüketicinin eleştirisi kabiliyetine hasar vermektedir. Tüketimin zevksel doğası, tüketicinin statükoyu kabulünü kolaylaştırmaktadır. Bu yüzden, turizmdeki güncel eğilimler eleştirinin yenilgisini işaret etmektedir. Ayrıca, turizmin özelleştirilmesi ve siyasetin semboller ekonomisine eklemlenmesi, siyasal olanın mekânı olan kamunun rolünü değiştirerek siyasal hareket mekânının yenilgisine yol açmıştır. Sonuç olarak, siyasi özne atıl kalırken, tüketim nesnesi desteklenmiştir. Bu nedenle, turizm tarafsız bir etkinlik olarak değil, post-modern tüketim toplumunun siyasal sorunlarına ayna tutan ayrılmaz bir parçası olarak görölmelidir.

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Preface

What originally caught my attention was the increased presence of themed tourist resorts in the southern, tourist-oriented part of Turkey. One can sleep in a rebuilt Kremlin, or assume –along with many others- to be the last sultan residing in a copy of Topkapi Palace, while Dutch tourists can have the time of their lives in a resort in Kemer which closely approximates Amsterdam aside from its weather- at least in Kemer the sun is bound to shine.

What to think about the recently opened bungalow-park Eson-stad in the north of the Netherlands, built in 17th-century style while carrying the name of a medieval town whose professed existence is even a topic of debate among historians? Situated among villages that actually stem from the early 17-th century, why buy a postcard depicting new bricks in an old style? What does the rebuilt VOC-ship “The Batavia” have to do with the mega-outlet posited next to it so that the latter is justified in calling itself Batavia-City? Why take the trouble of catching a plane from Schiphol Airport Amsterdam, only to find oneself surrounded by windmills and wooden clogs in Turkey? Why would the *ideal* place for a tourist to spend precious leisure-time be a themed resort that is so blatantly *fake*? Why prefer sleeping in the Kremlin in southern Turkey over a visit to the real thing? What do tourists want? Why do they want it? And should this be of political concern?

This thesis takes contemporary tourist trends to be an instance through which current postmodern consumer society can be evaluated. This thesis argues that the contemporary trends in tourism, captured under the notions *victory of pleasure* and *defeat of place* signify two politically relevant developments; the loss of critical

capacity of the consumer and the de-actualization of the place of politics. Hence, we may say that contemporary trends in tourism point to the encouragement of the individual as a consumer and a discouragement of the individual as a politically active subject.

In the field of political science, tourism has mainly been studied in terms of its potential role in political economy. Rationales for government involvement in the promotion or enhancement of tourism are the improvement of the balance of payments, the attraction of foreign exchange, the diversification of the economy, aid to local economic development, the increase in income level and tax-revenue and the development of new employment (Hall and Page 2006:126).

However, this thesis seeks to go beyond the political-economic significance of the tourism sector. Pure economic approaches to tourism fall short in treating taste and desired experience as a given rather than as an indication of something else. Though they may tell us about the extent of tourism practices, they remain silent on possible reasons for the proliferation of “fake” tourist-oriented places like the ones mentioned at the onset of this preface. They do not tell us anything about the context in which to view the demand in tourism (Franklin 2003, Rojek and Urry 2004). The fact that a large part of the population actively participates in tourism –a stunning 81% in 2005 (CBS Dutch Central Statistics Agency 2007) - emphasizes its societal relevance. Tourism is a popular cultural practice in the Western world and as such warrants a deeper analysis.

Tourism should be read throughout this thesis as *mass* tourism, which is distinct from tourism before the rise of modernity in terms of the number of participants. Chapter Two will elaborate on this further. When first entering the field

of sociology, tourism as a topic of study was looked down upon. It seemed too frivolous, too *fun* almost to be a proper object of academic analysis (Franklin 2003). However, the study of tourism should be taken seriously in its role of a “study of deviance” (Urry 2002). Abnormalities can be used to mirror the standard settings of society. Why certain practices are considered abnormal, touristy in this instance, will throw a light on how multiple societies act in a more general fashion. For instance, in his study on Japanese tourism, Nash (1995) recounts how the group-shaped outings of the Japanese and their cravings for souvenirs unfold the group-oriented structure of Japanese society. Hence, tourism as a research topic is justified in “its ability to reveal aspects of normal practices which otherwise remain opaque” (Urry 2002:2). Moreover, one should wonder “why specific touristic modes are attached to the particular social groups at the historical period when they are found” (Graeburn 1983:30).

Though this thesis follows the suggested path of analysis of society through the observation of tourist trends, it seeks to go beyond the pure socio-cultural dimension implied by the previous scholars. Tourist trends imply societal trends that are politically relevant. Tourism is not neutral, but set in a certain social and political framework promoting values that benefit some while disfavoring others: “the dominant tourism culture is essentialized and marked as a neutral activity, hardly ever questioned, yet assumes a distinct set of values and expectations. (...) consumer fantasy continues to be embedded in the political and sociocultural [sic] (con)text from which tourism originated” (Ateljevic and Doorne 2002:663). This thesis links up the critique of contemporary tourist trends with the critique of postmodern consumer society and shows how tourist trends are anything but a “neutral activity”,

but should be questioned in the light of how they contribute to silencing the political subject.

The research conducted in this writing is theoretical. Existing literature is used to draw a new perspective on the political relevance of tourist trends illustrated by three cases which have been touched upon at the beginning of this preface and will be properly introduced in Chapter Two. These cases exemplify the demand for the artificial in tourism, and the blurring of consumption and tourism. Due to the national background of the author, these cases all have a relation with the Netherlands; two of them are located in the Netherlands, the remaining one can be found in Kemer, Turkey. All of them are targeted primarily at Dutch tourists. These cases have an illustrative function and serve to indicate a trend rather than prove it.

The contemporary trends in tourism signify the consumption of apparently “artificial” or “contrived” attractions, which are contrasted with the authenticity debate that runs through tourism since the late 1970s, initiated with MacCannell’s *The Tourist* (1976). His work and the multiple refutations of his work by scholars throughout the years prove a useful framework on which to locate this thesis, both in terms of the role of authenticity and artificiality in tourism as in the connection between tourism and non-tourist society. The analysis of tourist trends delivered in this thesis pays heavy tribute to the work of Baudrillard, especially his work on the sign economy and emergence of simulations in postmodern society.

The critical evaluation of contemporary tourist trends carried out in this paper is done using the critical analyses of capitalist society of Marcuse, Baudrillard and Negri and Hardt. All drawing from the Marxist legacy, these scholars provide a useful critique of capitalism. The critique of capitalism as expressed by Marcuse may

be considered to be old-fashioned as it is written in the early 1970s against the background of the cold war. Even though “revolution as a desirable goal has long since lost any appeal for most Western leftists and all Western liberals” (Herf 1999:41), his analysis of capitalist consumer society still proves very useful in assessing current society:

Nowadays, the one-dimensional society is maintained by a more subtle system of controls, and its domination over the human imagination is almost complete.(...) The means of bondage to the status quo have never been more powerful or cost less. (...)The Silicon Valley engineer who seeks solace from 60-hour weeks by indulging in pre-fab “leisure activities”; the reader who buys only those books that Oprah Winfrey decrees; the pubescent boy who enacts fantasies of mayhem in front of a Nintendo screen-they all epitomise Marcuse’s one-dimensional beings (Amidon 2000:65).

As the latest forerunners of Marxist thought, Negri and Hardt show the development of a new system of control more or less running the globe. This thesis adopts their analysis of the development of capitalism to show how tourist trends fit in that development.

Drawing on a Marxist framework, this thesis suffers from a Marxist affliction: the lack of a convincing road to revolution. After the detrimental analysis of contemporary tourist trends in the light of current consumer society, it is not clear how to bring about change, either in tourism or in society in general. However, the difficulty of political change is exactly one of the criticisms of capitalism as discussed in this thesis. In effect, if this thesis would provide the reader with a clear exit, it would undermine what was previously argued.

Chapter One gives a brief background into the economic role of tourism in western society and the Netherlands specifically, and discusses the development of modern mass tourism.

Chapter Two contrasts the contemporary tourist desire for the artificial with the alleged tourist demand for authenticity as expressed by MacCannell (1976). Do tourists admire authenticity, or rather fancy the fake? Are they fooled by authentic appearances, or do they consciously luxuriate in frauds? Does the specific tourist demand arise as a reaction to or an extension of non-tourist society? This chapter first assesses the role of authenticity in tourist demand, and second the place of tourism as a practice opposed to or corresponding to non-tourist society is established. Finally, the contemporary trends in tourism are conceptualized under two newly established notions that will be exported to the rest of the thesis.

Chapter Three seeks to judge the trends exported from Chapter Two. First, positive evaluation of these trends will be refuted. Then, an alternative interpretation of these trends will be given as part of the postmodern phase of capitalism. As such, these trends are considered to be harmful in terms of political potential.

Finally, the conclusion sets the results in a broader perspective and identifies further areas of research adding some new questions regarding the expected development of tourism, the relation between tourism and politics, and the conceptualization of political terms in other fields of research within political science as a result from the analysis done

Tourism is an activity most of us are acquainted with. Tourism is the area of allegedly “taking a break”. Taking a break from what though? The artificial attractions tourists are drawn to appear to provide a discontinuity with the everyday. Taking a break by taking a fake seems harmless enough. In fact, it might turn out that what tourists are taking a break from is not so much their everyday reality, but their political potential. Enjoy your holidays!

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

What do tourists want? This question seems to have immediate relevance for those interested in the economic aspects of mass tourism. Private hotel-owners as well as the public officials of small, empty towns whose only hopes of countering the unfavorable economic tide reside in being or becoming picturesque- they all desire a flow of tourists, a succession of credit cards. Flows of tourists mean flows of cash. According to the World Tourism Office, tourism “includes all travel that involves a stay of at least one night, but less than one year, from home” (World Tourism Office 2006). The economic impact of tourism on today’s capitalist society can hardly be overlooked. According to an inquiry of the World Travel and Tourism Council (2000), the travel and tourism industry directly and indirectly constitutes 11 per cent of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and this number is bound to increase. However, this 11% of global GDP is not spent by the globe’s inhabitants equally. Of all international tourist arrivals in 2005, more than half (55.7%) came from Europe (UNWTO 2006). The study of tourism is, as Hall (2005) maintains, a study of the well-to-do in the world.

In international tourism, the Dutch are a major player in terms of expenditure per capita. With an average of 985 USD per capita, they rank second, next to the Britons with a 987 USD per capita (UNWTO 2006). In the Netherlands, tourism accounted for 2.5% of GDP in 1999. In that year, visitors –foreign and Dutch- spent a total of around 21 billion euros in the Netherlands, which created nearly 330,000 jobs, accounting for almost 4% of the total employment in the Netherlands in that

period (Heerschap 2005). In 2005, the number of international tourist arrivals in the Netherlands reached 10,012 million, which implied an increase of 3.8% compared to 2004 (UNWTO 2006).

From 7 million long holidays in 1969 (CBS 2007) to an astonishing 34.4 million holidays undertaken in 2005 (NBTC et al. 2006), the number of long holidays taken by the Dutch has shown a steady increase since the early 1970's. Not only has the number of holidays increased, but also the number of people that went on holiday displays an upward trend. While in 1990 74.5% of the Dutch people went on holidays (CBS), in 15 years the holiday participation has augmented to 81% in 2005 (CBS). Roughly speaking, while half of Dutch holidays were spent abroad (17.1 million) in 2005, the other half was spent in the Netherlands (17.3 million). However, meanwhile the average leisure time a week has decreased from 49 hours a week in 1985 to 44,8 hours a week in 2000 (NBTC et al. 2006). It seems that the decrease in leisure time is offset by a greater desire for spending that time as a tourist. Hence, we may say tourism plays a significant role in society in terms of revenue as well as participation. Tourism is anything but a marginal topic of study.

Defining tourism, and hence tourists and tourist places, has proven a toilsome task. First, the aforementioned definition of the World Tourism Organization is too broad to be viable- among others it fails to distinguish between the still aggrandizing business travel, family-trips and 'simple' holidays. Plus, although it facilitates quantitative research on tourism, it yields little insight into the qualitative nature of tourism.

Second, tourism has a close connection with consumption. The former is a distinct activity of the latter. In the Netherlands, number-one activity among tourists

is “funshopping” (NBTC 2006). And the Dutch do not stand alone in this: “In many respects tourism is the geography of consumption outside the home area; it is about how and why people travel to consume” (Law 1993:14). As such, “the only real difference between contemporary mega-malls and amusement parks is the relative mix of shops and amusements” (Ritzer and Liska 2004:103). In consequence, conceptual problems arise as the difference between work/everyday and leisure/holiday is severely blurred by the diffusion of consumerism in both (Franklin 2003). However, as this thesis takes tourist practices to be an instance of general consumer society and seeks to show the overlap between tourist and general consumer behavior, this no longer poses a problem.

Third, tourism is often defined in terms of what it is not: “One significant reason for the problematic status of tourism is that its meaning stems from its ‘other’, from the other term or terms with which it is contrasted. (...) Its meaning constantly slides as its ‘other’ changes” (Rojek and Urry 2004:1). At the heart of tourism resides a negation. Tourism is constructed to its presupposed opposite; regulated and organized work. As the conceptualization of the latter changes, so does the definition of tourism.

Instead of proclaiming a clear-cut definition, scholars have sought to come to a common ground regarding the essential positive qualities of tourism. Cohen (1995) argues that all definitions of tourism imply some travel, both spatially and sociologically. Tourism is built upon the assumption that the destination offers something which is not available at home. This alleged distinctiveness of a destination is referred to as its “placeness” (Relph 1976). When defining a tourist sight as ‘a spatial location which is distinguished from everyday life by virtue of its

natural, historical or cultural extraordinaries' (Rojek 2004:42), Rojek implicitly adheres to the assumption of difference being at the heart of tourism, which is shared by Urry (2002). Similarly, MacCannell (1976) accords to a tourist site's distinctiveness when describing them as spaces separate from the ordinary flow of local life designed in order to have an 'authentic' experience. For MacCannell, the distinctiveness lays primarily in being authentic, something that will be returned to later. Generally, the distinction between the familiar and the faraway is held to give incentive to travel.

Furthermore, Urry (2000) notes the dominance of vision in tourism. It is through vision that the physical environment is experienced (the word "tourist *sight*" already indicates its considerable character). To our eyes, the ferociously attacking alligator at Disneyland is real enough. To a blind person, the reptile will feel like what it is: a machine. Similarly, the 17th-century Dutch façade of the resort in Kemer will only appeal to those that can visually consume it.

Photography, an activity strongly affiliated with tourism, is in many ways significant; it is simultaneously a manifestation of the visual culture of the 20th century, providing a shape to travel and an idea of beauty, and finally democratization of the human experience by allowing everyone access to the Bahamas through a simple sunset picture (Rojek and Urry 2004). Tourism enables and is enabled by the quantification and homogenization of the visual experience (Urry 2000). Anyone who ever tried to find a postcard in Amsterdam that shuns the canals, marihuana or wooden clogs (or a cheesy combination of the three), can attest to that.

People have always traveled and visited other places. During Victorian times, it was a well-established habit among the Western elite to send their sons off on a “Grand Tour”. This Grand Tour entailed a big tour through Europe, and its educational purpose ensured a strong focus on Italy and Greece- out of whose soil the roots of western civilization were considered to have sprung (DeBotton 2003). The strolling *flâneur* on the broadened boulevards of centre-Paris at the turn of the century is thought to be a forerunner of the (post)modern tourist (Urry 2002), mostly in terms of “the activity which has in a way become emblematic of the tourist: the democratized taking of photographs-of being seen and recorded, and of seeing others and recording them” (Urry 2002:127).

However, it is only with the coming of modernity that a less elite-oriented form of tourism, *mass* tourism that is, made headway. Modern mass tourism as we know it now started half-way into the 20th century (Franklin 2003, Urry 1990). According to the United Nations Declaration of Tourism (1980), its bedrock lies both in social legislation as in a more general concern about human rights to repose: “[Modern mass tourism is] born out of the application of social policies which led to industrial workers obtaining annual paid holidays, and at the same time found its expression through recognition of the basic human right to rest and leisure”. In the UK, the Public Holidays Act of 1938 contributed significantly to tourism, initially in terms of enabling time-consuming trips to the coast (Franklin 2003).

Also other linkages between modernity and the rise of tourism have been noted. The rise of a national railway system facilitated both the formation of national identity as that of tourist movements. Meanwhile, government interference, for instance in the creation of national parks and the implementation of national

holidays, interacted positively with the constantly increasing levels of travel (Urry 2002, Franklin 2003).

Thomas Cook, founder of the travel agency called after him, is often regarded as the ancestor of mass tourism (Franklin 2003). He took pride in enabling his proletarian clientele, who found themselves surrounded in sceneries similar to Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times*, to experience the beauties of the world. His were attempts to create a way out of the monotonous life of early capitalist workers, by showing them the marvels of the vastly changing world: "to remain stationary in these times of change, when all the world is on the move, would be a crime. Hurrah for the Trip- the cheap cheap Trip!" (Thomas Cook cited in: Brendon 1991).

To summarize, modern mass tourism is considered to be pivoting around visual consumption of a difference between the home and the away, enabled by travel and related to the rise of modernity. From this, several questions arise. What kind of difference is visually consumed? In which way is the home differentiated from the away? Can artificially induced difference be consumed? But if artificially induced difference thrives everywhere, how far can be said that there is still a difference between the home and the away? Also, though tourism is positively related to modernity, what about the content of tourism? Are tourist practices a negation of non-tourist society, or do tourist practices not differ significantly from non-tourist practices? Also, does the passage from modernity to post-modernity have its effects in the field of tourism? Chapter Two seeks to answer these questions by discussing the debate on authenticity that runs through the study of tourism and proposes an alternative explanation in the framework of the post-modern economy of

signs. As such, the trends in contemporary tourism will be conceptualized under the newly established notions of *victory of pleasure* and *defeat of place*.

Chapter Three critically approaches the contemporary trends in tourism established in Chapter Two. These trends have been defended on grounds of enabling identity expression, of equalizing and hence democratizing the access of people to special attractions and finally to enhance the position of locals both financially and culturally. However, it will be shown that these arguments comply with the capitalist dictum. An alternative analysis of these trends will be provided, linking up contemporary trends in tourism with a more general critique on (post)modern capitalism in terms of the erosion of politics. The shift from modern to post-modern capitalism will be explained through capitalism's internalization of its outside. With 'outside' is meant non-capitalist, whereas the 'inside' of capitalism refers to all that functions following the capitalist logic. The *victory of pleasure* and the *defeat of place* are linked to the internalization of the non-capitalist by capitalism. The blurring of the inside and outside due to the capitalist logic carries in it political implications in terms of the critical capacity of men and the place for politics. These implications will be captured under the newly established notions of *defeat of critique* and *defeat of place of politics*.

Finally, Chapter Four sets the arguments put forward in a larger perspective and discusses their implication for the study of political science. What are the implications of the *defeat of critique* and the *defeat of place of politics* for the state of democracy? How does it effect the possibility of denouncing structural inequality? Is a post-modern system of signs completely beyond judgment? And who benefits from the situation created? Also, further areas of research will be established pointing to

the relation between tourism and politics, the possible future development of tourism and the consumption of the political signs in relation to that of non-political signs.

Finally, the reader is urged not to numb his mind by buying but to try his mind by defying.

CHAPTER II

VICTORY OF PLEASURE AND DEFEAT OF PLACE

This thesis takes contemporary tourist trends as an instance through which to analyze current consumer society. As touched upon in the introduction, modern tourism was enabled by a combination of social legislation, the creation of the modern state, technological innovations such as the train and a general developing notion about a right to leisure (Urry 2002, Franklin 2003). Modern tourism may as well be said to actually denote modern *mass* tourism. The principal difference with the tourism and travel before the first half of the 20th century is the degree of participation (Franklin 2003, Urry 1990). Mass tourism, in turn, is part of mass consumption. This chapter will, therefore, start off with a brief overview of the ways in which tourism and consumption are related.

Second, tourist demand throws a light on the desires of the consumers. The stance of this thesis is that these desires should be reviewed in the light of a societal framework. The first scholar to approach tourism in such a way is MacCannell (1976) who argues that tourists are, in reaction to the alienation associated with modernity, on the lookout for *authentic* experiences. However, current trends in tourism invoke an image of a tourist that does not take authenticity to heart so much. Three examples of apparently “inauthentic” tourist attractions aimed at Dutch tourists will be briefly discussed as illustrative of this trend. The role of authenticity in tourism demand has led to a fierce debate in the study of tourism. After discussing and evaluating the literature on authenticity, in the third part, an alternative explanation of the contemporary trends in tourism is offered through Baudrillard

(1998)'s economy of signs. As part of a larger trend of the consumption of signs rather than use-value associated with products, authenticity, as well as artificiality, no longer serves as an objective standard.

Having explained the trends in tourism through the framework of the postmodern economy of signs, the fourth part turns to the continuum of Nash (1995) and settles that tourism, as part of the postmodern economy of signs, is an extension of society rather than the negation of it. From the perspective of Nash (1995) tourism should thus be viewed as a "spill-over" rather than "compensatory" effect. However, tourism and leisure appear to be a negation of society. The veiling character of tourism and leisure is captured under the new notion of *lies of leisure*.

Finally, having established the innate nature of tourism linked to consumer society in general, this chapter seeks to pinpoint the trends in contemporary tourism so as to be able to export them to a critical framework of the postmodern consumer society in Chapter Three. Two trends will be noted; first the *victory of pleasure* refers to the attempt to create happiness through consumption and the associated conscious consumption of simulations. Second, the *defeat of place* denotes the proliferation of simulated tourist attractions that are all similar in their semi-public, consumption-oriented nature as well as their blatant playfulness with cultural signs giving them a contrived appearance.

Tourism and Consumption

The tourist sector is organized following capitalist logic (Britton 1991). First of all, tourism as a business is structured and organized by the standard capitalist

dictum of capital accumulation. It has division of labor in the form of separate businesses for accommodation, transport, attraction, each fulfilling their roles in creating tourist goods and services. Furthermore, tourism markets function according to the mandates of supply and demand. Finally, industry associations act as regulatory agencies (Britton 1991). The goods and services offered by the tourist sector are mainly immaterial. Tourism seems to entail among others the selling of nice sceneries, good weather, luxury, cultural artifacts- in short, a large part of tourism is about selling *experience*. As such, tourism takes up a prominent place in a contemporary movement within capitalist accumulation which focuses on the formation and marketing of experiences (Hall and Page 2006). A specific part of the experiences associated with tourism, are of cultural nature. Cultural tourism pertains to a form of tourism where “cultural sites, events, attractions and/or experiences are marketed as the primary tourist experiences” (Craik 2004:113). Cultural differences are packaged and offered for consumption. Due to globalization, culture is more and more subject to commoditization, the process which leads to “cultural parameters to be increasingly framed by corporate interests, which transgresses territorial demarcations, in their search for profitability” (Hughes 1995:783).

According to Britton (1991), cultural tourism takes place in three ways. First, existing cultural attractions such as historic sights are converted into tourism goods. For example, old churches are suddenly adorned with information booklets in five languages, remote African villages are complemented with a parking lot for touring buses and wild nature is full of signs directing you towards the best spot to take a picture from. Second, cultural aspects flourish in theme parks and resorts. For instance, the holiday resort Eson-stad in Friesland, the Netherlands, has a distinctive

early 17th century look. Third, a tourist element is introduced in other commercial leisure undertakings. Cultural elements give shopping centers and historic town centers a tourist appeal. For example, in the Netherlands the shopping outlet Batavia Stad was built with the theme of the Batavia, a 17th-century merchant's ship. Both these cases will be further explored later on.

Tourism is part and parcel of capitalist society. As such, tourism shines a light on our desires: "the market is not only the showplace for commodities, it is also the material register of our inner fantasies and dreams (...). It can be argued that tourism is a concentrated instance of the phantasmagoria of capitalism" (Rojek 2004:53). When we look at tourist practices, we might be able to discern tourist fantasies. What do tourists want? And what do these desires say about the state of society?

The first scholar to analyze the tourist demand in relation to the state of society in general, is MacCannell (1976) in his landmark work *The Tourist*. The desire for authenticity is thought to be strongly related to the rise of modernity (MacCannell 1976). Modernity is characterized by the rise of formal, impersonal institutions. No longer are the self and the societal institutions in 'natural' unity, which leaves individuals feeling alienated and in consequence a desire for authenticity arises: "The opposition between self and society has now reached its maximum. The concept of authenticity is one way of articulating this experience" (Berger cited in: Cohen 1988:373). MacCannell (1976) argues that the alienation associated with the rise of modern society forces people to look for an escape from modernity in their leisure time. The escape from modernity is then thought to be realized in the visitation of 'primitive', non-modern societies. However, this quest for authenticity is a problematic one, since it will ultimately fail. MacCannell (1976)

argues that in order to protect themselves against the gaze of tourists, local people will try to satisfy the needs of tourists by engaging in what MacCannell calls “staged authenticity”- authentic-looking presentations of their cultures. By doing so, locals are ensured to protect the real “back stage” of their cultures while benefiting from the tourist attention. However, MacCannell argues, tourists will not be satisfied and will try to get through to the “back stage”, leading to “staged back stages” *ad infinitum*. According to MacCannell (1976) modern tourism is characterized by an endless search for authenticity. However, certain trends in contemporary tourism question this desire for authenticity.

Contemporary Trends in Tourism

Before discussing in more general fashion the recent trends in the tourist industry, first three cases of artificial appearing tourist attractions are discussed. All three cases are aimed mainly at the Dutch tourist market. Two of the cases presented, the Batavia and Batavia Stad as well as Eson-stad, are located in the Netherlands. The third case, Orange County Resort, is located in Kemer, Turkey.

The Batavia and Batavia Stad

The original ship “Batavia” left the port of Amsterdam in 1628 on its journey to Batavia, currently Indonesia. Commander of the



Fig.1 Replica of the Batavia

ship was Adriaan Jakobsz, leader of the expedition was merchant François Pelsaert. Pelsaert and Jakobsz had bad relations from the start, leading Jakobsz to plan a coup on the ship and its precious carriage during the journey. However, June 4th 1629 the ship shipwrecked at the Wallabi reef in front of the West-Australian coast. Part of the crew, among which Jakobsz stayed put on a small island while Pelsaert went out for help. On the island, Jakobsz and his followers persisted in their planned coup, and murdered all those they reckoned would ally with Pelsaert when the latter would return. One sailor escaped and managed to warn Pelsaert in advance, who intervened and took the rioters prison. They continued their journey to Batavia. Of the 341 sailors that set off from Amsterdam, only 38 arrived in Batavia. Apart from Jakobsz, all rioters were put on trial and sentenced to death.

The original wreckage of the Batavia is now on display in a museum in Fremantle, Australia. On the basis of archives, books and drawings from the 17th century, a replica of the Batavia was reconstructed in Lelystad, the Netherlands between 1985 and 1995 (see figure 1). Next to the ship, an outlet shopping centre was built carrying the name “Batavia Stad”, which carries as a motto “in love with the brands, seduced



Fig.2 Batavia Stad

by the prices” (Batavia Stad 2007). Their website proclaims that in order to “keep the style”, the outlet centre is built with the theme of a 17th-century town (see figure 2).

All houses are built of wood. The goods sold range from famous sport brands to lingerie and shoes. Also, the outlet centre contains four restaurants and a free care facility for dogs (Batavia Stad 2007).

Amsterdam in Kemer: Orange County Resort

Under the motto “ One Holiday Two Destinations” (Amsterdam in Kemer 2007) a holiday resort has been built on the coast of Kemer with a theme drawing upon Amsterdam and small Dutch fishing villages like Volendam (see figure 3). The project that opened in April 2005 is an initiative of Turkish tourism entrepreneur Torosluoğlu, financially supported by Dutch travel agency Kras Stervakantie. The resort offers multiple activities ranging from table tennis to relaxation in a “wellness center with Far East

Concept”(Amsterdam in Kemer 2007). The restaurants offer Dutch food like *kroketten* (meat rolls), and the resort even contains its own little



Fig. 3 Amsterdam in Kemer: Orange County Resort

red light district. Highlight of the reconstructed village is the reconstructed front of the Central Train Station of Amsterdam.

Eson-Stad

According to the legends, Eson was a medieval merchant's town located in the north of the Netherlands which was swallowed by the sea in 1230. Historians question the actual existence of the town by lack of substantial proof. Whether Eson existed or not, the name Eson has since 2004 been attached to a holiday resort built in 16th- and 17th-century Dutch style. The rebuilt 'medieval' town with the 17th- century style



Fig.4 Eson-Stad Main Square.
Courtesy Huub Louppens

bungalows is part of Landal Green Parks, which is the biggest holiday resort entrepreneur in the Netherlands. It is assured that “although the emphasis is on history, the guests will receive the luxury they are used from Landal Green Parks” (Landal Green Park 2006).

General Trends

First, from the eighties onwards, the “disease for nostalgia” (Urry 2002:95)

has gained ground. The admiration for what once was has resulted in the preservation of many a village, home and industry in Great Britain and other parts of the western world (Urry 2002). The paradoxical nature of this trend is well captured by Graburn (1995): “the majority of ‘new’ tourist attractions are old” (Graburn 1995:47).

Formerly everyday places become “touristified”. Apparently, something ordinary can be *made* extraordinary. Heritage is in the eye of the beholder.

Second, the pursuit of cultural experience is both enabled and disabled by the commoditization of culture. Tourists are looking for real, authentic cultural

experiences, but the fact that tourism has reached certain formerly “natives” already destroys the authenticity of the experience: “The typical sign of disappointment of Western tourist when faced with ‘natives’ adorned with Western clothing, alludes to the presence of “a good deal of self-delusion (...) in the pursuit of tourist pleasure” (Craik 2004:115). The impossibility of “true” experience is what I coin the *Lonely Planet Paradox*; any place mentioned in the popular tourist guide, consequently ceases to be ‘lonely’. In other words, “the more tourism flourishes, the more it allegedly becomes a colossal deception”(Cohen 1988:373).

Third, the conservation lobby that started in the sixties has joined forces with the development of nature for tourist purposes (Wilson 1992). Natural sites and landscapes are protected from the building aspirations of contractors and saved for the tourist to enjoy. However, this poses problems in terms of the conceptualization of “nature” versus “human-made”. As nature becomes protected by, directed by or even created by human hands, what is seen is “the conceptual collapse of the differences between nature and culture, when Nature cannot survive without Cultural intervention” (Strathern 1992:22).

Finally, themed attractions gain dominance in capitalist society: “China, for example, has embraced this new phenomenon with forty-one theme parks having opened over the last decade and many more planned, including one scheduled for a northern suburb of Beijing which promises, somewhat ominously, to simulate the blast of the nuclear bomb which destroyed Hiroshima” (Hannigan 1998:2). Such parks offer experiences around a certain topic, be it comic figures or historical events. The inevitable roller-coaster is consequently named accordingly. In terms of

their themes, theme parks are the ultimate artificial experience, yet very popular in modern tourism.

The aforementioned contemporary trends in tourism signify problems in terms of the natural-artificial dichotomy. Cohen (1995) notices a shift in tourism from natural, authentic to artificial and contrived tourist attractions: “one of the important trends in contemporary tourism development is the growing number of attractions which are admittedly and overtly staged” (Cohen 1995:18). How to combine these trends with the analysis put forward by MacCannell (1976) stating that tourists are on a continuous quest for authenticity?

MacCannell’s argument has been contested on multiple grounds. First, Franklin (2003) refutes the escapist character of his argumentation. According to Franklin (2003), modernity is characterized by a proliferation of novelties and changes and tourism exemplifies people’s needs to explore those novelties. Thus, instead of an escape from modernity, modern tourism is “a quintessential expression and performance of modern life” (Franklin 2003:24). Franklin (2003) implicitly contends that tourist behavior is not the negation of society, but an extension of it, something that will be returned to later in this chapter.

Second, Cohen (1988) argues that on its entrance to sociology, authenticity was a concept insufficiently defined: “it is a philosophical concept which has been uncritically introduced into sociological analysis” (Cohen 1988:374). Cohen objects to MacCannell’s (1976) treatment of authenticity as a static concept and proposes a natural-contrived continuum (Cohen 1995). With the term natural, Cohen refers to attractions that are characterized by little human intervention, whereas contrived attractions are those specifically created for tourist purposes (Cohen 1995).

Consequently, it is possible for an attraction to be both natural and contrived.

Although such an approach answers to the problematic associated with the treatment of authenticity as a static concept, it does not *explain* the somewhat counter-intuitive assessment of an object being 'a little authentic'. *How come* we can speak of a continuum?

Also, Cohen (1988) rebukes the assumption of authenticity as being objective. Rather, Cohen pleads that authenticity is socially constructed, and hence is negotiable, which is an assumption shared by Moscardo and Pearce (1986). Thus, perceptions of authenticity may differ among different tourists: "individuals who are less concerned with the authenticity of their tourist experiences, will be more prepared to accept as *authentic* a cultural product or attraction which more concerned tourists, applying stricter criteria, will reject as *contrived*" (Cohen 1988: 376). Cohen continues to propose five different types of tourists, differentiated on grounds of the degree of authenticity they seek. He emphasizes that authenticity is not objective but perceptive: "the question here is *not* whether the individual does or does not "really" have an authentic experience (...), but rather what endows his experience with authenticity in his *own* view" (Cohen 1988:378). This view is problematic because of its self-evidence; authenticity is what tourists perceive it to be. Such an approach avoids asking the question as to *why* tourists may perceive something as authentic.

Research by Moscardo and Pearce (1986) supports Cohen's assumption of more agency on the part of tourists in assessing authenticity. Moscardo and Pearce (1986) have analyzed the possibility of experiencing authenticity when visiting historical sights. Though historic theme parks are contrived in that they have been (at least partly) constructed for tourist purposes, their research on tourist experiences of

historic theme parks in Australia shows that authenticity is an important element of these theme parks, both for the owners of these parks who claim authentic experiences in their promotional material, as for consumers who rate it as an important factor in satisfaction with their visits. Not only is authenticity as a concept used in such a contrived atmosphere, but the research also established that the perceptions of authenticity differ among people, as Cohen (1988) suggests. Moreover, the research conducted by Moscardo and Pearce (1986) refutes MacCannell's (1976) assumption of the perpetual impossibility of the search for authenticity. Whereas MacCannell's argument would classify historic theme parks as staged authenticity, and would hence denounce the possibility of tourist satisfaction, Moscardo and Pearce (1986) have proven there is consumer satisfaction on the authenticity of their experiences. There are, however, two problems associated with Moscardo and Pearce's research.

First, Moscardo and Pearce (1986) already admit that possibly what they researched was historical accuracy rather than authenticity. But, they propose, since in MacCannell's terms (1976) theme parks explicitly seek to reproduce the "back areas" of the past rather than putting on a front stage, in the case of historic theme parks, "it is only as authentic as the accuracy of the reproduction" (Moscardo and Pearce 1986:477). In other words, what visitors may have responded to is not so much the authenticity of the place, but the authenticity of the reproduction. This is likely to be the case. However, this observation brings about a new problematic for the concept of authenticity: here we touch upon the difference between *being* authentic and *appearing* authentic, a distinction that is essential in the analysis

conducted by this thesis. Moscardo and Pearce (1986), however, fail to discuss the implications of this observation, which will be pursued in this thesis later on.

Second, despite shedding insight into tourist experiences, Moscardo and Pearce (1986) treat historic theme parks as an isolated tourist experience and thus fail to place its existence in a societal or political framework. Both the essence-appearance problematic and the societal relevance of tourist experiences will be elaborated upon later in this thesis.

Another interesting rebuttal of MacCannell's static concept of authenticity is put forward by Cohen (1988) when he discusses the possibility of something *becoming* authentic over the years. This process, which he refers to as "emergent authenticity" (Cohen 1988), for instance, explains the assessment of Disney World Florida as the "real" Disneyland (in comparison to the ones in Europe and Asia), a sentiment expressed by multiple visitors (Cohen 1988). Cohen (1995) makes an important observation here, but fails to *explain* the paradoxical process of something becoming authentic.

Moreover, inauthentic tourist destinations such as Disneyland can be perceived as authentic in what Cohen (1995) calls "secondary staging" (Cohen 1995:20). This means that as a production of its own historical time period, such destinations are "authentic". They are true in their function of a reflection of society. Although this thesis, by taking current tourist trends as an instance through which to analyze current society, supports the assumption of the value of tourist attractions as reflecting the *Zeitgeist* (spirit of the time), it deflects from using the word "authentic" to describe that value. First of all, it would entail classifying all attractions mentioned in this thesis as authentic, thereby creating a shortcut to the settlement of the debate

overlooking other possible processes at hand. Second, Cohen's (1995) approach brings forth a new debate as to what can be considered typical of a certain time period, and hence can be called authentic, which lies beyond the scope of this paper.

To sum up, valuable comments have been made to refute the endless search for authenticity by tourists as put forward by MacCannell (1976). Authenticity is not a static concept but rather something socially constructed, leading to different perceptions among different people and the possibility of an object to become authentic (Moscardo and Pearce 1986, Cohen 1988). An authentic appearance of an object will, in many cases, cause the object to be rated authentic (Moscardo and Pearce 1986). These observations are valuable, yet the following questions remain. How and why is authenticity socially constructed? How can something become authentic? How come appearing authentic is conflated with being authentic? And how is this all related to society in general?

The major problem in the discourse on authenticity comes back to the difference between being authentic and appearing authentic, briefly touched upon above. It is the distinction between reality and representation. This chapter will put forward that such an opposition between essence and appearance, reality and fiction is no longer useful for analysis in postmodern society. Hence, Hughes (1995) makes a good point when assessing that the debate over authenticity in tourism is part of a larger felt "crisis of representation" (Hughes 1995:782), something the next paragraph will discuss further. It will put forward that tourism is subjected to the postmodern economy of signs, and the rise of contrived tourist destinations and the fall of authenticity will be explained in that light. As such, the analysis of tourism will follow Nash's (1995) spill-over approach.

Post-modern Economy of Signs

Following Marxist analysis, capitalism marks the shift from the use-value of a product, to its exchange-value. In other words, the value of a product is no longer measured in terms of its functionality, but rather in terms of its worth in the marketplace expressed in monetary terms. Capitalism, therefore, can be considered the ancestor of abstraction from use- to exchange value: “capitalism is alma mater of abstraction by exterminating use-value” (Baudrillard 1994:22). Baudrillard (1994, 1998) proposes that in postmodern society, capitalism has made a further shift. Not only have products lost their use-value, but they also lost their exchange value. The exchange value of a product presupposes a more or less static point of reference in terms of the value of labor plus the surplus that determined the value of a product. However, Baudrillard (1998) puts forward that commodities are ranked in value *only and constantly* in comparison with each other, not with their intrinsic necessities for amount of labor or capital. In consumer society, commodities have become markers of social differentiation. Status is no longer related to hereditary luck, talent or grace.

Contemporary consumer society functions under the assumption that “happiness is, first and foremost, the demand for equality (and distinction, of course) and must, accordingly, always signify with regard to *visible* criteria” (Baudrillard 1998:49). The purchase of objects is allegedly the first step in equalization, and hence the first move towards happiness. To put it simply: once everyone has a fridge, everyone is equal and hence happy. However, simultaneously consumers desire to distinguish themselves from others, and do so via their purchases. One’s place in

society is determined by one's acquired goods. One is "proving oneself by objects" (Baudrillard 1998:60).

However, as more and more people possess a fridge, having a fridge will cease to be a marker of status. Hence, instead of buying a fridge, the consumer will buy a design fridge to distinguish himself: "He maintains his privilege absolutely by moving from conspicuous to discreet (super-conspicuous) consumption by moving from quantitative ostentation to distinction, from money to culture" (Baudrillard 1998:54-55). In other words, status is bought. Commodities have only relational value; they are assessed vis-à-vis other commodities in the final analysis of the purchaser: "the fame of the object becomes its meaning" (Urry 2002: 18). In short, commodities are *signs* of status. But as the fame of the object is related to the anonymity of other objects, the status of a commodity, its sign, is not fixed. Unlike their use-value, and to a certain extent, their exchange-value, the sign of a commodity is eternally shifting. This has three important consequences.

First, buying happiness, seeking "salvation by works" (Baudrillard 1998: 60) is a quest never fulfilled. As the value of signs is determined in relation to other signs, distinction in the consumer society ultimately pivots around scarcity. Formerly special objects are multiplied, which leads to a decrease in its sign of social status, and calls for a new object of distinction: "[kitsch] *multiplies in ever greater quantities*, whereas, at the top of the social ladder, 'classy' *objects become fewer in number by increasing in quality* and are revived by becoming rare" (Baudrillard 1998:111).

Second, the sign in the economy of signs is not related to an object of reality, but to other signs. As differentiation takes place not through the use-value of the

product but its relational value, there is no objective essence to measure the products against. A blue fridge is differentiated from a red car not on grounds of its function, but on grounds of blue being ‘totally last season’, and hence conveying less status. The sign does not refer to the object but to the status of the object in relation to other objects. As there is no objective difference, no true negation, the reality of the object no longer matters. Any hierarchy between the two ceases to be important: “The recognition that the signifying quality of a commodity can now exceed its utility value, and indeed precede it (in consumer cultures where to be fashionable is now often culturally more important than to be warm or comfortable) threatens the boundaries of the real and the fictional” (Hughes 1995:799). The essence ceases to be relevant. Hence, the sign does not represent an object in reality but in ‘relationality’.

Third, as social differentiation is *only* realized through consumption, other forms of differentiation are made obsolete: “To differentiate oneself is precisely to affiliate to a model, to a combinatorial pattern of fashion, and therefore to relinquish any real difference, any *singularity*, since these can only arise in concrete, conflictual relations with others and the world” (Baudrillard 1998:88). As both distinction and equality are expressed through the purchase of commodities, their antagonism vanishes. They are the same in their commodity-form. Paradoxically, it is exactly this sameness that, rather than limiting the social differentiation through consumption, enhances it. Instead of realizing that ultimately social status cannot be derived from a fridge, since the status associated with a fridge will decline the more common it becomes, the consumer buys a microwave. The continual loss of differentiation through widespread consumption only encourages us to differentiate more through

consumption: “It is upon the loss of differences that the cult of difference is founded” (Baudrillard 1998:89). To cut short, there is no real difference; there are only signs that temporarily signify difference- perpetually.

The lack of real difference allows for irrational combinations of signs: “it no longer needs to be rational, because it no longer measures itself against an ideal or negative instance” (Baudrillard 1994:2). Social status and identity can be created by combining whatever signs available. Rather than struggling over the creation of a self-identity as opposed to that of others, the modern consumer happily buys himself multiple ones, and combines them in a fashion he sees fit. Identity does not have to make “sense”. Hence, the postmodern sign-economy is characterized by a play of signs rather than contradiction: “the ludic dimension of consumption has gradually supplanted the tragic dimension of identity” (Baudrillard1998:192).

As mentioned before, the impossibility of establishing ‘the real’, that is a negation *outside* the system of signs does not lead to a rejection of that system, but rather to an attempt of creating the real *via* the system:

it is no longer possible to fabricate the unreal from the real, the imaginary from the givens of the real. The process will, rather, be the opposite: it will be to put decentered situations, models of simulation in place and to contrive to give them the feeling of the real, of the banal, of lived experiences, to reinvent the real as fiction, precisely because it has disappeared from our life (...) brought to light with a transparent precision, but without substance derealized in advance, hyperrealized. (Baudrillard 1994:124).

What we see is “hyperreal”: “a real without origin or reality” (Baudrillard 1994:1). A “hyperreal” plays with essential qualities and hence becomes “more real” than the objects these qualities belonged to in the first place. The playful and random combining of signs through purchases that proliferates in consumer society leads to a state of hyperreality: “It is the *form* that everything has changed: a neo-

reality has everywhere been substituted for reality, a neo-reality entirely produced by combining elements of the code” (Baudrillard 1998:126). All around objects appear that outsmart the objects whose alleged essential qualities they have appropriated as signs.

The signs precede the territory. Signs become the point of reference of a certain place, and hence that place tries to live up to the expectations and turns into a simulation. Any popular town is divided into ‘touristy’ and ‘normal’ areas; in the former a small area excels the city as whole by applying the signs that are thought to capture the image of that city in the tourist eye. Here a double deception can be witnessed: simulated reality confirms simulated expectations created by advertisements and other signs. A simulation is beyond true and false. Tourists and consumers “do not contrast the staging of their authenticity, such as a Parisian street, against direct experience of the original, but rather with a mental image of that original which has already been ‘corrupted’ by mediating influences” (Hughes 1995: 782-783). Consequently, the “proof” of Paris, the verification of its claims is not objective, but lies within the simulation. Once you have seen your expectations confirmed, the simulation has proven itself. The simulation of Paris becomes true once it is consumed: “The consumer, by his purchase, will merely ratify *the coming to pass of the myth*” (Baudrillard 1998:128). In other words, simulations function on the basis of a self-fulfilling prophecy.

As the sign-economy denounces any difference in form between reality and fiction, between authentic and contrived, it questions the authenticity debate in tourism. Rather than a static concept (MacCannell 1976), or a social concept

negotiable on an individual level (Cohen 1988), authenticity is a sign, adorned with value on a social level that will be consumed at an individual level.

Moscardo and Pearce (1986) were quite right when assessing that a historic theme park “is only as authentic as the accuracy of the reproduction” (Moscardo and Pearce 1986:477). Its appearance is its essence. They were wrong, however, in assuming that this is the case only for historic theme parks. Also “natural” attractions, or museums can be considered to try to restore the real by using its alleged essential qualities, and hence to be “artificially resurrected under the auspices of the real” (Baudrillard 1994:8). Moreover, Moscardo and Pearce (1986) fail to see that the authenticity of the historic theme park refers a degree of hyperreality which uses signs. A historic theme park is more real than real, because it contains all of its essential qualities and its form allows you to scrutinize every detail- something that would not have been possible at the historic period the theme is set in. As a simulation, the commodity’s appearance is its essence in its most expurgated form. Or rather, the commodity *is not*, it has no essence, only an appearance that signifies its place in relation to the appearances of other commodities.

The economy of signs also explains Cohen’s (1998) problem of “emergent authenticity”; the possibility of an object to *become* authentic. As more Disneylands rise, the first and oldest Disneyland will become the most ‘real’. The first Disneyland will only achieve its status of “authentic” Disneyland in relation to other, younger Disneylands. Something can come to signify authenticity, just as something can come to signify beauty.

By many, Disneyland is stated to be the paramount prototype of the postmodern economy of signs (Baudrillard 1986, Ritzer and Liska 2004, MacCannell

1992, Scott 2004). Disneyland offers its visitors a simulated world, a dream-world, and as such “Disneyland thus offers not only ‘la quintessence du tourisme’ in which it is ‘real’ images rather than the real world that are consumed, but also the quintessence of modern consumer society” (Scott 2004:131). Consumers do not want to consume things, but what they symbolize, their most essential character: “Real alligators sleep motionless in the mud of California zoos while the latex alligators at Disneyland mount ferocious attacks on the tourist-carrying boats. Again the fakes do a better job; they live up to our sense of what an alligator should be” (MacCannell 1992:184).

Lies of Leisure

As much of our day-to-day lives is simulated, the postmodern tourist also seeks simulations when on tour: “people increasingly travel to other locales in order to experience much of what they experience in their day-to-day lives” (Ritzer and Liska 2004:99). Rather than the search for authenticity as MacCannell (1976) stipulates, post-modern tourists seem to seek *signs* of authenticity. They have a ‘playful, ironic, formally individualized attitude to sights-seeing (...) They may even voluntarily, and, of course, ironically play the part of being a mass tourist (...) for the post-tourist, the sign economy surrounding a sight constitutes a kitsch tourist attraction which (...) is an unavoidable accessory to the sight” (Rojek 2004:62). In other words, the post-tourist is aware of the *Lonely Planet Paradox*, and subsequently buys the new Latin-American edition. Tourist behavior is not much different from general consumer behavior in terms of the consumption of simulations.

Also in terms of social differentiation, tourism adheres to the system of general society. Leisure time is a special type of product in the prestige economy of signs. Not only does time in capitalist society have a commodity function as labor time, it also has a social exchange value. Leisure can be viewed as the unproductive consumption of time. Spending leisure time means having the luxury not to work: “Leisure is not the availability of time, it is its *display*” (Baudrillard 1998:158). Baudrillard argues that this wasting of time is done frantically, according to the capitalist dictum that also organizes non-leisure time:

We find in leisure and holiday the same eager moral and idealistic pursuit of accomplishment as in the sphere of work, the same *ethics of pressured performance*. No more than consumption, to which it belongs entirely, is leisure a praxis of satisfaction. (...) In fact, the obsession with getting a tan, that bewildered whirl in which tourists ‘do’ Italy, Spain and all the art galleries, the gymnastics and nudity which are de *rigueur* under an obligatory sun and, most important of all, the smiles and unfailing *joie de vivre* all attest to the fact that the holiday-maker conforms in every detail to the principles of duty, sacrifice and ascetism. (Baudrillard 1998: 155-156).

Rojek (1993) mentions the sun-tan as an important sign in leisure economy: “Successful tanning requires the consumption of sun-tan lotion and the abandonment of work. It is quintessentially, a transformative activity. Often, the process literally involves the shedding of skin to acquire a new look. Display and appearance determine tanning activity. (...) It instantly conveys health, leisure, vigour and sophistication” (Rojek 1993:190). That leisure and tourism are part of the social differentiation associated with the consumer society is supported by Ateljevic and Doorne (2002), who in researching tourism patterns in New Zealand, found that the former standard tourist from the “hegemonic, male-dominated, privileged class of Anglo-Saxon society” (Ateljevic and Doorne 2002:662) had been replaced by a variety of tourists that seek to express their identity and class by their consumption

patterns. Leisure and travel -what you do and where you do it- have become important markers of social differentiation in the culture of consumption where consumption preferences are the key to creating identity. “Been there, done that, got the t-shirt”, as the Duchess of York put it (Duchess of York cited in: Hannigan 1998:69). Hannigan (1998) refers to the use of tourism as a vehicle of social differentiation, the “passportization of experience” (Hannigan 1998:69).

Hence, tourism and leisure are as much part of the logic of consumer society as is any other sector in terms of consumption of both status and simulations. However, leisure and tourism pretend to be an escape from the capitalist dictum by promoting ‘freedom’ from the everyday, thereby concealing the structures of the everyday: “Disneyland exists in order to hide that it is the “real” country, all of “real” America that is Disneyland”(Baudrillard 1994:12). In Nash’s terms (1995), tourism should be viewed as a spill-over from society in its tendency to socially differentiate through consumption and the consumption of simulations, but likes to pretend it is compensatory. Tourism and leisure are an extension of the system that organizes general society, yet its discourse poses itself as antithetical to everyday society. See here the *lies of leisure*.

Not fooled by the *lies of leisure*, this thesis seeks to establish the contemporary trends in tourism so as to use them to give a more general critique of postmodern consumer society, an undertaking carried out in Chapter Three. The next section will gather the trends in contemporary tourism under two newly invented notions; the *victory of pleasure* and the *defeat of place*.

Victory of Pleasure and the Defeat of Place

The desire for social differentiation through consumption and the emergence of simulations associated with the postmodern economy of signs as put forward by Baudrillard (1994, 1998) can be said to lead to insatiability on two points. First, there is insatiability of needs, and second the insatiability of simulation, which both lead up to a contemporary trend in tourism.

The insatiability of needs is inherent to the consumer society and leads to an endless consumption of products in an attempt to attain happiness, as well as to the emergence of simulations. The dynamics of consumer society ensure that there will always be a demand for new products. This is so, since the needs in consumer society are associated with the logic of differentiation. The underlying assumption of consumer society is the equation of happiness with equality, and the translation of equality as equality in products. However, at the same time people seek to differentiate themselves, and hence do so via the single option offered: products. As the satisfaction for differentiation is inherently impossible due to the shifting of signs, needs will never be saturated: “No product has any chance of being mass-produced, no need has any chance of being satisfied on a mass scale unless it has already ceased to form part of the higher model and has been replaced by some other distinctive good or need –such that the distance is preserved” (Baudrillard 1998: 64). Even though the differentiation of goods is limited (how many different fridges can you design?), the differentiation of the social demand for prestige is unlimited. We can thus argue that the insatiability of needs leads to a perpetual search of happiness through purchases.

As mentioned before, the perpetual demand for differentiation through the status rather than the use- or exchange value of products leads to these signs of

products to become detached from the products. Hence, the possibility of playing with signs arises, enabling simulations that have no true essence but an appearance consisting of a playful combination of essential qualities. Tourists consciously consume such simulations: “Most products of a post-modern world might be willing to eat at the campfire, as long as it is a simulated one on the lawn on the hotel” (Ritzer and Liska 2004:107). Rather than authenticity, the *sign* of authenticity is a tourist’s concern, which is confirmed when looking at the persisting demand for ‘authentic souvenirs’ made in Taiwan. And even when not made in Taiwan, tourist products can be hyper-real: “But I’ve found that tourists want to hear aboriginals play the didgeridoo, regardless of where it comes from. When you run a business like mine, that’s the trick: balancing people’s expectations of aboriginal culture with the real thing. That’s why a town like Alice Springs has galleries full of paintings from a culture that never had houses to hang them in” (*Aboriginal guide Bob* cited in: Potts, 2007). Postmodern tourists are “sophisticated individuals, who choose not to discern, though they are aware of the possibilities of distinction” (Cohen 1995:25). Rather than being ashamed about consuming a copy, the consumer is proud to consume a simulation. Tourism is characterized by “an aesthetic enjoyment of surfaces, whatever their cognitive status may be” (Cohen 1995:21). Tourists deliberately devour simulations.

These two notions, the continual search for happiness through purchase, and the conscious consumption of simulations are combined in a trend that I call the *victory of pleasure*.

Second, the insatiability of simulation refers to the impossibility of capturing the real essence of a place due to the constant shifting of signs: “why would the

simulacrum with three dimensions be closer to the real than the one with two dimensions? (...) it has the opposite effect: to render us sensitive to the fourth dimension as a hidden truth a secret dimension of everything, which suddenly takes on all the force of evidence”(Baudrillard 1994:107). In Lynch’s terms (1960), it is argued that in postmodernism the ‘imageability’ of the city, that is the degree to which objects in a landscape are able to provoke a firm emotional reaction in observers, has triumphed over its ‘legibility’ i.e. the measure of coherence of the different elements of a city. The focus on ‘imageability’ is perpetual: “As we get more reconstructions of Mediterranean villages or Mexican saloons in our shopping malls, and more Thai and Chinese restaurants in our city streets, so the tourist industry in the real Mediterranean, the real Mexico, Thailand and China, has to exert itself with even more contrived representations of the apparent ‘reality’ of these places” (Rojek and Urry 2004:12). Since in postmodern capitalist society “the inauthenticity of the sign (...) is perceived as a positive quality and enjoyed by the receiver in mass society” (Scott 2004:115), the consequential elimination of differences is argued to lead to a general mediocrity (Scott 2004): “the more cities seek to differentiate themselves on the basis of distinctive fantasy themes, the more they resemble one another with the same line-up of attractions” (Hannigan 1998:4). Better, you can say it generates the paradoxical situation of *mediocre superiority*- where everything is better than the real thing. Much in the way that Extreme Makeover Programs -plastic surgery is the ultimate sign business- makes everyone exquisitely beautiful- yet all in the same way. Soon, the globe will be adorned with consumption-oriented places reconstructed in Dutch 17th-century style- yet all provided with air-conditioning. The post-modern ethos combined with technological

innovations enabling ever more simulated reconstructions pose a problem of 'placelessness', the "distinctiveness of a destination" (Cohen 1995:23). What is witnessed is a conflation of geographical space and historical time which erases the uniqueness of any setting (Hannigan 1998).

Also, these simulations are closely related to consumption. An attractive environment is a necessary condition for tourism to take place (Hall and Page 2006). As Zukin's "special embeddedness" (1990) implies, it is as much about what you sell as where you sell it: "consumption occurs within, and is regulated by, purpose-built spaces for consumption characterized by the provision of consumption-related services, visual consumption, and cultural products" (Craik 2004:125). In that sense, practices in tourism serve to illustrate trends in society at large: "holiday centers are therefore a kind of prototype for what is now becoming much more widespread; the aesthetization of consumption" (Urry 2002:15). Such consumption takes place in simulated environments that appear to be public, but actually carefully select their visitors. Hence, these simulations are 'semi-public', they are privatized consumption-oriented simulations taking on a public appearance.

The proliferating same-ness of tourist destinations both in their simulated appearance as in their private, consumer-oriented essence as a consequence of the postmodern economy of signs, I capture under the notion of *the defeat of place*.

The two notions of the *victory of pleasure* and the *defeat of place* capture the main trends in contemporary tourism. However, this is not the end of the analysis. In Chapter Three, the political implications of these notions when taken in a more general critical framework of capitalism will be discussed.

CHAPTER 3

DEFEAT OF POLITICS

In the previous chapter two trends in contemporary tourism were established as a result of the commoditization associated with the postmodern economy of signs. First, the *victory of pleasure* refers to both the search for happiness and identity through purchase as the conscious consumption of simulations. Second, the proliferation of simulated consumer-oriented exclusive tourist spots leads to “placelessness”, the continuing loss of distinction between different localities, creating privatized, semi-public consumption oriented places that are interchangeable, is a trend captured under the notion of *defeat of place*. This chapter seeks to judge these trends in the framework of a critique on capitalism.

The *victory of pleasure* and the *defeat of place* have been judged by some scholars to be a positive development. Many scholars have pointed to the enabling character of commoditization, especially in cultural tourism. Three main arguments evaluating the current trends in tourism in an optimistic light will be discussed; the *democracy* argument, the *statement of the self* argument and finally the *preservation, profit and pride* argument. However, these arguments are refuted on the grounds of their immanency to the capitalist system. They take the capitalist framework for granted rather than to question it.

Second, this chapter will criticize the developments in tourism in the form of a critique on capitalism. In order to do so, the postmodern sign economy will be explained in terms of capitalism’s inherent internalizing of its outside. With ‘outside’ is meant areas that are not subject to the capitalist logic. The third section of this

chapter explains how the loss of the inside-outside distinction, or in other words the total internalization of society by capitalism is problematic. As there are no longer areas of life that area stand in opposition to the logic that dictates society, the loss of the inside-outside distinction purports to a defeat of critique, which renders all non-capitalist forms of happiness impossible and impedes potential change of society. The fourth section discusses another negative consequence of the internalization of its outside by capitalism, namely the loss of the public-private distinction which weakens the place for politics and political action.

Hence, the current trends in tourism are placed in the framework of postmodern capitalism. As such, contemporary trends in tourism give insight into how the internalization of the outside by capitalism has detrimental effects for political life in terms of the defeat of critique as in compromising a clearly defined place of politics and political action.

Democracy, Statement of the Self and Preservation, Profit and Pride

First, the *democracy* argument refers to the equalization associated with mass tourism and simulations. Mass tourism enables and is enabled by the quantification and homogenization of visual experience (Urry 2000). No longer are the marvels of the world to be viewed by a small elite only. The quantification of sight through simulations enables more people to participate in tourism. Following the same line of argument, Rojek and Urry (2000) put forward that photography, an activity closely related to tourism, enables more people to derive pleasure from beautiful spots all around the globe once pictured (Rojek and Urry 2004). The alleged democratizing

quality of mass tourism has also been captured under the term 'social tourism' (Hall and Page 2006).

Second, the *statement of the self* argument judges the postmodern economy of signs to be enabling in the multiple possibilities it opens up for the expression of identity. In assessing the consumption culture, Hughes (1995) stresses the facilitating role of the rise in market segments: “[the differentiation of market segments and niches] provide signifying regimes in which identity can be expressed” (Hughes 1995:799).

Finally, the *preservation, profit and pride* argument maintains that the commoditization of culture into simulations for tourists opens up new possibilities for vernacular peoples. Cohen (1995) sees simulations as “an alternative policy to unbridled penetration, and [enabling] the toured group to derive some benefit from tourism, while protecting it from disruption by outsiders” (Cohen 1995:18). Thus, simulations may be preferred, in terms of both protection and profit. Also, through commoditization, allegedly new meanings can be added and commoditization can even help to preserve local habits and crafts that otherwise would have died a quiet death (Cohen 1988). A similar sentiment is expressed by Adam (1997) who claims that commoditization is part “of a very positive process by which people are beginning to re-evaluate their history and shake off the shame of peasantry” (Adam 1997:13). The commoditization of culture as seen in tourism is argued to enhance the pride people take in their own culture. MacDonald (2004) comes to corresponding conclusions after research on the erection of a Gaelic heritage center in Scotland. Macdonald (2004) maintains that entering the commodity market of heritage tourism by erecting the Gaelic heritage center has been an opportunity for

the local people to use capitalism to their own financial and cultural advantage rather than a degradation of Gaelic culture into a commodity. She, therefore, prefers speaking of the “Gaelicisation of commerce” rather than the “commercialization of Gaelic” (MacDonald 2004:159), expressing agency on the part of the Gaelic vernaculars in commercialization instead of sheer victimization by commercial forces. Hence, the commoditization of culture associated with tourism is argued to benefit the local people in terms of preservation, pride and profit.

This thesis, however, refutes all three arguments on the grounds that its argumentation lies within the framework of capitalism, and hence cannot be considered genuinely critical. The following paragraph will explain the immanency to capitalism of the arguments at the heart of the *democracy* argument, the *statement of the self* argument as well as the *preservation, profit and pride* argument.

First, the *democracy* argument holds that mass tourism and simulations for tourist purposes enable more people to enjoy tourist practices. Cheap tickets enable a *massive* flow to sunny shores systematically spruced up with similar suites. Everyone can book a stay in a 17th-century bungalow in Eson-stad, not just the lucky few who happen to live in such an appealing town. The defeat of place may actually point to a victory of the people. How is consumption thought to be democratizing? Baudrillard (1998) explains that modern society equates happiness with equality in terms of consumption. The quest for happiness, for a qualitatively good life, has turned into a quest for equality in terms of goods: “the myth of happiness (...) comes to embody *the myth of Equality*” (Baudrillard 1998:49). Equality is not equality in terms of abilities, responsibilities and social opportunities, as Baudrillard (1998:5) maintains would be the basis of real democracy. Rather, equality is translated into

equality in terms of needs. Everyone is equal in terms of desire for water, food, shelter, clothing- all men are equal in terms of their need for the use-value of products: “At the meat-and-drink level (...), there are no proletarians, no privileged individuals” (Baudrillard 1998:50). Thus, the social welfare system tries to bring about equality by producing more goods so that everyone can consume equally. The result of this “egalitarian myth” (Baudrillard 1998:49) is an economic system of growth and affluence, allegedly leading to equalization. This equalization in terms of consumption gives birth to “the democracy of social standing, the democracy of the TV, the car and the stereo” (Baudrillard 1998: 50). However, this “equality before the Object” (Baudrillard 1998: 50) is misleading, since it is based on a biased assumption, of equating happiness with equality and equality with equality in terms of need. Hence, the structural inequalities of society whose overcoming would entail ‘true’ democracy, like inequality in terms of “capacities, responsibilities, of social chances” (Baudrillard 1998:5), are overlooked. The *democracy* associated with consumption, or more specifically tourism, is hence a non-democracy in terms of true equal opportunities and chances:

Whether or not one is able to prove that consumption possibilities are being equalized (income differentials being flattened out, social redistribution, the same fashion for everyone, along with the same TV programmes and holiday destinations), this means nothing, since posing the problem in terms of the equalization of consumption is already to substitute the pursuit of objects and signs (levels of substitution) for the real problems and their logical and sociological analysis (Baudrillard 1998: 50-51).

The argument is based upon a specific, pro-market notion of democracy, one that in turn serves to preserve the status-quo:

If the worker and his boss enjoy the same television programme and visit the same resort places, if the typist is as attractively made up as the daughter of her employer, if the Negro owns a Cadillac, if they all read the same newspaper, then this assimilation indicated not the disappearance of classes, but the extent

to which the needs and satisfactions that serve the preservation of the Establishment are shared by the underlying population.(Marcuse 1972:21).

To summarize, the *democracy* argument can be refuted on the grounds of its capitalist underlying assumption of democracy as being equality in terms of consumption rather than equality in terms of abilities, responsibilities and chances. The discourse of capitalism on democracy in terms of equal consumption conflicts with the attainment of ‘true’ democracy in terms of abilities, responsibilities and chances. The *democracy* argument is created within and in support of the capitalist consumption framework which it is supposed to judge.

Second, the *statement of the self* argument refers to identity expression through commoditization, which is a common practice in postmodern consumer society. By consuming certain products, the consumer is able to differentiate himself from others and hence gain a place in social life. First of all, this argument as put forward previously by Hughes (1995) is tautological. Hughes (1995) praises consumer culture, in which identity is expressed through consumption preferences, on the grounds that it enables expression of identity through consumption preferences. Second, the *statement of the self* argument implies a freedom of choice, an assumption questioned by this thesis. The argument implies a sovereignty of the consumer. Baudrillard (1998) explains why consumer society functions through a system where social differentiation takes place through consumption. According to Baudrillard (1998), needs are not coincidental. The system of differentiation serves to support the productive capitalist system: “the system of needs is the product of the system of production” (Baudrillard 1998:74). Capitalist profit is created by having the workers produce surplus-value: the value of the production necessarily outweighs the sum value of the wages. As the workers as a whole cannot buy the whole of their

production, capitalism needs a market to sell the created surplus-value. In consequence, capitalist production *needs* continuously growing consumer demand. Hence, the consumer has no other choice but to consume: “The cult of individual spontaneity and the naturalness of needs is, by its nature, father to the productivist option” (Baudrillard 1998:66). As explained in the previous chapter, whereas the consumer demand for products *an sich*, in their use-value, is limited, the consumer demand for products as prestige is unlimited. This is so, since the social value of a product is determined socially. As the system of economic growth means a further extension of products through society, new products of prestige are being sought. Hence, needs are never objective and never satisfied: “if one admits that need is never so much the need for a particular object as the ‘need’ for difference (*the desire for the social meaning*), then it will be clear that there can never be any *achieved* satisfaction, or therefore any *definition* of need” (Baudrillard 1998:78). In consequence, demand will always be growing. Social differentiation through consumption in effect means the support for an ever-growing capitalist apparatus. The social differentiation through needs ensures that consumer demand will move along with production. Needs are an extension of the productive system and thus not autonomous: “Needs, taken one by one, are *nothing* and that there is only a system of needs, or rather that needs are only *the most advanced form of the rational systematization of the productive forces at the individual level*, where ‘consumption’ takes over logically and necessarily from production” (Baudrillard 1998:75). We may be able to express ourselves through thousands of different products, yet we are not able to express ourselves any differently. As Barber (1995) observes, the freedom of choice of goods may be increased, yet our freedom not to consume suffers dearly.

The sovereignty of the consumer is a hoax: “In fact, the consumer is sovereign in a jungle of ugliness where *freedom of choice has been forced upon him*”(Baudrillard 1998:72). Capitalism’s discourse of ‘choice’ is antagonistic to the reality of enforced needs. Hence, the *statement of the self* argument is not only tautological; it also falsely assumes consumer sovereignty and thus fails to question the workings of the society it functions in.

Finally, the *preservation, profit and pride* argument advances the idea that, through commoditization, culture and habits are not only being preserved, but are renewed with a certain pride while benefiting the local people financially. Although the offering of cultural experiences for consumption may have crucial cultural and/or economic importance to certain locales, this argument can be denounced in terms of the ability of choice it implies. Is there another way to preserve and take pride in culture other than commoditization? Is it not exactly capitalism with its *Lonely Planet Paradox* that threatened the culture in the first place? The internalization of society by capitalism marks the attack on established cultural practices. The logic of capitalism demands full adjustment of the society it functions in, and hence culture adapts. Non-instrumental and non-rational aspects of culture are rendered insignificant. Only by shaping these aspects in a form inherent to capitalism they can exist. Through commoditization cultural aspects that in themselves have no instrumental value in capitalist society finally become *of use*. The agency of the locale to use the commoditization of tourism to their benefits that the advocates imply is in fact a restricted agency. If you have a choice of making money by selling culture as a tourist product, if you have the choice of expressing your identity by packaging your culture, can we conceive this as a *choice* – that is as an option among

other options- or is it the only possibility left within a capitalist framework?

Threatened by the logic of the marketplace, culture has finally submitted to the laws of the market. Again, the argumentation is immanent to capitalism.

To sum up, the claims made by capitalism define the place within which the debate takes place. Capitalism narrows down the options of choice to those that comply with its system and poses these choices as arguments in favor of its system. The promises made by capitalism, here in terms of democracy, identity expression and preservation of culture, are in effect threatened by capitalism itself. Capitalism's discourse is antagonistic to its practices. The argumentation in favor of capitalism is confined within the capitalist logic. Capitalism has a self-validating hypothesis; its power lies in immanence. Or, as Hardt and Negri(2000) put it:

the laws by which capital function are not separate and fixed laws that stand above and direct capital's operations from on high, but historically viable laws that are immanent to the very functioning of capital: the laws of the rate of profit, the rate of exploitation, the realization of surplus value, and so forth. (Hardt and Negri 2000:326).

And though these laws are limited, they are applied in analyzing the whole of society. Tourism is profuse with advertisements promising "freedom"- yet the pool closes at 6. Such contradictions however, do not dismantle the discourse: "One does not "believe" the statement of an operational concept, but it justifies itself in action- in getting the job done, in selling and buying, in refusal to listen to others" (Marcuse 1972:92). This justification through operability- a concept inherent to capitalist logic- is problematic. Like Baudrillard (1998), Marcuse (1972) maintains that needs are socially constructed and should be regarded in a historical perspective. Apart from so-called "vital" needs such as food, clothing and shelter, the needs of a society are determined by external dominant factors, the mode of production. A fulfillment

of those needs generated by the system cannot function as an argument to support the quality of that very system. Put in a more macabre fashion, one cannot justify Auschwitz in stating that it did what it intended to; it perfectly served the 'need' to kill millions of people. Though this argument may seem extreme, it is exactly such self-validation by rationality that runs through capitalist society. The operational rationality of the system is the ultimate proof of the system of operational rationality. The irrationality of this system of rationality resides in its immanence; technological rationality must be consumed in order to sustain the apparatus that brings about technological rationality. Rational society functions through a fallacy of circular reasoning- *petitio principii* prevails.

So far, three arguments displaying a positive evaluation of contemporary trends in tourism have been refuted on the grounds of remaining within the capitalist framework rather than criticizing that very framework. The logical next step for this thesis to take is then to show how the trends in contemporary tourism, being the *defeat of place* and the *victory of pleasure*, indicate mechanisms at the heart of capitalism like rationality and commoditization that have serious negative political consequences. In order to do so, the postmodern economy of signs will be discussed in terms of the internalization of non-capitalist grounds by capitalism.

Post-modernity and the Inside-Outside Dichotomy

Hardt and Negri (2000) explain the postmodern capitalism in terms of the inside-outside dichotomy, an approach that will be followed in this chapter.

“Outside” should be read as non-capitalist, whereas “inside” refers to processes inherent to the capitalist system.

In two specific ways, capitalism relies on its “outside”. First, capitalist profit is created by having the workers produce surplus-value: the value of the production necessarily outweighs the sum value of the wages. As the workers as a whole cannot buy the whole of their production, capitalism needs a market to sell the created surplus-value. Capitalism thus looks for non-capitalist surroundings (the “outside”) to turn into new markets. In the course of capitalism, imperialism proved a useful vehicle for creating new markets.

Second, the profits made by selling the surplus-value need to be reinvested in new capital, both constant capital in the form of raw materials and machines as variable capital in the form of labor. This serves as an incentive for capitalism to look beyond its own boundaries again, to become imperialist. Whereas the appropriation of constant capital can be done while leaving the social composition of the non-capitalist environment relatively unharmed, the necessary investment in variable capital -labor- implies a qualitative change in the organization of the surroundings at hand, a process Marx called “formal subsumption”. New investment options are created through changing formerly non-capitalist surroundings in such a way that its productive forces and social organization become essentially capitalistic. Once under the spell of capitalism however, these formerly non-capitalist surroundings are no longer “outside”, and hence can no longer function as a new market and new surroundings are sought- *ad infinitum*. Behold capitalism’s conspicuous contradiction: “capital’s reliance on its outside, on the non-capitalist environment, which satisfies the need to realize surplus value, conflicts with the

internalization of the noncapitalist environment, which satisfies the need to capitalize that realized surplus” (Hardt and Negri 2000: 227). In effect, capitalism transforms a society, it erases its outside: “In the process of capitalization *the outside is internalized*” (Hardt and Negri 2000: 226). The crisis associated with this process does not signify its demise, but rather should be viewed as “a normal condition (...) [indicating] not its end but its tendency and mode of operation”(Hardt and Negri 2000: 222).

For a while, imperialism facilitates capitalism not only by providing both new markets and new investment possibilities in the colonies, but also by exporting “class struggle and civil war in order to preserve order and sovereignty at home”(Hardt and Negri 2000: 232). However, in essence, imperialism contradicts capitalism through the limits it poses on competition. Imperialism is exclusivist; it operates on tariffs and protection of (national) markets. In other words, imperialism fosters a rigid inside and outside. Though initially expanding the boundaries for capitalism, imperialism itself is also based on boundaries, and thus finally hampers the further development of capitalism: “at a certain point the boundaries created by imperialist practices obstruct capitalist development and the full realization of its world market. Capital must eventually overcome the barriers between inside and outside” (Hardt and Negri 2000:234). Overcoming imperialism means overcoming the boundaries set by the state, and hence overcoming the state: “the decline of the nation state is in a profound sense the full realization of the relationship between the state and capital” (Hardt and Negri 2000: 236). It is clear how by following the argumentation of the internalization of the outside, ultimately there must be a *natural* limit to capitalism,

since there will at one point be no more outside to function as market- everything will be subsumed.

The “ecological disaster”, referring to nature as the ultimate limit of capitalism, is countered by a change in capital accumulation. Instead of subsuming non-capitalist environments, capitalism now looks inward for its expansionary drifts. The shift made by capitalism is that of the informatization of the economy, often captured under the heading of post-modernization, a process characterized by a shift from the industrial to the service sector. Communication and information play a large role in the production process. The passage to an informational economy implies a movement from the production of durable, material goods to immaterial goods- the informational economy produces knowledge, service, cultural products and communication (Hardt and Negri 2000:290). One of the facets of immaterial labor is that of “affective labor”, jobs that require to a great extent personal, human contact and interaction, which essentially pivot around “the creation and manipulation of affect”(Hardt and Negri 2000:293). What is produced and sold in postmodern consumer society no longer is material, but immaterial. Human relations, communications and knowledge become commoditized; they become the inside of *capitalism*, whereas formerly these were relatively independent from the capitalist dictum. Human intellectual faculties are no longer non-capitalist, leading to a further blurring of the inside and outside.

The *victory of pleasure* and the *defeat of place* can be translated into the terminology of the loss of the inside and outside to show two problematic political implications that the following sections will elaborate upon. To give a brief introduction into the argumentation extended in the next sections, first, the simulated

character of tourist attractions captured under the notion *defeat of place* points to the internalization of culture as signs that can be played with. Everything is a commodity and hence internal to the system of capitalism. Culture is thus no longer antipodal to the society it is created within. As such, the critical potential of culture as a negation of the reality is diminished. Also, the habits and behavior prescribed in commodities through the internalization of the “inside” of human beings, further erodes the critical capacity of consumers. The *victory of pleasure* is made possible by the postmodern shift from material to immaterial goods. Happiness is related to purchase. The pleasure associated with consumption in effect dulls the critical capacity of consumers. Hence, the *victory of pleasure* and the *defeat of place* betoken a *defeat of critique*. The defeat of critical capacity entails the loss of transcendental concepts, which have no immediate operational value and hence find in rational society no place. However, it is exactly through concepts like Happiness and Justice that man can critically evaluate his current circumstances and think about bringing about change. Thus, the *defeat of critique* in effect hinders the attainment of any other, non-capitalist form of enjoyment, as well as diminishes the possibility of changing the society.

Second, the exclusive, consumer-oriented semi-public nature of the tourist trends expressed by *defeat of place* pertains to a loss of the inside and outside in terms of the public and the private, which weakens the place of politics and political action. As the political like the cultural has been internalized by capitalism, the political is nowhere and everywhere, which makes it harder for the subject to identify his enemy and friends. Through consumption, the subject is further atomized, a trend supported by the proliferation of semi-public shopping areas. In short, the *defeat of*

place leads to the paralyzing the subject as political agent while empowering him as a consumer.

Next sections deal with the *defeat of critique* and the *defeat of place of political action* more elaborately.

Victory of Pleasure and Defeat of Critique

The internalization of human relations and culture is also subject to the analysis of Marcuse (1972). Paradoxically, Marcuse's (1972) outside lies inside: the outside can be thought to be the critical index of one's mind that should stand in opposition to the outside- the reality of society. The outside is "an individual consciousness and an individual unconsciousness *apart from* public opinion and behaviour" (Marcuse 1972:22). The outside is the individual intellectuality as opposed to the inside of the society governed by capitalism. It is the outside should be read in terms of externality and transcendence to the capitalist system.

However, with the aid of continuous technological development, the productive apparatus has also invaded the critical capabilities of the consumers: "the irresistible output of the entertainment and information industry carry with them prescribed attitudes and habits, certain intellectual and emotional reactions which bind the consumers more or less pleasantly to the producers, and, through the latter, to the whole" (Marcuse 1972:24). Through the consumption of goods which harbor directions for human conduct, the consumer buys himself into silencing his own formerly independent inside. His behavior is dictated by the market. As a consequence, whereas previously man consisted of two "dimensions", being his

independent inside and his dependent social being, through commoditization and its prescribed communication and information attitudes, man becomes “one-dimensional man” (Marcuse 1972:13).

The independent intellectual consciousness of man is capable of delivering critique on the society man lives in, a process in which art and culture as expressions of man’s independent mind play an important role. Through the commoditization of culture however, the difference between culture and reality, between art and the state of art it is supposed to reflect has disappeared: “any tension or contradiction between culture and reality has been steadily eroded and destroyed by the increasingly sophisticated technology and primitive aesthetic technique of the culture industry” (Gunster 2000:44). As a result, the critical potential of art ceases to exist. Rather, culture becomes the epitome of consumer society, indicating the deficit of the “dream of art: instead of being the thrall of consumer society, [art] would be able to decipher it” (Rizter 1998:16)

Contrary to what the term suggests, one-dimensional society does not offer “one” singular experience. One-dimensional society is not a *one-size-fits-all*-society. Rather, plurality prevails. The one-dimensionality refers to the *form* of the products offered by society: “This quality of “ever-sameness” does not apply to the surface content of popular culture, which is constantly changing, but to its *form*- to the structures that hold everything in place” (Gunster 2000:42). In contemporary tourism, although in appearance Amsterdam in Kemer and Batavia-stad differ considerably, in essence they are the same: a simulation in historical Dutch building style intended for mass consumption. There are many commodities, yet they are all *commodities*. Contradictions seem to be proliferating, but in fact they are harmless-

they share the same commodity form: “What parades as progress in the culture industry, as the incessantly new which it offers up, remains the disguise for an eternal sameness; everywhere the changes mask a skeleton which has changed just as little as the profit motive itself since the time it first gained its predominance over culture” (Adorno and Rabinach:14). Everything goes- but not beyond the system. Capitalism’s internalization of consciousness and criticism leaves no space for negation. Outcasts do no longer show alternative lifestyles, but affirm the status-quo: “They are no longer images of another way of life but rather freaks or types of the same life, serving as an affirmation rather than negation of the established world” (Marcuse 1972:59).

What is lacking are areas of true contradiction, where enough distance is created vis-à-vis reality to critically reflect on it: “We shall say that this counter-discourse, which establishes no real distance, is as immanent in consumer society as any of its other aspects. (...) Just as medieval society was balanced on God and the Devil, so ours is balanced on consumption and its denunciation. (...) No heresy is possible any longer in a state of affluence” (Baudrillard 1998:196). Consumer society gives rioters little chance. How are consumers lured into giving up their criticism? Why do they “listen” to the commodities? As Chapter Two has shown, consumers *consciously* enjoy simulations. In this chapter, the emphasis should lie on *enjoy*. The pleasure associated with the increase in the standard of living is responsible for seducing the consumer out of his independent mind into a dependent shopping sprawl. The abundant pleasure possibilities associated with the good life made possible by Baudrillard’s growth society precipitate “desublimation”: a decline in autonomy and comprehension (Marcuse 1972). There is a firm belief that “the

real is rational and that the system delivers the goods” (Marcuse 1972:78), a state of mind Marcuse refers to as “Happy Consciousness”. The institutionalization of pleasure hence contributes greatly to the “authoritarian personality of our time” (Marcuse 1972:70). Capitalism, as Gunster puts it, “starts to *feel* good” (Gunster 2000: 51). People are willing to give up autonomy and critical thinking for a bit of pleasure. Landal Green Parks, the company owning Eson-stad, states that “although the emphasis is on history, the guests will receive the luxury they are used from Landal Green Parks” (Landal Green Parks 2006). Rather, Marcuse (1972) would argue, *because of* the luxury the guests are used from Landal Green Parks, they will consume the somewhat promiscuous “emphasis” on history. Pleasure, the nexus around which the tourist industry pivots, is not innocent. Pleasure dulls, pleasure comforts, and as such pleasure resists a change of the status-quo: “It is a good way of life-much better than before- and as a good way of life, it militates against qualitative change” (Marcuse 1972:24). Man however still lives in “unfreedom”, as he is still “subjective to his productive apparatus” (Marcuse 1972:39) and as such does no longer think independently. Unfreedom is conserved by the comforts that the system generates. Stretched out on a towel at the beach, enjoying the sun after applying a product that promises *natural bronze*, unfreedom doesn’t seem such a bad option:

If the individuals are satisfied to the point of happiness with the goods and services handed down to them by the administration, why should they insist on different institutions for a different production of different goods and services? And if the individuals are pre-conditioned so that the satisfying goods also include thoughts, feelings, aspirations, why should they wish to think, feel, and imagine for themselves?(Marcuse 1972:52-53).

The *victory of pleasure* over critical capacity has two serious implications for the well-being of society. First, it hinders the fulfillment of any type of happiness other than the one dictated by capitalism. Second, the loss of dialectics associated

with the victory of pleasure diminishes the possibility of political action; the possibility of changing society for the better.

Victory of Pleasure and Defeat of Plural Pleasures

Marcuse introduces the “Pleasure Principle” (Marcuse 1972:71) which refers to the antithetical nature of pleasure; if pleasure is a violation of everyday reality, seeking pleasure involves a negation of that reality. As such, it is important in shaping an independent, critical mind. In more practical terms, the Pleasure Principle is the mechanism that makes children do exactly that which you forbid them to. Though few parents will appraise their children’s disobedience, the Pleasure Principle plays an important role in putting forward claims that are irreconcilable with society and hence enable critical reflection on that society. The instant pleasures displayed in current society take away that critical potential: “the range of socially permissible and desirable satisfaction is greatly enlarged, but through this satisfaction, the Pleasure Principle is reduced- deprived of the claims which are irreconcilable with the established society. Pleasure, thus adjusted, generates submission” (Marcuse 1972:71). The individual gets used to the blind acceptance of whatever is being served: “In the ultimate triumph of style, they already come to us prepackaged for our immediate consumption (...)And thus, the capacity to have new experiences, to critically reflect upon things that do not fit into a predetermined cognitive schematic, is fatally damaged” (Gunster 2000: 53).

Similarly, Baudrillard (1998) argues that consumer society obstructs the attainment of enjoyment rather than offering it. Enjoyment, “as something

autonomous and final” (Baudrillard 1998:49), as something antithetical to society has been replaced by the imposed needs in a system of social differentiation through consumption:

Enjoyment would define consumption for oneself (...) But consumption is never that. Enjoyment is enjoyment for one’s own benefit, but consuming is something one never does alone. (...) One enters, rather, into a generalized system of exchange and production of coded values where, in spite of themselves, all consumers are involved with others (Baudrillard 1998:49).

Like other emotions, in postmodern sign economy, enjoyment is attached to commodities. As part of the system, enjoyment breeds compliance, which in turn prevents the consumer from independent pleasure, enjoyment or happiness:

Happiness as total or inner enjoyment- that happiness independent of the signs which could manifest it to others and to those around us, the happiness which has no need of *evidence*- is therefore excluded from the outset from the consumer ideal in which happiness is, first and foremost, the demand for equality (and distinction, of course) and must, accordingly, always signify with regard to *visible* criteria (Baudrillard 1998: 49).

The capitalist dictum ensures that other, non-capitalist forms of pleasure are hard to attain. There is one type of pleasure, and it comes in the commodity form. In short, the victory of pleasure announces the defeat of multiple pleasures.

Victory of Pleasure and Defeat of Potentiality

Marcuse (1972) invokes Plato to emphasize the importance of transcendent thinking in the possibility of changing the quality of human life. Platonic thought is essentially dualistic; he mirrors the events of everyday life to their transcendent concepts. If the current state of affairs does not adhere to Justice, then though justice is violated, Justice is intact. It survives as a concept, and thus maintains its truth as a

possible guidance to changing society: “thus there is contradiction rather than correspondence between dialectical thought and the given reality; the true judgment judges this reality not in its own terms, but in terms which envisage its subversion. And in this subversion, reality comes into its own truth” (Marcuse 1972:110). The dual character of Platonic thought implies a passage from *is* to *ought*, or in Marcusean terms, from “actuality” to “potentiality” (Marcuse 1972:13). The further a thought digresses into abstraction, the greater the tension with actuality, the more valuable such a thought can be for improving society: “the value of a thought is measured by its distance from the continuity of the familiar. It is objectively devalued as this distance is reduced; the more it approximates to the pre-existing standard, the further its antithetical function is diminished” (Adorno 1974: 80).

Both Platonic and Marxist thought are built on the assumption that man ultimately is led by truth. Once man has learned to see what really is, he will act accordingly- be it defending Socrates or overthrowing the bourgeoisie. As Marcuse puts it: “Epistemology is ethics, and ethics is epistemology” (Marcuse 1972:105). However, in formal logic and rationality, the content of a concept is no longer relevant. Rather, the instrumentality of the concepts, their effective relations have priority: “Under the rule of formal logic, the notion of the conflict between essence and appearance is expendable if not meaningless; the material content is neutralized” (Marcuse 1972: 114). In postmodern rational capitalist society “only what appears exists” (Hardt and Negri 2000:322). In consequence, ethics had to give up its spot, visibility has become the new epistemology.

Transcendent thoughts have no instrumental value, and as such are discarded in rational society. Capitalism denounces transcendent concepts, concepts that live

outside reality as having no direct practical relation with that reality: “The metaphysical dimension, formerly a genuine field of rational thought, becomes irrational and unscientific. On the grounds of its own realizations, Reason repels transcendence” (Marcuse 1972:141).

Moreover, once transcendental, “powerful” terms are internalized and used by capitalism for its own purposes, thereby further deteriorating its revolutionary potential: “Every time a store promises “justice” or “freedom” to its customers, for example, it transforms the original idea into an advertising jingle, effectively dissolving any critical potential it might once have had” (Gunster 2000: 62). Capitalism digests its own critique; on the festive banquet its own outside is being served.

The internalization of the human capacity of criticism through commoditization has negative repercussions in the possibility of qualitative change of society. The inside-outside opposition is necessary to consider the difference between actuality, being the current state of affairs as the inside of capitalism, and the potentiality of our inner thoughts, which is ultimately the only vehicle by which the human condition can improve (Amidon 2000:56). The annihilation of the second dimension, of the outside of critical thought, is detrimental in that it renders both history and future beside the point. By neutralizing critical thinking, the system neutralizes any qualitative differences both history and the future may display:

The suppression of this dimension in the societal universe of operational rationality is a *suppression of history*, and this is not an academic but a political affair. It is suppression of the society’s own past- and of its future, inasmuch as this future invokes the qualitative change, the negation of the present. (..) [it] is repulsing and forgetting the historical reality- the horror of fascism; the idea of socialism; the preconditions of democracy; the content of freedom (Marcuse 1972:88).

The seductions of a rationally functioning society deaden our critical capacity. The victory of pleasure questions the actual democratic state of our society as well as the possibility of changing it:

It impedes the development of autonomous, independent individuals who judge and decide consciously for themselves. These, however, would be the precondition for a democratic society which needs adults who have come of age in order to sustain itself and develop (Adorno and Rabinbach 1975:18-19).

Defeat of Place of Politics

The postmodern economy of signs could also be argued to lead to an erosion of the place of politics and political action. The political has not remained immune to the postmodern economy of signs, but has become part of it. Through the commodity form art, culture, religion and philosophy, all are under the spell of capitalism, evaporating any critical outside: “if mass communications blend together harmoniously and often unnoticeably, art, politics, religion, and philosophy with commercials, they bring these realms of culture to their common denominator—the commodity form” (Marcuse 1972:58). The political is as much a sign to be consumed as culture or any other commodity is. Politics is subject to the postmodern play with signs: “It is the ludic which increasingly governs our relations to objects, persons, culture, leisure, and, at times, work, and also politics” (Baudrillard 1998:113). The political thus has lost its distinctiveness vis-à-vis other elements of society.

Moreover, not only does postmodern consumer society impose prescribed habits and thoughts onto the consumers as mentioned in the previous section, but the consumption system also atomizes the consumers. Consumption takes place at an

individual level. As a collective, we all consume individually. The individual action of consumption places the consumer separate from other consumers, while by consuming it supports the system of consumption. Hence, “consumption is (...) a powerful element of social control (by the atomization of consuming individuals)” (Baudrillard 1998:84). The mechanism destroys “any collective form of sociality – individualizing social actors in their separate automobiles and in front of separate video screens- [while at the same time imposing] (...) a new uniformity of action and thought” (Hardt and Negri 2000:322). Consumption atomizes the individual, erasing a feeling of general collectivity which possibly further deteriorates the potential for political action.

Instead, the consumer finds himself in a society where images are abundant, political and non-political up for individual consumption. The public no longer connotes a political place but a consumption place. Whereas in modernity, the private was constricted to the interiority of the home, and the outside connoted the public, post-modernity characterizes itself by such a degree of privatization of formerly public places, that this opposition no longer holds: “*the commons, which once were considered the basis of the concept of the public, are expropriated for private use and no one can lift a finger. The public is thus dissolved, privatized, even as a concept*” (Hardt and Negri 2000:301). Under the influence of capitalism, the commonality of public place has become the commodity of public place: “the immanent relation between the public and the common is replaced by the transcendent power of private property” (Hardt and Negri 2000: 301).

The public place of political participation can be said to have been impoverished. The location of the political might be everywhere and nowhere at the

same time; everywhere in its commodity-form and nowhere as distinctive from other commodities. Politics resides in a *non-place*: “It might appear to be free of the binary divisions of striation of modern boundaries, but really is crisscrossed by so many fault lines that it only appears as a continuous, uniform space. (...) there is no place of power- it is both everywhere and nowhere. (...) [the political resides in] an *ou-topia*, or really a *non-place*” (Hardt and Negri 2000: 190).

Meanwhile, commercial enterprises often use a public appeal by taking up a public appearance. Not only does the rise of privatized consumption places demark in some sense the loss of truly public places, they also use the *sign* of ‘public place’ for consumer appeal. The blurring of the private and the public can be traced within the trends of contemporary tourism. The loss of distinction between the public and the private leads to the creation of so-called “urbanoid environments” (Hannigan 1998), exclusive private environments pretending to be public, while being measured, controlled and organized to accommodate consumerism, entertainment and popular culture.

The *victory of pleasure* and the *defeat of place* inherent to these urbanoid environments are not restricted to tourist attractions only. More and more, whole cities turn into exclusive ideal places, the city becomes a “metropolis which ignores the homelessness, unemployment, social injustice and crime, while eagerly transforming sites and channels of public expression into “promotional spaces” (Hannigan 1998: 4), and in that sense not significantly different from Disneyland.

Hannigan (1998) mentions some of the downfalls of these Disneyfied semi-public environments. The admission fees keep low-income people from entering, protestors are not allowed, small vendors are left out in favor of big multinationals,

curfews are exercised on those who are thought to do harm, like groups of teenagers and spaces are copyrighted so taking pictures is prohibited. All this leads to a transformation of the original public place to a new private one, one that tells a whole different story (Hannigan 1998). Instead of promoting the promises of the public, being political exchange and participation, these semi-public environments dictate economic exchange and political exclusion. Urbanoid environments appear public, yet they shut out poverty, crime, and discourage a mixing of classes (Hannigan 1998). Exclusion prevails along with signs of public inclusion.

To sum up, the internalization of the political by the postmodern economy of signs implies the weakening of a proper place of politics in terms of the loss of its distinction vis-à-vis other commodities and discourses instructed by capitalism. The individual character of consumption further atomizes the individual, while the sign of the public is being used for commercial enterprises that in fact have an exclusive nature.

The non-place of politics as a result of consumer society could imply a non-place of political action in exchange for ubiquitous places for “consumer action”. The internalization of the political by capitalism brings forth semi-public consumption-oriented areas where the subject reigns through consumption rather than through political exchange: “Consumers are recognized as enjoying sovereignty (...) so long as they do not attempt to exercise it on the social stage. (..) The Public and the Public Opinion are the consumers, provided they content themselves with consuming” (Baudrillard 1998:86). In current times, “the political subject is fleeting and passive, while the producing and consuming agent is present and active”(Hardt

and Negri 2000:320). The *victory of pleasure* and the *defeat of place* may allude to a defeat of the place of politics.

Implications of Simulations

So far, a theoretical background has been provided explaining the political implications of contemporary trends in tourism as part of the postmodern economy of signs. This section will briefly connect the theory to the cases presented in Chapter Two.

First of all, what is discerned in all three examples provided, being Amsterdam in Kemer, Batavia-stad and Eson-stad, is the conscious consumption of signs over critical analysis of the appearance offered. Visitors of Eson-stad are happy to reside in houses rebuilt in a style which originates from a time-period two hundred years after the destruction of the original Eson by the sea. The sign “old Dutch” seems to suffice for the consumer to be satisfied, further dissection in terms of centuries is not necessary. The history of the Batavia, with its cruel politics resulting in the deaths of innocent sailors finds no place whatsoever in the outlet centre named after it. The real history is erased in favor of a consumable setting. No longer is the past used to contrast current society against, to count our blessings or ring the alarm. The only alarm heard in Batavia-stad signifies the 2-for-3 sales promotion. Buying a fake is no longer something to be ashamed of, but is done deliberately and happily. The genuine fake has been replaced by the fake genuine. The guests of Amsterdam in Kemer are fed a *façade*, and it proves enough. The appearance of these cases are

their essence; they are signs in a postmodern economy of signs and consumed as simulations.

Moreover, these simulations display a focus on consumption and pleasure, a trend exemplified by Batavia-stad with its 17th-century appearance and 21st-century focus on shopping and entertainment. Sales never come alone in Batavia-stad; they are accompanied by lotteries, kids-days or, in December, choirs performing any of Mariah Carey's greatest Christmas hits (Batavia Stad 2007). Amsterdam in Kemer offers its guests a wide range of organized activities- from aqua gym to pool biljart. The wellness center has a "Far-East concept" despite the resorts overall seemingly attempt to appear Far-West (Amsterdam in Kemer 2007). Eson-Stad promises its visitors a combination of 17th-century appearance and 21st-century luxury.

Meanwhile, while offering a spectacular 'break' from the every day, the tourist attractions at hand all function according to the same capitalist system that regulates our everyday. Rationality prevails behind the irrational cover of these simulations. Entrepreneur of Eson-stad Jaap Hofstede justifies the discrepancy in historical time period between the resort's style (17th-century) and name (13th-century) by rational capitalist logic: "Of course we are not going to built medieval houses, they simply can't be sold. But a name like that does inspire: you can for instance name streets after famous sea captains and pour beer in glasses carrying the logo of the medieval town" (Boomen 2004:1). It sells, hence it is justified. The profit principle beats history, rationality appears as irrationality in the form of a consumable façade.

Finally, the cases flirt with a public appearance while promoting exclusion. On the one hand, as part of social differentiation through consumption, the

simulations are exclusivist. On the other hand, within its boundaries, the cases take on a public appearance. The Central Station façade in Amsterdam in Kemer may be the ultimate example. Whereas the real Central Station of Amsterdam is a public place alive with the coming and going of a wide range of people from all sort of national and socio-economic backgrounds, the Central Station in Amsterdam is ‘dead’, a grave occasionally visited by Kodak cameras. *Batavia-stad* and *Eson-stad* carry their public aspirations in their names, “stad” being the Dutch word for “city”. However, they are far from a real city which carries in it a mixture of society. Rather, their “main square” is not accessible to all, but opened only to a limited number of paying visitors. The “main square” in *Eson-stad* is exactly such a private, consumption-oriented environment appearing to be public.

Batavia-stad, *Eson-stad* and Amsterdam in Kemer are exclusive simulations with a focus on pleasure through consumption and as such epitomize the workings of postmodern consumer society in general, where critical thinking has been forced to make headway for mindless consumption of commodities, allegedly enhancing the pleasure of one’s life while hampering any such thing outside of the capitalist logic.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

This thesis has established that the contemporary conscious consumption of simulated, exclusive, consumption-oriented tourist attractions is part and parcel of postmodern consumer society and as such contributes to the silencing of the critical capacity of men as well as to the de-actualization of the place of politics.

The postmodern economy of signs is based upon the false equation of happiness with equality in terms of possession; salvation is thought to come through consumption. As the desire for equality functions through purchase, so does the desire for differentiation. While the desire for equality leads to further spread of commodities, the desire for differentiation leads to new needs for unique products that may set the buyer apart from those who do not possess it. Needs are thus never saturated. The continuous demands for commodities benefits the producers; consumption plays the supporting role in the production-led economy of signs. As a consequence of the desire for differentiation, commodities are not rated on their use-value, nor their exchange-value but their relational value. Since the relational value of a product, its status that is, is determined in relation to other products rather than being inherent to the product, signs are “set free”. They can be playfully attached to other products. Formerly essential qualities of a product are shifted around and attached to a product render that product a simulation. The playful combination of signs leads to simulations, such as tourist destinations which are adorned with signs signifying the alleged essential qualities of whatever it tries to be. And when consumers buy it (in both meanings of the verb), the simulation no longer has to try.

It has become what it wanted to be. This analysis solves the problems noted in the authenticity debate that runs through the study of tourism and pivots around possible interpretations of the concept of authenticity and its role in tourist demand.

Discussing authentic or inauthentic as objective criteria is beyond the point, since both are floating signs, able to be attached in any way seen fit. Hence, it is possible for an attraction to be rated both authentic and contrived, and for a constructed historic theme park to be rated “authentic” by visitors. What visitors consume is not authenticity, but its sign. Appearance is essence in postmodern consumer society.

Moreover, through the framework of the postmodern sign economy the possibility of something becoming authentic is explained. A commodity’s status is never fixed. As a product’s status is attached to other commodities, it may be rated authentic in comparison to other destinations that are rated more contrived. To cut short, the abundance of apparent “inauthenticity” in contemporary tourism is one instance of the abundance of simulations in postmodern consumer society. Hence, tourism should be regarded as an extension of the system that regulates non-tourist society, rather than as a negation of it. The practices undertaken in tourism, the conscious consumption of simulations in an attempt to attain happiness, coined the *victory of pleasure*, as well as the advancement of indistinct, private consumption-oriented simulated tourist attractions coined the *defeat of place*, are a direct consequence of the regulatory mechanisms at the heart of the postmodern economy of signs.

The *victory of pleasure* and the *defeat of place* as associated with the postmodern economy of signs should not be regarded as positive developments. They have been defended on grounds of being democratizing, of enabling identity expression and of bolstering the pride, preservation and profit to local communities.

The democratic concept referred to when discussing the democratizing potential of further commoditization is a type of democracy inherent to the postmodern economy of signs: democracy and equality in terms of goods consumed. The identity expression enabled in the postmodern economy of signs is an observation rather than an argument. Moreover, it is an imposed identity expression, as the system ensures needs are never saturated. There is no choice but to consume and differentiate oneself through commodities. Finally, although tourism may enable locals to protect their culture, take pride in it and derive financial benefits from it, this cannot be considered as a choice; the argument discusses the benefits associated with an *enforced* development rather than questioning the nature of that development. The aforementioned arguments hence all fail to question the framework in which the *victory of pleasure* and the *defeat of place* are situated.

This framework is the result of postmodern consumer society which denotes a new stage in the internalization of capitalism's outside. Capitalism inherently destroys its outside, since it relies on its outside both for selling the surplus-value as for investment of the revenues in new capital. The shift responsible for post-modernity is the internalization of the non-material- the thoughts, communication, information and habits humans produce. The internalization of human culture, relations, communication in effect diminishes the critical capacity these formerly had. No longer does culture stand in opposition to reality, rather it is commoditized like everything else in reality and judged according to the capitalist dictum. The potential for critique on reality through culture is effaced, and the prescribed habits associated with commodities further dull the consumer's mind. The rationality and instrumentality of the capitalist system render transcendental concepts, that have no

immediate instrumental value but are crucial for the development of critical thinking, insignificant. The consumer allows this to happen due to the pleasure and comfort the commodities generate. However, the omnipresence of commoditized happiness and habits in effect impedes the attainment of other forms of enjoyment and pleasure that are non-capitalist. Moreover, by paralyzing the critical potential of humans, potential societal change is obstructed. To sum up, the postmodern internalization of human relations denotes a *defeat of critique*. Rather than wondering about the different lifestyles of sailors on the Batavia, hence comparing culture with his stance in reality, the consumer buys himself a discounted t-shirt. A *kroket* (meat-roll) is as easily bought in Kemer as it is in Amsterdam, without a second *thought*. Eson-stad may be a total simulation, but there is demand, so what is there to argue? Consumption wins from consideration. The goods are consumed, the consumer is subsumed.

Second, the postmodern internalization of human relations entails an internalization of the political. The political is as much as anything else a sign, not distinguishable from other commodities. Hence, the political is everywhere and nowhere at the same time. Whereas in modern times, the public was the place of the political, this no longer holds in post-modern society. The internalization of the public as a sign can be seen in the attempts by tourist simulations to appear public. Simulations such as Batavia-stad, Disneyland and Eson-stad have main roads and main squares, sometimes even a town-hall. Needless to say that little politics takes place there. These semi-public simulations actually shun parts of the public rather than enhancing political exchange. The privatization of the commons from the eighties onwards has further increased this trend. In effect, the place of politics has

been blurred. Both enemy and friend are harder to distinguish. Meanwhile, by individual consumption, the subject is atomized and supports the status-quo. The exclusion of the whole of the public by semi-public places and the degradation of the political to a sign have in effect denounced the public space as the place for the political while enhancing the subject's power as a compliant consumer. Postmodern sign economy entails the *defeat of place for political action*.

This thesis has noted the *lies of leisure*: while being akin to non-tourist society in the conscious consumption of simulations and social differentiation through commodities, tourism pretends to be the opposite of the every day life. Even more so, the extent to which consumption reigns in the area of tourism makes us more or less tourists all the time. The biggest *lie of leisure* is its pretension to be a neutral activity in political terms. This thesis has established that tourism, as an instance of postmodern economy of signs, is far from neutral and carries in it important *political* implications. The postmodern economy of signs blurs the difference between appearance and essence. As a sign, the political is beyond true and false. Abraham Lincoln said about democracy that “you may fool all the people some of the time; ... some of the people all the time; but you can't fool all of the people all the time” (Abraham Lincoln cited in McClure 1904). Lincoln presupposes the wisdom of the people as a whole to be the backbone of democracy. Within the people, there will always be those using their freedom of speech to unmask the foolish actions and presuppositions of others, thereby preventing democracy from subverting. In the postmodern economy of signs, however, the issue is not whether people can be fooled. Being fooled implies an objective truth, which in postmodern consumer society ceases to exist. Rather, people believe by action. Postmodern

consumer society functions through a self-fulfilling prophecy. What is sold is true, what appears exists. Postmodern consumer society makes people act *as if* they are fooled all the time. Unmasking their ‘foolish’ assumptions will amount to nothing. The ‘wisdom’ of the people as a whole has become the backbone of a democratic appearing authority.

Although due to the conflation of appearance and essence signs are beyond judgment, the *system* that creates these signs is not. The system that ensures the equation of appearance with essence does have an essence in itself, though not a clear appearance. This thesis has sought to clarify the nature of this system starting from trends in contemporary tourism and has judged it on grounds of impeding political action, both in terms of numbing the critical mind, as in terms of erasing a place of politics. Meanwhile, it boosts the power of the subject as a consumer, which ultimately benefits an elitist cohort of producers.

These observations pose serious threats to pillars of democracy, such as political exchange and critical citizens. How truly democratic can consumer society said to be if these pillars are seriously damaged?

Moreover, the false equation of happiness and democracy with equality in terms of goods leads to the neglect of equality in terms of capacities, responsibilities and chances (Baudrillard 1998:5). Rather, it leads to well-meant public and private initiatives to spread goods among the less well-off. Charity organizations such as the One Laptop Per Child (OLPC 2007) focus on the equal distribution of laptops among disadvantaged children and thereby keep a blind eye to the structural reasons for these disadvantages.

Also, one may wonder whether the current trend in international relations of the promotion of democracy and freedom is not in fact the export of a production-led postmodern economy of signs benefiting a small cohort of producers.

The internalization of the political as a sign pushes the political into the realm of advertisement and media attention while it numbs the consumer. How many Live Earth or Live Aid concerts can one digest? The consumer of signs will be blasé before the hungry in the world are. And though fuelled with good intentions only, the actualization of a Live Earth Concert broadcasted from Antarctica of all places displays the defeat of place of politics *par excellence*.

It would be interesting to have the theories advanced in this thesis supported by empirical research. Although a direct relation between visiting a simulated tourist attraction and a decrease in critical capacity is not likely to be found due to both operational problems –the operationalization of “critical capacity” may prove difficult plus the subtle mechanisms at hand prevent clear “before and after visit” outcomes indicating gross differences in critical capacity- it would be interesting to see whether the political is consumed similarly as any other message. Do consumers distinguish between the political and the non-political even if both take up the shape of the sign? This thesis suggests not. Also, it would be interesting to see whether different types of tourists can be related to different degrees of political participation.

Moreover, this thesis has focused on the proliferations of simulations in tourism in Western developed countries mainly, supported by cases from the Netherlands. How do these trends compare to the trends in tourism in less developed countries? Is capitalism there still in a different stage, and if so, can different types of tourist attractions be noticed?

Finally, the extent to which simulations are taking over tourism suggests for further research in the simulation *par excellence*; the virtual world. Will future tourism not involve spatial dislocation at all anymore? Provided that the virtual simulated world suffers from the insatiability of signs of differentiation as much as the non-virtual world, what places will be designed? Where do we ultimately go?

The *Lonely Planet Paradox* suggests that ultimately, there is no “lonely” left. Once touched by commercial tourism, there is no outside to travel to, leading to a frustration 19th-century poet Baudelaire already exclaimed: “Anywhere! Anywhere! So long as it is out of the world!” (Baudelaire cited in: DeBotton 2003:34). This thesis suggests that the only possible out of the world lies within the human. An independent mind is the only lonely planet that can be protected from the paradox. In the end, real travel outside the system may not lie in spatial dislocation but in cognitive dislocation. Rather than being dulled by pleasure, use your critical capacity to reflect on reality and “travel” by a train of thoughts to a different and better potential world. Travel by the sensitivity of the mind rather than desensitize the mind by the pre-fabricated pleasures of traveling.

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