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Tourism as Dwelling: an Ethnography of the Practices, Bodies and Places of Mass Tourism in Menorca

Pau Obrador-Pons

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

University of Durham
Department of Geography
September 2004

To Andreu Murillo, Fina Salord and Joan Estruch

Abstract

Tourism is no longer a discrete and self-contained activity separated from everyday life, but an important cultural laboratory in the production of places, bodies and subjectivities. Tourism is understood as a practical and embodied way of being-in-the-world. The most important theoretical development is the notion of dwelling, which I adopt despite the sedentary connotations it holds. I use post-structural thinking on spatiality, embodiment and perfomativity to inform an ethnography of mass Mediterranean tourism in Menorca, which focuses on both the commodified spaces of the coastal hotel and the Edenic nature of the beach. Both are places of return and familiarity, places of 'dwelling' rather than 'travelling', of pleasure rather than seriousness. Coastal hotels are paradigmatic of the kind of pre-fabricated and superficial experiences that are characteristic of fluid and highly commodified environments. In examining the form and the performance of these key tourist spaces, I engage in a number of key debates concerning contemporary dwellings and the relations between subjectivity and space. Despite being places of void and banality to which there is no meaning or utopia attached, coastal hotels are by no means insubstantial. I consider the case of family tourism, which challenges the depiction of mass tourism as a depthless and inauthentic experience. I explore the embodied character of tourism through the beach and consider in particular the role of the visual sense, its limits and contestations. We can neither treat the visual as a disembodied relation with the world nor reduce destinations to signs and visual representations concealing the complex and contradictory ways in which people sense and perform tourist spaces. Performance becomes paramount. The popularity of the beach relies enormously on the capacity of the body to create life, space and meaning in a way that refuses an objectifying gaze and the control that discourse exerts. I use the case of nudism to explore different ways of knowing through the body, in particular the role of visuality and the sense of touch.

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Declaration

No part of this thesis has previously been submitted by the candidate for a degree in this or any other University.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Mass Mediterranean tourism is one of the most characteristic expressions of the consumerist and mobile reality of today's western European societies. It is not only at the core of the rapid modernisation of the Mediterranean region, but also of the complex socio-cultural transformations of Britain and Germany. This research project takes mass Mediterranean tourism seriously, as an important cultural laboratory in the production of geographies, bodies and subjectivities. My PhD thesis is an ethnographic account of mass tourism in the island of Menorca[1], which focuses on both the highly commodified spaces of the coastal hotel and the Edenic nature of the beach. In using ethnographic methods, this research project lays emphasis on the complexities of this tourist phenomenon rather than its generalities. This is not another abstract and general account of tourism, but a particular insight into the touristic character of the contemporary western world. I agree with Franklin when he considers general theories to be inadequate, proposing instead a variety of theoretical approaches that "recognise tourism as a complex set of social and cultural phenomena" (2003: 2).

1- All place names appear in their Catalan version

This research project that weighs anchor in the waters of Menorca, the place from whence I come. It has its origins in my persistent interest in the social and cultural reality of the island, in particular, in its radical transformation as a result of the massive tourist development of the last 35 years. It responds to my discomfort with both the uncritical celebration of tourism that the industry promotes and also the critical stance, very common in the island, that dismisses the reality of mass tourism. I come from a large social group traditionally uncomfortable with the massive presence of tourists and actively involved in preventing the fast development and degradation of the island, a process popularly called 'Balearisation'. This is not however another 'local' study of the island, a research project bounded to a place. In Menorca there is already an impressive production of scientific knowledge on a local scale, partly thanks to the excellence of the Minorcan Research Institute (IME). Neither is this an exercise in academic tourism, a travel into a pseudo-exotic island, which continues with the geographical tradition of exploration. This is a research project in-between different places and cultural traditions that, like contemporary societies, is not spatially contained but dwelling-in-mobilities. This is an insight into contemporary mobile societies resulting from an inverse travel to that of mass tourism, from Menorca to England, from the periphery to the centre.

This PhD thesis suggests the importance of social science addressing tourism not only as a source of wealth or cause of environmental, socio-economic or cultural problems but also as worthy of studying in and of itself as a central experience in Western European societies. Many books have concentrated on the damage tourism causes to the places through which it passes. Thus, for example, Seabrooke (1996) has examined how the spread of sex related tourism in Asia is responsible for a variety of ills such as child prostitution, drugs, AIDS and the disruption of the family. Smith (1989) and Greenwood (1989) present tourism as culturally damaging and reductive. According to Greenwood, tourism commodifies local cultures and previously untouched human relations. As soon as this happens their authenticity is destroyed and "the meaning is gone" (1989: 178). In their environmental accounts of tourism, Mowforth and Munt (1998) and Hall and Lew (1998) have framed tourism exclusively as an environmental danger, thus ignoring its

importance in the constitution of different cultures of nature. There is nothing wrong in these perspectives per se. Indeed in places such as Menorca, mass tourism is responsible for a number of social, cultural and environmental problems, such as water pollution, unstable employment and wild urban development. However these arguments are partial and ultimately insufficient. Not only because that they dismiss the positive effects of tourism but also because they refuse to view tourism as worth studying in itself, as an important part of the fabric of today's social and geographical world. Instead of mourning the consequences of tourism in this thesis we might "view vacationing as a cultural laboratory where people have been able to experiment with new aspects of their identities, their social relations, or their interaction with nature and also to use the important cultural skills of daydreaming and mind-ravelling" (Löfgren 1999: 7).

Tourism is no longer something different from everyday life, but a particular extension of it (Rojek, 1993; Inglis, 2000; Franklin & Crang, 2001 and Franklin 2003). It can no longer be considered as a discrete activity, contained in special locations and times, but paraphrasing Franklin as "a metaphor for the way we lead our lives in a consumer society. So rather than being an exceptional or occasional state of being in modern societies, or even as some have said, an escape from it, the manner of the tourist has come to determine a generalised stance to the world around us" (Franklin, 2003: 5). On the one hand, tourism has to be understood in relation to the extension of consumerism and the de-differentiation of work and leisure that characterise post-fordist economies (Lash and Urry, 1994). In our increasingly dis-organised and fragmented societies the clear modernist distinction between work and leisure has blurred and "the qualities of leisureliness have become more pronounced in the organisation of work and public life" (Rojek, 1993: 171). Consumer fantasies are not confined to special places such as Blackpool any more, but are now available everywhere, thus becoming a central part of our everyday life. On the other hand, tourism also has to be understood in relation to the generalisation of mobilites and the process of globalisation. This is no longer a world of self-contained and bounded spatial realities such as the nation-state. We live in a world in which people, objects and ideas are becoming routinely mobile. As Urry points out in his manifesto *Sociology beyond Societies*, "Contemporary forms of dwelling almost

always involve diverse forms of mobility" (2000: 132). It is not only that migration and tourism are becoming normative, but also that the world is now on our doorsteps. "Some of the things that signalled the authentic lives of others are freely available in every city in the world because cities and their incredible ethnic diversity have become the places where the world outside now flows" (2003:266). In short, it is not only that tourism is increasingly popular, but also that the world is becoming increasingly touristic. In our consumerist and mobile societies, tourism is one of the most characteristic ways of being-in-the- world, of dwelling in it. As Franklin and Crang point out "tourism has broken away from its beginnings as a relatively minor and ephemeral ritual of modern national life to become a significant modality through which transnational modern life is organised" (2001: 6-7).

Instead of focusing on their mutual interdependences, a majority of scholars *distinguish* tourism from everyday life. The main contributions view tourism either as a search for something different, as in the case of MacCannell (1989), Graburn (1989) and Smith (1989); or as a pleasure of the unusual and the different, the most relevant example of which is Urry's (1990) notion of the tourists gaze. Whereas MacCannell's understanding of tourism as a quest for authenticity presupposes a reaction to a disappointing modernity, Urry's tourist gaze presupposes its celebration. Both perspectives however imply a self-contained system of activity and consciousness which is constructed in opposition to non-tourist forms of experience, in particular, those related with the home and paid work. My discomfort arises from the fact that they do not respond to the socio-cultural reality of tourism in the twenty first century. As Franklin points out, "they are creations of a different world from that of the present" (2003: 265). The increasing interrelation of tourism and everyday life challenges a scholarly approach to tourism as a separate field of enquiry (Edensor, 2001: 60). MacCannell (1999), Smith (1989) and Graburn (1989) are representative of the dominant concerns of the 70s, when western society was a great deal less mobile and still dominated by the 'alienating' and 'dull' conditions of factory work; Whereas Urry's *Tourist Gaze* (1990) has to be understood in relation to the implosion of hypereality seen in the 80s. As Franklin points out "the

Tourist Gaze was written at a time when the sign and symbolisation of an object were becoming ever more significant than the thing itself` (2003: 267).

Being no longer a discrete and self-contained activity separated from everyday life, this PhD thesis thinks of mass tourism as an important 'cultural laboratory' in the production of places, bodies and subjectivities in western European societies. It is an exceptional setting to explore the kind of being-in-the-world, the kind of dwelling-in-mobilites that is characteristic of the fluid and highly commodified spaces of late modernity. Mass tourist sites, in particular places such as Mallorca and Benidorm, are among the best examples of post-modern cities of leisure and other ephemeral, ludic and nomadic spaces built on fantasy and pleasure. This research project engages in a number of debates concerning cotemporary ways of dwelling and the relations between subjectivity and spatiality. My most important theme is the development of the notion of dwelling in tourist studies although without the normal baggage of sedentary belonging as the authentic way of being (Chapter 2). Using the example of the coastal hotel, in chapter 4 I discuss extensively commodified nomadic spaces surrounded by the fleeting, the role of fantasy and the banal in the constitution of places and subjectivities and post-modern forms of sociality, in particular the possibility of togetherness without organic communities. The coastal hotel embodies some of the socio-spatial codes that are characteristic of late modern societies. Mass Tourism also offers an excellent opportunity to analyse the modus operandi of the body in contemporary western societies.

Tourist studies have focused primarily on the restless and fleeting character of the traveller rather than on the mundane and sedentary figure of the tourist. In doing so, they have privileged the exotic and the spectacular thus ignoring the fact that what many tourists seem to enjoy is a return to the familiar (Franklin 2003: 52- 56). "Tourist studies" –Haldrup and Larsen opine – "have notoriously struggled to account for the thick sociality of most tourist practices; it has been drawn to the spectacular and exotic, thus excluding the mundane types of tourism such as family vacationing in summer-cottages and resorts" (2003: 24). In reproducing the social hierarchy of travellers and

tourists, tourist studies have tended to downplay the banal, the un-exotic and, in particular, the pleasurable character of the tourist experience. I agree with Franklin and Crang when they contend "too often we risk treating the numerous and enumerated tourists as foreign species, *'Turistas vulgaris'*, only found in herds, droves, swarms and flocks" (2001: 8). Tourists are often presented as lacking initiative, unadventurous and insipid and mass tourism as a plague that destroys the attraction of the place (Rojek 1993: 175). Even a category such as the post-tourist, which alludes to the resigned post-modern acceptance of the condition of the tourist, implies an ironic distance from the tourist (Urry, 1990: 100-2; Löfgren, 1999: 264)

This PhD thesis focuses on places of return and familiarity, places of 'dwelling' rather than 'travelling', of pleasure rather than seriousness. Neither the beach nor the coastal hotel can be identified with the popular image of the male and middle class ardent traveller in search of new sights, which Löfgren identifies with Phileas Fogg (1999:9). Rather they are an expression of the Crusoean desire to find an unspoilt corner of the world to relax, and build an alternative life (Löfgren, 1999: 9). This figuration suggests a much more open, uncertain and nomadic subject who does not posses an absolute control of his/her destiny but lives in an erratic world of familiarity and repetition. Coastal mass tourism is the territory of the sedentary vacationer, who finds pleasure in 'inhabiting' the mundane, disciplining the environment and creating new habits and familiarities. It is a space of becoming rather than being. As Urbain points out, "The tourist [referring to the traveller] and the summer resident may encounter one another in the same physical space, but they nevertheless belong to two different worlds. For the former, the space is a place to pass through, for the latter it is a territory to inhabit" (2003: 4). In focusing on tourists' inhabiting practices, this thesis not only breaks with the social discrimination between middle class travellers and working class tourists, but also with 'the social reproduction of seriousness' that often characterises tourist studies. I agree with Franklin and Crang when they contend "we need to be able to say tourism matters because it is enjoyable, not in spite of it" (2001: 14). This focus on the familiar and pleasurable is most evident in chapter 5 in which I examine British family tourism. This is a tourist phenomenon with a lot of similarities to the cottage culture of which

Löfgren tells us provides "a very safe and workable utopia, where people can explore different sides of themselves or their relations with others or with nature" (1999: 151). It is also evident in chapter 4 when I discuss the kind of sociality that is characteristic of the hotel pool.

Most scholars have identified the visual sense as the dominant sense in tourist studies (Adler, 1989; Urry, 1990; Rojek, 1993; Macnaghten and Urry 1998). Tourism has often been reduced to a practice of visual consumption, a semiotic game involving the coding and decoding of signs. Urry's notion of the tourist gaze (1990) is probably the most relevant and sophisticated example of this stance. Urry sees tourists basically as collectors of views and gazes, which are extraordinary and separated off from everyday life. "Part at least of that experience"- he contends- "is to gaze upon or view a set of different scenes, of landscapes or townscapes which are out of ordinary" (1990: 1). Inspired by, among others, the work of Foucault (1997) and Lefebvre (1991) he links the dominance of visualism in tourist studies with modernity. He brings together the tourist gaze with the expanding popularity of novel modes of visual perception, such as photography and the novel urban experience of the flâneur. In particular the tourist gaze is related with "the emergence of relatively novel modes of visual perception which became part of the modern experience of living and visiting new urban centres, particularly the grand capital cities"(1990:136). While reflecting on the visual nature of the tourist experience and, in particular, the important role of visual technologies, occulacentric approaches such as Urry's notion of the tourist gaze rely on illusions of disembodiment and detachment, thus ignoring the actual doings of the tourist (Chaney, 2002; Crouch, 1999, 2002; Joniken & Veijola, 1994, 1997; Desmond, 1999; Franklin & Crang, 2001; Franklin, 2003). According to Franklin, this is consistent with his emphasis on the pleasure of the new and the surprising. "Visualism is consistent with Urry's definition and objectives of tourism: the 'different' and the 'unusual' belong quite clearly to a lexicon of the visual" (2003: 85).

This PhD thesis contends that we can neither treat the visual as a disembodied relation with the world nor reduce destinations to signs and visual representations concealing the

complex and contradictory ways in which people sense the world around them. Furthermore, passive visual leisures are now in decline while there is increasing demand to touch, taste, feel and participate. As Franklin & Crang point out, "Tourists are seeking to be *doing something* in the places they visit rather than being endlessly spectatorially passive" (2001: 13 italics in original). Even Japanese tourists seem to follow this trend, since one of the most important emphasises in Japanese tourist brochures is "to participate with their own skins" (Moeran 1983:95 quoted in Franklin 2003: 86). Drawing on, among others, the work of Edensor (1998, 2000a, 2001), Franklin (2003) and Baerenholdt et al (2004) this PhD thesis proposes a performative and multi-sensual approach to tourism that focuses on the actual doings of tourists. This thesis unveils an active tourist always practising and performing. In chapter 6 tourists are seen building sandcastles; in chapter 4, engaging in the hotel entertainment programme and in chapter 5 performing family relations. Drawing on Thrift's non-representational theory (1997, 1999) and Radley's ideas on the body and play (1995), this PhD thesis also considers the expressive, sensual and non-cognitive qualities of the body, in particular, kinaesehtetics, alternative visualities and the sense of touch. Using nudism as my example, in chapter 7 I demonstrate that the popularity of the beach relies enormously on the capacity of the body to create life, space and meaning through the skin in such a way that refuses an objectifying gaze and the control that discourse exerts. As such, this research project has a lot in common with the work of Cloke and Perkins (1998) on adventure tourism, Stranger (1999) on surfing and Franklin (2001) on hunting and angling. Like them, I place the body, the skin and the non-representational at the centre of tourist studies.

Overview

This PhD thesis uses mass Mediterranean tourism to think about the production of places, bodies and subjectivities in contemporary consumerist and mobile societies. Tourism is understood as a practical and embodied way of being-in-the-world. In Chapter 2 I explore the relevance of using dwelling, embodied and performative metaphors in tourist studies. These metaphors are argued to produce an account of

tourism which addresses the mobile and complex reality of the 21st century without conceptually de-localizing, dis-embodying or isolating tourists. Building on Ingold (2000) my most important theoretical development is the notion of dwelling, which I adopt despite the sedentary connotations it holds. I also explore the possibilities that a situated, elusory and expressive body opens in tourist studies and I consider a de-centred and rhizomatic understanding of tourist agency that neither undermines the material and non-material networks folded into the human world nor overemphasises human action, thereby concealing the messy human condition. These theoretical developments inform an ethnography of mass tourism in Menorca, which focuses on both the commodified spaces of the coastal hotel and the Edenic nature of the beach. Chapter 3 introduces the case study of this thesis and explains the methodological processes that I have followed. While being a paradigmatic example of the functioning of mass Mediterranean tourism, Menorca has also a number of singularities that make it different from its neighbouring resorts. This combination makes the island an ideal setting for this research. Ethnography is argued to be the most appropriate methodology to develop a research project that focuses on the everyday life of tourists, their bodies, practices and performances.

The coastal hotel is an exceptional backdrop to explore the kind of dwelling that is characteristic of fluid and highly commodified environments in contemporary Western Societies. Drawing on the work of Kracauer (1995) and Maffesoli (1996) in Chapter 4 I examine the pre-eminent tourist space of the coastal hotel. Among other elements I detailed the organised entertainment programme in hotels and the kind of sociality that is characteristic of the pool. My aim is to reintroduce a sense of sensuality, materiality and enjoyment into the coastal hotel without dismissing its abstract and nomadic and superficial character. Despite being places of void and banality to which there is no meaning purpose or utopia attaché, coastal hotels are by no means insubstantial or irrelevant. They are sites of sensual encounters, social relations and embodied pleasures. The underlying theme of this chapter is the possibility of a way of being-in-the-world without roots, of togetherness without organic communities. We must neither apprehend mass tourism as an example of an inauthentic and dehumanising way of dwelling, nor

avoid the intrinsically mobile and pleasurable condition of the tourist experience. In Chapter 5 I consider the case of family tourism, which challenges the depiction of mass tourism as a depthless and inauthentic experience. Family tourism is seen as a cultural laboratory where people perform different social relations and identities related with the family and the everyday. Responding to the desire to find an unspoilt corner of the world to relax and built up an alternative live, family tourism finds pleasure in the mundane and the familiar. Different figurations of the tourist are revised in order to see how these perspectives deal with the fact that people go on holiday with their families. Following Joniken and Veijola (1997, 2003) I engage in a practical exercise of making theory situated and grounded, through the re-embodiment, re-location and re-socialisation of the perspectives we use.

On the beach practices of visual consumption coexist with a number of embodied practices that do not presuppose a visual and cognitive relation with the place. As such, the beach provides a unique opportunity to examine the embodied character of tourism and, in particular the role of the visual sense, its limits and contestations. In Chapter 6 I examine the tourist experience of the virgin beach, a paradigmatic example of a romantic approach by which nature is gazed upon and turned into spectacle. I contend however that neither we can treat the visual as a disembodied relation with the world nor we can reduce destinations to signs and visual representations concealing the complex and contradictory ways in which people sense the world around them. Being associated with an image of Edenic paradise, the virgin beach is in accordance with the masculine tendencies to master, conquer, penetrate and see from above. By taking sandcastles as my example I demonstrate that the beach draws its significance not only from mental and intellectual work, but also from the embodied and manipulative practices of the people that inhabit them, thus challenging a common identification of the beach as a passive and voyeuristic space. The popularity of the beach relies enormously on the capacity of the body to create life, space and meaning in a way that refuses an objectifying gaze and the control that discourse exerts. In Chapter 7 I use the case of nudism to explore different ways of knowing through the body, in particular the role of visuality and the sense of touch. Drawing on Thrift (1997, 1999, 2000) and Radley

(1995) I think of nudism as a 'performative experiment' that uses the body to conjure up virtual worlds. In presupposing a counter-hegemonic way of seeing which is circumspect and liberating the practice of nudism breaks with the logic of the mastering gaze and in particular the dynamic that produces detachment. What makes nudism a distinctive and pleasant experience however is the direct exposure of the skin to the natural elements, as well as the sensation that moving produces. This chapter finishes by examining the kind of sociality that is characteristic of the nudist beach, which I relate with Maffesoli's notion of neo-tribalism.

Chapter 2

Being-on-holiday: tourist dwelling, bodies and place

This chapter explores the relevance of using dwelling, embodiment and performative metaphors in tourist studies. These metaphors are argued to produce an account of tourist phenomena which addresses the mobile and complex reality of the 21st century without conceptually de-localising, dis-embodying or isolating the tourists; or, as Latour (1999: 271) might argue, without destroying their humanity. I develop an insight of tourists as situated and embodied subjects whose lives unfold in reciprocal interactions with their environment. My claim is that tourism is a practical way through which we are involved in the world, we create knowledge and interact with the physical environment; in Heideggerian terms, a way of being-in-the-world, of dwelling it.

In proposing the use of dwelling, embodiment and performative metaphors, I intend to develop the potential of non-representational theory for tourist studies. I share, on the one hand, the disappointment felt by Thrift (1999, 297- 300) at the essentialized and de-contextualized meta-narratives of being in modernist and postmodernist theories that leave lived and situated subjects unscrutinized and mean that the geographical

implications of tourism have frequently been forgotten under ideological discourses on movement and globalisation proclaiming the end of space. On the other hand, I disagree with those representational approaches that apprehend tourists as engaged in building discursive worlds by actively constructing webs of significance which are laid over a physical substance (as in Selwyn (1996), Squire (1994). and Abram et al (1997)). In short, I move away from the Cartesian division between subjects and objects, material and spiritual, facts and fetish.

This chapter is organized in five parts. First of all, I consider the Heideggerian metaphor of dwelling and I explore the possibilities of using it in tourist studies. I adopt this metaphor despite the static connotations it holds which may seem incongruent given the fluid reality of tourism. To escape these connotations I develop the notion of spatiality that this metaphor incorporates. In the second section I focus on human practices, in particular on ordinary and non-representational practices. In doing so, I identify my research with the recent turn towards practices and performances in tourist studies. By favoring this focus I am not suggesting eliminating knowledge, values, meanings or any sort of mental and spiritual activity from accounts of tourism, but the integration of both sides in a single human world. In the third section I address the body since it is the unavoidable medium through which we are involved in the world. In this section I explore the possibilities that a situated, active and expressive body opens up in tourist studies. The final two sections bring this together to develop a de-centered, rhizomatic and relational notion of the tourist subject based on Deleuzian philosophy. A focus on the multiple networks and assemblage of the material and non-material constitution of the tourist phenomena is proposed in order to grasp the complex ramifications of tourism and to overcome the habitual methodological individualism of tourist studies as well as teleological, detached and all-powerful conceptions of the subject.

Tourism as dwelling.

This section seeks to articulate tourism as dwelling, that is, as a particular way of being-in-the-world. I use this metaphor because it enables a genuinely geographical and social

account of tourism that prioritises everyday embodied practices. The metaphor of dwelling makes life as lived as the primary focus (Heidegger, 1993; Ingold 1995, 2000; Thrift, 1999; Whatmore, 1999; Simonsen, 2003; Dreyfus 1993). The starting point is the recognition that being is always being-in-the-world, that is, a situated and contingent process of engagement with the environment. That is, to be-in does not refer to location (ocurrentness), but involvement. "Heidegger points out that 'in' does not originally mean inclusion. The primordial sense of 'in' was rather 'to reside', 'to dwell'" (Dreyfus, 1993: 42). The Heideggerian *dasein* is always already amidst-the-world. Our involvement, that is, our way of dwelling in the world is mainly practical not cognitive. Being-in-the-world is an everyday skilful, embodied coping or engagement with the environment (Simonsen, 2003; Dreyfus, 1993). Therefore, this dwelling perspective suggests that the world is disclosed without resorting to deliberate consciousness. As De Certeau points out "It is below 'down' on the threshold where visibility ends, that the city's common practitioners dwell" (2000: 102). While acknowledging the importance of linguistic practices, this perspective places the non-representational everyday practices at the core of how we dwell (and construct) the world (Thrift 1997, 1999; de Certeau, 1988, 1998; Whatmore,1999).

Using the concept of dwelling leaves no place for those theories that perpetuate a Cartesian division between the material and the ideal, the brain and the body, facts and fetish (Latour 1999: 271). This sets theories of dwelling apart from, for example, some versions of the constructionist tradition in which humans are seen as unique beings occupying intentional worlds where our engagement in the world is thought to be designed in the imagination, in webs of meaning, prior to the material realisation. The existence of a pre-given order before life is, therefore, pre-supposed. In this scheme, the material world only exists either as an unavoidable pre-condition or as a product of an external cultural process of construction (Ingold 1995, 2000; Thrift 1999). However, as Ingold comments, "Something [...] must be wrong somewhere, if the only way to understand our own creative involvement in the world is by taking ourselves out of it" (1995: 58). A dwelling perspective does not deny the importance of the processes of social construction, but sees them as possible only because we are engaged in the world.

But it does deny the possibility of representing the world, of extracting an image of some naturally present, externally given reality (Thrift, 1999: 297: Deleuze & Guattari, 1988; Simonsen 2003: 1; Latour, 1999: 285, Grosz, 1999; Merleau-Ponty, 1968: 130, 136). "People do not import their ideas, plans or mutual representations into the world, since that very world (...) is the homeland of thoughts they do" (Ingold, 1995: 76). In Heidegger's words "we do not dwell because we have built, but we build because we dwell, that is because we are dwellers" (1993: 350).

Dwelling as formulated by Heidegger in his essay "Building, Dwelling, Thinking" (1993) does not imply simply the primacy of the practical activity. Heidegger does not overcome Cartesianism by eliminating the spiritual component of our lives, but by integrating it. It is by means of dwelling that humans become human. And not only because we are practically involved in the world in a constant, manipulative, frequently unreflexive relation (participation) with things and people, but also through bringing the fourfold elements, earth, sky, divinities and mortals together in one activity. Since we-are-in-the-world life is preserved from dispersion and disintegration (Harrison, forthcoming: 17). By leaving space for the invisible in the visible, an understanding of place as a lived and autonomous entity is made possible (Thrift, 1999; De Certeau 1988, 1998). Places haunt us at the same time that we haunt them. That is, places frequently visit us in the form of a ghost since they are constituted through human and non-human dwelling. "The ecology of place is a rich and varied spectral gathering, an articulation of presence (...) and seething absences" (Thrift 1999: 326-317). De Certeau develops a similar notion of place when he reckons that "more than its utilitarian and technocratic transparency, it is the opaque transparency, it is the opaque ambivalence of its oddities that makes the city liveable" (1998:134)

Promising insights can be gained by articulating tourism as a particular way-of-being-in-the-world, a particular way of living, dwelling, participating in the world. Notwithstanding this potential, the use of a dwelling metaphor in tourist studies is not without pitfalls. Dwelling was not initially conceived to embrace practices, like tourism, based on spatio-temporal flows and mobilities. The authentic mode of dwelling that

Heidegger (1993) had in mind is a pattern of life rooted in a particular earth and world (Dreyfus, 1993; Harrison, forthcoming), not the 'detached', short-term, mobile and fluid reality of mass Mediterranean tourism. Similarly the societies upon which Ingold (1995, 2000) based his notion of dwelling are of hunters and gatherers, apparently unaffected by the shrinking of the planet, the acceleration of western life and increasingly global flows and mobilities. "In the painting described by Ingold propinquity, localness and communion thus coincide. But in the contemporary world they almost never coincide. The emergence of new, often more or less instantaneous, mobilities mean that the patterns of dwelling described by Ingold require extensive reconceptualisation" (Urry, 2000: 136). Drawing on the reflections of Crang (2002) on interstitial spaces and ephemeral moments, my contention is that we must neither apprehend tourism as an inauthentic way of dwelling, nor treat tourists as if they were hunters and gatherers, avoiding their mobile and fluid reality. I therefore take up the claim of Urry in his manifesto 'Sociology Beyond Societies' that: "There are (...) a variety of ways of dwelling, but that once we move beyond that of land, almost all involve complex relationships between belongingness *and* travelling, within and beyond the boundaries of national societies. People can indeed be said to dwell in various mobilities" (2000: 157 italics in original). The challenge is to grasp the tourist reality, as O'Reilly (2000) does in the case of the British on the Costa del Sol, as dwelling without concealing the flows, networks and connections that make it possible. This research programme thus comes close to the work of De Certeau on spatial practices (1988,1998). In his work human dwelling is not conceived as a static condition but as intrinsically mobile and erratic. Mutations, drifts, wandering lines, errant trajectories are what makes the city and the text habitable (Crang, 2000: 150).

By apprehending tourism as dwelling, a live, sensible, situated, embodied and relational picture of tourists emerges. In doing so, I overcome structural conceptions of tourism the most representative example of which is the work of MacCannell (1999). He sees modernity as alienating, superficial and culturally disruptive and tourism as somehow an anxious but pointless search for authenticity (1999:105). Tourism is conceived as an escape from everyday life and an attempt "to overcome the discontinuities of modernity,

of incorporating its fragments into unified experiences" (1999:13). His structural bias is most evident in his analysis of tourist attractions, secular versions of the sacred, offering "an unplanned typology of structure that provides direct access to the modern consciousness or world view" (1999: 2). In their ritual quest for representations of a true society, tourists also search for what remains untouched by modernity and for the museified other. However it is implicit in Maccannell that there is no salvation in tourism since the arrival of tourist undoes the authenticity that they are striving to find. Selwyn and Culler develop a similar structural account. The former, closer to constructivism, sees tourists as constructors of myths moved by the desire to recuperate regretted wholeness and structures, absent in modern life (Selwyn 1996). The latter reconstructs the structural account from the terrain of semiotics. He thinks of tourism as a quest for an experience of signs. "Tourism identifies the salient features of the social and natural world as phenomena articulated by symbolic complexes (Culler, 1981: 138).

Structural conceptions of tourism do not consider this phenomenon as an everyday practical embodied engagement with the environment. Instead of situating tourists in the world, scholars such as MacCannell, Selwyn and Culler represent them as ungrounded subjects; mere examples of some hidden meta-narrative of modernity and post-modernity. A pre-ordered world is announced, full of structures and moral claims that tourists simply have to collect and accept. There is a lack of a sense of practice and embodiment (Joniken and Veijola, 1994) and the agency of the subjects is transferred to another world. As MacCannell himself recognises, "the society remains superior to the individual" (1999: 158). Structural conceptions of tourism are also problematic because of their denial of the congenial diversity of tourism. MacCannell presents his figuration as "one of the best models available for modern-man-in-general" (1999:1); however, as Edensor (1998: 3), Joniken and Veijola (1994), and Chaney (2002: 198) point out, it only refers to a limited number of tourist practices- the act of sightseeing- and a particular type of subjectivity - Western, middle-class educated tourists. There are indeed other ways of touring and dwelling that do not involve such a serious anxiety over authenticity (Cohen, 1988b: 376; Redfoot, 1984: 306).

A dwelling perspective also differs from those conceptions that reduce tourism to a symbolic and meaningful activity. Squire for example, quoting Jakle points out that, "tourism is a *significant* means by which modern people assess their world, defining their own sense of identity in the process" (1994:3 my italics); Abram et al move even further to affirm that "tourism can no longer be defined by the activities engaged in by people that we call tourists". Rather tourism is a form of consciousness: "it is not the movement that is new, but the change in ideology from modernity to post-modernity that marks tourism apart from earlier precursors" (1997: 6). In privileging a cognitive world of meanings and values, this tradition reproduces a Cartesian division between body and brain, the material and the spiritual. The subjects are re-empowered but their practices are missing and their bodies diminished, apprehended as mere containers of the cognitive reality, as a subordinated term. In defining tourism as a form of consciousness, a world beyond is re-introduced again. This tradition however has produced interesting insights on the importance of tourism scripting meaning onto the landscape. Ringer (1998) for example has examined the cultural construction of distinctive tourist destinations, paying attention, in particular, to the role of images, values and ideologies shaping places and tourist behaviour. Using a similar perspective Dann has examined a number of texts influencing tourism, in particular marketing material and tourist brochures (Dann, 1996).

The non-bounded character of tourism cannot be an excuse to reintroduce a de-spatialized, ungrounded subject. Neither can it be an excuse either to re-introduce 'big theory' that subordinates practices to being mere examples of some hidden meta-narrative of modernity or post-modernity. Doing tourism is not only a matter of being in space or representing the space. It is, above all, a matter of practising space and practicing through space (Crang, 1999: 248). That is, tourists are not only in place, but also involved with the place, although not necessarily in the same manner that non-tourists are. This idea of involvement is at the core of Löfgren's approach to tourism (1994, 1999). He not only recognises the priority of existence and its uncertain becoming, but also its embodied, situated and historicized character. Tourism is constantly apprehended as vital situation and as a space of encounter, knowledge and

interaction. In relation to cottage culture Löfgren says that it provides "a very safe and workable utopia, where people can explore different sides of themselves or their relations with others or with nature" (1999: 151). While in relation to Mediterranean tourism he contends, "some are out to discover exotic worlds or meet new people, for others a vacation is a chance to explore the body, their sense, or sexuality or just develop the difficult art of doing nothing" (1999: 206). Human dwelling is always spatially situated and in a constant and reciprocal relationship with human and non-human networks thus creating different types of assemblages. Doing tourism is not an individual act but a conglomerate of multiple and complex encounters between several different human and non-human entities (Crouch, 1999: 1; Crouch, Aronsson et al, 2001: 253) In these tourist encounters space is neither a neutral arena, a container where things happen, nor an inert medium to be inscribed with meaning, but another open and relational entity always in the making (Thrift, 1999: 301).

The distinctive characteristics of the tourist subject are to be found neither in his/her capacity to temporally suspend his/her engagement with the world, nor on his/her capacity to gain conceptual distance, that is, a viewpoint outside the world; but on his/her capacity to take up different views and to re-define the parameters of his/her involvement in the world. Tourist studies cannot rely on dichotomies like the one Suvantola (2002: 39-49) proposes between the readiness-at-hand relation of home and the presence-at-hand relation of reach, that is, between the practical, 'natural' and close involvement that characterizes daily life and a detached, distant and representational (non)engagement that supposedly characterizes the tourist experience. Dichotomies like this implicitly contribute to the de-spatialization and de-humanization of tourist studies. The conceptual ground of tourist studies has to be based on the notion of involvement rather than location; that is, on the recognition that tourists are still dwelling in the world in a practical, close, and often non-representational manner rather than on the myth of the detached, placeless, ungrounded autonomous subject. The challenge of tourist studies is to explore what makes such a tourist dwelling different and original. Drawing on Rojek, (1993) Inglis (2000) Franklin & Crang (2001) and Franklin (2003) this thesis views tourism as an expression of the fluid and highly commodified reality of

contemporary western societies. Tourism is no longer a discrete activity, contained in special locations and times, but "a metaphor for the way we lead our lives in a consumer society" (Franklin, 2003: 5). It has to be understood in relation to both the extension of consumerism, in particular the de-differentiation of work and leisure that characterises post-fordist economies, and the generalisation of networks and mobilities. In a world in which people, objects and ideas are becoming routinely mobile, tourism is increasingly one of the most characteristic ways of being-in-the-world.

Tourist practices

Identifying tourism as a way of being-in-the-world means, therefore, giving priority to embodied practices before consciousness or structure. Tourism has to be understood as a practical and, frequently, non-representational way in which we are involved in the world. This breaks with the common tendency in tourist studies "to remain within a 'vicious hermeneutic circle', abstracting from how people relate to tourist places in practice" (Baerenholdt et al., 2004: 5). Tourism is neither only a matter of consciousness, as Abram et al. (1997) tend to imply, nor only about meanings and values as Squire (1994) suggests; but also about situated and embodied subjects practising and performing. It is because we are doing something in a particular way that we are tourists and we adopt tourist consciousness.

This focus on tourist practices and performances has an important precedent in ritual analysis of tourism (Cohen, 1988a Graburn, 1989, Boissevain 1996, Lett, 1983 Shields 1991). According to Franklin, these developments were critical in breaking general theories of tourism and turning attention to the diversity of tourist practices. "Ritual analysis is useful because it forces us away from megalithic or general theories of tourism to precise practices of specific people in specific times and places; we are forced in other words to see tourism not as an inevitable singularity nor as something that exists independently of the people (and objects) who perform it" (2003: 111-112). Ritual analysis makes a parallel between tourism and pre-modern activities such as pilgrimages and carnivals. Tourism involves the creation of liminal spaces in which the

everyday order and hierarchies are reversed or, at least, temporally suspended (Edensor, 1998: 4). In Anthropology, Graburn (1989) model modern time into periods of work/profane and episodes of tourism/sacred. Drawing on Turner and Turner (1978), Cohen and Redfoot identify tourism as a carnivalesque moment and a liminal space, a time for the triumph of personal meaning over which tourists gain the freedom to do what they want (Redfoot, 1984: 306; Cohen, 1988a: 37-41). While embracing social spatialization theory, Shields develops a more geographical version of this ritual approach. He thinks of tourist resorts like Brighton and Blackpool as spaces in-between, where social coordination is lost and normal rules are inverted and challenged (1991: 83-101). Boissevain's ethnographies of Malta also elaborate on ritual conceptions of tourism (1996). While giving priority to tourist practices, a focus on ritual inversion is problematic not least because it transforms tourist practices into a necessary function to integrate and reinforce social cohesion. As Edensor point out, "the assumption that tourism is a function of the social need for integration seems to suggest that the actions and meanings of tourists merely act to reinforce social cohesion" (1998: 4). In doing so, they conceal the specific historical and spatial relationships and practices in which tourists engage. Franklin however disagrees with this claim (2003: 114-5).

Tourist studies have experimented with a recent turn towards tourist practices and performances. This turn is marked by the work of Edensor (1998, 2000a, 2001); Desmond, (1999); Crang (1997, 1999); Crouch (1999, 2002); Coleman and Crang, (2002); Franklin (2003) and Baerenholdt et al. (2004). They acknowledge the relevance of everyday, embodied and non-representational practices through which we engage with the world as tourists. As Baerenholdt, Haldrup et al point out, it "stresses more broadly how tourist practices are performed and intersect with everyday life in (post)modern cultures. Here the actual 'doings' of tourists in their complex relations with everyday life form the focal point" (2004: 5). Contrary to ritual approaches tourist places are not conceived as fixed and static, but as fluid and created through performance (Coleman and Crang, 2002: 1). At the core of this perspective is the idea that the everyday is not simply the realm of unreflexive habit and repetition "where cultural norms get played out" (Edensor 2001: 61); it also contains redemptive

moments, "immanent potential for new possibilities of life" (Harrison, 2001: 498). "The emergent quotidian process" - Edensor explains- "is open-ended, fluid and generative. concerns becoming rather than being, is a sensual experiencing and understanding that is constantly attaching, weaving and disconnecting; constantly mutating and creating" (Edensor, 2001: 62). In using performative metaphors, tourist action is redefined as open, fluid and uncertain. It is about becoming rather than being.

This chapter re-considers what can be gained by tourist studies researching through the ordinary and the non-representational. It is insufficient to focus only on extraordinary practices, like sightseeing (Urry, 1990). Grasping only what is exceptional underplays the continued relevance of the routines and habits in the configuration of tourist experience as well as 'the immanent potential for new possibilities of life' that inhabits the realm of the everyday. It also ignores the fact that the distinction between the everyday and the holiday is becoming increasingly fuzzy (Franklin and Crang, 2001). The relevance of everyday ordinary practices becomes clear when we consider the experience of a holidaymaker on a package tour in the Mediterranean. The main activity of hundreds of thousands of Europeans on their summer holidays is just sunbathing and swimming on a crowded beach or in the hotel swimming pool reading a thriller or a tabloid newspaper for two weeks. Furthermore, according to MVRDV's study of "Costa Iberica" (2000), the tourist experience in an overcrowded coastal resort like Benidorm is increasingly grounded in walking practices; in this site tourists spent an average of more than three hours a day just wandering around the city. We cannot undermine the importance of these practices in opening out experience and even sketching out alternative ways of being. In short, if we want to grasp the embodied practices that constitute tourist experiences there is a need to de-exoticize tourist studies, without removing the discussion of the role of the exotic in our societies.

Adopting a dwelling perspective in tourist studies does not involve either the replacement of the symbolic with the material, the brain with the body, or the negation of the invisible and imaginative in the tourist experience. I am not suggesting eliminating knowledge, values, meanings or any sort of mental and spiritual activity

from accounts of tourism – indeed making room for those dimensions has been a valuable and hard fought effort. In fact the proposed dwelling perspective makes possible the integration of both sides in a single human world, by developing a situated, embodied and relational account of tourism, like the one Löfgren (1994, 1999) produces. In developing this notion of tourism as an open practice, he does not contrapose material and symbolic existence, rather he integrates them in single human world, jumping from physical terrain, to 'fantasylands' or media worlds, constantly inter-linking them. The cultural side of tourism is not dissociated from tourist practices and tourist settings. This is at the core of his definition of "vacationing as a cultural laboratory" (1999: 7). This accords with Crouch et al. on the need to approach tourist phenomena "through a combined focus on what the tourist does and how the tourist makes sense of what she or he does as an active individual" (2001: 253). A practical ontology cannot take into account only individual actions and physical events; it needs to consider simultaneously context, 'representations' and embodied practice. The expressive, intersubjective and poetic are also mediated through the way the body is engaged actively in space.

Disrupting structural and semiotic accounts does not obstruct then the possibility of relating tourism with the symbolic dimension of the human life. Being-a-tourist-in-the-world entails constantly figuring and refiguring (but not prefiguring) identities, knowledge, values and meanings. Being on holiday is a relevant factor in the formation of geographical lay knowledge (Crouch, 1999) and sometimes also political and cultural identities, be they regional, national or even trans-national (Urry, 1995). Some travel experiences, in particular long-haul travel, retain a significant influence on the construction of self-identities (Desforges, 2000). Tourist practices can also be linked with the transformation of the native self in developing countries (Bruner, 1991). The meanings, identities and knowledges that are figured and refigured through tourism are not necessarily negative and de-humanising. I do not agree with those insinuations that tourism is an inauthentic, banal and depthless way of being in the world, nor that tourist dwelling is unable to combat dispersion and disintegration, in other words to be an active part in the formation of what counts as symbolic. Our inability to explore what

comes through enjoyment and banality does not justify an implicit or explicit account of tourism as empty and lifeless.

Tourism as embodiment

In a dwelling perspective based on the primacy of practices, the body inevitably occupies a central place. The body is the means through which we are practically involved in the world. Lived experienced, social practice, knowledge and feelings are always intrinsically corporeal and sensual (Edensor, 2000b: 100; Simonsen, 2003: 7). In other words, "if there is any truth it is the truth of the body" (Game: 1991:192). In this section I consider an embodied understanding of tourism, building upon the suggestions of Crouch (1999, 2002), Joniken and Veijola (1994; 1997), Löfgren (1999), Desmond (1999), Franklin and Crang (2001) and Coleman & Crang (2002). I bring the body into tourist studies not only because taking the body seriously means that new dimensions of tourist experience are unfolded but also because tourism appears to be an exceptional field in which to realize the *modus operandi* of the human body in the contemporary western world.

I do not think of the body just as a thing: a physical entity or an object of representation. Those positions that develop an approach to the body exclusively as an object of control, a surface of inscription or a physical medium for the development of the subjectivity (Turner, 1991; Featherstone, 1991) seem deeply unsatisfactory. In these schemas, the body exists only as an unavoidable pre-condition or as a product of an external cultural process of construction (Ingold, 2000: 42; Thrift, 1999: 301). The existence of the body as a living entity is denied. It appears as a subordinated term, a mortuary entity, a critical mass from which and upon which the mind-subject operates (Radley, 1995: 3). Instead I follow Merleau-Ponty when he argues that "The body interposed is not itself a thing, an interstitial matter, a connective tissue, but sensible for itself" (1968:135). I also refuse those approaches based on a division between the natural and the cultural side of the body, a position taken for granted in most of classical

sociological thinking (Grosz, 1995: 106). Turner, for example, identifies, as one of the main common themes in sociology, the idea that:

> "Man [sic] has been wrenched from the natural world by the creation of civilized societies which require institutional regulations of violence (especially the control of sexuality). The growth of civilization requires simultaneously the restraint of the body and the cultivation of character in the interest of social stability. The growth of instrumental rationality as the main principle of rationalization requires the suppression of desire, but is also the wellspring of art, imagination and creativity".(1991: 14-15)

Marcuse proffers an extreme version of this argument when he holds that sexual liberation is itself a challenge to capitalism. "A release of libidinal power would directly threaten the ascetic regulation of the population", he reckons (Turner, 1991: 16). These approaches pre-suppose the existence of a natural order, an instinctual way of being which have been negatively altered by the rationalization of modern society. This position is in contradiction with the fact that the body is organically, biologically incomplete; it is indeterminate, amorphous, a series of more or less uncoordinated potentialities that require social triggering, ordering, and long-term administration. The cultural is a biological necessity of the body. This section thus regards re-examining the distinction between the biological and the cultural formation of the body as a necessity (Grosz, 1995; Franklin, 2002). In doing so, I am following Grosz who suggests turning the inside out and the outside in, in other words, to analyse "how the subject's exterior is psychically constructed and how the process of social inscription of the body's surface constructs a psychical interior" (1995: 104).

Neither of these two recurring notions of embodiment identified by Grosz (1995: 104-106) is solid enough to ground the body in the tourist field. The tourist body is neither merely a thing through which we tour the world, nor only an object of representation, cultivation or exhibition. The body is also active, expressive and sensual, that is, it is always at the same time social and natural, object and subject, active and passive. Therefore an embodied account of a place like the beach is incomplete when it focuses exclusively on the social importance of having a suntan, or on the exhibition of bodies

that takes place and the presentational rules that prescribe them, though these are all true. In arguments like these the body is exclusively a cultural signifier of values and norms. It is still partial if the focus is instead on the possibilities to escape from social rules and develop a more natural way of life. Adopting this point of view, nudist beaches in particular, would be a revolutionary space where tourists escape from the clothing rules that oppress the body, thus recuperating a more natural life, and what is more natural than dressing like you were when your mother brought into the world? In short, a place like the beach needs to be apprehended as a place where the body lives, experiments and desires, a place of embodied utopias and non-discursive pleasures.

In order to escape from such a paralysing dichotomy that traps the tourist body either as overloaded by social norms or free from them, this section proposes a situated, elusory and expressive understanding of the body. The body is not only written, but it also writes (Game, 1991: 189), that is, it has an active role in the configuration of human experience and its meaning and utopias. I follow Thrift when he argues, "embodiment is about the body-subject, not the body, engaged in joint body-practices of becoming" (1997: 142). The active body that I am describing is not only an elusive, evasive, body with the capacity to depart from those endless objectifications that are imposed upon it, but an elusory body, delusive but also empowered with the capacity to open out experience and even to sketch out alternative ways of being. "The body is not merely a vehicle for departing from social norms, for escaping from the strictures of moral codes. It is, in its positive aspect, the grounds for configuring an alternative way of being that eludes the grasp (...). It is not a matter of resisting power but of dis-regarding it" (Radley, 1995: 9). In this body "there is a living in a place that refuses the objectifying gaze; and what cannot be seen, cannot be spoken either" (Game, 1991: 183-4). That is, the body by virtue of being elusory is able to signify in ways that discourse cannot embrace (Radley, 1995: 12).

I would concur with Simonsen when she argues, "The body is itself spatial" (2003: 10). It is simultaneously situated and a situation. The body always inhabits particular spaces and times; but at the same time it is a situation that will always be a part of our lives

conditioning and making them possible. Furthermore, the body by virtue of being elusory also spatializes, it 'creates' places by means of uniting us directly with people, spaces and things through its own ontogenesis, that is through the entire sequence of events involved in its development as an organism (Merleau-Ponty, 1968: 136). This is why the body is not something distinct from the environment in which it dwells. Body and space are mutually defining, "there is a two-way linkage that could be defined as an interface" (Grosz, 1995: 108). Using a Deleuziean perspective I will enlarge this argument in the next section by exploring how the body forms assemblages with the material and human environment that surrounds it. The body is "capable of crossing thresholds between substances to form linkages, machines, provisional and often temporary sub- or micro-groupings" (Grosz, 1995: 108). Thus in a dwelling perspective the body cannot be apprehended in a holistic view in terms of unity and integration, as a total, monolithic, separated entity. The presupposition of a stable and ordered subject needs to be unsettled. (Grosz, 1995, Deleuze & Guattari 1988) .

It is not clear to me that articulateness and representation are always possible and desirable in this embodied perspective. I agree with Grosz when she argues, "the most intense moments of pleasure, the force of their materiality, while certainly broadly evocable in discourse, cannot be reduced to adequate terms, terms which capture their force and intensity. A distinction must be drawn between discourse and experience even with the understanding that language or systems of representation are the prior condition for the intelligibility of experience" (1995: 222). Therefore recognizing the importance of the non-representational side of the human existence in tourist studies confronts us not only with the need to find more appropriate ways of knowing the tourist body but also with the cost and effects of such knowledge. By unveiling the non-discursive creativity of the tourist body, we bring to light the complexities of human existence and the deficiencies of western reason. However this approach might also involuntarily open a gateway for a higher penetration of our daily lives by the objectifying gaze and rationalising discourse, threatening our 'embodied freedom', which appears to be an essential vacational element.

Leisure and tourism provide a unique setting to explore the role of such expressive, sensual and elusory faculties of the body. Increasingly, more fully embodied forms of tourism are developing which explicitly rely on the non-representational side of our bodies. "Tourists are increasingly doing things with their own bodies, with embodied objectives such as fitness, thrill, spirituality, risk, sensual connections, sexuality, taste (olfaction and degustation) and what I will presently refer to as 'inscription' and 'flow'" (Franklin, 2003: 213). The importance of the body and the non-representational is particularly evident in the case of adventure tourism. Testing the possibilities of the body, seeking thrills through participation in physically challenging activities and heightening new sensory experiences are among the ultimate purpose of the majority of adventure activities (Cloke & Perkins, 1998). Thus for example, what makes surfing attractive is, according to Stranger (1999), the intensity of the kinaesthetic experience involved and the intensified sense of present that it creates. In the case of climbing what is of special interest is the interface between hands and rocks (Lewis 2000). The embodied ground of the tourist experience is also evident in less adventurous forms of tourism such as wine tourism (Hall & Lew, 1998), hunting and angling (Franklin, 2001), naturism (Bell & Holliday, 2000) and ecotourism (Markwell, 2001). There are multiple tourist experiences deeply grounded on non-visual forms of corporeal participation, such as the psychedelic rave scene in Goa, a sonic tourist environment that is constituted by through the material connections to bodies, spacetimes and objects that a particular sort of music enables (Saldanha, 2002: 43). These fully embodied tourist developments participate in a general concern with our bodies, and in particular, in a renewed emphasis on sensual embodied experiences that value the present (Franklin, 2003: 87). According to Thrift, in the 'go-faster world' in which we are living 'body practices that value the present moment rather than spreading out into the future' are becoming increasingly popular (2000: 41). These body practices and technologies are predominantly focused on kinaesthesia. Fully embodied forms of tourism such as surfing and naturism have a lot in common with this often spiritual concern with the body not least because of their emphasis on feeling the moment and making it last.

Coastal mass tourism also participates in this trend. The popularity of the beach relies enormously on such an embodied capacity to constantly create life, space and meaning in a way that refuses the objectifying gaze and the control of discourse. As Game points out "The desire to put one's feet or body in the sand, to be in the water, can be understood as meaning embodied – feel, touch, fluid- and possibly not speakable" (1991: 177). On the beach tourists are actively savouring the embodied pleasure of being touched by the sun, and not only passively struggling to fulfil the beauty canons that society imposes upon us; they might be, also, suffering the uncomfortable presence of smelly seaweed and threatening jellyfish that compel them to remain in the much safer swimming pool; and some might even be reliving their childhood by building sandcastles and playing ball games. The beach can only be fully understood if we take into account the capacity of the body to configure human experience, to open out new geographies, to make new connections and assemblages and spatialize meanings and utopias.

To date most scholars have singled out the visual sense as the dominant mode of corporeal participation in tourism (Adler, 1989; Urry, 1990; Macnaghten and Urry, 1998; Rojek 1993). As Joniken and Veijola (1994) point out, there is a notable absence of the body in tourist studies. Tourism has often been reduced to a practice of visual consumption, a semiotic game involving the coding and decoding of signs. The most representative example of this is Urry's notion of the tourist gaze. According to him a fundamental part of the tourist experience "is to gaze upon or view a set of different scenes, of landscapes or townscapes which are out of the ordinary" (1990: 1). Inspired by the work of Foucault (1997) and Lefebvre (1991) he links the dominance of visualism in tourist studies with modernity. While reflecting on the visual nature of the tourist experience and, in particular, on the important role of visual technologies; the reduction of tourism to a practice of visual consumption is consistent with a semiotic conception of tourism as a cognitive and symbolic experience. The visual has been placed as the dominant form of corporeal participation because of its special relationship to cognitive, mental and intellectual process (Franklin, 2003: 104).

The notion of the tourist gaze is problematic not least because it ignores a significant part of the activity that takes place in the body. As different scholars suggest, it privileges visuality and, in particular, the act of sightseeing, over other sources of embodied experience, such as the sense of touch (Chaney, 2002: Crouch, 1999, 2002; Joniken & Veijola, 1994, 1997; Desmond, 1999). It overlooks the fact that "tourists are seeking to be *doing something* in the places they visit rather than being endlessly spectatorially passive" (Franklin & Franklin 2001:13 italics in original). The notion of the tourist gaze does not take into account the multisensual and active character of the body-subject and, in particular, what remains invisible and non-rationalised, which I contend is central to understanding the attraction of an increasing number of tourist experiences. Urry's notion of the tourist gaze is also problematic because it privileges a masculine middle-class and imperialistic imaginary. As Chaney points out "the gaze in its untroubled authority is masculine in the presupposition that it articulates normality, and imperialist in the way it appropriates other cultures" (2002: 199). Underlying the notion of the tourist gaze there is a particular gender construction that corresponds with the notion of the flâneur. (Pollock, 1988: 67) In doing so, it risks reintroducing a version of a detached free subject mastering and representing the world from outside while universalising a particular middle class travel experience based on the illusion of collecting places. Its focus on the extraordinary is also problematic. The metaphor of gaze defined by Urry avoids the visuality of everyday life, a central issue in this research.

This research project considers different modes of corporeal participation in tourism, which do not presuppose a visual and cognitive relation with the place. In chapter 6 I examine the role and limits of a romantic inspired approach by which the beach is gazed upon and turned into spectacle. By taking sandcastles as my example I also demonstrate the performative, manipulative and ludic character of the beach. In chapter 7 I use the case of nudism to explore different ways of knowing though the body touching on alternative visualities and the sense of touch. By using the concept of corporeal participation I am following Merleau-Ponty's (1968) proposition that perception is not representation but participation and engagement with the environment, which

constitutes simultaneously both subject and object. It is a process of opening out based on a constant reversibility between the seeing and the visible that make the outside of the inside and the inside of its outside. A lot can be gained from taking seriously non-representational forms of experience (Crouch, 1999; Joniken and Veijola 1994, 1997; Edensor 1998, 2000a, Crang & Franklin, 2001), as well as the role of the non-visual senses (Rojek and Urry, 1997: 5-10), such as smell (Urry, 1999) and especially kinaesthetics (Game 1991; Thrift 2000) and the practice of walking (Edensor, 2000b; De Certeau 2000). In fact, it is the entire body that participates in tourism. No sense acts separately from the other senses, but in a continuous interrelation and tension (Merleau-Ponty, 1968: 133-134; Crouch, 2002: 212).

The discussion of embodied forms of participation in tourism cannot be separated from the concern about the formation of tourist knowledge. According to Merleau-Ponty knowledge and ideas are not the opposite of the sensible, and cannot be detached from flesh. "They could not be given to us as ideas except in a carnal experience" he argues, where ideas have "been acquired only through its commerce with the visible, to which they remain attached" (1968: 150). It follows from this that tourist practices are always knowing practices. "Tourism is about producing knowledge (...) although not necessarily the kind of knowledge usually recognized by academia" (Crang, 1999: 239). In practicing tourism we do not represent the world and its inhabitants, rather we participate in it from a particular entrance point through our bodies. That is, it is because we are in a situated and embodied space of practice and interaction, that through practicing tourism, meanings and knowledge are constituted. Bodies in tourism are relevant not only in the formation of lay geographical knowledge (Crouch 1999, 2002), that is, of an embodied sense of place; bodies in tourism are also significant in the constitution of identity categories and notions of subjectivity. The work of Desmond shows, for example, how bodily differences in certain types of tourism are marked, measured and politically mobilised to naturalise various social relations, in particular gender and race categories, as well as particular notions of nature and modernity (Desmond, 1999).

De-centring tourists

Adopting a dwelling perspective leaves no room either for methodological individualism or a conception of the tourist as a solitary entity detached from the material and spatial environment mastering the world. A dwelling perspective not only requires us to embody, enliven and spatialize tourists but also to develop a de-centred and rhizomatic approach to tourist action that neither underplays the material and non-material networks that breed tourist experiences nor sanctifies and overemphasizes tourist action, concealing the inevitably messy human condition. Based on Deleuzian philosophy, this section contends that by reconfiguring the tourist experience as a relational effect generated by a network of heterogeneous interacting geographical processes, the teleological, solitary and all powerful notion of the tourist has to be replaced by an open, uncertain, nomadic subject who does not posses an absolute control over his/her destiny.

Human action is about openness, uncertainty, creativity and randomness, about becoming. "Practices are always open and ungiven" (Simonsen, 1996: 509). In Grosz's words: "This is what life (duration, memory, consciousness) brings to the world: the new, the movement of actualisation of the virtual, expansiveness, opening up" (Grosz, 1999: 25). Becoming is not a teleological movement, it is a question of bifurcations, events and circumstances (Latour, 1999: 281). In line with this, Deleuze and Guattari suggest a rhizomatic metaphor to "avoid any orientation toward a culmination point or external end" (1988: 22). A rhizome "has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle (milieu) from which it grows and which it overspills" (1988: 21). In a rhizomatic approach to action the autonomy of human constructions is recognized. Human 'creativity' is not synonymous with absolute control of our 'products', but of giving life to them, of transferring to them part of our becoming. The physical and imaginative intervention of human beings in the world is the cause of its autonomous humanity. So, "we are slightly overtaken by the action" (Latour, 1999: 281). Consequently, the notion of Becoming is not only a temporal term, but also spatial. It involves the recognition of the disclosive character of human practices; that is, they

always open spaces (Thrift, 1999: 311). Human practices continually shape spaces and bestow meanings upon them in a never ending and reciprocal process that makes and remakes society and space in multiple and plural form, far from the conceptual image of coherent and definitive entities. In this context the human practices through which we dwell the world are relational, integrated in several different networks and always in the making. Being has to be rendered intelligible in terms of routes, relations, contexts, networks, practices, assemblages and so forth rather than in terms of meta-narratives of being (Thrift, 1999, 1997; Whatmore, 1999; Massey, 1994; Urry, 2000; Deluze & Guattari, 1988). That is, what is important is not to understand the subject, but rather the always-relational practices of subjectification (Thrift, 1997: 127).

Drawing on Deleuze & Guttari (1988), Latour (1999), Thrift (1999) and Whatmore (1999), this section proposes a rhizomatic and de-centred understanding of the tourist subject. This entails the reconfiguration of the tourist subject as a relational effect generated by a network of heterogeneous, interacting components whose activity is constituted in the networks of which they form part (Whatmore, 1999: 28). Tourist practices are always relational, integrated in several different networks and always in process. In other words, tourism is constituted by means of multiple encounters between several different things (Crouch, 1999: 1). It also entails an understanding of tourism as a site of becoming rather than being, a place subjected to processes of de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation of flows of desire, identity and meaning. The teleological, solitary and all-powerful tourist has to be replaced by an open, uncertain, nomadic subject who does not posses an absolute control over his/her destiny.

Tourist studies have predominantly focused on just one of these encounters, the interface of tourists and locals, that is, of hosts and guests. These encounters have often been seen as culturally damaging and reductive. Tourism is made responsible for the commodification of cultures and the disappearance of authenticity. According to Greenwood when tourists arrive, the rich and complex local cultures are commodified, reduced to a simplistic and commercial form. When this happens their authenticity is destroyed and "the meaning is gone" (1989: 178). This argument is problematic not

least because it presupposes a very static and essentialist idea of local cultures. A number of scholars have suggested a much more complex account of these encounters. The work of Boisseivain (1996) on Maltese tourism demonstrates that not only tourists but also locals are active and creative actors. There are multiple processes of cultural adaptation and modification that protect local cultures from the tourist invasion. Commodification does not always involve destruction of cultures; it might also involve their rediscovery. Picard's (1996) account of Balinesse tourism also describes a small culture experiencing a large-scale tourist development. However he concludes that in the case of Bali far from simply eroding cultures, tourism has introduced new vitalities, a process that he calls "cultural involution". Ewins (2002) suggests a similar picture in the case of Fiji. In these encounters between hosts and guests, authenticity is not an inherent property of objects fixed in time and space, but a relational effect, which is part and parcel of a 'political economy'. Authenticity is often the product of an invention and a cultural construction as in the case of the American town of New Glarus that Hoelscher (1998) analyses, which is also known as 'little Switzerland'. This example demonstrates the changing nature of ethnic memory and heritage in response to tourism. In amplifying pre-existing cultures and memories, tourism is seen as an active agent in creating a sense of place and authenticity.

Coastal mass tourism is constituted by multiple encounters between different material and non-material networks. However few of these encounters involve cultural contact with the exotic and the different. Going to the Mediterranean is no longer a travel outside the realm of the familiar as in the case of cultural tourism; on the contrary it is now an important part of the everyday life of British society. As Franklin points out, "Most people do not travel outside the political pale and so they find themselves increasingly travelling inside the realm of the familiar" (2003: 10). It is not only the fact that mass Mediterranean tourism does not primarily focus on the exotic other, but that globalisation is making the world increasingly homogeneous. In this context, "it is now (...) becoming increasingly difficult to travel anywhere new or different that is in any way free from hazards" (Franklin, 2003: 10). Rather than an encounter with exotic and pre-modern cultures, coastal mass Mediterranean tourism has to be understood in

relation with processes of cultural de-differentiation and hybridation. This is implicit in the work of both Waldren (2001) on Deià (Mallorca) and O'Reilly (2000) on the British on the Costa del Sol. Both ethnographies show the existence of an increasing number of people that do not clearly fold in the categories of hosts and guests, but develop their lives in-between different places and cultures. In doing so, they challenge the clear-cut dichotomies between the exotic and the familiar, as well as a fixed notion of community and the other.

Mass Mediterranean tourism is not primarily an encounter with the other but with the self. It is a space of becoming rather than being in which different desires and expectations are de-terrritorialised and re-territorialised. From its beginnings it has been inextricably linked with a transient re-definition, if not multiplication, of the self. An extreme case of this association was observed in Eivissa during the 60s and 70s with European youth counter culture. During those years this Balearic island became the ideal support for young people's utopian fantasies of another life and a refuge from a disappointing modernity (Rozenberg, 1990). Nevertheless, a case like this is rather exceptional; the continuous de-composition and re-composition of the self that characterizes the tourist experience is most of the time limited both in scope and time. Mass Mediterranean tourism is more often the space of a nostalgic version of the family as well as of a number of hedonistic desires. In chapter 5 I examine coastal holidays as a travel-inward to the feminised private world of the family, as a retreat from the hard realities of male dominated public life. It is a similar phenomenon to the cottage culture of which Löfgren tells us that it provides "a very safe and workable utopia, where people can explore different sides of themselves or their relations with others or with nature" (1999: 151). Family tourism is also a workable utopia, a cultural laboratory which revolves mainly around performing social relations rather than collecting views (Löfgren, 1999). It is a testing ground for the family, which is however not exempt of tensions and conflicting projects.

What I suggest is, in fact, an intrinsically geographical exercise. All tourist practices and encounters are geographically situated and materially mediated. In other words, it is

because we are constantly trapped and haunted in complex geographical networks and material assemblages that the tourist subject is relationally constituted (Whatmore, 1999: 28; Deleuze & Guattari, 1988, Thrift, 1997, 1999). On the one hand, this perspective challenges the common idea according to which there is nothing substantial in tourism. The subject of this PhD thesis does not correspond with Urry's (1990: 100) and Rojek's (1997: 62, 69) notion of the post-tourist. The tourist is not just a playful and ironic figure who assumes the world as superficial and volatile. This research presupposes a social and grounded subject that is performing different identities and social relations through tourism. On the other hand, this perspective challenges a teleological, solitary and all-powerful image of the tourist. Coastal tourism, and in particular family tourism, does not correspond with the popular image of the male and middle class ardent traveller in search of new sights which Lofgren identifies with Phileas Fogg (1999: 9). Drawing on Urbain (2003: 4) I identify coastal tourism instead with the Robinsonian desire "to get away from it all", to relax and to build up an alternative life elsewhere. This figuration suggests a much more open, uncertain, nomadic subject who does not posses an absolute control over his/her destiny. In short, my contention is that by decentring the human agency of tourists throughout the particular geographical relations that constitute it, it becomes clear that tourist experience is a relational effect generated by a network of heterogeneous interacting geographical processes. That is, when approaching the tourist experience we are not only facing geographical nomadism but also temporal, personal and interpersonal rhizomatic movement.

Researching through the material

Last but not least, working through a de-centred and rhizomatic notion of tourist subjectivity also entails the supposition that things matter. The material world is inevitably part of everyone's vital context. We fabricate the social, we develop ourselves in constant interaction with the people, things, machines and places that surround us (Miller, 1998; Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Lash, 2001). Things are folded into the human world in all manner of active and inseparable ways,

creating hybrid assemblages of human and non-human entities (Whatmore, 1999; Latour, 1999), in other words, technologies of being (Thrift, 1997). We have already discussed how our relationship with the material world, according to Heidegger, is primarily manipulative not representative. We encounter things most of the time in their readiness-at-hand, using them, rather than present-at-hand, contemplating them from a detached position. "Heidegger first notes that we do not encounter mere things (use, talk about, deal with), but rather we use the things at hand to get something done" (Dreyfus, 1993: 62). The equipment that we ordinarily manipulate is alive, and causative since it already incorporates part of our human becoming. At this point I separate myself from an orthodox Heideggerian approach to materiality. His conception of equipment as something-in-order-to, as something that already incorporates intentions, is too deterministic to be associated with a relational materialism that recognizes the life of things without concealing the unpredictable becoming that appears in the continuous assemblages between human and non-human entities.

Objects are important in tourism. As Franklin points out, "tourism does seem on the face of it to be more *object*- rather than simply *idea*-or *discourse*-orientated" (2003: 101 italics in original). Tourists are integrated in complex networks of things, technologies and places configuring hybrid assemblages of human and non-human entities. Tourist objects are not fetishes of some social superstructures, but inevitable parts of each other's tourist experience. Objects, like spaces, not only condition tourist experiences, but also become a way through which they unfold. Things play an enabling role in tourism, they are active agents in making things happens. The introduction of the car, for example, not only opened new territories to weekend tourism but also had a major impact in fastening new modes of landscape perception and sensualities in a constant interconnection between motion and emotion (Löfgren, 1999: 41-71; Wilson, 1992). It is necessary to unveil the materiality of tourism, particularly the intimate interdependencies between tourism and different technologies unfolded in our lives, including technologies of representation (Hutnyk, 1996). Tourist objects undermine the fixity of cultures and places (Lury, 1997). The object-ness of tourist objects is constituted in a process in which dwellings and travelling are frequently rendered

indistinguible (Lury, 1997: 89). Tourist materiality is constituted in-between destinations and catchment areas, in-between host and guest, becoming, according to Lury (1997) examples, of global cosmopolitanism. Souvenirs are probably the best example. While strongly associated with a destination, souvenirs acquire their full meaning only through their capacity to travel elsewhere.

The proposed notion of materiality intends to avoid abstraction, that is, reducing things to models of the social world, fetishes of some social superstructures, lifeless products that represent society. Unfortunately most texts do not hold things to be very significant (Franklin 2003: 98). This is particularly the case of post-modern accounts of tourism in which things are made potentially redundant as signs become more important than things themselves (Urry, 1990: 10). My aim is to take into account things in themselves, the concreteness of the objects that surround us, their material qualities, their specific relations with the human world, their specific context of use. "Through dwelling upon the more mundane sensual and material qualities of the object we are able to unpick the more subtle connections with cultural lives and values that are objectified through these forms, in part because of the particular qualities they possess" (Miller, 1998: 9). Indeed, this concrete notion of materiality involves apprehending a tourist place like the beach by also taking into account the sensual qualities of the sand, the fresh air or the lilo. In fact, what I am proposing is akin to Crang's research on photography. He suggests grasping photography without concealing the sense of temporality and eventfulness, that is, without concealing what tourists do with the camera and the resulting pictures. "It can be useful and informative then to think through the multiple permutations of who is picturing, what or whom, where and with what context of later exhibition, circulation or display, either in mind or happenings as the researcher comes across the pictures" (Crang, 1999: 245). He claims that new angles could be reached by apprehending photography as a knowledge production practice undeniably material and situated, and inextricably linked with characteristic tourist ways of seeing the landscape, especially those based on detachment and objectification (Crang, 1999: 244-6).

Conclusion

In short, this chapter has argued that dwelling, embodied and performative metaphors open out interesting research avenues in tourist studies. I have explored above both the implications of using such metaphors and their possibilities for grasping the tourist phenomena. First of all I have argued for the relevance of apprehending tourism as dwelling, that is, as a practical, and frequently non-representational way, through which we are involved in the world. Secondly, I have suggested focusing on human practices in tourist studies, in particular on ordinary and non-representational practices. Thirdly I have explored the advantages of using an elusory, situated, active and multi-sensorial understanding of the body in tourist studies. Finally I have considered a de-centred and rhizomatic understanding of tourist agency that neither undermines the material and non-material networks folded into the human world nor overemphasizes human action, concealing the inevitably messy human condition. In doing so this chapter aims to pove the possibilities of a non-representational theory in tourist studies. This is a sociological and geographical project that neither de-spatializes, dis-embodies, nor isolates tourists and their practices.

This chapter as a whole has not only departed from detached and, paraphrasing Crang (1999: 248), mortuary accounts of tourism, it also has departed from flattening understandings that negate any possibility of transcendence and authenticity on holiday. This chapter has made an effort to take seriously what is considered fun, banal and depthless, in such a way that does not contribute to the social reproduction of seriousness (Crang & Franklin, 2003: 14). In focusing on the everyday life of tourists, in considering the holidays from below, I have contended that tourism is not separate from the main concerns of social science, that is, from the efforts to explain (and improve) our society. In short this chapter inquires into weather the utopias of the twenty first century start (and also finish) on the beach.

Chapter 3

Context and Methodology

This PhD thesis is an ethnographic account of mass tourism in Menorca, which focuses on both the commodified spaces of the coastal hotel and the putatively Edenic nature of the beach. This chapter introduces the case study of this research and explains the methodological processes that I have followed. In the first part I present a general overview of mass tourism in Menorca using mainly local literature and my personal experience. With over a million tourists visiting each year, Menorca is paradigmatic of the functioning of mass Mediterranean tourism. There are two main kinds of tourists, British and German, who book the classical package tour, and another kind, Spanish middle class tourists. While in Britain, the island is well positioned as a family destination, in Spain it is recognised mainly as a quiet and well-preserved resort that appeals to the top end of the market. In both cases the unique selling point of Menorca derives from having a more harmonious tourist development than the urban disasters that characterise the Spanish coast. One might argue that this is less a difference in kind than stage of development since Menorca is not yet a mature resort. To set the scene for these differing development paths I finish this introduction with an overview of the

social controversies surrounding tourism and the recent political initiatives to regulate the sector and readdress its negative effects. The second part of this chapter explains the methodological process I have followed. I explain the methods used, the rationale behind the selection of particular objects of analysis and the general practicalities of the research. Ethnography is the most appropriate methodology for examining the everyday life of tourists their practices, bodies and subjectivities. This research focuses on the two dominant groups of tourist, British package tourists and Spanish middle class tourists, who are examined in their contrasting ways of dwelling and practising two particular spaces, the hotel and the beach. Whereas in the coastal hotel I conducted a much more intense and structured research programme based primarily on serial interviews; on the beach I followed a much more open and relaxed research programme based primarily on participant observation. A number of contextual observations were made to complement this general overview of tourism in Menorca. Overall it has been a very successful and gratifying experience although not exempt of challenges and drawbacks

Menorca

The island of Menorca is the case study for this thesis. Located in the middle of the western Mediterranean, Menorca has a size of 701 Km^2 and a population of 71,524, according to the 2001 census (IBAE, 2004: 35). In the last 30 years, with the expansion of tourism, its population has increased dramatically with the arrival of immigrants, first from southern Spain and more recently from South America, Northern Africa and the United Kingdom. Foreign immigration comprises at least 7% of the population. Menorca is historically a Catalan speaking island with a very turbulent political history that belongs to Spain. During the 18th century, because of the strategic importance of the harbour of Mahon, it became a disputed territory between Britain, France and Spain. Since then, it has been embroiled in the major cultural and economical trends of the time, including the enlightenment, the industrial revolution and the socialist movements of the first half of the 20th Century. Unlike the neighbouring island of Eivissa, the

arrival of tourism did not bring modernity to the island since modernity was already there. Menorca has long been a more liberal, open and modern island than Eivissa and Mallorca. Despite its unique character, Menorca has until very recently been unable to develop a modern political system. This fact partially explains its erratic socio-economical evolution. Menorca today is part of the autonomous community of the Balearic Islands and has its own insular government, with some significant but limited powers.



Figure 3.1 Menorca is located in the middle of the western Mediterranean

Tourism is the dominant economic activity in Menorca today. Marí (2000) estimates that in the year 2000, the service sector represented 75% of the GDP and the often-related construction industry 15%, overtaking industry as the second most important sector (2000: 2). Tourism has a huge impact on employment both directly and indirectly. During the tourist season employment grows by almost 40%; thus for example in 2002 the number of people employed in Menorca increased from 24,411 in January to 34,385 in August (OBSAM, 2004a). In 2003 Menorca received just over one million tourists mainly from Britain, Spain and Germany (see table 3.1). This number

is, however, likely to be higher because of the difficulty in counting certain kinds of tourists, in particular Spanish resident tourists. The best indicator of the significance size of tourism is the index of daily human pressure that the OBSAM produces (2004b)(see figure 3.2). In 2003 the population of the island, counting permanent residents, seasonal workers and tourists, grew threefold from 60,000 in January to 180,000 in August. This highlights the important social division between the permanent and floating populations, between hosts and guests, between sedentary and mobile forms of dwelling. In Menorca, tourist activity has a highly seasonal nature, even more than in Mallorca (Bardolet 2002: 112; Serra Olives, 1991: 96; Cortès, 2002: 66). Traditionally the tourist season starts on the 1st of May and last until the 31st of October, the busiest months being July, August and the first half of September. There are however only 2% of hotel places available in winter (CITTIB, 2003: 23).

Origin of tourists 2003		
	n of tourist	*% over total*
British	602588	53.84
Spanish	278423	24.88
German	97498	8.7
Italian	56777	5.07
Irish	23523	2.02
Dutch	12838	1.14
Swedish	10992	0.99
Others	36554	3.27
total	1119193	100%

Table 3.1 Origin of tourists in 2003. Source CITTIB

In Menorca there are two different kinds of tourists. On the one hand, there are the British and German tourists who book the classical package tour identified with the slogan 'sun, sea and sand', which in Menorca is predominantly organised around family tourism. In 2003, 600,000 British and 97,000 Germans visited Menorca, which

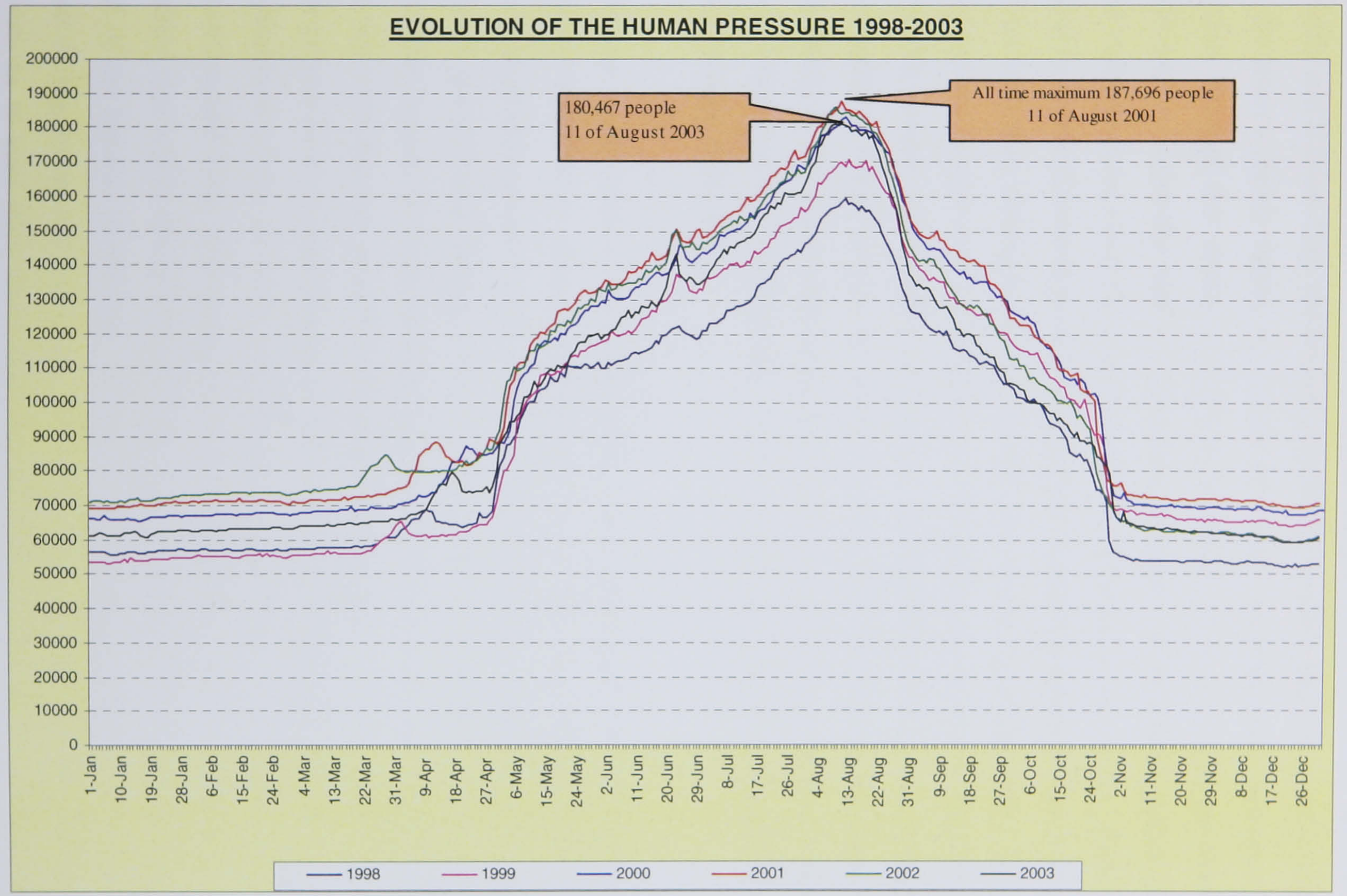


figure 3.2 Evolution of the human pressure 1998-2003

represented respectively 57% and 9% of the total number of tourists (see table 3.1). On the other hand, there are the Spanish middle class tourists, mainly from Barcelona, Madrid and Bilbao. They are frequently wealthy, live in villas and spend every summer in the island, mainly during the month of August. In 2003, they represented 22% of tourists although this number is likely to be higher. While in Britain the island is well positioned as a popular family destination, in Spain it is recognised mainly as a quiet and well-preserved resort that appeals to the top segment of the market. There are other minority forms of tourism such as sailing tourism and alternative tourism (see chapter 7 on nudism) that, although they do not fall into any of these categories, share similar motivations, in particular the attraction of tranquillity and beauty of the island. In any case, the unique selling point of Menorca derives from its more harmonious tourist development, which avoids the urban disasters that characterise the Spanish coast. According to the tourist marketing plan for Menorca, this fact makes the island as an ideal destination for families, high income tourists and couples looking for relaxation (Pons Moles, 2004: 489).

The case of Menorca is a late expression of the coastal mass tourism which, after the Second World War, changed the face of the Mediterranean shore. There is a long tradition of elite seaside resorts in places such as Brighton (Shields, 1991), the French Riviera (Lenček and Bosker, 1999) and even Mallorca (Barceló and Frontera, 2000). However tourism in its present form, orientated to the masses, is a new phenomenon of the 50s, with the only precedent of popular resorts such as Blackpool (Bennett, 1993). The present form of mass tourism is intimately linked with the welfare state, the fordist organisation of the economy and the wider availability of air travel. According to Marchena and Vera, "European coastal tourism did not attain its present scale until the welfare state and Fordist production were both consolidated in Western Europe after the end of the Second World War" (1995: 111). The vastly transformed areas that have risen during the second half of the 20th century are different from the old seaside elite resorts in at least three characteristics: their mass social character; the wider areal transformations of the coast and the heliotropic attraction of more southerly latitudes (Marchena and Vera, 1995:112). Although recently coastal resorts have undergone

important transformations in response to the changing cultural conditions of Western Europe and in particular the post-fordist disorganisation of the economy (Lash and Urry, 1987), coastal mass tourism, at least in Spain, is still a highly standardised product in which competition is reduced to the level of price (Williams and Montanari, 1995: 3).

The case of Menorca is paradigmatic of the tourist industry in Spain. The tourist market is dominated by a few tour operators and air travel companies, mainly British and German trans-national corporations; however, the functioning of the resorts relies on a large numbers of small firms, locally and nationally owned, many of which are locked into sub contractual relationships with the major tour operators (Williams and Montanari, 1995: 3). Although they provide most of the tourist services, they have a limited capacity to control the tourist market. This duality between big and small companies is reproduced inside the island between big hotels and other forms of accommodation. Menorca has approximately 100,000 tourist places, of which 47,319 are in hotels and apartments, an important part of which are owned by Mallorcan chains (CITTIB, 2003: 78). The rest are private villas and second homes, most of which escape the control of the authorities (Rullan, 2002: 132; Cortès, 2002: 62-63). Unregulated forms of accommodation are mainly orientated to the Spanish market, although increasingly to the British market too. Their recent sharp expansion is one of the best indicators of the ongoing disorganisation of the tourist economy. As in other parts of Spain the tourist industry has been driven mainly by the short-term profit that urban property development generates rather than the provision of tourist services. Tourism is a very expansive and speculative economy that has grown up almost 'spontaneously' depending on external flows of capital (Marí, 2000: 5). Still today the standards of quality and service are low, although improving. One of the main problems for Menorca is the low degree of interrelation between the tourism sector and the rest of the economic activity of the island. As López Casasnovas (1992) points out, tourism has distorted the healthy economical base of the island, creating a very open but dependent economy. Despite its wealth, Menorca has characteristics of an underdeveloped economy; economic monoculture, labour instability, highly seasonal activity and the shrinking of traditional economical activities (1992: 12). These economic

disfunctionalities are at the centre of the social and political controversy surrounding mass tourism in Menorca.

In Menorca mass tourism did not emerge as a result of an internal decision, but as a result of the economical and political needs of the fascist regime that ruled Spain until 1975. Driven by the urgency to open the political regime and obtain much needed foreign currency to drive its modernisation, Spain embraced tourism as a magical solution to boost the economy. The new liberal class that in the late 50s replaced the fascist old guard sought the maximum implantation of the tourist sector regardless of its negative implications. Tourism became the privileged activity that would enable the regime to last for so long (Barceló and Frontera, 2000: 27-28; Bardolet, 2000: 102). Tourism developed quickly, creating unprecedented wealth and transforming the places in which it was implemented beyond recognition. However, tourism also developed chaotically without following any urban plan or tourist model. "In the Balearics"- Bardolet concludes – "tourism has implied an unprecedented creation of wealth without forecast, perhaps comparable to what the discovery and exploitation of the petroleum wells has meant to other countries" (2000: 104). This chaotic development is not only a result of the unusual political circumstances in which tourism expanded but also of the fact that when implemented there was no clear idea of its increasing importance and implications (Bardolet, 2000).

The development of tourism was also spatially and historically uneven. Mass tourism arrived in Menorca 10 years later than in Mallorca. Menorca did not experience mass tourism until 1969 when the new airport was opened (Serra Olives, 1991: 97; Barceló and Frontera, 2000: 29; López Casasnovas, 1990: 206). As in the rest of the Balearics, the first expansion of tourism was disorganised and chaotic responding simply to the availability of land and capital. By 1973, and the first oil crisis, there were 86 hotels with a combined capacity of 13,141 beds in Menorca (see figure 3.3). The economic and political crisis of the mid 70s provoked a sharp decrease in tourist demand that had risen to 131,625 visitors by 1973. This number would not be surpassed until 1985 when the second and most important expansion of tourism began. While still lacking a plan

for the regulation of tourist development, between 1985 and 1989 more than 13,000 tourist places were built, this time mainly in cheaper apartment blocks. It is in the second half of the 80s when Menorca definitively embraces mass tourism and the economic model of Mallorca, abandoning its traditional industrial base (López Casasnovas, 1992: 7). The industry sector that in 1975 represented 40% of GDP, by 1987 only accounted for 20% while the importance of agriculture decreased from 14% to 1.5% of GDP (Marí, 1992: 13). After a few years of stabilisation, in 1994 a third wave of expansion began that lasted until 2000 (Amer, 2003: 166). During this period the GDP of the Balearic Islands grew by 70%, generating an unsustainable pressure on natural resources, in particular water (although it follows the same trend, the growth of the GDP is probably lower in Menorca). Exogenous factors such as the Yugoslavian war, Islamic instability in Egypt and Turkey, the devaluation of the Spanish currency and the strength of the German economy boosted demand. During this period, expansion concentrated mainly on non-regulated forms of tourist accommodation, in particular villas and second homes.

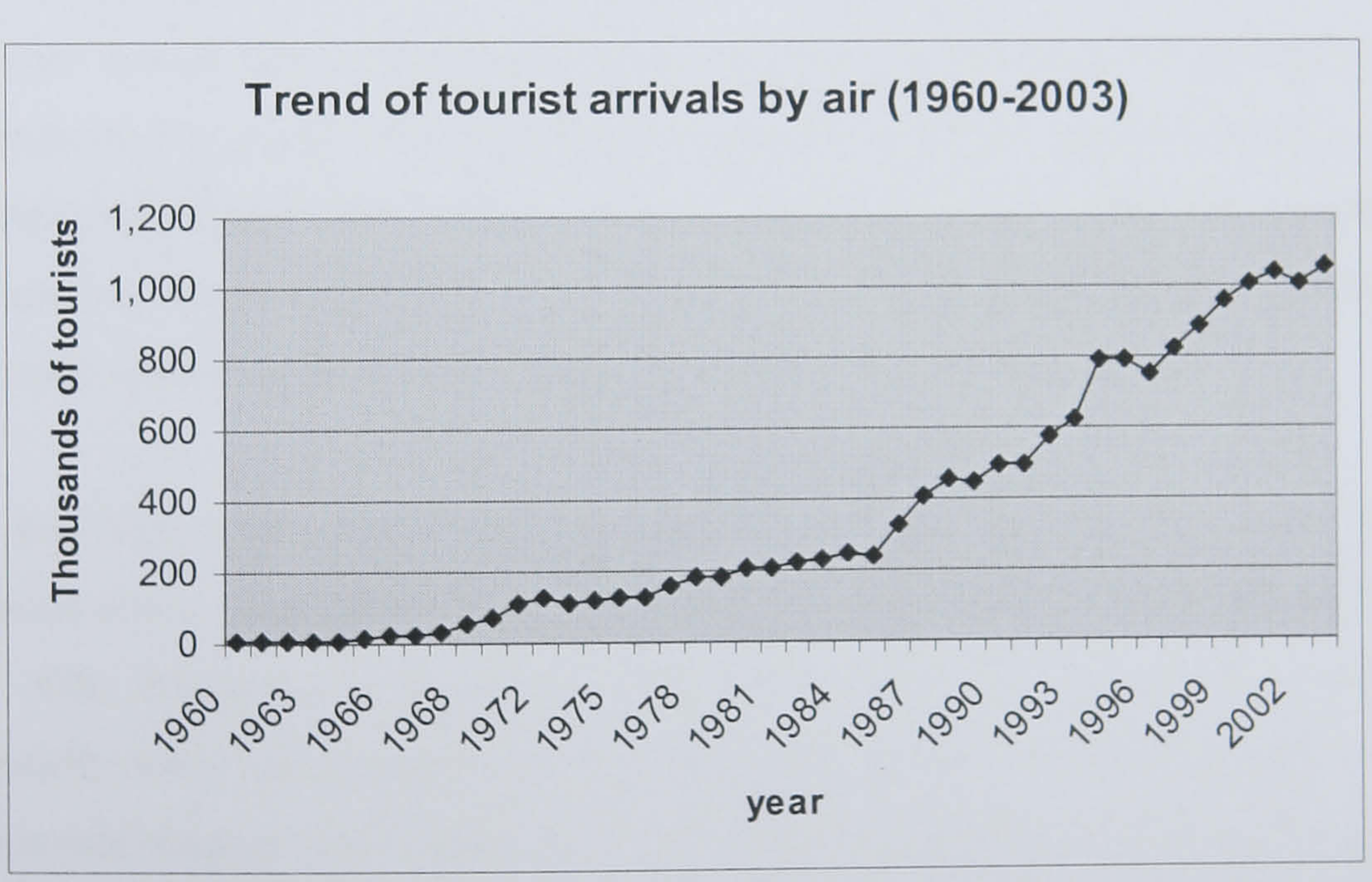


Figure 3.3 Trend of Tourist arrivals 1960-2003. Source: CITTIB and Enciclopèdia de Menorca.

Unlike Mallorca, Menorca is not yet a mature resort. Although its tourist model is the result of the liberal policies and the expansive urban (non)planning of the 60s, as Bohigas (1964) and Ribera (1964) observed at the time, it was not really until the mid 80s when the economical structure of the island definitively changed. The identification of Menorca with tranquillity, family tourism and natural beauty also dates from the mid 80s. What makes tourism in Menorca different from Mallorca is not its idiosyncrasy, or its strong industrial background, or even the original beauty of its landscape. There is no such thing as "the Menorcan way of economic growth", that Ferré-Escofet et al propose (1977: 349), a golden economical environment that, which contrary to Mallorca, does not rely on a speculative economy but rather, is economically and socially balanced. As Marí points out, a balanced economic model was a momentary illusion, the result of analysing the economy at a moment when all three sectors were still economically viable (2000: 3). What makes tourism in Menorca different is simply the lateness of its beginnings, or using Butler's (1980) terminology, the island's degree of maturity as a tourist resort. Due to a combination of factors, including its left political background and its originally less attractive landscape, the necessary investment to build the airport came later than in the other islands. When expansion finally took off in 1969 tourism was soon hit by a profound economic crisis and important political changes, which increased regulations and limited wild tourist development. The much-celebrated landscape of Menorca results from a combination of underdevelopment and the new democratic politics of the 80s, which prevented important developments

There has been a strong resistance to mass tourism in Menorca. The most relevant expression of this resistance is the island's lack of enthusiasm for tourism (Pons Moles, 2004: 485; Alenyar and Servalls, 1990: 192). The local population has been traditionally more reluctant than in Mallorca and Eivissa to embrace the new activity, which would transform the traditional way of life beyond recognition. Even today very few hotel and seasonal workers originate from the island. The resistance to mass tourism has not only been manifested in a general indifference to tourism but also in active political opposition. With the arrival of democracy in 1976, the environmental and social implications of tourism become the main political issue in the island. The

social mobilisations opposing tourist developments have been huge, gathering up to 10% of the population. They are considered the most important political movement in Menorca since the arrival of democracy. These mobilisations, together with the pressure of the local environmental group (GOB) and some political organisations, claimed important victories, such as the protection of s'Albufera d'es Grau, Cala'n Turqueta and Trebalúger. In figure 3.4 I reproduce a famous cartoon published by GOB denouncing the tourist invasion of the island. The social discomfort over tourism is not only the



Figure 3.4 There has been an strong resistance to mass tourism in Menorca. Humorous cartoon denouncing the tourist invasion of the island. Source GOB

expression of a democratic concern for the social and environmental implications of tourism; it is also an expression of the importance of the landscape in the collective imaginary of Menorca. The bishops of Menorca, Mallorca and Evissa recognised this fact in a collective letter published in 1990. They listed as the first of the negative effects of tourism, "the continuous erosion of the identity signs of our community" (Ubeda et al, 1990: 8). The destruction of the landscape has been experienced as the destruction of Menorca as a community. As the most successful political slogan of the 80s claimed, "those who care for Menorca don't destroy it" (Qui estima Menorca no la destrueix).

While social mobilisations have been huge, political will has not always been as strong and effective. This is partially because of the late arrival of the developed institutions and their slow beginnings. The formation of the Balearic Government and the Menorca Insular Council in 1983 generated new political initiatives to regulate tourism and prevent its negative effects. However, the effectiveness of these political initiatives has so far been limited. As Ripoll points out, "During this stage, the intention to arrange the sector is established, in spite of the normative results, their application and their consequences taking more time than desirable to protect the territory with efficiency" (Ripoll 2000: 47). There have been three main political initiatives since 1983 affecting tourism (Serra and Company, 2000): The regulations of the construction of new tourist accommodation in 1984 and 1988 constitute the first significant step to improve the quality of tourism. The second initiative came in 1991 with the Law of Natural Spaces, which defined the protection of natural areas, embracing a larger surface area of the Balearics, in the case of Menorca, about 60% of its territory. This law was soon followed by the creation of the Natural Park of s'Albufera des Grau, protecting a valuable lagoon from tourist development. The last and most important initiative came in 2003 with the approval of the long-waited Insular Territorial Plan (PTI), which is considered the territorial constitution of Menorca. This plan not only introduces new and stronger protections on natural and rural areas, but also reduces drastically the possibility of future tourist developments as well as regulating the quality and the timing of the developments permitted. While this plan has been celebrated for its

environmental sustainability, it has also been strongly criticised for being overly interventionist and contrary to the principles of the free market (Pons Moles, 2004: 448). In any case, it is the most serious and radical effort to transform the wild tourist model orientated to the masses into a balanced and sustainable economy based on the quality of tourist services.

During the last 20 years the efforts to change tourism have been important although not always successful, as is demonstrated by the failure of the eco-tax introduced in 2001. Ultimately, a consensus about the tourist future of Menorca has yet to be achieved. While some sectors of society, mostly on the left, are promoting a radical change in the tourist orientation of the island; other sectors, mostly on the right, want to expand tourism even further. Following the example of València, Murcia and the Costa del Sol, the new right who have been governing the Balearic Island (but not Menorca) since 2003 is moving away from the protectionist agenda that had dominated previous years. Instead, they are proposing the enlargement of the airport, the construction of new highways, marinas, golf trips and theme parks and the relaxation of the protectionist laws. Their economical recipe is the same as that of the 50s and 60s, that is, to expand tourism further and further. The old liberal agenda that in the 60s and 70s transformed the Spanish Coast without recognition, creating a unique but unsustainable tourist landscape (MVRDV, 2000), has not disappeared. It has simply been reborn without its former fascist connotations while embracing an American model of society and development.

Methodology

Ethnography is the most appropriate methodology for examining the relevance of mass tourism as a cultural laboratory in the production of places, bodies and subjectivities. According to Cook and Crang, "the basic purpose in using these methods is to understand parts of the world as they are experienced and understood in the everyday lives of people who actually live them out" (1995: 4). The use of ethnographic methods

enables a better understanding of the everyday life of tourists, their bodies, practices and subjectivities. Rather than considering tourism as an extraordinary activity confined in special locations and times, this PhD thesis thinks of mass tourism as a particular extension of contemporary everyday life. Since this thesis examines everyday life in its original context, the use of ethnography enables an understanding of mass tourism that avoids the isolation of tourists while highlighting the different networks and connections that make tourim possible. Ethnography is a methodology in which the researcher spends a long period of time observing and interacting with a social group. During such a period of time different methods and observations are developed though always restricted to very few cases (Herbert, 2000: 551; Cook and Crang, 1995). Since the focus of this PhD thesis is primarily on tourism as an embodied and practical way of being-in-the-world, this ethnography rests mainly upon *participant observation* and *semi-structured interviews,* as well as a general attention to the context and the materiality of mass tourism. Through the combination of these two methods insight is gained not only into discourses of the tourists but also into their embodied practices and emotions. While participant observation is useful in revealing "what people do, as well as what people say"(Herbert. 2000: 552), semi-structured interviews are particularly effective in exploring the emotional world of tourists.

In using ethnographical methodologies this research breaks with those academic traditions that presuppose an outside standpoint from which the researcher can neutrally read the social reality (Herbert, 2000). Insight is not acquired through distanced observation but through the immersion of the researcher into the living world of tourists as well as by means of his/her multi-sensual engagement and interaction. Ethnography is an exploration through dwelling and participation rather than an attempt to test and impose pre-conceived theories. Doing research, to paraphrase Ingold, is not a matter of representation but of participation (2000: 42); it is not about acquiring mental schemata and reading the world transparently, but about engaging with it and taking up a view in it. By using ethnography I also challenge those academic traditions that represent the object of analysis as "independent both from the means by which the researcher gained access to and (miss)understood them, and from the ways in which they were produced,

reproduced and transformed in the histories and day to day struggles of the people under study" (Cook and Crang, 1995: 6). The goals, skills interests of the researcher are basic elements in the research. As I explained in the introduction, this research project not only responds to an academic interest; but also to my social position as a citizen of Menorca. As Clifford points out, there are no longer any mountaintop or islands, "we ground things now on a moving earth" (1986: 22)

This research focuses on two different kinds of tourism, *British* package tourism and *Spanish* middle class tourism. As I explained in the previous section, they are the dominant groups in Menorca, accounting for approximately 80% of the total number of tourists (see table 3.1). They are two antithetical kinds of tourism which use the same resources to develop different tourist experiences. They represent the package versus the independent holiday, the organised versus the disorganised vacation, the hotel versus the villa, the lower middle class versus the upper middle class. For the purpose of brevity, this research simplifies the tourist landscape, leaving aside not only minority groups of tourists such as Germans, but also hybrid tourist experiences that break the neat dichotomy that I have presented. These two groups of tourists are examined in their dwelling and practising of two particular spaces, the *hotel* and the *beach*, still the two main tourist spaces of mass Mediterranean tourism. To be completed however, this list should also include the villa, an increasingly popular mode of accommodation not only among Spanish but also among British tourists, which already represents half of the tourist places in Menorca. The difficulties of doing fieldwork in private places together with the time pressure of the PhD prevented me from considering this tourist space in detail. In a similar way Löfgren (1999) does with Scandinavian cottage culture, future research would be needed to consider the new experiences, emotions and subjectivities unfolding in the Mediterranean villa.

The fieldwork for this thesis was conducted during the summers of 2001 and 2002, requiring a total of 7 months. In the first summer I focused my attention on the coastal hotel and British mass tourism, while in the second summer I concentrated primarily on the beach and Spanish middle class tourism. With the collaboration of Foment del

Turisme (Tourist Promotion) and ASHOME, (the Menorcan Hotel Business Association) in the summer of 2001, I carried out ethnographic research in two large three star coastal hotels with predominantly north-European costumers. Both hotels are paradigmatic sites of the classic package tour identified with the slogan of 'sun, sea and sand', which in Menorca is predominantly family orientated. The first, the Sol Hotel Milanos-Pingüinos, is part of the Sol Melià group, a Mallorcan based company with hotels all over the world. Located in Son Bou, a three mile long beach at the centre of the Island's south coast, it is one the biggest hotels in Menorca with space for 1600 tourists and 240 workers. The second, the Hotel Barceló Pueblo Menorca, is also part of a Mallorcan based company with hotels all over the world. This establishment has space for 1100 tourists and is located in the southeast resort of Punta Prima, one of the first tourist resorts of the island. Although they have been extensively renovated, both hotels are the result of the first expansion of tourism that took place in the late 60s and early 70s

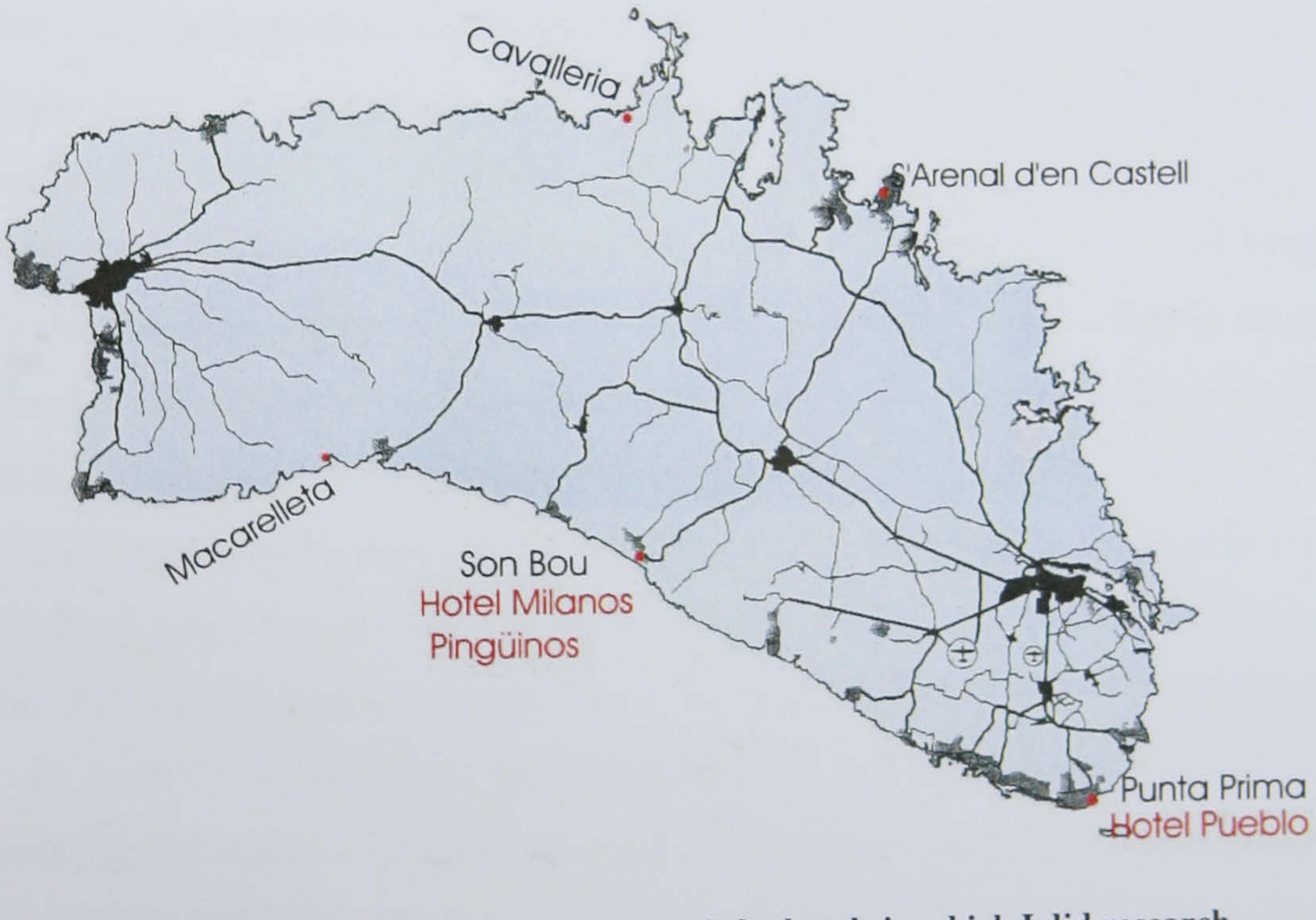


Figure 3.5 Map of Menorca with the beaches and the hotels in which I did research

The summer of 2002 involved ethnographical research on 3 different beaches. Although I also considered places predominantly with regard to British tourism I focused primarily on Spanish middle class tourism. I started my fieldwork in s'Arenal d'en Castell, a large urbanised beach in the north of the island visited predominantly by foreign tourists. I also conducted research in Cavalleria and Macarelleta, two of the most popular natural beaches in Menorca, which I reproduce in chapter 6 (see figures 6.1 and 6.2). The former is an open beach in the north of the island, very popular with middle class Catalan tourism; the latter is a small cove on the south coast surrounded by cliffs with a rather tropical look. It is one of the most famous tourist icons of the island. While primarily covering mainstream forms of tourism, I also considered alternative tourist experiences such as nudism. In particular Macarelleta, but also Cavalleria, have traditionally gathered a high number of nudists and have even been linked to the hippy movement.

In order to gain access to the field I contacted the Hotel Business Association (ASHOME) and through them the management of the two hotels. Without their consent and collaboration I would have been unable to undertake this dimension of my fieldwork. I was offered the possibility of doing research, and having free food and drink in the hotel. Despite my initial intentions, it was not possible to stay overnight in either of the two establishments. With this compromise there was sufficient scope for me to develop an ethnographical approach and to participate in a number of activities, however it prevented me from getting a full experience of the place as an insider. In the coastal hotel I conducted a much more intense and structured research programme than on the beach, based primarily upon serial interviews. I spent a total of 3 weeks in each hotel, interviewing 17 groups of tourists, 11 of whom were English, 4 Spanish and 2 Italian. In total I interviewed approximately 70 people; 20 more participated sporadically in the research. The use of serial interviews allowed me to produce a full account of the holidays. It also allowed me to develop much more informal conversations in which respondents had the confidence not only to reveal their often contradictory feelings but also to challenge my questions and prejudgements (Cook and Crang, 1995: 46). I interviewed each group of tourists once every three or four days for

a period of between 20 minutes and 1 hour. I have transcribed all the interviews and translated all the relevant quotes. The transcripts of these interviews are the central material of this PhD thesis. All the names of the interviewees have been change to protect anonymity. Since a systematic reconstruction of the everyday life of tourists was the main purpose of my research programme, I asked my respondents to fill in time diaries. Although useful when contextualising conversations, they did not produce the expected results. The lack of details provided highlights the culture of inactivity that often characterises this kind of holiday. I selected my respondents in collaboration with the tour reps through my attendance to welcome and introductory meetings. This system not only generated confidence amongst my future respondents but also prevented undesired conflicts with the management of the hotel. During my time in the hotels I also carried out participant observation, focusing primarily on the entertainment programme. I interviewed some participants and activity leaders; I participated in a number of activities and, in particular, I spent a lot of time wandering around observing, taking pictures and filling my diary. I also carried out a systematic description of the different spaces in the hotel and the dominant practices in each one. The most interesting of these descriptions is that of the swimming pool area, which I use in chapter 4. In order to gain a general view from within, I interviewed few members of the staff. Despite conducting a much more intense and structured research programme, to gain insider knowledge of life in the hotel remained one of the fundamental aims of the research. In keeping with the general environment of the holiday, I decided to dress in an informal manner. This allowed me not only to participate in a larger variety of activities, but also to establish much more informal and friendly relationships with tourists. However, my style of dressing was not always well-received by the management of the hotel, who preferred a much more formal style.

Being a public space, the beach allows for more freedom than the coastal hotel when organising research. Moreover, a major attraction of the beach is the possibility of starting conversations with strangers and watching other people's bodies and behaviour. The methods of the ethnographer are thus not strange to the beach but a central part of its experience. On the beach, I followed a much more open and relaxed research

programme, primarily based on participant observation. On each beach I spent about 5 hours a day for at least a week, always on my own. In this case the aim of the research was not to experience something new but to observe with different eyes a familiar landscape. I spent long periods of time writing down observations, feelings and emotions in my diary. I conducted a number of systematic observations, such as counting the number of people on the beach at different times of day and listing the different objects that people bring to the beach. I also used interviewing techniques. Contrary to the coastal hotel, I did not conduct serial interviews but short dialogues with random tourists that rarely lasted for more than 15 minutes. Although I always started with general questions about the holidays, these conversations focused primarily on the personal and the emotional, with particular emphasis on the body. I interviewed 60 groups of tourists, approximately 20 at each beach, involving in total more than 140 people. I also interviewed a sample of people working on the beach such as photographers and lifeguards in order to get a general view of the place. Starting up conversations with tourists on the beach was much easier than I expected. Although I introduced myself directly to people without any kind of mediation, nobody refused to speak with me. When people spend long periods of time lying on the sand not doing very much, having a chat and being friendly is something that comes almost naturally. I always approached my respondents wearing shorts and a T-shirt.

Part of my fieldwork involved research with nudists. Contrary to what I expected, conducting research on a nudist beach was not a problem. People were very open not only to speak about the beach but also about the motivations and emotions of being naked in public. A few of my respondents even agreed to pose for a picture, which is something that I never even considered possible. The success of my research highlights the social nature of nudism. Being naked on the beach is generally experienced as an embodied and pleasurable relation with nature rather than a particular form of exhibitionism. As I discuss in chapter 7 the potential association with sexuality is what makes nudism a problematic and censurable practice. In order to generate confidence, when interviewing nudists I followed a progressive logic, starting with general questions about the holidays and finishing with more personal questions about nudism

and the body. I was very concerned to adapt myself to the rhythm of the conversation and avoid uncomfortable questions. I adopted a strict but relaxed code of behaviour, always vigilant not to intimidate my respondents. I approached my respondents with the same dress code as on a normal beach. I considered it to be the most neutral and least intimidating way of dressing. Overall this has been the most gratifying experience of my PhD, resulting unexpectedly in one of the major chapters of this thesis. The transcripts of my interviews with nudists are indeed my best and most original material.

During the two summers of fieldwork I also conducted a number of contextual observations to complement this ethnographic overview of tourist practices and subjectivities in Menorca. In the summer of 2001 I conducted participant observation in a number of organised activities primarily aimed at British tourists. I participated in almost every kind of excursion that British tour operators had to offer with the exception of a leather-shopping trip. I took part in: *Island Tour*, a classic day trip by bus around the island; *Anchor's away*, a boat trip along the south coast of the island; *Secret Garden*, a morning visit to an orchard orientated to family tourism; *Taste of Spain*, an evening trip combining an Spanish dinner, a horse show and a visit to a commercial centre; *Cabaret night*, an evening dinner with live Spanish music; and *Shop'n' sail*, a visit to Maó with small trip to the harbour. In the summer of 2002, I conducted participant observation in a number of activities related with nature, primarily addressed to middle class tourists. In doing so, I considered the relevance of alternative forms of tourism. I participated in two trekking excursions around the island; I visited a small tour operator specialising in sailing tourism, I visited the natural park of s'Alburfera d'es Grau and I joined two Catalan families on a day out with their yachts. Although useful in acquiring a general overview of mass tourism and its current transformations, I do not use this material very much due to lack of space.

I did not suffer any major problems in the field. This is partially due to the fact that I am from Menorca and therefore I had a rich background knowledge of the place and its hidden rules. The only major problem I suffered was in one of the hotels and it was principally related with my style of dress. In keeping with the general environment of

the holiday I had decided to dress in an informal manner in shorts and t-shirt. However my style of dress was not well received by the management, who considered it an infringement upon the general image of the hotel. After two days of fieldwork I was advised to wear long trousers and a shirt, even when interviewing tourists wearing swimming costumes (on the hotel terrace) in temperatures of 30 degrees. As I recorded in my diary, "The obligation to dress in long trousers and shoes makes me feel useless. It prevents me from doing a number of things, in particular participating in the entertainment programme" (24th of July). At the same hotel, there was also a minor incident with the head of the entertainment staff who was not happy with my attitude towards her staff. She believed that I was too intrusive with the staff particularly in my questioning. I was able to solve the problem easily, but not without changing my initial plans. My problems in the coastal hotel bring to light two underlying issues of this research: on the one hand, the difficulties in researching what is not serious. As a researcher you are expected to be dressed seriously as a professional, however this is a major handicap in understanding what is going on in places such as the coastal hotel. On the other hand, the problems I encountered evidence the fast pace of the tourist industry. A major challenge to doing ethnography in modern environments such as coastal hotels is that everything has to be done quickly, in my case between four and fourteen days, the normal duration of a holiday. Modern 'tribes' do not have as much time to spare as pre-modern 'tribes'.

Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the case study for this PhD thesis and has explained the methodological process that I employed. Although this research project has its origins in my interest in the social reality of Menorca, this is not another local study, but a project in-between different places and cultural traditions resulting from an inverse travel to that of mass tourism. While being a paradigmatic example of the functioning of mass Mediterranean tourism, Menorca has also a number of singularities that make it different from its neighbouring resorts, in particular Mallorca. This combination makes

the island an ideal setting for an ethnography of the reality and limits of mass tourism. The possibility of developing an objective, distanced and external understanding of mass Mediterranean tourism vanishes as a result of my connections with the island and my use of ethnographical methods. This is not an example of academic travel, but a particular insight from within which is no more independent of the methodologies I use than it is of the social and political reality in which I am immersed.

Chapter 4

The coastal hotel: instances of civic life in a commodified fluid environment

The focus of this chapter is the coastal hotel, which constitutes the most relevant site of the tourist landscape that developed in the sixties and seventies in the Mediterranean with the emergence of the charter flight. The coastal hotel is not only the central space of coastal mass tourism but, for many people, a tourist experience in itself. Amongst British and German holidaymakers in particular the hotel is something more than a comfortable tourist service. It not only provides accommodation and catering but also entertainment and sociability. More than two thirds of the people I interviewed spent most of their holiday time in or around the hotel. This was the case, for example, of the Marshalls, a middle age couple from Bristol with an 11-year-old son. They left the resort only three times in a fourteen-night holiday, once to go to the outdoor market in Maó and the other two times to travel around in a rented car. They spent approximately 10 days swimming, sunbathing, reading, chatting and drinking by the hotel pool with some friends, making occasional incursions to the beach and local shops. They watched the hotel entertainment almost every night and participated occasionally in daytime entertainment activities, once winning a competition in pistol shooting. The holiday

pattern of the Marshall family is by no means exceptional. It is very common for families to spend most of their time in or around the hotel complex. The highly commodified space of the hotel is by no means a simple cliché, but one of the main spatial axes around which the classic package holiday is organised.

In dealing with the coastal hotel, this chapter looks at the uneasy relation between tourists and the built environment. Drawing on ethnographic research in two standard coastal hotels in Menorca, I examine the possibilities of tourist experience in fluid and highly commodified spaces. Ultimately, my aim is to reintroduce a sensuality, a materiality and a sense of enjoyment to the coastal hotel without dismissing its abstract nomadic and superficial character. Although coastal hotels are often seen as places of void and banality to which there is no meaning, purpose or utopia attached, they are by no means insubstantial or irrelevant. They are sites of sensual encounters, social relations and embodied pleasures. The work of Kracauer (1995) and Maffesoli (1996) are the main theoretical developments that inform this chapter. As in the case of the metropolitan hotel, the coastal hotel embodies some of the spatial and social codes that are characteristic of late-modern western societies. According to Katz, "we can recognize in Kracauer's lobby the code for those formations of civic life that we use to map our contemporary late-modern economy, including the private-public broadcast spectrum, total-living enclaves, and resurrected urban cores where the metropolitan is replayed as a series of consumable shock images" (Katz, 1999:136- 137). The kind of post-modern empathetic sociality that Maffesoli (1996) identifies with neotribalism is probably the most significant 'social and spatial' that the coastal hotel embodies. I have evidenced numerous instances of camaraderie and des-individualisation that neither contradict the ephemeral character of the place, nor challenge Kracuaer's observation, according to which, in hotel lobbies togetherness has no meaning.

Mass tourism offers an exceptional backdrop for the exploration of the kind of being-in-the-world, the kind of dwelling, that is characteristic of fluid and highly commodified western societies. The underlying theme of this chapter is the possibility of a way of being-in-the-world without roots, of togetherness without organic communities. We

must neither apprehend mass tourism as an example of an inauthentic and de-humanising way of dwelling, nor avoid the intrinsically mobile and pleasurable condition of the tourist experience. The challenge is to grasp the tourist reality whilst neither concealing the flows, networks and connections that make it possible, nor reintroducing a de-spatialised, ungrounded subject. The challenge is also to take seriously what is considered fun, banal and depthless albeit in such a way so as not to contribute to the social reproduction of seriousness that often characterises tourist studies. I want to account for the thick sociality of mass tourism without downplaying its pleasurable and fluid character. I want also to demonstrate how even in such an environment subjects are creatively engaging with the world as their lives unfold.

This chapter develops in four parts. The first part reflects on the objective character of the coastal hotel. In doing so, it introduces the line of reasoning that I challenge in the rest of the chapter. Drawing on Kracauer (1995), I understand the coastal hotel in opposition to an anthropological notion of place, as a depthless and nomadic site to which there is no meaning, purpose or utopia attached. Coastal hotels are paradigmatic examples of the highly commodified, abstract spaces - non-places- that colonise western touristic landscapes. I also introduce the phenomenon of hotel entertainment. The coastal hotel not only responds to a cold rationalist logic but also to a general disposition to distraction. The objective character of the coastal hotel is linked with the universalising energy of modernism. The second part reintroduces a sense of sensuality, subjectivity and materiality. I want to demonstrate that the coastal hotel is other than depthless, placeless and abstract. It is also a site of social relations, sensual encounters and embodied pleasures. An objective account of the coastal hotel underplays the active and sensual character of the tourist subject, ignoring also the material and performative constitution of the place. Coastal hotels are not just examples of rationalist architectures, but also particular articulations of practice. By drawing on ideas of dwelling and performance I foreground the importance of the mundane and the material. In the third section I look at what makes coastal hotels attractive. The main focus is on the puissance of everyday life, that is, on the human creativity that makes the life liveable. What the coastal hotel has to offer is the possibility of immanence, a radical and naked present

that leaves generous space for embodied social life. This focus on the present, the everyday and the affectual corresponds with the kind of solidarity that Maffesoli (1996) identifies with the notion of neotribalism. This notion reconciles a central observation in my fieldwork; the fact that there is some sort of sociality and communality in highly commodified environments which does not rely on a rational project but on a shared ambience or emotion. The chapter concludes with a close examination of the kind of sociality that is idiosyncratic of the hotel pool, the space in which this kind of togetherness is most evident. Having no meaning, purpose or utopia attached, its attraction derives from its emphasis on warm companionship, being together and enjoying the present. Ultimately the significance of the pool illustrates how the body, the puissance of everyday life, act as an arena of cultural expressionism and creativity.

The Objectivity of the Coastal Hotel

Coastal hotels are paradigmatic examples of the kind of commodified, nomadic environments that colonise western tourist landscapes. Generic, homogeneous spaces proliferate wherever the mass tourism industry develops. As Edensor points out, "In Western processes of modernity, there are powerful tendencies to organise bodies and spaces according to particular imperatives, producing distinct forms of ordered and commercial space as well as regulated bodies" (2005: 3). The two coastal hotels that I have analysed are consciously designed environments that respond to the principles of economic efficiency and social control. They are the result of rationality, geometry and abstraction and are not linked with any 'superstructure' whatsoever.

This section focuses on the objective character of the coastal hotel. In doing so it introduces the line of reasoning that I challenge in the rest of the chapter with the development of a subjective lively account of the place. Drawing on Kracauer, in the first part I characterise the coastal hotels in opposition to an anthropological notion of place, as a depthless and nomadic site to which there is no meaning, purpose or utopia attached. Having an abstract and fleeting character, I identify the coastal hotel with

Augé's (1995) notion of non-place, although without sharing the nostalgia that is implicit in this account. In the second part I elaborate on the rationalist logic of the hotel. Like the American Mall, the two coastal hotels are highly commodified, abstract spaces that respond to the principles of functionality, economic efficiency and social control. In the third part I introduce the phenomena of hotel entertainment, a cultural manifestation that invites not thinking but rather distraction and evasion. As in the case of movie theatres and theme parks, coastal hotels do not only respond to a cold rationalist logic, but also to a general disposition to distraction. I concentrate on the entertainment programme of the hotel Milanos-Pinguinos, which makes an intense use of media effects. In the final part I acknowledge that the form of the coastal hotel does not only respond to the principle of economic efficiency, but also to the universalising energy of modernism and the reformist efforts to remake the city in the image of a 'sunlit' ordered utopia. The final part is a prelude of the next section, in which I expose the limitations of an account that only emphasis rationality and homogeneity

The hotel, the inverted image of the house of god.

The coastal hotel is a site of fleeting encounters and 'superficial' ways of being in which there is no purpose in being together. It is a transitory and nomadic space with no other mission than to entertain and relax, thus making possible an evasion from the hard realities of everyday life. The coastal hotel is about banality, flatness and coincidence, not organic communities. According to Kracauer the hotel is a spatial metaphor of the emptiness and homelessness that characterise modernity (Katz, 1999; Tallack, 2002; Mülder-Bach, 1997; Reeh, 1998). He identifies the hotel as the inverted image of the house of god, as "the space that does not refer beyond itself" and in which "the togetherness (…) has no meaning" (Kracauer, 1995: 176, 177). The metropolitan hotel is a place without purpose that "merely displaces people from the unreality of the daily hustle and bustle to a place where they would encounter the void" (1995: 176). It is not a site of meaning, transcendence and organic community but of superficiality, void and fragmentation. "Whereas in the house of God a creature emerges which sees itself as a

supporter of the community, in the hotel lobby what emerges is the inessential foundation at the basis of rational socialisation. It approaches the nothing and takes shape by analogy with the abstract and formal *universal concepts* through which thinking (...) believes can grasp the world" (1995: 179). Both the metropolitan and the coastal hotel are spaces filled with people and events with no other relation to each other than the fact that happens simultaneously in time and space. They are sites of pure coincidences that are organised through abstract and formal principles; a sort of spatial desert, trackless and depthless, the quintessential nomadic space, smooth and open to traffic. "Kracauer's lobby"- Katz concludes- "suggest then both a mode of spatialisation and a manner of being in space marked by this kind of depthlessness" (1999: 143). The depthlessness and abstract character of the hotel makes it "a herbarium of pure externality", a site of pure distraction and mere play "an aimless lounging, to which no call is addressed, leads to the mere play that elevates the unserious everyday to the level of the serious" (Kracauer, 1995: 179).

In the coastal hotel we can recognise most of the characteristics that Augé identifies with non-places. The coastal hotel forms part of the generic landscape of a globalised world that, it is argued, challenges the anthropological notion of place, which is based on the fantasy of a "society anchored since time immemorial in the permanence of an intact soil" (Augé, 1995: 44). Like airports and petrol stations (Augé, 2000) the coastal hotel is a fluid and ephemeral reality in which reigns actuality, the urgency of the present moment, thus leaving no room for history, identity and myth. It is the opposite of utopia; it sustains neither an ideal nor a proper organic society (1995: 111-112); it is "a world surrendered (...) to the fleeting, the temporary and ephemeral" (1995: 78). The coastal hotel takes shape through abstract and formal relations, which involves the prevalence of a contractual over an organic solidarity. Tourists interact with anonymous institutions, frequently through texts of instructions, which do not recognise their particular identity, but simply average attributes. "Anthropological place"- says Augé – "is formed by individual identities, through complicities of language, local references, the unformulated rules of living know-how; non-place creates the shared identity of passengers, customers or Sunday drivers" (1995: 101). In coastal hotels tourists are

always and never at home. They are familiar places that everybody recognises, there are multiple similar places elsewhere. However, they are at the same time a permanent 'elsewhere' with no local references, which cannot be perceived as distinctive and singular.

The spatial realities of the coastal hotel and mass tourism cannot be fully appreciated unless we move away from nostalgic accounts that rely on the values of higher art. Coastal hotels do not respond to the depth which bourgeoisie culture identifies with genuineness and authenticity. Neither the coastal hotel nor mass tourism are part of the "community of higher realm", as a kind of artistic activity that "aims at a totality that remains veiled to the proponents of civilized society", that is, whose achievement is to "construct a whole out of the blindly scattered elements of a disintegrated world" (1995: 174-175). Rather the hotel is part of the sphere of lesser reality in which "consciousness of existence and of the authentic conditions dwindles away in the existential stream" and "sense becomes lost in the labyrinth of distorted events" (1995. 173).

The coastal hotel & the abstract 'ratio' of capitalism.

Built in the late 60s and early 70s, the two coastal hotels that are the focus of my attention are paradigmatic examples of the generic globalised landscape that according to Augé (1995) is challenging an anthropological notion of place. Like the Mall that Goss (1993, 1999) and Shields (1989) analyse, both hotels respond to the principles of economic efficiency, thus reflecting the abstract *ratio* of capitalism. They are not just buildings that contain a business, but built environments that are consciously designed from scratch to sediment favourable consumption practices. As Goss points out "The built environment forms a spatial system in which, through principles of separation and containment, spatial practices are routinized and sedimented and social relations are reproduced" (1993: 30-31). Drawing on a fordist logic of the economy, the two hotels offer a standard product on a mass scale under criteria of efficiency and productivity. They are indeed examples of what Ritzer calls the McDonaldization of Society (1996)

according to which increasingly more businesses and institutions are organised under the principles of fast-food restaurants, that is, "efficiency, predictability, quantity and control of the product through formal rules and regulation" (Gottdiener, 1997: 133).



Figure 4.1: Aerial photograph of the Hotel Milanos-Pingüinos. They are the tallest, and for many people also the ugliest, buildings in Menorca

The 'rationalist' logic of the hotel is manifest in the functionalist design of the building. As in the case of the Mall that Goss analyses, the form of the coastal hotel is the result of combining a narrow calculus of profit and behavioural theories of human action for purposes of social control (1993: 29-30). This is particularly clear in the Milanos-Pingüinos, a three star hotel with more than 600 rooms distributed in two identical 10 story buildings at the very edge of the longest beach of the island (see figure 4.1). By adopting a vertical solution, the building is able both to accommodate a lot of tourists in a very reduced space and to secure the maximum exposure to the sun and the sea. It is a classic example of hotel architecture of the 60s, the basic structure of which is, according to Löfgren "a rather extreme functionalism that has to do with the tourist economy of sun and views as well as with local property prices" (Löfgren, 1999: 193).

Almost every aspect of the building is conceived under a similar, narrow calculus of profit. Local references are rare and irrelevant. They are standard constructions that could be anywhere in the Mediterranean or even the Caribbean. Also, neither of them were built using mass media motives that make such a cold, rationalist building more appealing. It was not in the original plan to participate in the process of disneyfication and manufacturing of illusion that Goss (1993, 1999) and Shields (1989) observe in the postmodern Mall. Major changes however have been made during the last 10 to 15 years that have substantially altered the original buildings.

The 'rationalist' logic of coastal hotels is also manifest in the remarkable standardization of the tourist product they offer. They are like factories that produce a standard tourist experience that is popularly recognised under the slogan 'sun, sea and sand', which in Menorca adopts a family orientation. Central to this experience is the proximity to the beach, the existence of organised entertainment, a big swimming pool, a nearby commercial centre and a weekly excursion program with an island tour, a boat cruise, a local village fiesta and maybe a cabaret night. Although every hotel chain has different peculiarities, the format is the same, leaving tourists with a feeling of *déjà vu*, "they know exactly what to expect of their week" (Löfgren, 1999: 188). In this fordist context, a number of strategies are being used to increase the revenue of the hotel, one of which is the all-inclusive scheme. The logic of the all-inclusive scheme is to ensure the maximum revenue without increasing the quality or the choice offered. It has striking similarities with the strategies that Goss (1993) has observed in the American Mall, which also rely on retaining the consumers as long as possible in the environment. Following behavioural theories of human action, the all-inclusive holiday appeals mainly to low-income tourists by promising unlimited availability of food and drink at a fixed price.

Control and exclusion are central features of a rationalist logic of the space. As with the mall (Shields, 1989; Goss,1993, 1999) and the airport (Augé, 1995), the smooth functioning of the coastal hotel requires a high degree of monitoring to maintain the standards of the product. This involves the exclusion and segregation of those groups of

people who pose a threat to the social order of the place, such as teenagers, workers and locals. Paraphrasing Goss, it is "a strongly bounded or purified social space that excludes a significant minority of the population and so protects patrons from the moral confusion that a confrontation with social difference might provoke" (1993: 26). In my case study, the purification of the hotel is accomplished mainly through marketing strategies. Both the price range and the family appeal of the place deter the undesired guests. This is not however the only strategy of control that I observed. The invisibilisation of the living conditions of the workers to the eyes of the guests, the subtle monitoring of children behaviour in public areas and the introduction of a dress code can also be interpreted as part of the system of exclusion. The high degree of monitoring makes of the hotel an ambiguous space, public and private at the same time. Although it presents itself as a carnivalesque public space more or less open to everyone; the coastal hotel is a privately owned and controlled consumption space in which there is a subtle but efficient process of exclusion and monitoring.

Hotels as palaces of distraction

Coastal hotels do not only provide catering and accommodation but also a complete programme of entertainment that covers day and evening and is aimed both at adults and children. In the case of the Hotel Milanos-Pingüinos, the case study of this section, the entertainment programme involved 19 members of staff. It offered the traditional evening show; kindergarden service from 9am to 11:30 pm; adult activities during the day such as aquatic sports, fitness sessions, dancing lessons or a weekly cooking demonstration; and a wide range of children's activities. The hotel had three children clubs; club 8 for children aged 4 to 8, club 13 for children aged 9-13 and club 17 for teenagers. Tourists also had the opportunity to use tennis courts, a volleyball pitch, a pool, ping-pong tables, a few electronic games machines and other similar facilities.

The hotel entertainment resembles the type of popular cultural manifestations that Kracauer (1995) analyses in "the cult of distraction" and "the mass ornament". As in the

case of the Tiller girls and the picture palaces of Berlin what most hotels offer is "the American style of self-contained show, which integrates the film into a larger whole". (1995: 324). Coastal hotels are "palaces of distraction", "shrines to the cultivation of pleasure" (Kracauer 1995: 323). It is a world of glittering banality and revue-like creatures that "has crawled out of the movies". Contrary to higher cultural manifestations such as ballet, the proliferations of organic forms and the emanations of spiritual life remain excluded from this kind of popular cultural. Like the "mass ornament", the coastal hotel is a site of pure distraction and mere play, "an herbarium of pure externality", that does not encourage contemplation and thinking but "elevates the unserious everyday to the level of the serious" (1995: 179). It is a phenomenon empty of meaning and transcendence that does not aim to construct a totality. Hotel entertainment is for the masses, not individuals. Amongst the guests of the coastal hotel, there is a characteristic sense of egalitarianism that means homogeneity and formal similarity. The entertainment programme is not the result of a utopian project or a spiritual relation with God but of the evacuation of all individual differences; it is the result of a relation to nothingness (1995: 179). The coastal hotel does not reproduce the values of the higher bourgeoisie art of authenticity and genuineness. "There is little room left for the so-called educated classes. (...) They are absorbed by the masses" (Kracauer, 1995: 325). Its reality cannot be fully appreciated unless we move away from nostalgic accounts that apprehend popular cultural phenomenon in relation to the "community of higher realm".

In organised entertainment coastal hotels are employing similar rhetorical devises to the ones that Goss (1993, 1999) and Shields (1989) have observed in the American Mall and Gottdiener (1997) on themed environments. The sense of place that is predominant in the coastal hotel is the result not only of the principles of efficiency, calculability and control that Ritzer (1996) identifies with the McDonaldisation of society, but also of symbolic reconstruction, image making and environmental design, characteristics commonly associated with Disney urbanism (Zukin, 1995). According to Goss, "Sophisticated techniques of illusion and allusion enable them to create and appropriate and convincing context where the relationship of the individual to mass consumption and the commodity to its context is mystified" (1993: 21). The entertainment programme

is a crucial agent in the production of a lively appealing image of the hotel that is favourable to consumption. Through entertainment, a carnivalesque and liminal sense is developed that conveys enjoyment, happiness and fantasy, thus breaking breaks with the cold rationalist logic of the hotel. As Kearns and Philo (1993) point out in relation to cities, this process of symbolic differentiation of the built environment is partially the result of the current socio-economic conditions in which consumption and not production becoming the centre of the economy. To succeed economically it is not enough to produce products at competitive prices; it is also increasingly important to create a convincing environmental context that pursues consumption



Figure 4.2: a family posing for a picture with the entertainment team of the Hotel Pueblo on the last day of their holiday.

A common element of any entertainment programme is the use of mass media techniques to produce illusion, fantasy and distraction. Coastal hotels are a world of glittering banality and revue-like creatures that "has crawled out of the movies". The Hotel Milanos-Pingüinos makes an extensive use of mass media effects. Its entertainment style reproduces pretty much the 'flatness of the screen'. Fundamentally,

the hotel offers a type of distraction that transforms any sort of activity into a kind of revue. In this context the guests of the hotel are invited to assume a position similar to moviegoers, who get their excitement and enjoyment from contemplating what is going on on screen. This obliges the hotel to exert a high degree of control over every aspect of activity. Indeed, the use of media tactics leaves very little room for the improvisation and creativity of both staff and participants. Every detail appears to be the product of a conscious and centralised decision.

The entertainment programme in the hotel Milanos-Pingüinos incorporated a lot of media references mainly from the Hollywood film industry. The kinder garden, for example, was equipped with a lot of Disney products such as films, games and posters. Disney references were also popular in the other children's clubs. One of the weekly activities of the children's clubs was, for example, to prepare a Disney musical such as 'Fantasy' or 'Snow White and the 7 Dwarfs', which the children then perform in the evening in front of their parents. In these shows the children do not sing, but simply appear on stage in fancy dress imitating a cartoon or a film. These show the original movie reproduce with a lot of precision and are very much designed for the photo opportunity they provide. The disneyfication of the hotel Milanos-Pingüinos has recently taken a major step forward. A year after I completed my research, Sol Melià signed a contract with Warner Bros to redefine the hotel, in particular its entertainment programme, using a Flintstones theme. It has become one of the chain's first themed hotels. As we can see in figure 4.3 they have redesigned common spaces, in particular those aimed at the children, with references to these popular media characters. This is indeed a major effort to reinforce their already strong family appeal. They are aware of the important role of children in



Figure 4.3: Picture advertising the Flintstone re-branding of the hotel

choosing the destination (see chapter 5). Here I reproduce the advertising that appears on their web site.

> The Flintstones have found the perfect place for their holidays: they are staying with your family in one of our first themed hotels: Brontoburger, or special themed china and tableclothes for the youngest, gardens and swimming pools like those of Fred, Wilma, Barney and Betty. Let yourself be surprised! (Sol Melià Hoteles, 2004)



Figure 4.4: A cooking demonstration in the hotel Milanos-Pingüinos, an 'event that has crawled out the screen'.

The Entertainment programme in the hotel Milanos-Pingüinos not only assimilates a lot of references from mass media; it also adopts a number of its tactics. The most evident example is the emphasis on spectacle. Everything is transformed, paraphrasing Kracauer, in an "American style of self-contained show, which integrates the film into a larger whole" (1995:324). With the exception of a few sports, every activity adopts the style of a show or a revue, with a conductor using a microphone, background music and a public who laugh. "A glittering, revue-like creature has crawled out of the movies: the total artwork of effects" (Kracauer, 1995: 324). Take for example the figure 4.4 of a

weekly cooking demonstration. That week the show demonstrated how to cook lobster juice, one of the gastronomic specialities of the island. As we can see in the picture, the activity very much resembled a TV set. There is a chef cooking at the front. a member of the entertainment team describing what the chef is doing and in the background two other members of staff dancing flamenco following the compass of Latin music. The event was conducted as if it were a TV show with the usual gadgets to engage the public and with suitable background music that coveys a particular character to the event. The fact that two members of the staff were dancing flamenco introduced an additional element of superficiality and pastiche. As in the case of TV cooking shows, it is unlikely that anyone ever will try to cook this particular recipe. It is very much an event that has 'crawled out the screen'. The same effects are reproduced again and again regardless of the content of the activity. They are used for example in the morning fitness session, in a water-polo competition, in a fun game with the children and in the evening show.

The use of mass media tactics is also evident in the value that is given to an image of happiness and youth. Like on TV, this image is very much conveyed through the bodies of the entertainment staff. All the members of the entertainment staff are young and fit and wear tight uniforms with bright colours that highlight the shape of their bodies. Their uniforms are designed both to enhance the bodies of the entertainment staff and to convey happiness and youth. In spite of working more than 60 hours a week, they have a permanent smile and they are always friendly with the guests. The image of youth and happiness is not only the result of how they look, it also the result of how they perform. There is something characteristic in the way they act on the stage and speak with the guests which makes them lively and fresh. The entertainment staff seems to be trained to move in a certain way, to have endless energy, to be loud and intrusive and so on.

Although it contains scattered elements of nostalgia, the sense of place that is produced through hotel entertainment abandons a modern, rational conception of the world. Like in the case of the West Edmonton Mall that Shields (1989) analyses, the hotel Milanos-Pingüinos plays quite a lot with hyperreality and Pastiche. Through entertainment references to different places and epochs gather together in one space in a Disneyland-

esque pastiche of scenes in which "the real space relations of the globe are replaced by imaginary-space relations" (1989: 153). The strategy adopted by the hotel has a lot in common with the phenomenon of the post-urban. It is not only the fact that it makes extensive use of mass media effects, it is also the fact that the real and the virtual become increasingly indistinguible, in particular now that the hotel has a Flintstone theme. According to Chapling & Holding (2002) places like Las Vegas and New York are being reconfigured using both popular representations and the tactics of cinema, thus making the virtual and the real city increasingly indistinguible. They suggest the existence of "an iterative cycle of intertextual referencing between the city and its image, whose goal is to create the 'citiest city', where the throbbing heart of the capital is momentarily and simultaneously glimpsed on screen and for real, self-consciously designed to maximise its seductive potential" (2002:196). This reconfiguration is the result of current patterns of consumption, marketing practice, media coverage, tourism and life style choice. The post-urban city is becoming an important part of the media world and as such it needs to provide experience and entertainment. "The city has become part of the culture of the 30-second soundbite along with all other aspects of lived experience, and, like politicians, global cities are required to compete for airtime through cinema, television and print media for news coverage" (2002:185). Although on a different scale, the hotel through the entertainment program is also re-configuring itself using mass media effects, as a result of which the real and the virtual are increasingly interdependent.

A modernist utopia?

The sometimes disturbing standardisation of every aspect of the hotel is also a material translation of an ethical and esthetical project. In *Here comes the Sun,* Worpole (2000) analyses the rationalist architecture that was developed in northern Europe at the beginning of the 20th century in public buildings and spaces under the pressure of the social democratic movement. He claims that this architectural phenomenon responds, to a great extent, to the reformist effort to remake the city in the image of a sunlit ordered utopia. The Social democratic movements developed an aesthetic that has much to do

with both a universalising energy, like modernism, and ethical and cultural beliefs. "It was a civic aesthetic focused on collective provision allied to modern design, and strongly predicated on a belief in the benefits of clean water, sunlight and fresh air. It was an aesthetic based primarily on public health and the reform of the stunted malnourished bodies of the worker and his family" (2000: 10). It was a project about transparency, accessibility and the integration of indoor and outdoor life, which relied strongly on a vision of a good life and a healthy body. As Worpole explains "they pictured the good life as the youthful, working-class body made muscular by exercise, fluid and sleek from aquatics and swimming" (2000: 14). Kracauer does not relate any of the rationalist architectures that he analyses with the reformist effort to remake the city in the image of a 'sunlit ordered utopia'. However, he would agree with Worpole about the universalising energy and the 'ethical' dimension of modernist architecture. Both the hotel lobby and the phenomenon of the mass ornament reflect an advanced stage in the historical process of demythologisation. The problem of a contemporary phenomenon such as the hotel lobby does not derive from the over-rationalisation of these spaces but from the fact it develops a 'murky reason' that does not encompass man. The core defect of capitalism is that "it rationalizes not too much but rather too little. The thinking promoted by capitalism resist culminating in that reason which arises from the basis of man" (1995: 81)

Something of this sunlit vision can be found in the two coastal hotels I have analysed. Their modernist architecture is not only about commodification, McDonalisation and Disneyfication; it is also about reason, clarity and 'good habits'. It responds to a particular idea of a healthy life, one which focuses on the benefits of the sun, the air and seawater. Indeed, a major aim of the building is to catch the sun and the sea air and, even more importantly, to break down the barriers of internal external space, bringing the outside wonders into every room and using the outside as living room. As Edensor points out "Rational(ised) space is supposedly conductive to the formation of 'good habits', akin to the bourgeois Victorian forms of rational recreation devised to inculcate improving norms of conuct and personal development" (1995: 12). The architecture of the hotel is also intimately linked with the major social democratic project of giving

holidays to all. The sometimes disturbing standardisation of every aspect of the hotel is also a material translation of an egalitarian project that aspires to dignify the living conditions of the working class population of northern Europe. They are indeed simple, easygoing and unsophisticated places that welcome normal people who want a break from the hard realities of everyday life. Without being at the forefront of any progressive architectural movement, these buildings welcome a modernising vision that enhances the tanned, undressed outdoors body and celebrates contact with nature.

Beyond Objectivity and spectacle

So far I have focused exclusively on the abstract and objective conditions of the coastal hotel. Drawing on an academic critique of mass culture, I have presented this prominent tourist space as a paradigmatic example of the highly commodified nomadic environments that proliferate wherever mass tourism develops. However, thinking of the coastal hotel "only as a form of objectivity of spectacle" (Hetherington, 2003: 20) is insufficient and ultimately deceptive. It underplays the active and sensual character of the tourist subject, ignoring also the material and perfomative constitution of the place. An emphasis on the abstract ratio of capitalism shadows the sensuous human activity that the coastal hotel affords. The embodied experience of the pool, the unexpected encounters at the bar, the embarrassment of being the object of mockery in the evening show, the pleasure of eating as much as you can in the buffet, all these experiences are ignored if not dismissed. A single abstract picture is imposed, which empties the place of subjects, pleasures and social relations, transforming it into a 'mortuary geography' (Crang,1999: 248).

The aim of this section is to reintroduce a sense of materiality and sensuality into the coastal hotel. I want to demonstrate that the coastal hotel is other than depthless, placessless and abstract. I want to show how it is also a site of social relations, sensual encounters and embodied pleasures. Coastal hotels can never be wholly abstract, they always contain small idiosyncrasies that break the cool and objective character of the

place. In the first section I re-interpret the role of the subject in the coastal hotel. The coastal hotel is not just about rationality, geometry and abstraction, it is also a site of relevant social and cultural practices. Lines of inquiry that focus exclusively on objectivity and abstraction presuppose a passive and mechanistic subject, ignoring the richness of this tourist experience. I present a number of evidences that show how people are always active in enjoying pre-fabricated commodified experiences such as hotel entertainment. Drawing on the notion of dwelling the second section reintroduces a sense of materiality and performativity. Coastal hotels are not just examples of rationalist architectures, but also particular articulations of practice. They are material realms we dwell in as tourists primarily through everyday embodied practices. Thinking in terms of dwelling and perfomance foregrounds the importance of the mundane and the familiar.

The active tourist

The Coastal hotel, like any other highly commodified nomadic space, is neither simply about liminality, nor about commodification or the disintegration of organic communities. It is also a site of social and cultural practices as well as sensuous human activity. I take as a point of departure the conclusions of Crang (2002) on how to think of interstitial places and ephemeral moments, like airports, buses and hotels. He concludes, "they are not just liminal or threshold spaces, though there is that element. Nor are they simply places of homogenised commodified experience; nor just the rationality of scheduling and flow management, though they rely upon both. The few examples above suggest they are also places of fantasy and desire, places of inclusion and exclusion, and social milieux for different groups of people". A few lines later he reiterates, "they are not just absence of 'organic community' but offer different pleasures and pressures of sociality when the situation is ephemeral from the start" (2002: 573). The hotel, like the telephone box (Bell, 2000), the swimming pool (Molotch: 2000), or the bus (Hutchinson, 2000), is a site of relevant cultural practices that speak to exclusion, identity, fantasy and so on. Hotels are places embedded in different

discourses, practices and social processes in a similar way that buses in Los Angeles. according to Hutchinson (2000), are central in the constitution of black feminine identity. The fact that we are dealing with a generic landscape is not an excuse to reintroduce an abstract, ungrounded perspective that empties the place of subjectivity. sociality, pleasure and sensuality. Recognising the relevance of social and cultural practices in highly commodified nomadic spaces also involves acknowledging the diversity of mobilities, practices and material conditions that are embedded in them. It is necessary to recognise the small idiosyncrasies, the particular power relations, the constraints and uncertainties that are embedded in any commodified and nomadic space. In relation to this Creswell points out "The celebration of the mobile does not help us to recognise difference", "it replaces suspicion to mobility with an overly general celebration and romanticisation" (2001).

A modernist anxiety about mass culture and commodification imbues a large part of the social sciences, leading to an emptying of places such as the coastal hotel of sensuality, social relations and meaning. As Hetherington points out, "The fear of a mass society of individuals unable to think and act on their own behalf has coloured the view of the modernising vision has had of itself during the twentieth century" (1998: 42). This line of reasoning, which penetrates among others the work of Augé (1995), Simmel (1997a), Ritzer (1996) and Shields (1991) ignores the specificity, multiplicity and locatedness of the human engagement with the world. The emphasis on the abstract 'ratio' of capitalism shadows the subjective experience of the place. "The chief defect of recent materialism"- Hetherington contends- "is that the thing, reality, sensuousness, is conceived only in the form of the objectivity of spectacle or of passive contemplation, but not as sensuous human activity, practice, not subjectively" (2003: 20). Underlying this view of mass cultures there is the assumption that any form of objectification is an expression of alienation. It is believed that "rationalisation within western society [...] has generalised the conditions of the mechanised factory to all areas of social life" (Hetherington, 2003: 22). There is no 'proper' life in the highly commodified landscape of our globalised world. Generic places such as malls, hotels and petrol stations deny the creativity of the subject. The work of Augé is a good example of the equation of

rationalisation and alienation. His account of non-places is a controversial lament for the disappearance of organic, real places, which I do not endorse. This is manifest in the following passage that closes a short piece on petrol stations.

> "It remains to ask ourselves whether, once we live the network that guides us through the scenery of illusion all the way to our final destination, we shall find a different world, more genuine, more real; or whether by the infinity of cables and screens it is already infiltrated and penetrated by the seducing and empty message which does not cease to invite us to fill ourselves up with information, images, noises and illusions." (Augé, 2000: 179)

Dominant accounts of mass culture and commodification presuppose a passive subject, which is mechanistic and crude. "Individuals are nothing more than members of an audience"- Hetherington points out in relation to Debord's analysis of spectacle- "They exist outside of their own bodies. They cannot encounter the world other than as isolated and static member of an audience" (2003: 22). The emergence of the generic landscape of capitalism together with the rise of hedonistic culture is argued to be weakening the creativity and spontaneity of the subject, that is, the possibility of an authentic engagement with the world. These critical accounts of mass culture and commodification ultimately celebrate a bourgeois ideal of the subject. According to Hetherington, "This ideal type is of an autonomous, bourgeois, male subject that exists outside the frame of social process in a privileged position as author and spectator of social process". Whereas the heroic bourgeois self-reflexive, autonomous subject is taken as the moral example, popular cultural manifestations such as mass tourism are seen as a sign of alienation, superficiality and herd mentality. We need to move away from these idealised, ahistorical models of the subject which "derived from the ascetic and rational personality to be found in the Weberian tradition" (Hetherington, 1998: 61). This elitist view of the subject ignores the multiple sensuous activity of the body, in particular the expressive realm of feeling and emotion. Emptied of sensuality, communality and embodied pleasures the commodified landscape of the coastal hotel is effectively dehumanised, a superficial, depthless and lifeless environment.

There are multiple evidences suggesting the active character of tourists. even when enjoying 'pre-fabricated' experiences such as hotel entertainment. An ethnographic approach to this phenomenon contradicts the reputation of package tourists as passive and alienated subjects. People appear to be selective and creative in consuming 'pre-fabricated' entertainment. It is also clear that tourist experiences are always authentic, personal and 'unique'. Tourist practices are specific and multiple. I agree with Löfgren when he contends that "Studies of the staging of tourist experiences in mass tourism often reduce or overlook the uniqueness of all travel experiences: two vacations will never be identical" (Löfgren, 1999: 8.). Standardised and pre-fabricated entertainment does not necessarily involve a standardised tourist experience.

The creative character of the package tourist often manifests itself in negative terms as indifference, apathy and lack of interest. It is a matter of fact that tourists do not passively consume everything that is offered to them. There is much evidence to confirm the existence of attitudes of resistance and indifference towards hotel entertainment. Numerous tourists explicitly disapprove the standardisation of hotel entertainment, and in particular the extensive use of media tactics and references. The underlying argument is that disneyfied entertainment makes the place tacky, artificial and unpleasant. The most radical judgement came from Ana and Teresa, two friends from Madrid in their early 40s without children. Although they stay in the hotel Milanos-Pingüinos, they spend most of their holidays travelling around with their car to different sites, mainly beaches. They watched the evening show once, which was enough for them to conclude, "I found it very tacky, I don't like it at all (...) I can't stand these silly things". The evening show was too loud and unpleasant, to the point that it produced a headache. "It gives me headache, honestly, I didn't find it pleasant at all". The reproaches against the hotel entertainment for being pre-fabricated are not exclusive to Spanish middle class tourists. Some British holidaymakers also raised similar arguments as, for example, Bart Campbell, a holidaymaker in his early 40s from Oxfordshire who was enjoying two weeks holiday along with his wife and two children, both under 10, in the hotel Milanos-Pingüinos. Despite being generally satisfied with the hotel, he expressed a negative opinion of the entertainment programme, in particular the evening show. According to Bart it was too

loud, too disneyfied and too claustrophobic. "I prefer my own entertainment, to watching this. It is always indoors. I don't like to be inside, there are too many people, too packed in there". As with Ana and Teresa, he explicitly criticised hotel entertainment for being too pre-fabricated. Campbell's children were not happy with the hotel entertainment either. Contrary to last year, children refused to participate in the children's activities because they found them too restrictive.



Figure 4.5 The Marshall family with some friends sitting by the pool bar. Linda Marshall celebrated the funny and friendly of the hotel.

The creative character of the tourist does not only manifest itself in the form of resistance. There are multiple examples of positive engagement with prefabricated hotel entertainment. The use of media references and effects is an appealing factor, in particular amongst children. They look captivated when contemplating a professional magician or "Snow White and the 7 dwarfs". In the evening a lot of them will sit at the front watching the show attentively. The possibility of performing on stage with fancy dress is also a source of excitement. It is indeed captivating for them to be up there with all the lights and the glitter in front of the public performing their favourite characters. The attraction of

disneyfied entertainment is the fact that it gives a magic aura to the coastal hotel. The use of media effects is able to immerse people, in particular children, into a fantastic world very different from everyday life. Kracauer does not explicitly recognise palaces of distraction as a place of fantasy. However he certainly suggests that the revue type of entertainment dresses the place up and creates illusion and distraction, thus concealing its superficial reality. "The interior design of movie theatres"- he contends- "serves one sole purpose: to rivet the viewers' attention to the peripheral, so that they will not sink into the abyss. The stimulations of the senses succeed one another with such rapidity that there is no room left between them for even the slightest contemplation" (1995: 325-326).

Most of the time neither mass media effects nor standardisation alone are enough to generate appeal. As we will see in the third part of the chapter, what makes the hotel entertainment appealing is, paraphrasing Maffesoli (1996), a 'warm companionship' and a shared emotion. The creative character of the tourists not only manifests itself through either positive or negative reactions to what is being offered. It also manifests itself through the "different pleasures and pressures of sociality" (Crang 2002: 573) that is, through the specific and multiple sensual engagements that tourist establish with the activity. Underlying most of the comments that celebrate the hotel entertainment there is the recognition of the activity leaders' capacity to make fun and to create a feeling of holiday. In particular amongst the people who stayed in the hotel pueblo, a warm companionship, a shared emotion and a radical focus on the present emerge as the main attractions. Behind the superficialities of the hotel entertainment there is a rich sensual world of sociality, which is makes it 'human' and enjoyable. Take for example the opinion of Linda Marshall, a middle aged holidaymaker from Bristol who was enjoying a fourteen night family holiday (see figure 4.5). She did not participate in the entertainment program all the time, however most nights she watched the evening show and a couple of times she took part in some sports competitions such as pistol shooting. She suggested as the main appealing factor the lively and friendly ambience that entertainment brings about. She concluded, "They do very good, very good. I mean the people... they speak all the languages, they have fun... they can make you laugh, make you feel silly... They are very good, very enjoyable, yes". It was not only British people who made positive judgements

on the entertainment program; some Spanish tourists also demonstrated a high consideration for it too. Take for example the opinion of Bernat and Maria. a couple in their early 30s from a town near Barcelona. They were enjoying one-week of total relaxation in the hotel Pueblo together with some friends. Despite their disappointment with the conditions of the hotel, their opinion of the entertainment programme was very positive. Like Linda, they also recognised a warm companionship and a shared ambience as the main appealing factors. They appreciated first of all the fact that there were a great variety of things to do which made it impossible to get bored. "The people who managed to get bored did so because they wanted to get bored. It's impossible to get bored here. There are a huge variety of things to do. It's very impressive". They were also enthusiastic about the professionalism of the entertainment team. "I appreciate the entertainment team a lot as people. There are only five of them, but they are wonderful. I am amazed. They are people for everything". Finally Bernat and Maria were pleasantly surprised with the variety and adaptability of the entertainment program. "It's the first time that we've been in a place like this, we've never been before, and I like it. They have a huge variety. Everything is well conceived not only for foreigners, but also for people like us. It is difficult to imagine an activity that can gather 15 or 20 people and is not here. Apart from anything else, 90% of the activities are well-planned, so nothing is left to chance. Every possibility has been imagined". Hotel entertainment is about doing something for the sake of doing it; it is about having a laugh with people you do not know; it is a radical present that has neither a past nor a future.

The Materiality of Place

Drawing on the notion of dwelling, this section reintroduces a sense of materiality and performativity into the coastal hotel. I agree with Edensor that "All too often in the geographical accounts of place and space, and in accounts of human experience and practice, materiality is ignored, implying that subjective understanding emerge out of broader discursive and representational epistemologies" (2005: 7). Augé's notion of non-place is a good example of the omission of materiality. It not only underplays the

active and creative character of the tourist; it also ignores the multiple physical interactions with people, objects and spaces. "Seemingly"- Edensor continues- "there is no sense that embodied subjects physically interact with space and objects gaining sensory experiences that shape an apprehension as to their feel and meaning " (2005: 7). Space and place are neither an abstract set of relations, nor a mere container of human actions, but 'a concrete and sensuous concatenation of material forces' (Wylie, 2002: 251) that are encountered through a complex set of embodied practices and performances.

Coastal hotels are material realms we dwell in as tourists. Mass tourism as a form of dwelling is a practical way through which we are involved in the world, we create knowledge and interact with the physical environment. By adopting a dwelling perspective this PhD thesis emphasises embodied practices over consciousness and structure. We dwell in the coastal hotel primarily through an array of everyday embodied practices and performances, only a small part of which are representational. As Edensor points out "The most common spatial experience is that sensed through everyday life, where familiar space forms an unquestionable backdrop to daily tasks, pleasures and routine movements" (Edensor: 2005: 6). Doing tourism is not only a matter of being in space or representing the space. It is, above all, a matter of practising space and practising through space (Crang, 1999: 248). That is, tourists are not only in a place, but also involved with the place.

Highly commodified environments such as the coastal hotel are stages in which particular enactions take place. As Endensor points out, "The place is reproduced by the enaction of habitual performances and touristic forms of habitus find their expression in particular spaces" (2005: 9). Places like the Hotel Milanos-Pingüinos or the Hotel Pueblo are not just examples of 'rationalist' architectures, but also particular articulations of both habitual and conscious practices. It is a matter of fact that we possess a practical knowledge of the coastal hotel, we know "what to do there, where to go, how to look and what to look at" (Edensor, 2005: 6). Tourist not only consume representations, they also perform destinations. In this context, the hotel space is not a

neutral area where things happen but a 'concatenation of material forces' (Wyle, 2002: 251) that posses an agency to impact upon the sensibilities of those who dwell in. I agree with Edensor on the need to reinstate the affordances of place and space, that is, "those qualities which are spatial potentialities, constraining and enabling a range of actions".

The all-inclusive scheme is a good example of the performative and material character of the coastal hotel. This scheme is not only an expression of the high levels of standardisation and commodification of the tourist experience. The all-inclusive is also a particular mode of engagement with the world of goods, which is based on ideals of excess. The key to its success is not only the fact that it makes things easier, preventing for example having to bring down money to the pool area. More important than the practical reasons is the fact that it makes possible enjoying unlimited availability of food and drinks without worrying about the cost. All-inclusive is about the hedonistic pleasure of having as much as you want. It takes compulsory consumption to an extreme. Some tourists justify their option for the all-inclusive scheme mainly on the practical advantages of the scheme. This was the case of the Hughes family from Sussex who decided in the middle of the holiday to change to all-inclusive in order to make things easier for their three sons, 11, 17 and 20 years old. James Hughes was both embarrassed about his youngest son having free drinks from other peoples cards and sympathetic with the older boys that they did not have much to drink because they were ashamed to ask for money. "You were for ever giving money out to the boys all the time. We don't mind, but they always have to come and ask. (....) I'm sure the older ones didn't have as much to drink because they had to come to ask me, whereas now it seems to be much easier". He concludes, "it has been much easier all-inclusive because the boys could get whatever they want; they've been able to be more independent". In contrast, other tourists insist explicitly on the pleasure of all-inclusive consumption. That was the case of the Howards who insisted explicitly on the pleasure for the kids of being all-inclusive. "But I think as an adult to eat and drink and relax is a part of your holiday and as a child to eat ice-creams, and have cokes, and have things that you wouldn't have at home is a part of their holidays". Having 'free' and unlimited food and drink was a major attraction for their younger sons. One of them pointed out "it's fun because you

are allowed to get tickets for your drinks". He had had up to five hot dogs that day. Interestingly enough, the issue of the all-inclusive holiday was mainly justified as good for the children. There was some sort of collective shame in adopting this scheme. The economic success of the coastal hotels depends on the articulation of consumption practices such as these, which is based on hedonistic ideas of excess.

Thinking of the coastal hotel in terms of dwelling and performance foregrounds the importance of the mundane and the familiar. What makes the coastal hotel appealing is neither the possibility of transcendence nor the pleasure of the unusual and the different, but a sense of familiarity and predictability. The coastal hotel might be located in a different and exciting country but for a lot of people they are familiar dwellings in which they can feel at home, with all the pleasures that this involves. The notions of dwelling and performance have thus the potential to explain the attraction of unadventurous and predictable forms of tourism such as coastal mass tourism. Today "many tourist ventures resemble both the mundane rituals of domestic life and the responsibilities and planning required in employment" (Edensor, 2005: 6). These notions serve as an alternative to traditional approaches, which distinguish tourism from everyday life. Tourism has been generally conceived as a self-contained system of activity and consciousness which is constructed in opposition to non-tourist forms of experience, in particular those related with home and paid work. However, this dichotomy between extraordinary and ordinary period of time has become more and more tenuous (Franklin, 2003: 5). In the next chapter I will elaborate on the significance of the mundane and the familiar in the coastal hotel.

The success of the package tour depends very much on the fact that all responsibility is being taken away, thus making things easier. There is a high degree of predictability and a low level of risk in booking a package tour in the Mediterranean. A week in Menorca is indeed a standard type of holiday, but it is easy to arrange, reliable and predictable. As Löfgren points out, "it is the certainty and predictability of the package tour that has made it a mass phenomenon, opening international travel for working class families" (1999: 205). Every year a staggering number of people choose to spend their holidays in

the coastal hotel. Far from being a problem, this high level of predictability is what makes the place attractive. I have collected numerous evidences that confirm the attraction of predictability and familiarity. The number of tourists expressing their satisfaction with the fact that all responsibility is being taken away is probably the most significant evidence. This was the case for the Howard family, a middle-aged couple with 7 sons from Essex, all Jehovah's Witnesses. This was the first time that the whole family had travelled abroad together as a group. Their holiday was possible because the travel company, under a fixed, agreed price, took responsibility for all the arrangements. As Melissa points out,

> "I think as well one of the differences between this holiday and another holidays is because we've done it like a package tour. The responsibility is being taking away from us. We get to the airport. We were met by representatives. We were shown to coach, the coach drove us straight here. We were met by another representative. You don't have to think to yourself; what I am doing?. There is no problem. When I hurt my back we had lots of medical cards. It's not a problem at all about pain relief, medication, seeing the doctor. You see the representative. You are looked after all the time."

For Melissa not having to worry about anything, feeling looked after all the time is what makes her holiday attractive. The case of the Howards was indeed quite exceptional. They were too large and inexperienced a family to travel independently. However, similar arguments were common, even among people who are used to travelling independently.

The general appeal for the familiar and the predictable contrasts with the negative opinions that often dismiss the coastal hotel as inauthentic. Not only locals and academics but also tourists disapprove the high levels of commodification and standardisation of the coastal hotel. This was the case of Ana and Teresa, from Madrid. Although they like the sea and the sun, they found coastal resorts highly disappointing because of their 'lack of life'. "I enjoy the summer because I like the sea¨- Ana told me- "but the coastal resorts make me feel distressed, in particular the bars and the shops. It`s all very artificial; it's like a joke. It`s the same here as everywhere else unless you go to a place like Benidorm where you can't tell what it's like because of all the commotion¨.

For Ana and Teresa, the commodification and over-rationalisation of the coastal resorts is consummated at the expense of their authenticity. In doing so, Ana and Teresa fail to acknowledge the pleasures of the mundane and the familiar that break with the cool and abstract character of the coastal hotel. The coastal hotel is other than depthless, placeless and abstract; it is also a place of social relations, sensual encounters and embodied pleasures. Coastal hotels can never be wholly abstract, they are always specific and multiple, material and embodied. They are always of spaces of immanence.

Empathy and Immanence and the Coastal Hotel

Despite being the result of rationality, geometry and abstraction, people enjoy being in a coastal hotel. Tourists repeat the experience year after year, often in the same establishment. This section looks at what makes coastal hotels attractive. Together with a sense of materiality and sensuality it is essential to take into account a sense of enjoyment. The main focus of the section is on the puissance of everyday life, that is, the human creativity that makes the life liveable. The attraction of coastal hotels derives primarily from its emphasis on warm companionship, being together and enjoying the present. Two main ideas emerge: the significance of immanence and the centrality of an empathetic sociality. Having no meaning, purpose or utopia attached, what the coastal hotel has to offer is the possibility of immanence, a radical and naked present that leaves generous space for embodied social life. This is a kind of sociality that does not rely on a rational project but on a shared ambience and emotion, on the physicality of being together. By emphasising the present, the everyday and the affectual I move away from a nostalgic account that rely on the values of high art, in particular notions of authenticity, rationality and genuineness.

This section is divided in four parts. The first introduces the main idea of the section. What makes the coastal hotel attractive is not the possibility of transcendence and meaning but of immanence. I do not understand immanence as adventure but as a

consciousness of the present and fluctuation. The realities of the coastal hotel and mass tourism cannot be fully appreciated unless we move away from nostalgic accounts that rely on the values of high art. In the second part I relate the possibility of immanence with an empathetic sociality. The consciousness of the present and the longing for change that characterises the coastal hotel do not respond to the higher tempo and sophisticated character that according to Simmel (1997a) characterise modernity but to the kind of solidarity that Maffesoli (1996) identifies with the notion of neotribalism. In the third part I examine the entertainment programme in one of the hotels, a good example of the kind of empathetic and ephemeral sociality that impregnates these places. Finally, I look at the kind of togetherness that is characteristic of the coastal hotel. It acts as a prelude to the final part, which focuses on the hotel pool. The community of hotel dwellers has fundamental similarities with both Simmel's (1971) figure of the stranger and Maffesoli's (1996) notion of neotribalism. Signs of indifference, insubstantiality and individualism come together with signs of camaraderie, de-individualisation and tribalism of a particular kind. Despite being a nomadic community of strangers without much in common, it is a matter of fact that there is some sort of communality among hotel dwellers which does not contradict the ephemeral and fluid character of the place.

Immanence, radical present and the richness of everyday life.

What makes the coastal hotel a focus of attraction is not the possibility of transcendence and meaning but the fact that the immanence of the human condition is not concealed. In such an abstract environment human life can emerge without mythological structures of meaning that push it back. It is a site of 'bare life' (Agamben, 1998) in which the anonymous individual confronts the question of the provisional condition of human existence without the protection of any superstructures whatsoever. It is because of the possibility of 'immanence' that Kracauer sees the movement of the mass ornament as legitimate and even progressive. Katz, using a Deleuzian language, supports this

interpretation when he argues, "Kracauer figures the hotel lobby as a site of heightened exchange value, subject to nomadic deterritorializing flows of information and desire" (1999: 148). The hotel is an example of the power of capital to radically deterritorialise and fragment identity, desire and meaning by creating nomadic smooth and trackless spaces.

I do not understand immanence as adventure. In fact a key element of the coastal hotel is its extreme predictability and its high degree of control over risk. Rather I understand immanence as a consciousness of the present and fluctuation, as a renovated focus on practicing the here and now. This interpretation is implicit both in Kracauer's account on the hotel lobby (1995) and Augé's notion of non-place (1995). Both refer to a place naked of totalities and myths in which there prevails an urgency of the present and a longing for change and fluctuation. As Augé point out in relation to the concept of non-place, "there is no room there for history unless it has been transformed into an element of spectacle, usually in allusive terms. What reigns there is actuality, the urgency of the present moment" (1995: 103-104). It is the lack of temporal and mythological perspectives, the possibility of a radical present, that leaves space for 'bare life' and makes the coastal hotel attractive.

My understanding of immanence has a lot in common with the French intellectual tradition that sees everyday life as an arena of cultural creativity and social revolt (Hetherington, 1998: 62). The work of De Certeau on walking is a good example of this tradition. Instead of focussing on a Foucauldian micro-physics of power, de Certeau turns his attention to how the everyday may act as a source of microphysics of resistance. He suggests the richness of everyday practices that neither presuppose transcendental meanings nor always conform to the norms and institutionalised practices of society. A practice such as walking is seen as a creative practice though which life and space unfolds. Walking is not presented as a text, but as something equivalent to the act of speaking, which is constantly drifting and mutating. "In reality"- de Certeau points out - "a rationalised, expansionist, centralised, spectacular and clamorous production is confronted by an entirely different kind of production, called consumption and

characterised by its ruses, its fragmentations, its poaching, its clandestine nature, its tireless but quiet activity, in short by its quasi-invisibility" (1988: 31). This perspective suggests how a radical and naked present is full of unexpected drifts and mutations that add value to life. As Solnit points out, "Wandering in a book or a computer takes place within more constricted and less sensual parameters. It's the unpredictable incidents between official events that add up to a life, the incalculable that gives its values" (2000: 10). De-Certeau's (1998) like Solnit (2000) and Maffesoli (1996) insist on the immanence of life and the relevance of the small movements and mutations that make life liveable. Underlying the Institutional world of politics, culture and religion there is the puissance of everyday life, a different kind of expressionism and creativity, which is not based on some idealised and rational model of the subject.

However, the coastal hotel, like the Hotel Kracauer, has a complex spatial logic. It not only embodies processes of demythologisation and deterritorialisation but also re-enchantment and reterritorialistion. As Katz points out "the nomadic and smooth space of advance capital continues to call up nostalgic depth effects through various forms of place making" (1999: 148). Both the strong management that organises the coastal hotel and the frequent recurrence of nostalgic motives are evidences of the efforts to fix the open and unstable nature of the coastal hotel and masquerade the possibility of immanence and bare life. It is in relation to this spatial complexity that Kracauer concludes that the process of demythologisation and rationalisation has not gone far enough. He identifies as capitalism's core defect the fact that "it rationalizes not too much but rather too little. The thinking promoted by capitalism resists culminating in that reason which arises from the basis of man" (1995: 81). The problem of the contemporary spaces of distraction such as the movie theatre or the hotel lobby is their reactionary effort to, "coerce the motley sequence of externalities into an organic whole" (1995:327). He does not question whether the hotel is a site of authentic life but whether it conceals the real life that it contains. "Rather than acknowledging the actual site of disintegration that such shows ought to represent, the movie theatres glue the pieces back together after the fact and present them as organic creations" (1995: 327-328).

An account of the coastal hotel that emphasises immanence, present and the richness of everyday life demands a move away from nostalgic accounts that rely on the values of high art. Neither the coastal hotel nor mass tourism are part of the "community of the higher realm", as a kind of artistic activity that "aims at a totality that remains veiled to the proponents of civilized society", that is, whose achievement is to "construct a whole out of the blindly scattered elements of a disintegrated world" (Kracauer, 1995: 174-175). Rather the hotel is part of the sphere of lesser reality in which "consciousness of existence and of the authentic conditions dwindles away in the existential stream" and "sense becomes lost in the labyrinth of distorted events" (Kracauer, 1995. 173). Moving away from the vales of high art demands, according to Mülder-Bach, a recognition of "a representational method that dissolves the fortuitous empirical coherence of the raw material, and rearranges and combines the observations on the basis of comprehension of their meaning"(1997:54). Advancing himself to postmodernism Kracauer calls this representational method mosaic. Moving away from the values of higher art does not involve refusing the legitimacy of the aesthetic pleasure gained in these kind of cultural manifestations. I assume the view of Kracauer when he contends, "the aesthetic pleasure gained from ornamental mass movements is legitimate". In fact he sees mass artistic productions as more authentic and less deceptive than bourgeoisie art, which he qualifies as outdated. "No matter how low one gauges the value of the mass ornament, its degree of reality is still higher than that of artistic productions which cultivate outdated noble sentiments in obsolete forms - even if it means nothing more than that" (Kracauer,1995: 79).

Tourism can be a 'superficial' reality that is at odds with higher art, however, according to Lippard (1999), like art, it also can give a privileged access to major themes of contemporary reality. Tourism resembles art in the fact that it interrogates the normal, teaches people how to see and is a form of transformation, even cannibalism of other places and other cultures. "It is odd"- she thinks- "that tourism as activity has piqued so few progressive artists' imaginations, despite its heady vortex of cross-culturalism, mixed signals, disjunctive codes, faked authenticity, detterritorialisaton and other hot topics." (1999: 4). The identification that Lippard proposes between art and tourism is

possible because her idea of art does not aim at a totality, does not seek to construct a whole out of the blindly scattered elements anymore. As in the case of this thesis. she goes "against the grain of the dyspeptic and melancholy tone in which tourism is more often discussed, to acknowledge some of its pleasures" (1999: 11)

The coastal hotel as empathetic sociality

A consciousness of the present and a longing for change are central attributes of both the coastal hotel and the experience of mass tourism. There is an urgency to enjoy the present and to distance oneself from the daily hustle and bustle. It is not so much a desire for a different life as a longing to 'get away from it all'. These are similar attributes to the ones that Simmel identifies with fashion. According to Simmel, fashion is a concretion of a psychological feature of our times, which he describes as the accentuation of fleeting and fluctuating elements and of feelings of present and change, which he relates with the weakening of permanent and unquestionable convictions.

> Among the reasons why nowadays fashion exercises such a powerful influence on our consciousness there is also the fact that the major permanent, unquestionable convictions are more and more losing their force. Consequently, the fleeting and fluctuating elements of life gain that much more free space. The break with the past (...) concentrates consciousness more and more upon the present. This accentuation of the present is evidently, at the same time, an emphasis upon change. (1997b: 193)

The consciousness of present and change are part of the radically different sensory foundation that characterises metropolitan modern life. Modernity and in particular the modern metropolis is characterised by a much higher tempo and sophisticated character. It is a timee of constant change, sharp discontinuities and endless transmutations. "The psychological basis of the metropolitan type of individuality"- Simmel points out- "consists in the intensification of nervous stimulations which results from the swift and uninterrupted change of outer and inner stimuli" (1997a: 175). Kracauer also recognises the importance of the 'impatient tempo' in contemporary metropolitan culture. Thus for

example, in an essay on Boredom, the implosion of nervous stimuli is presented as one of the central relevant psychological features of our times. "The world makes sure that one does not find oneself"- he points out- "and even if one perhaps isn't interested in it, the world itself is much too interested for one to find the peace and quiet necessary to be as thoroughly bored with the world as it ultimately deserves" (1995: 332). He describes a restless, fleeting and fluctuating world that is much more interested in movement and tempo than in content and sense. "Illuminated words glide by on the rooftops, and already one is banished from one's own emptiness into the alien advertisement" (1995: 332). As in the "Hotel Lobby" and "the cult of distraction" he uses the metaphor of play to characterise modern times. "One becomes a playground of worldwide noises that regardless of their own potentially objective boredom, do not even grant one's modest right to personal boredom" (1995: 333).

In the case of the coastal hotel however, the consciousness of present and the longing for change are not linked with the higher tempo and sophisticated character that, according to Simmel, characterise modernity. Coastal mass tourism is an ephemeral and 'superficial' way of life, but by no means accelerated and sophisticated. As I will reveal in the next chapter on family tourism, slowing down the accelerated everyday tempo and recovering a much simpler and more childish way of life are central elements of this kind of holiday. The phenomenon of the coastal hotel responds better to Maffesoli's notion of neo-tribalism than to Simmel's account of metropolitan life (1997a). The consciousness of the present and the longing for change are not a manifestation of an accelerated and increasingly sophisticated life but of the new kind of holism and solidarity that is appearing out of the ephemeral and fluid contemporary life.

The concept of neo-tribalism reconciles a central observation in my fieldwork; the fact that there is some sort of sociality and communality in highly commodified spaces such as the coastal hotel which is not inconsistent with the nomadic character of the place. We are witnessing a process of de-individualisation and vitalism which is manifest in the emergence of a new kind of holism and solidarity out of an ephemeral and fluid contemporary reality. There is a new kind of "holism taking shape before our eyes:

throwing wide the doors of privacy, sentiment takes over, and in certain countries its presence is reinforced in the public sphere, thus producing a form of solidarity that can no longer be denied" (1996:16). In contrast with the stability induced by classical tribalism and organic communities, neo-tribalism is characterised by fluidity, occasional gathering and dispersion. According to Maffesoli, "The tribes that crystallize from these masses are unstable, since the persons of which these tribes are constituted are free to move from one to the other" (1995: 6). Maffesoli's notion of neotribalism complies with the point of departure of this chapter. The coastal hotel, as with any other transitory space and ephemeral experience, is neither just about liminality, nor about commodification or the disintegration of organic communities. As relevant as this is, it is a fact that there are a lot of "pressures and pleasures of sociality when the situation is ephemeral from the start". (Crang 2002: 573)

The emphasis of neo-tribes is not on rationality but on empathy. What binds together these contemporary groupings is not a rational project or an ideology but simply an ambience, a lifestyle or an emotion. There is a disdain for any projectivist attitude; instead these groups seem to experience an undeniable intensity in whatever action they take. As Maffesoli observes "we are witnessing the tendency for a rationalised social to be replaced by an empathetic sociality, which is expressed by a succession of ambiences, feelings and emotions" (1996: 11). What is important is the moment, the execution of being together and creation for its own sake. "The tribes we are considering" - Maffesoli contends – "may have a goal, may have finality; but this is not essential; what is important is the energy expended on constituting the group as such. Thus developing new lifestyles is an act of pure creation of which we should be aware" (1996: 96). Indeed the foundations of the communal ethic in places like coastal hotels rely neither on an ideology nor on a communal project but simply on a 'warm companionship' and the physicality of being together. The crucial point is the act of creation as such and the present experience. Maffesoli places at the foundation of neo-tribalism a communal ethic in the sphere of the everyday. He contends, "The collective feeling of shared puissance, this mythical sensibility that assures continuity, is expressed through rather trivial vectors" (1996: 24). The solidarity, the holism that binds people together in neo-

tribes does not emerge out of the extraordinary, but within costume and habit. "Having a few drinks, chatting with friends; the anodyne conversations punctuating everyday life enable an exteriorisation of the self and thus create the specific aura which binds us together within tribalism" (1996: 25)

Acting as clowns.

The entertainment programme, more in the hotel Pueblo than in the Milanos Pingüinos, is a good example of the kind of empathetic and ephemeral sociality that impregnates coastal hotels. At the hotel Pueblo the entertainment program explicitly responds to the kind of phenomenon that Maffesoli (1996) identifies with neo-tribalism. The hotel Pueblo does not make such an extensive use of mass media effects. Although there are still a lot of references to the Hollywood film industry, the hotel does not reproduce so explicitly the 'flatness of the screen'. The primary aim of the hotel Pueblo is to create a warm and friendly holiday environment. Underlying most of the activities there are the simple intentions of combating boredom, promoting friendship and making people laugh. In promoting a lively warm environment, the organised entertainment is fostering a type of communality that does not rely on an ideology or a communal project but simply on 'warm companionship' and the physicality of being together. This entails the provision of much more space for the spontaneous creativity of both tourists and members of staff. The ambition of the hotel is not to create an image so much as an ambience and a feeling.

Although some of the activities were pretty much the same, the general orientation of the entertainment programme in the hotel Pueblo was quite different from hotel Milanos-Pingüinos. Take for example the drinking game in figures 4.6 and 4.7. At 1pm every day the entertainment team organise a recreational game by the pool, which varies from one day to another. They appear 'by surprise' in the pool area in fancy dress making a lot of noise. In this case they are dressed in skin-tight skeleton suits and green masks. With loud, lively music in the background they go around the pool area announcing the event

and encouraging people to participate by making jokes and splashing people. Once there are enough participants the game properly starts. It is normally a very simple game, like 'seven and a half'. Using dice, the participants have to get as close as possible to seven and half glasses without going too far. The holidaymaker who gets closest gets a free cocktail that she/he has to drink all at once standing on a chair in front of the public. The event is short, funny and uncompromising, it is about laughing and making fun. Using circus techniques, the entertainment team is able to create a festive and friendly atmosphere. The key to its success is not the game itself but the fact that the activity leaders are acting like clowns, making jokes, and being intrusive and spontaneous. The appeal of this type of entertainment is not an image of youth and beauty but an emotion, a feeling and an ambience. What it is important is the execution of being together in the present and the ephemeral companionship that is being created. Drinking games are good examples of the kind of solidarity that Maffesoli (1996) identifies with neotribalism, which does not rely on an ideology or a communal project but simply on 'warm companionship' and the physicality of being together.



Figure 4.6 and 4.7: Drinking Game in the hotel Pueblo.

Circus techniques were not only used in drinking games. Even a simple pool game was totally transformed by the capacity of activity leaders to act as clowns. "Billar Killer" is an adaptation of the classic game of pool in which the participants are eliminated from the game as soon as they make two mistakes. The activity leader transformed this activity using circus techniques in a very funny and entertaining event. She made endless jokes with the participants, in particular about their nationality, she introduced a song every time a participant was knocked out, she imitated the people and she even lied on the table to show her disappointment. It was an excellent demonstration not only of how to entertain people, but also of how to accommodate people from several different backgrounds. The event did not reproduce the logic of the screen, but the logic of the circus, with a funny, sometimes even crazy activity leader- a clown - who made people feel happy together. It was an act of pure present that was not associated with any utopia, meaning or image.

In the hotel Pueblo, there is the opportunity to practise a lot of different sports, such as tennis, football, mini-golf, water polo, shooting, archery and more. The sports facilities are bigger and better than in the Hotel Milanos-Pingüinos. This emphasis on sports, which has proved to be a major success, does not contradict the emphasis on fun games and circus techniques. Both sports and recreational games have similar aims. Football and drinking games are good examples of 'pure' entertainment that does not pretend to be anything beyond the act of participating and having fun together. The underlying idea of the entertainment programme in the Hotel Pueblo is to create a lively ambience and to promote warm companionship. The relevance of sports activities in the hotel pueblo reinforces this interpretation.

An ephemeral community of strangers

This section looks at the kind of togetherness that is characteristic of the coastal hotel. It is a prelude to the final part, which focuses exclusively on the hotel pool. The coastal hotel encompasses a kind of being together that paraphrasing Tallack (2002)

simultaneously combines the familiar and the unfamiliar, the homely and the unhomely, movement and stasis, assembling and disassembling. In coastal hotels signs of indifference, insubstantiality and individualism come together with signs of camaraderie, de-individualisation and tribalism of a particular kind. The community of hotel dwellers has fundamental similarities with both Simmel's (1971) figure of the stranger and Maffesoli's (1996) notion of neotribalism. The coastal hotel is a nomadic community of strangers', in which tourists do not have a lot in common; very few tourists have real attachment to the places they visit. Notwithstanding, there is some sort of solidarity and communality among the dwellers of coastal hotels which does not contradict the ephemeral and fluid character of the place nor challenges Kracauer's observation, according to which, in hotel lobbies togetherness has no meaning. These ephemeral forms of solidarity and friendship challenge the identification of hotel dwellers with Simmel's notion of the stranger (1971).

On the one hand, the kind of being together that is predominant in coastal hotels has a lot in common with Simmel's notion of the stranger. The character of the stranger refers to someone who simultaneously combines closeness and remoteness, someone without organic ties to the community of which he is, nevertheless, a member. "The stranger is an element of the group itself, not unlike the poor and the sundry, 'inner enemies'_ an element whose membership within the group involves both being outside it and confronting it" (1971: 144). Another characteristic of the stranger is his intrinsic mobility. The stranger is for Simmel like the trader, a potential wanderer, and a contemporary nomad. "The purely mobile person comes incidentally into contact with every single element but is not bound up organically, through established ties of kinship, locality or occupation, with any single one" (1971: 145). Tourists have a lot in common with the homeless and nomadic figure of the stranger. The people who spend their holidays in places like the Hotel Milanos-Pingüinos or the Hotel Pueblo do not have a lot in common and very few of them have a real attachment to the place they visit. The 1600 bed hotel is not their home, but encompasses them for two weeks with the sole promise of pure distraction. Tourists are like nomads, mobile persons, wanderers who are not only strange to each other, but also strange to the place they visit. This

characteristic pattern of nearness and remoteness makes the coastal hotel an emblematic place of modernity. The lack of organic community in the coastal hotel is not the product of a failure but an example of a modern mobile way of being-in-the world. Paraphrasing Mülder-Bach on Kracauer, hotel dwellers are those "who seek to make the exile of transcendental homelessness, if not into home, at least into a familiar dwelling" (1997: 48). In the coastal hotel, the tourist "is already the stranger, who has decided to stay in the modern world, because he does not know where else to go- and because he is curious" (Mülder-Bach, 1997: 49).



Figure 4.8 José and Maria from Valladolid, Ana and Teresa from Madrid. They spend most of their holidays travelling around by car

The kind of togetherness that is predominant in coastal hotels also contains a lot of features that resemble a blasé attitude. The hotel is a place of anonymity and insignificance, of insubstantiality and indifference, in which togetherness has no meaning. In "Metropolis and Mental Life" Simmel (1997a) not only observes that modern life, with its sharp intensification of nervous stimulations, is conducive to a freer and more individual existence; he also observes that as a result, a feeling of loneliness

and indifference impregnates human existence. "Life is composed more and more of these impersonal contents and offerings which tend to displace the genuine personal collaborations and incomparability" (1997a: 184). The blasé involves indifference and insubstantiality. "The essence of the blasé attitude consists in the blunting of discrimination. The meaning and differing value of things, and thereby the things themselves, are experienced as insubstantial" (1997a: 178). Simmel relates the blasé with a distinctly objective and abstract attitude to the world in which the universal and abstract elements are predominant over particular and contingent features. A stranger is, according to Simmel (1971), a freer man, practically and theoretically who treats even his close relationships from a bird's-eye-view and who assesses the world from a rather general and objective point of view.

There are numerous evidences that suggest the importance of a blasé attitude in coastal hotels. The most relevant one is fact that a lot of people tend not to establish any kind of links with the rest of the guests of the hotel. This is especially the case of those tourists who do not use the hotel complex during the day like Ana and Teresa, from Madrid. Ana and Teresa did not use the hotel as a space of relation and friendship; they spent most of their holidays travelling around with their car to different sites, mainly beaches. They have neither the time nor the interest to establish even simple relations with the other guests of the hotel. The only exception was a couple who travelled with the same tour operator. In figure 4.8 they are posing alongside with Ana and Teresa. A blasé attitude is also manifest amongst people who use the hotel complex during the day. There are a significant number of tourists who refuse to develop links with the rest of the guests of the hotel even when they spend most of the day by the hotel pool. This was the case of the Peterson family from Essex, who I have already introduced. Although they met quite a lot of people through their children, they explicitly refused to get involved with them. "We spoke to people" - explained Tim – "because the children make friend all the time (…). We speak to them, but we are not in their company. We say hello, we ask them about things and then we go to sit on our own". The Peterson family did not participate in any organised activity; they just wanted to rest and to have fun together as a family. "We came on holiday for a quiet rest, not to be part of a big group". This passage

suggests a blasé approach to the coastal hotel. It confirms that the Peterson family adopted an individualistic attitude that both emphasises the insubstantiality of the hotel and demonstrates indifference towards the rest of the guests.

The refusal to mix with other tourists is not always linked with a blasé attitude. There are numerous other circumstances that result in a lack of togetherness. Take for example the case of two young couples, Italians holidaymakers who I interviewed in the hotel pueblo. Neither Mauro and Irene nor Fabio and Ilaria were living together yet. Thus coming to Menorca was, for them, an opportunity to stay together day and night away from their families. It should not come as a surprise that they did not establish any proper relationships with other guests of the hotel. The intention of coming to Menorca on holidays was simply be together while enjoying the beach, which is something that they cannot do at home. They did not demonstrate indifference towards other tourists; it was simply their priority to gain intimacy. In other cases, the refusal to mix with other tourists appears to be intimately linked with a negative image of mass tourism. This was the case of Jeff and Emma Humphrey, from Derby. They neither established any kind of relationships with other guests nor developed any sort of solidarity with them. The other guests of the hotel were only mentioned as a source of discomfort and noise. No joy is suggested from sharing the space. "It's interesting"- Jeff pointed out – "we always thought of a package holiday like this as mainly for families who've got children. And we've gone past that stage. The way that they look after the children, keeping everybody entertained, doesn't appeal to me. It's fine. But our children are almost grown up and we don't want children on holiday close to us". Underlying his comments there is indeed an accusation of mass tourism as vulgar and insubstantial.

On the other hand, there are numerous evidences that contradict an understanding of the coastal hotel as a 'community of strangers'. Signs of indifference, insubstantiality and individualism come together with evidences of camaraderie, de-individualisation and tribalism of a particular kind. There is some sort of solidarity and communality among the dwellers of coastal hotels which neither contradicts the ephemeral and fluid character of the place nor challenges Kracauer's observation, according to which, in hotel lobbies

togetherness has no meaning. The existence of solidarity and friendship challenges the identification of hotel dwellers with Simmel's notion of the stranger (1971). Although it accounts for the nomadic and homeless character of the tourists, Simmel's notion of the stranger does not explain the existence of evidences of friendship and communality in coastal hotels. He associates the mobile and fluid character of contemporary societies both with a lack of communality and a blasé attitude. In so doing, Simmel (1971) implicitly identifies the figure of the stranger with an inauthentic way of being that demonstrates the erosion of the community that modernity has brought about.

The kind of togetherness that is characteristic in coastal hotels has a lot in common with the type of gathering that Maffessoli identifies with the notion of neo-tribalism. As I have explained in a previous section, this concept reconciles a central observation in my fieldwork; the fact that there is some sort of sociality and communality in highly commodified spaces such as the coastal hotel which is not inconsistent with the nomadic character of the place. It is a matter of fact that for a lot of hotel dwellers, a feeling of togetherness and an experience of communality are central attractions of a package holiday. This is manifest for example in the number of times people socialise with 'strangers' or in the much more open and friendly attitude that tourists tend to adopt on holiday. Indeed such experiences of communality rely neither on an ideology nor on a communal project but simply on a 'warm companionship' and the physicality of being together.

An exemplary case of a friendly and open attitude was the Campbell family, from Oxfordshire. For the Campbell's, being in a coastal hotel did not involve atomism and alienation, but camaraderie and sociality. In the following quotation Juliet explains how at home they barely speak with their neighbours, whereas on holiday they feel more open and friendly, always ready to meet and chat with strangers. "We live in a small close and we haven't spoken with some of the neighbours yet, and we have been there a year. Where we live we don't speak to each other, we don't even know their names. But here, you meet people from different parts of the country and in minutes they will be friends of ours. It makes you more open". On holiday they socialise with other guests of

the hotel all the time, while sitting by the pool, having a drink in the beach bar, watching the evening entertainment and so on. In the following quote. Bart Campbell explains how they met the family they spent most of the time with. It happened on the first day of the holiday while having a drink in the beach bar on an unusually rainy day. "The first day we met with a family group we associate with all the time. We met them the day we arrived here. It was raining so we were just walking around and we went to the beach bar just to take some shelter, and now we spend all our time with the family of the man we met there that day". This example suggests a kind of sociality that has a lot in common with Maffesoli's notion of neotribalism. The story portrays a casual and ephemeral gathering, the central element of which is simply the execution of being together in a warm companionship. Bart recognises that uncompromising encounters like this that do not involve 'friendship' are the sort of relationships tourists tend to develop during the holidays. "that's the way it goes. We meet some new people just sitting at the bar. You meet people all the time that's the thing". It is thus quite unusual they still keep in contact with a family that they met the previous year at another hotel in Menorca.

The Campbells' story is by no means extraordinary. The relevance of casual and ephemeral gatherings is manifest in numerous other cases. It seems natural and easy to enter into conversations with other tourists in communal spaces such as the pool, the dining room or even the bus. Most of the time these conversations are short and superficial but by no means irrelevant. What is important is the intensity of the moment and the emotion that being together generates. Take for example the case of James and Claire Hughes from Sussex. In contrast with previous holidays, they did not develop a special friendship with anybody, instead they cultivated ephemeral and casual relationships. I gathered evidence of three 'spontaneous' conversations. The first took place in a beach bar in the evening. "We met" – Claire explained – "some people who were staying in Es Castell and we had a nice chat with them". The second conversation was in the bus to Maó with a couple who booked a last minute holiday in a hotel nearby. During the 20 minutes journey they compared their holiday experiences. The third spontaneous conversation was between Claire Hughes and Melissa Howard about her

large family. Claire did not hesitate to introduce herself to Melissa in order to satisfy her curiosity. Ephemeral gatherings and spontaneous conversations like these make their holiday equally special not least because of the feeling of togetherness they generate.

The casual and ephemeral encounters that I have described so far are not, with very few exceptions, so unmediated and fortuitous as it might seem. Almost all informal conversations take place between tourists from the same country with very similar backgrounds, in this case families with children. It is quite rare that tourists enter into conversations with locals, foreigners or partygoers. The coastal hotel is a place of encounter and liminality but only amongst people from similar backgrounds. In this context very few casual and ephemeral encounters have a taste of adventure. However, the few that have will be remembered as major events of the holiday, in part because of the mood that people develop on holiday. The most interesting example that I compiled was from Ana and Teresa, from Madrid, whom we can see in figure 4.8 with José and María from Valladolid. On their way to Macarella, one of the must-see beaches of the island, Ana and Teresa picked up a man who was high-hiking. It was late, he was lost in the woods and was desperate to get back to the beach to his yacht and his friends. In compensation, the man invited them onto his yacht, an offer that Ana and Teresa refused. "He was so frightened, that we decide to take him"- Teresa explained - "It wasn`t a problem since we didn't have to stray off the road very much. When we arrived to the beach, in compensation, he invited us to go onto his yacht. However it was too late to go down to the beach and the track was about to be closed. So he suggested that we go the day after, so we could avoid the track and we would visit all the 'virgin' coves of the south west coast by boat. And, well, Ana refused." This unexpected event is presented in rather epic terms as a major adventure of their holiday. Interestingly enough the story is haunted with subtle eroticism. "She will never forgive me for that", Ana concluded.

However, adventures are quite rare. The predominant type of sociality in coastal mass tourism is not so epic or spontaneous. Underlying most casual and ephemeral gatherings, there is a particular logic of behaviour without which this type of sociality would be

difficult and unacceptable. In the case of Menorca, a significant number of encounters, for example, take place through the mediation of children. In particular in places like the pool or the beach, parents end up having conversations as a result of the fact that their children are playing together. In the following quote, for example, Paco Hernàndez. a holidaymaker from a working class suburb of Barcelona in his 30s explains very vividly how they came to meet a family from Mallorca on a beach through the intermediation of his daughter. "in fact it's our daughter who went there first. Samantha, come here! Oh don't worry about... you say 'where are you from?' and you on it goes from there. The thing is you ask something and you discover they are from here. 'Are you from here?' 'Well we are from Mallorca; we are here on holiday'. 'Do you know some nice coves to go?' It's so typical, you ask a question and you go on and on for three quarters of an hour. On this occasion we discussed the children, the family, where we are from, the weather, these sorts of things". As this example demonstrates, most of the time there is an implicit logic of behaviour underlying casual and ephemeral encounters. In the case of Menorca this logic frequently involves children.

Being together by the pool

This chapter concludes with a close examination of the kind of sociality that is idiosyncratic of the hotel pool. The pool is at the centre of the social life of the hotel. Most of the examples of camaraderie and communality that I have gathered are related with this space. By the pool people tend to adopt a much more open and friendly attitude often opening conversations with other tourists. It is the space around which tourists, in particular those who use the hotel as a space of distraction, spent most of their 'free time'. This was the case, for example of the Marshalls, from Bristol. Their favourite entertainment was sitting by the pool, drinking, sunbathing, reading, chatting and swimming. Apart from the 3 days when they left the resort, they spent an average of 5 hours a day by the pool. The day they spent most time was on Sunday the 12th of August when they spent up to 6 hours by the pool from 10am to 2 pm and from 5pm to 7pm. During the two-week holiday they visit the beach only four times and never for longer

than 3 hours. This is not at all an exceptional case. Staying by the pool is at the centre of the tourist experience of coastal hotels.



Figure 4.9 The Pool of the Hotel Milanos-Pingüinos. It is one of its major attractions

The pool is the area of the hotel in which the kind of togetherness that Maffesoli (1995) identifies with the notion of neo-tribalism is most evident. This notion reconciles a central observation in my fieldwork; the fact that there is some sort of sociality and communality in highly commodified spaces which is not inconsistent with the nomadic and ephemeral character of the place. The pool is not a place of lasting relations and profound conversations but of occasional gatherings, spontaneous chats and fleeting friendships. It is an ephemeral and fluid kind of sociality that does not rely on an ideology or any kind of common project, but on empathy, and the execution of being together. Having no meaning, purpose or utopia attached, what the hotel pool has to offer is the possibility of immanence, that is, a radical and naked present that leaves generous space for embodied social life. The social attraction of the pool derives primarily from its emphasis on warm companionship, being together and enjoying the present. Ultimately the significance of the pool illustrates how the body, the puissance of everyday life, act as an arena of cultural expressionism and creativity.

This section is divided in five parts. First of all, I identify the hotel pool as an ordinary and passive space, which, as a result, does not generate the same degree of excitement as the beach. Secondly, I examine the pool as the most pre-eminent children's space of the hotel. Thirdly, I identify the possibility of watching other people and their bodies as one of the major attraction of the pool. Fourthly, I examine the conflict over the use of sun beds, which demonstrates that coexistence by the pool is not always easy and smooth. The chapter finishes with a discussion on the (non) meaning of the pool. Drawing on Kracauer (1995) I relate the pool with relaxation and boredom.

Ordinariness

In comparison to the beach, the pool is a much more passive and static space. People tend not to do very much by the pool, mainly sitting on a chair or lying on a sun bed, reading a thriller or a tabloid newspaper, filling in crosswords, sleeping, playing with the kids, lying on a lilo or cooling down in the water. While on the beach people would walk, play with a ball and swim for a long time; by the pool, people basically lie or sit and from time to time cool down into the water. As the figure 4.10 suggests the pool is fundamentally a place to do nothing. It should not come as a surprise that a sense of inactivity is present in most of the comments that I have gathered about the pool. Take for example the following passage from Louise and John Davis, a middle class couple in their early 40s with three children, who live in Hexham. When I asked them what they do by the pool, Louise answered, "Not a great deal, lie down and swim, that's it really" and John added, "I read books or English newspapers". Almost all tourists that I interviewed replied to my questions about the pool with similar, short, standard answers that convey relaxation and inactivity.

The character of the pool has a lot in common with the sofa and the sitting room. The pool, like the sofa, is an 'ordinary' place in which people can relax in a easy and comfortable environment, but which does not receive the level of attention and

consideration that exceptional activities such a night out would receive. Being predominantly a static and passive experience, the pool is certainly not as exciting and invigorating as the beach. This is manifest when we compare the comments that I have gathered about the pool and the beach. Even those tourists who spent most of their 'free' time by the pool had more and better things to say about the beach than the pool. This was the case of Linda Marshall, from Bristol. Although she spent most of her time by the pool she preferred the beach. "I prefer swimming on the beach. I've been more time in the pool but I like the beach more". Again she opposes the inactivity of the pool with the liveliness of the beach "I like to go if there are lots of waves. I think there is more to do. It's more fun, the beach". The fact that the pool is a predominantly passive and ordinary experience is, at the same time, what makes the pool attractive. The solidarity that binds people together in coastal hotels does not emerge out of the extraordinary, but in trivial situations such as this (Maffesoli, 1996: 24).



Figure 4.10 Doing Nothing by the pool

While the beach is frequently associated with high ideals and exceptional feelings, the pool has a practical nature. In most cases, the main argument that justifies the preference

for the pool is related with the fact the pool is handy, easy and comfortable. Take, for example, the following quote of James and Claire Hughes from Sussex. Although they prefer the beach, they spent much more time by the pool. Their teenage sons are the main motivation that compels them to stay by the pool. According to Claire and James, the reason why their sons prefer the pool is because it is much handier and livelier. "It's handy you know. I think it's easier than in the waves for the sort of things that they [the children] like doing. Throwing the ball about and playing about on the lilo are easier here. And you can get a drink easily, you can go to the loo easily, whatever." One of the attractions of the pool is the fact that there are more services, amenities and possibilities to make friends. As James points out, "it's close to the room, there are a lot of amenities here, and importantly the toilets are here. Here you've got your own toilets; whereas on the beach we don't know even where they are yet". The pool is also preferred because of the complications that going down to the beach involves. "It's an effort to go down to the beach from here" - Claire argued- "You've got to collect your stuff and carry it all the way down. I know it's not far but you've got to remember it. If you forget something, in ten minutes you have to go back again". However, what really makes the pool more appealing than the beach is its social character. "But I think the key thing is they stay here because well they do like it and it's easier. But there is more chance to meet English people and to make friends with them". The Hughes family identifies the pool as practical, relaxing, sociable and easy. This contrast with the beach that is seen as exciting, active but demanding.

Children

The pool is the most pre-eminent children's space in a coastal hotel. A mere glance at any hotel pool in Menorca is enough to realise that the majority of the people in the water are children. It does not take long either to realise that the appeal of the pool to children is even stronger than the beach. A majority of children prefer the pool to the beach. This was the case, for example, of the two sons of the Peterson family from Essex. Although the hotel was less than 100 metres away from the beach, they did not

visit the beach until the 5th day of being in Menorca. According to Sally, her children enjoy the pool very much and they have made a lot of friends. She commented, "kids love the pool, they've never had enough of it"; she also commented, "they feel safer in the pool". Although there is no single factor that explains why the pool is so appealing, latent in accounts like these is the idea that the hotel pool is a safe and well-prepared space for the children in which they can enjoy an uncommon level of independence from their parents. Children enjoy the pool very much not least because of the company of a lot of other children, with whom they can play. The pre-eminence of children gives a singular character to the pool, which is partially what makes it so attractive to adults also. The presence of children is critical in perpetuating the happy, playful and innocent ambience that binds people together. To a certain extent they are 'the emotion' on which relies the kind of togetherness that is predominant by the pool. The pool is not only a space for children but also a place in which people can be children again.

It is a matter of fact that children spend a lot of time by the pool, mostly in the water 'jumping endlessly' and making lots of friends. The pool is not a passive space for children in the way it is for adults. Children do not spent their time lying on the sun bed reading, like the adults do, but in the pool playing, running, jumping, diving, snorkelling and so on. This sense of activity is manifest in the following quote in which the two youngest sons of the Howard, the Johannes Witnesses family from Essex, explain what they do in the pool. In this quote, Mathew and Tom, the two youngest sons, explain two games that they play in the pool. One involves pushing each other in and the other involves making the 'biggest splash'.

Pau: What do you do in the pool?
Mathew: Dad lets us play games… We go like this ... we push them in
P: You push each other in over and over again
M: Yeah, one of us gets pushed in and then when another one goes in, the one who was in there first gets out and pushes someone else in
P: Like going round in a circle?
Tim: Yeah, and yesterday mum was relaxing by the pool and dad was playing cards with Ben and Jon and Joe was playing table tennis. But we were playing in the pool instead.
P: Do you do anything else?
M: We play with the ball in the pool all together.

T: And we see who makes the biggest splash sometimes...
P: And see who make the biggest splash!!
M: And sometimes dad and mum jump in and they make the biggest splash.

In the same interview, Mathew and Tom also assured me that they made a lot of friends playing in the pool area. "Yes we do and some are very nice", Mathew pointed out "There is one who is the some age as me". Their mother not only confirmed the fact, but also stressed the ability of her younger sons to communicate with foreign people. "Tim has made friends with a Spanish boy and a French boy". The story of Mathew and Tim suggests the almost magical character that the pool takes on for children. It is the place in the hotel in which children enjoy themselves the most and make the most friends. The story also suggests the relevance of this playful and social character for adults. In particular when they have young children, adults spend most of their pool time playing with them. They find in the pool a rare license to play and be a child again.

Flâneuring by the pool

Ephemeral contact and occasional gathering are not the only kind of sociality that is idiosyncratic of the hotel pool. A major attraction of the pool is the possibility of watching other tourists, their behaviour and their bodies. The pool offers an incomparable setting to watch, observe and flâneur (figure 4.11). People might look uninterested or totally immersed in the thriller they are reading as if they did not care at all about what is going on. However, this is just a kind of a veil to dissimulate one of the main pleasures of being by the pool. I agree with Molotch when in his short essay on pools he contends, "part of the intrigue of the pool is the chance to see other people's bodies", and also when he concludes, "they hold more than water and expose more than the skin" (2000: 189). Hotels in general, and pools in particular, are spaces with special license to establish visual contact and to expose oneself to the eyes of everybody else. The hotel pool would lose its charm if it did not offer the possibility of looking at so many strange bodies, not all of them from Britain, some also from Germany, Italy and Spain.

The relevance of the gaze in the tourist experience of the hotel pool is rarely explicitly recognised. The phenomenon of 'pool flâneuring' falls, most of the time, beyond the cognitive and rational sphere. Acknowledging the attraction of looking at people would probably be a source of shame for most tourists. The fact that I have not gathered many references that explicitly recognise the pleasure of watching by the pool should not come as a surprise. The most explicit reference was from Linda Marshall, from Bristol. She acknowledged as one of the main pleasures of the holidays, sitting by the pool, drinking and watching other people (see also figure 4.7). When asked about what they do by the



Figure 4.11 A major attraction of the pool is the possibility to watch other tourists, their behaviour and their bodies.

pool, she answered, "Just sit, sit and drink and watch people. Just watch. I'm quite happy to stand here, there is so much going on!" She pictured the hotel as an exciting place full of strangers and foreigners to look at and gossip about. "I like watching people" – she recognises- "especially in this hotel. There are so many different nationalities. At breakfast time, for example, you can see from what they are eating what country they are

from. I just like that. Just watching people". José Lucas, a holidaymaker in his 30s from Valladolid who, together with his wife María, was enjoying a 10 day holiday in the hotel Milanos-Pingüinos, also explicitly recognised the attraction of watching other people. He is not ashamed to acknowledge the pleasure of 'people watching', which he describes as 'the Spanish national sport', provides. Once he even admitted that, "I would sit now in the reception to see everybody passing through and 'raca raca raca'". His case is interesting not least because he makes explicit the connection between snooping and the built environment. He makes such a connection when he remarks that he misses a good marina like the one in Benidorm to stroll around in the evenings and enjoy watching other people passing through. Although José does not refer to the hotel pool, his comments reveal the importance of the morphology and the character of the place in making a practice like snooping possible.

The relevance of the gaze is intimately linked with an 'objective' and ideological approach to the other. The fact that sociality in the pool strongly relies on visual interaction implies the pre-eminence of an 'objectifying' and 'homogenizing' gaze that neutralises 'personal' differences. This means that the kind of togetherness that is idiosyncratic of the pool is not always as fluid and open as the identification with Maffesoli's notion of neotribalism suggests. Gossip, clichés, rumours and pre-judgements decisively condition the development of the community of the hotel dwellers. What binds people together by the pool is not always a feeling, an emotion, but also the 'ideological' order that the game of gazes generates. The pool is not only about warm companionship; it is also about social division, national rivalries and cultural differences. In coastal hotels, in particular, national clichés are very important. In such a fluid and open environment they are critical both in dealing with the other and in neutralising the uncomfortable questioning that the coexistence with foreign people brings about. It is quite astonishing the number of contemptuous comments that I have gathered about Germans, Spanish or English by the pool.

Sun beds

Coexistence by the pool is not always easy and smooth. Being together is frequently a source of conflict and division. One of the most characteristic disputes in Mediterranean hotels is related with sun beds. It is very common, in particular among British tourists, to complain about the fact that there are a lot of empty sun beds that cannot be used because they are reserved. The sun bed story is very much a territorial conflict between British and German tourists for the physical and symbolic possession of the central space of the hotel. The idea that is repeatedly raised is that the Germans put their towels on the sun beds very early in the morning although they are not using them until later in the day. Take for example the following quotation from Claire Hughes, from Sussex. She explained to me, "The boys were upset the other day. They had their towels on a chair and a German came up and kept moving their towels. (...) They were upset about that because they haven't done anything to him". Her husband concluded, "that seems to be quite common in hotels where there are Germans, they seem to get up very early to put towels on the chairs. It's quite well known wherever you go".

Conflict over the sun beds is a good example of the pre-eminence of an 'objectifying' and 'homogenizing' gaze that neutralises 'personal' differences. This is not simply a conflict about the use of scarce resources; it is also a backdrop for the enactment of nationalist clichés and prejudices about Germans. The relevance of clichés and prejudgements are manifest in the following passage from an interview with Craig Taylor, a holidaymaker in his early 50s from a suburb near London who was enjoying a family holiday in the hotel Pueblo. He was very concerned about the behaviour of the Germans in relation to the sun beds. He pointed out, "you say, I'm going to get a sun bed now, but they [the Germans] have arrived at 5 o'clock in the morning and put the towels on the tops". This situation is not exclusive of the hotel. "Everywhere you go on holiday"- he remarked- "you can come at eight o'clock and all the sun beds are taken. Now, there are sun beds next to mine that were taken at about six, ... well I don't know what time but when we came down at about eight, the towels were already out. Every sun bed was taken with a towel. And people don't like to lay on the sun beds until

quarter to twelve". Craig didn't blame only the Germans, he also reproach the hotel management for being inefficient and inattentive. "What I've found odd"- he concluded – "is that they create a remarkable bureaucracy for food and drink with tickets and so on but they haven't got anything for the sun beds. Nothing happens at all with the sun beds". This passage is not simply a complaint about the misbehaviour of some tourists and the mismanagement of the problem, Craig uses the story of sun beds to depict how possessive the Germans are and how unfair the world is for the English. In the same interview Craig also complaint about the Spanish for their disregard for queues. He takes these situations very seriously, to the extent of questioning whether he will come back to Menorca "it's very important. Something like that could stop me from coming to this island again".



Figure 4.12: Sun beds available on a cloudy day

The pool, relaxation and boredom

Underlying most of the arguments related with the hotel pool there is a clear association with the notion and the practice of relaxation. For most package tourists, enjoying the pool is the closest thing to the highly desired state of relaxation they are looking for. According to my fieldwork results, relaxation, together with the sun and the sea, are the main reasons for coming to Menorca on holiday. Relaxation is mainly defined in negative terms. In all the interviews that I carried out, relaxation is not described for what it is, instead, in almost all cases relaxation is described for what it is not. This means that relaxation is not something that you acquire but an escape or an inversion. According to my respondents, a relaxing holiday is one that allow them 'to get away from the hustle and bustle', 'to switch off', 'to cut off', 'to release stress', 'to get rid of problems and conflicts', 'to slow down', 'to forget worries', 'to suspend the daily routine' and so on. Take for example the case of Bernat and Maria, from a town near Barcelona. Their explicit intention was to do nothing. "This year"- Bernat explains- "we planned on not doing anything at all. The idea is to do nothing. So, everything that we do end up doing is because we've been coerced". Relaxation is presented as a sort of therapy from winter life and involves forgetting any problems and avoiding even the minim drawback. "I work everyday from 7 in the morning to 9 in the evening. When the summer comes I'm so tired that I don't even want to raise my eyebrows". For Bernat and Maria, both relaxing and doing nothing are important in order to counteract the stressful working life they have back home. "You see, I spend all year working hard. you never stop, you're always on the move. When the holidays come you say, even if it is only for 7 days, they are 7 days in which everything is done for me. If I could be carried to the room and put to bed, that would be wonderful".

However, the identification of the pool with the notion and the practice of relaxation has a double-edged dimension. The fact that the pool is conceived as the perfect place to do nothing means that the pool is also the most likely place to find boredom. After a few

days by the pool people normally get bored. What, at the beginning is rest and relaxation after 4 or 5 days becomes boredom and tedium. There is a remarkable resonance in describing a fourteen-night holidays as a 'v', with a very happy start, exciting with the prospect of doing nothing, followed by a process of slowing down that leads to a state of boredom which is readdressed with a tour around the island or some other exceptional activity. In the following passage, Linda Marshall acknowledges the interdependence of relaxation and boredom. After six days she recognised that the prospect of relaxing by the pool was not attractive anymore. "Not really boring" - she explained – "because you do some things, you swim and so on. Well it's nice to sit but yes, now we are thinking oh another day by the pool! It's very nice but you can only drink so much, you can only eat so much. We've been around the same spas so many times. It's very nice but it's a little bit repetitive". The way to combat boredom is to do something, which frequently involves hiring a car and travelling around. "On Sunday we decided to hire a car. It was about Saturday when we said to ourselves we have to go somewhere; we have to do something different. So really it's about a week ago when we thought we need to get away and do something different. You need to do something else. If not it gets a bit tedious". This passage coincides with other tourist's descriptions in depicting the mood of the holiday with the form of a 'v' as a succession of acceleration and deceleration processes.

The border between relaxation and boredom is very thin. What initially was considered as relaxation and rest soon became tedium and monotony. This fact confirms the nature of both the mass hotel and the coastal package holiday. There is no consistent utopia associated with the hotel pool, like there are in other forms of tourism such as eco-tourism. As soon as the body is calmed down, there are very few things left to do. Relaxation is not a glimpse of an alternative and better life; it is merely a temporary change in the state of the body. This is the main attraction and detraction of the hotel pool: the inexistence of totalities and transcendence, which are replaced by an emphasis on being together, doing something and relaxing the body. The fact that the pool is quite empty of meta-narratives is nevertheless what makes the pool the perfect setting to find oneself. The experience of the hotel pool is simply the experience of the body and the

self. This means that boredom is not necessarily a sign of inauthenticity, it is also a sign of the bare life that the pool enables. "But what if one refuses to allow oneself to be chased away?" Asks Kracauer – "Then boredom becomes the only proper occupation, since it provides a kind of guarantee that one is, so to speak, still in control of one's own existence. If one were never bored, one would presumably not really be present at all and would thus be merely one more object of boredom" (1995: 334). However the hotel – and here there is the paradox- does not like boredom, it is not pleased with the implications of controlling your own existence. As we have seen throughout the chapter the hotel management makes sure that there is always an evening show, an organised excursion or a drinking game that calls the attention of the tourists and enliven the pool. As Kracauer reminds us, "but although one wants to do nothing, things are done to one: the world makes sure that one does not find oneself. And even if one perhaps isn't interested in it, the world itself is much too interested for one to find the peace and quiet necessary to be as thoroughly bored with the world as it ultimately deserves" (1995: 332). The hotel pool is simultaneously a palace of distraction and a site of boredom, a place to find the self and lose it again.

Conclusion

Coastal hotels are paradigmatic of the kind of pre-fabricated and superficial experiences that are characteristic of the fluid and highly commodified western societies. It is a tourist space orientated to the masses that offers pure entertainment and often flirts with the banal. In this chapter I have examined this pre-eminent tourist space in the Mediterranean, touching on both the form and the performance of the coastal hotel. In doing so, I have engaged in a number of debates concerning contemporary ways of dwelling and the relations between subjectivity and spatiality. Drawing on Kracauer (1995) and Maffesoli (1996) I have explored the possibility of tourist experience in fluid and highly commodified spaces. The reintroduction of a sense of sensuality, materiality and enjoyment into the coastal hotel has been my main concern. This chapter as a whole has departed from flattening understandings that negate the humanity and authenticity of

mass tourism. I have made an effort to take seriously what is considered fun, banal and depthless, in such a way that do not contribute to the social reproduction of seriousness that often characterise tourist studies. I have also made an effort to recognise the creativity of tourists although without dismissing the highly commodified and often superficial character of mass tourism. Despite being places of void and banality to which there is no meaning, purpose or utopia attached, coastal hotels are by no means insubstantial or irrelevant. In the next chapter I consider the case of family tourism, which challenges the depiction of mass tourism as a deptheless and superficial experience. The coastal hotel is also a site of politics, 'workable utopias', concerning mainly the family and the everyday.

Chapter 5

The family as destination: revising the adventurer and solitary tourist



figure 5.1 Cover of the JMC in-resort guide to Menorca 2001

If you go into a travel agency in the UK and you look for Menorca as a tourist destination, you will promptly realise that in almost all of the brochures Menorca is presented as a family resort. Taking a summer holiday brochure at random we can read the following statement. "Tranquil Menorca is the place to get away from it all: the pace of life is relaxed and unhurried. Greener and quieter than Ibiza, its hideaway coves and

crowd-free beaches are extremely popular with families"[1]. You decide to take a charter flight to Menorca, as I have done a number of times, and, even when it is not the school holiday season, the plane is full of children. You land in Menorca and you are taken to the chosen accommodation. Once you are there, your travel company give you the 'in-resort' holiday guide with all the information you need. The whole brochure is full of pictures of parents and children playing together on the beach. The cover shows a child playing with an inflatable tyre (figure 5.1). Inside there are pictures of children making sandcastles, splashing each other on a beach (figure 5.4), riding on their father's shoulders (figure 5.3), eating ice creams and even 'fishing' in the white crystalline waters (figure 5.2). Welcome to the world of the family.



Figure 5.2 and 5.3: Menorca, a site for performing a united, stable, loving family. JMC in-resort guide to Menorca 2001.

The case of Menorca is not an exception. Most coastal mass tourist resorts have an intrinsically family character. With the significant exceptions of places like Sant Antoni (Eivissa) and Faliraki (Rhodes), coastal resorts are a world of families, children, play and relaxation. The tourist industry is very aware that the majority of people travel as a family group and do not hesitate to market destinations as family orientated. The

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[1] - Thomson . 2002 summer brochure magazine (Price summer breakers)

awareness of the industry contrasts with the 'blindness' of the social sciences, which have widely identified the figure of the tourist with a male solitary subject wandering around the world in a quest for sights. This is the case, for example, of MacCannell (1999), Cohen (1988) and Urry (1990). Despite being a central tourist experience, theorists rarely use the image of the happy family enjoying a sea-sun-and-sand type of holiday together. The coastal mass tourist experience, when it is mentioned, is predominantly identified with the carnivalesque experience of busy places like Blackpool or Benidorm (Urry, 1990).



Figure 5.4: The association of Menorca with families confer an aura of simplicity and innocence to the island. JMC in-resort guide to Menorca 2001.

This chapter considers the overwhelming family character of mass tourism. In doing so it challenges the depiction of mass tourism as depthless and inauthentic experience. The first part of this chapter revises different figurations of the tourist in order to see how these perspectives deal with the fact that people go on holiday as families. Drawing on Joniken and Veijola (1997, 2003) I engage in a practical exercise of making theory situated and grounded, through the re-embodiment, re-location and re-socialisation of the perspectives we use. Although tourism is intensively group based, the dominant

figurations of the tourist, which draw from the image of the adventurer and solitary tourist, have no family, no private life, no children or even friends. There is no need however to disregard them; they can be reworked to make space for the family. In the second part of this chapter I develop a perspective on family tourism as a cultural laboratory where people perform different social relations and identities related with the family and the everyday. Family tourism responds to the Crusoean image of the sedentary vacationer who finds pleasure in inhabiting the mundane rather than the figure of the ardent male and middle class traveller in search of sights, which dominates tourist studies. Drawing on my fieldwork results I recognise coastal holidays as a travel-inward to the private world of the family. Being together and reinforcing family bonds are the basic ambitions of the holidays. I also consider coastal mass tourism as a site of politics about the family and the everyday. An identity as a united, stable and loving family is being formed and performed on holiday. Family tourism however can also work as a testing ground for conflicting projects. The chapter finishes looking at the importance of the family in shaping the character of the coastal hotel. In conferring an aura of simplicity and innocence to the destination, family is one of the few workable utopias that give sense and purpose to the depthless and fluid environment of the coastal hotel. Despite being a site of void and superficiality, coastal hotels are by no means irrelevant and insubstantial.

The place of the family in tourist studies

This chapter takes as its starting point the work of Joniken and Veijola (1997) on the figuration of the tourist in contemporary cultural critique. These two Finish scholars analyse different conceptualisations of the tourist in order to see the sexed subjects that these texts produce, in other words, to see "what kind of space-time configurations the tourist epitomises and what kind of subjectivities are embedded in this figuration" (1997:23). Their aim is to locate, illustrate and eventually rewrite the contemporary use of this figure as a metaphor for the (post-)modern condition. What makes their work particularly relevant for this chapter is the fact that they make explicit the particular social and sexual configuration that underlies the metaphors we use, thus destroying the

illusion that they represent 'humanity in general', which is what makes these metaphors alluring. "We wanted"- they conclude- "to experience and exchange realistic accounts of sexed social figurations instead of the universal, solipsistic constructions of the male imaginary, such as the post-modern tourist" (1997:49). Following their example, this section revises the figurations that MacCannell, Urry, Cohen and the tourist marketing literature propose in order to see how these influential perspectives deal with the fact that people go on holiday with their families. In doing so I engage in a practical exercise of making theory situated and grounded through the re-sexualisation, re-location and re-embodiment of the figure of the tourist. By taking the family into account this section acknowledges that there are various bonds and relations involved in the metaphors and narratives we use, which are always embodied and sexed (Joniken and Veijola, 2003). This section also acknowledges the universalist illusion on which most figures of the tourist rely. Like Joniken and Veijola (1997) I appropriate Haraway's notion that "[T]he only way to find a larger vision is to be somewhere in particular." (Haraway, 1991:196).

Following Joniken and Veijola this section concludes that the figure of the tourist that these scholars produce responds to the image of the solitary adventurer wandering around the world in a quest for authentic sights. As suggested in the following passage, which revises Bauman's notion of the tourist, the image of the solitary adventurer assumes as universal a particular time-space configuration based on a male, middle class and imperialistic imaginary. Despite drawing on the real and fantasised experience of men, these figurations present the tourist as an a-social and disembodied being abstracted from age, sex, education, family and so on.

> "Sexual and sexed relationships between and in-between women and men in concrete social worlds are not discussed in Bauman's (or other tourist-user's) texts. The tourist, for instance is never seen sauntering from place to place with his family; he is never of a certain age and certain education; he is never sought out by another vagabond, with a baby in her arms; he is never the other half of an old, crippled, American couple, stumbling and tumbling over the ruins of Pompeii, the goal of their lifetime saving and dreaming. Instead the figure of the tourist is drawn by merely alluding to abstractions derived from an interplay of male and female morphology. Hereby the

> dominant male symbolic order is performed, repeated and supported by the sociological discourse" (1997: 34)

The image of the adventurer and solitary tourist in a quest for sights, which informs MacCannell's (1999) seminal work on tourism and partially also Urry's ideas on the tourist gaze (1990), does not however correspond with the 'collective' and familiar reality of most people's holidays. These scholars present the tourist as a solitary subject. whose behaviour responds to personal desires and existential matters, thus ignoring social and gender relations. Although tourism is intensively group based, the figurations of the tourist that I revise here have no family, no private life, no children or even friends. As the following passage suggests, the idea of tourism as a solitary and accumulative activity that takes place away from the consistency of home ignores the particular social and sexual relationships that the tourist experience involves.

> "She who views and moves is not always solitary, as literature, paintings, film industry and brochures suggest. There are various bonds, families and imaginary relations involved. The visual and embodied experience of the tourist does not always follow the linear narrative of entering, seeing and conquering. The one who moves and gazes touches the scenery in different ways, sensualities and modalities: with passion, arrogance, violence-playfulness " (Joniken & Veijola, 2003: 274)

Ultimately, the work of Urry and MacCannell naturalises a particular way of being a tourist, thus invisibilising other tourist experiences such as family tourism. This section concludes however that there is no need to disregard these figurations; they can be reworked to make space for the family

MacCannell

In MacCannell's seminal approach to tourism, tourists travel alone or at least without children. They are presented as anxious subjects concerned with the inauthenticity and superficiality of modern life but not with their families and children. Tourists embody a quest for authenticity, which is presented as a modern version of the universal human

concern with the sacred. Modernity - thinks MacCannell- disrupts traditional solidarities and breaks former totalities into fragments, thus producing an alienated society. In this context, tourism is "a way of attempting to overcome the discontinuities of modernity, of incorporating its fragments into unified experiences" (1999:13). In a kind of contemporary pilgrimage, tourists are seeking representations of a true society, which are believed to be available only to those who try to break with the bonds of everyday existence (1999: 159). In their ritual quest for values and moral models, tourists search for what remains untouched by modernity and for the museified other. However it is implicit in MacCannell's work that there is no salvation in tourism since the arrival of the tourist undoes the authenticity that they are striving to find.

MacCannell presents his figuration of the tourist as "one of the best models available for modern-man-in-general" (1999:1); however, as Edensor (1998), Joniken and Veijola (1997) and Chaney (2002) point out, it only refers to a limited number of tourist practices- the act of sightseeing- and a particular type of subjectivity - the Western, middle-class educated tourist. According to Edensor, MacCannell "only concentrates on the specific practices of Western middle-class tourists and their attempts to understand and categorise the 'other'" (1998: 3). In employing the concept of authenticity MacCannell reserves travel for the social elites who have the intellectual capacity to appreciate the exotic and condemns popular audiences to a false consciousness (Chaney, 2002: 198). In his account other people appear only as the museified other, but not as relatives, friends and acquaintances that give consistency to the familiar world. In MacCannell's thought, the tourist is implicitly identified with the figure of the adventurer to whom company is not relevant. The tourist is a solitary subject, generally male, who has departed from the consistency of everyday life in order to meet the wider world, replacing his security with something more fugitive and ephemeral. This figuration of the tourist does not correspond with coastal family tourism, which does not involve a departure from 'home' but a reintegration into it; that is, which does not involve estrangement from familiar faces but the reinforcement of family links and the recovering of the everyday life that work commitments have melted down.

The tourist gaze

Neither children nor the family are a relevant part of Urry`s Foucauldian-inspired notion of 'the tourist gaze'. The act of sightseeing, either in urban areas or in the countryside, is the source of inspiration for this influential concept. According to Urry, a fundamental part of the tourist experience "is to gaze upon or view a set of different scenes or landscapes or townscapes which are out of the ordinary" (1990:1). The tourist gaze is directed to features that are separated off from everyday experiences; thus presupposing a system of social activities and consciousness which is constructed in opposition to non-tourist forms of experience, particularly those related with the home and paid work. Although different types of gaze are mentioned, it is the romantic gaze that is considered as the dominant mode of visuality in tourism. "The romantic gaze"- Urry argues – "is an important mechanism which is helping to spread tourism on a global scale, drawing almost every country into its ambit as the romantic seeks ever-new objects of that gaze" (1990: 46-47). The emphasis of the romantic gaze is upon "solitude, privacy and a personal, semi-spiritual relationship with the object of the gaze" and it is contrasted with the collective gaze, which characterises the carnivalesque experiences of places like Blackpool and Benidorm and which necessitates the presence of a large number of people (1990: 45). He links the tourist gaze with the expanding popularity of novel modes of visual perception, such as photography and the novel urban experience of the flâneur, a major product of the 19th century urban reform of cities like Paris and, according to Pollock, "one of the key figures to embody the novel forms of public experience of modernity" (1988: 67). "The strolling *flâneur*" –Urry reckons- "was a forerunner of the twentieth-century tourist and in particular of *the* activity which has in a way become emblematic of the tourist: the democratised taking of photographs- of being seen and recorded and seeing and recording them"(Urry, 1990: 138 italics in original)

As in the case of MacCannell, Urry's notion of the tourist gaze is problematic not least because it refers exclusively to a limited number of tourist practices, mostly related with the act of sightseeing, thus privileging a masculine middle-class and imperialistic imaginary (Joniken & veijola, 1997, 2003; Chaney, 2002). Underlying the notion of the

tourist gaze there is a particular gender construction that is parallel to the case of the flâneur, on which it relies. "The flâneur" – Pollock points out- "is an exclusively masculine type which functions within the matrix of bourgeois ideology through which the social spaces of the city were reconstructed by the overlaying of the doctrine of separate spheres on to the division of public and private which became, as a result, a gendered division" (Pollock, 1988: 67). However this is not the only discordance between the notion of the tourist gaze and the reality of family tourism. Like the flâneur and the romantic stroller, Urry's figure of the tourist appears to have no family, no private life, no children, even no friends. He is a lonely subject who wanders either through the city or through sublime landscapes. The romantic tourist is a person who makes of the sublime landscape his place of dwelling, in a similar way to the flâneur who makes of the crowd his home. This contrast with the reality of family tourism, in which the subject is neither alone, nor detached from the place he/she is visiting nor estranged from people around. The subject of family tourism is not on a quest for the picturesque or the authentic, but for the ideal world of the family.

Cohen and the tourist marketing literature

Creating typologies of tourists has not been proved a satisfactory solution to understanding the complexity of family tourism. Recognising different motivations for travelling does not necessarily make explicit the particular social and sexual configurations that underlie the figure of the tourist. What makes the relevance of the family difficult to appreciate is not only the fact that differences are not addressed, but also the fact that an a-social and disembodied understanding of the tourist subject is presupposed, which relies on the illusion that it represents 'humanity in general'. Most of these typologies consider only perceptions and motivations of the individual, ignoring the fact that tourism is intensively group-based (Thornton et al, 1997)

The work of Cohen (1988a, 1988b) is one of the best examples of this kind of motivational typology. Instead of treating tourists as a homogeneous group, Cohen

proposes a typology that addresses the differences existing in the tourist experience. His work responds to MacCannell's generalist approach, which is criticised for not raising the possibility that tourists may conceive authenticity in different terms. 5 types of tourists are proposed according to the depth of the experience that tourists are pursuing. The idea is that the deeper the experience sought by tourists, the stricter the criteria of authenticity and the more strongly he will tend to embrace the other, and turn it into his elective centre. The five categories are the existential, experimental, experiential, recreational and diversionary tourist (Cohen, 1988b: 376-377). Cohen indeed considers the possibility of different types of tourists, however his typology does not question a solitary, disembodied and de-contextualised notion of the subject. There remains an implicit rational and 'a-sexual' tourist whose behaviour is not the result of a negotiated compromised but an enactment of one's individual desires along with profound existential matters of modernity.

A productive source of typologies is the travel industry itself, and in particular the tourist marketing literature. There are multiple typologies in this field. Lowyck et al (1992), for example, propose a typology that contains eight categories of tourist according to behavioural criteria: venturesome, pleasure-seeking, impassive, self-confident, playful, masculine, intellectual and people orientated. The orientation of this typology is not very different from the work of Dann (1977: 180-190). He analyses the motivations to travel in terms of push and pull factors also using behavioural criteria. He sees as the underlying push factors anomie (lack of social and moral standards) and ego-enhancement, (the desire for personal development). In both cases, tourists have no family, no friends or even bodies. The classificatory criterion depends exclusively on perceptions and motivations of the individual, ignoring the fact that tourism is intensively group based. Tourists are presented as solitary, a-social and de-contextualised subjects whose behaviour responds to well-defined existential situations such as anhomie or self-confidence. This makes it difficult to appreciate the phenomenon of the family tourist, which is about the most immediate "we", not the solitary "I"; and insists on the simplicity of life rather than on the big existential issues that this typology identifies.

Making space for the family in tourist studies.

The figure of the tourist that MacCannell, Urry, Cohen and the marketing literature propose deals rather badly with the fact that people go on holiday with their families. In identifying the tourist as a solitary, adventurer subject on a quest for authentic sights, these figurations do not correspond with the 'collective' and familiar reality of most people's holidays. Although tourism is intensively group based, the tourist that these figurations presuppose has no family, no private life, no children, or even friends. Their behaviour responds to personal desires and existential matters, thus ignoring the particular social and sexual relationships involved. The underlying problem of these figurations is that they assume as universal a particular time-space configuration which is intimately based on a male, middle class and imperialistic imaginary. Drawing on the dominant male symbolic order, tourists are presented as a-social and disembodied beings abstracted from age, sex, education, family and so on.

However, As Joniken and Veijola (1997) point out there is no need to disregard these figurations. They can be reworked to make space for the family. This involves rewriting them considering the space-time configuration that is characteristic of family tourism. In this section I consider two developments drawing from the notions of gaze and authenticity. What sets these developments apart from the original concepts is the fact that they consider the subjectivities of the male along with the female and children and acknowledge both being together and reinforcing the family bonds as the basic ambitions of the holiday. In breaking with the image of a solitary, adventurer tourist on a quest for authentic sights is that these developments offer a satisfactory framework for understanding the reality of coastal family tourism.

The notion of authenticity that MacCannell (1999) and Cohen (1988b) use does not correspond with the reality of family tourism. In both cases authenticity applies either to objects or to a museified (objectified) other but not to oneself or to one's family. As an

alternative to the museum-linked usage, Wang (1999) proposes what he calls 'existential authenticity', which offers a much more satisfactory framework for grasping the complexity of family tourism. Existential authenticity does not refer to originality but to a special state of being in which one is freer, simpler, more spontaneous and so on. People are concerned not only with authentic objects and authentic others, but also with authentic selves. In these circumstances tourism frequently acts as a nostalgic stage on which to recover the true self that has been lost in the fragmented everyday life. "In a number of tourism types"- he reckons- "such as nature, landscape, beach, ocean cruising, adventures, family, visiting friends and relatives, and so on, what tourists seek are their own authentic selves and intersubjective authenticity, and the issue of whether the toured objects are authentic is irrelevant or less relevant" (1999: 265-266). Wang's ideas on authenticity are similar to the existential perspective that Hughes (1995) developed a few years earlier. By detaching it from the image of the adventurer and solitary tourist, Wang's notion of authenticity has the potential to explain what family tourism is about. He does not presuppose that families are on a quest for the picturesque and the museified other; families might also be searching for authenticity between themselves. As Wang point out, "From most tourists' personal point of view, tourism or a holiday is itself a chance for the primary tourist group, such as the family, to achieve or reinforce a sense of authentic togetherness and an authentic 'we-relationship'" (1999: 364).

Urry's notion of the tourist gaze does not correspond with the reality of family tourism either. It refers exclusively to the practice of sightseeing. There are, however, other developments of the notion of the gaze that do concur with the reality of family tourism. Drawing on Urry (1990), Haldrup and Larsen (2003) propose the notion of 'the family gaze' in order to capture the particular socially organised way of seeing that is characteristic of family photography and family tourism. The family gaze is not only a 'way of seeing'; it also has a productive nature. "It produces photographic events and images that are about accumulating personal knowledge of who we are" (2003: 25). It is a mechanism that families have to imagine themselves as a real, stable, loving family. "Families make sense of themselves through narratives that in the very same movement

display the desired image and are a mechanism of producing this image" (2003: 25). While the tourist gaze is concerned with extraordinariness material worlds, the family gaze is directed at 'the small world of positive extraordinary', that is, to the high points of family life. The work of Haldrup and Larsen reveals an alternative way of seeing that concurs with the reality of family tourism. Like in the case of the nudist gaze that I explore in the chapter 7, the family gaze contains a number of feminine characteristics. This is suggested in the stress on intimacy, love and social relations, which breaks with the objectifying character of the tourist gaze. "It represents a feminised gaze as it stresses interactions, relationships and active embodied use of space" (2003: 26). However, at the same time that it disrupts the male imaginary, the family gaze has an undeniably conservative nature, having been widely used, for example, to domesticate new colonised spaces (Chambers, 2003).

These two developments, drawing from the notions of authenticity and the gaze, offer a satisfactory framework for understanding the reality of family tourism. They reframe these two concepts considering the space-time configurations that are characteristic of family tourism. This breaks with the image of the ardent male and middle class traveller on a quest for sights which dominates tourist studies and which Löfgren identifies with the character of Phileas Fogg (1999:9). In the next section, following Haldrup and Larsen (2003), Löfgren (1999) and Chambers (2003), I argue that family tourism is fuelled instead by the desire to find an ideal home in which to imagine themselves as a successful loving family; that is, by the Robinson ideal "to find an unspoiled corner of the world, to relax and build an alternative life" (Löfgren, 1999: 9).

Performing the family by the Pool: Holidays as a workable utopia.

This section examines family tourism as a cultural laboratory, a workable utopia that revolves mainly around performing identities and social relations rather than collecting views (Löfgren, 1999: 7; Wang, 1999). "Much family tourism"- Haldrup and Larsen

regret- "is fuelled by the desire to find a 'home' where families imagine themselves as being a *real* loving family; doing various mundane social activities together as a tight-knit affectionate unit (...). Such tourists are not so much questing the picturesque or authentic Other, as they are searching for authenticity between themselves" (2003: 26). Holidays are 'theatres of life' in which tourists have the possibility of experimenting with new aspects of their identities and social relations and performing various places and roles (Haldrup and Larsen, 2003: 24). Underlying this argument there is an implicit critique of tourist studies for its lack of concern for the sociality and performativity of mundane tourist practices. "Tourist studies" – opine Haldrup and Larsen – "have notoriously struggled to account for the thick sociality of most tourist practices; it has been drawn to the spectacular and exotic, thus excluding the mundane types of tourism such as family vacationing in summer-cottages and resorts" (2003: 24). The family holiday is a similar phenomenon to the cottage culture which Löfgren says provides "a very safe and workable utopia, where people can explore different sides of themselves or their relations with others or with nature" (1999: 151). It responds primarily to the Crusoean image of the sedentary vacationer who finds pleasure in inhabiting the mundane rather than the figure of the ardent male and middle class traveller in search of sights, which Löfgren identifies with Phileas Fogg (1999: 9).

Drawing on my fieldwork material, this section is divided into three parts. First of all, I present coastal holidays as a travel-inward to the feminised private world of the family, as a retreat from the hard realities of male dominated public life. For most of the families I interviewed, being together and reinforcing family bonds are the basic ambitions of the holiday. I also examine the place of children in family tourism. Children are at the core of the imaginary that fuels family tourism and have a lot of influence in decision-making. Secondly, I consider coastal mass tourism as a site of everyday politics. An identity as a united, stable and loving family is being formed and performed on holiday. Responding primarily to the perceived disintegration of family life, this identity has an exclusionary and nostalgic character. Despite concerning the private and the personal, these identities are right at the heart of a public battle over 'class taste' and 'moral correctness'. In the third section I acknowledge that family holidays can work in both

ways not only as a site of identify formation but also as a testing ground for conflicting family projects.

The family as destination

The family is the real destination for most of the British holidaymakers I interviewed. Like cottage culture, coastal mass tourism is in most cases a travel-inward, to the feminised private world of the family and a retreat from the hard realities of male dominated public life. Particularly in Menorca, there is a strong interdependence between mass tourism and the family. Menorca has been successfully marketed especially in Britain as one of the best family orientated destinations in the Mediterranean. Being a quiet resort, close to Britain and with a well-developed infrastructure to cater for children, such as the children's clubs in hotels, Menorca is sold as 'the perfect family destination'. For most of the families, I interviewed being together and reinforcing family bonds are the basic ambitions of the holiday. The section also examines the place of children in family tourism. Children are at the core of the imaginary that fuels family tourism and have a lot of influence in decision-making.

The association of Menorca with families was a recurrent argument among the tourists I interviewed. When asked about the reasons for coming to Menorca on holiday, a majority of tourists acknowledged the family orientation of the island as a decisive factor, thus presupposing the family as the real holiday destination. Take, for example, the case of the Campbells, a middle aged couple with two children under 10 from Oxfordshire. They opted for Menorca because it is a quiet resort well prepared for families. "Menorca" – Bart argued – "suits what we are looking for, it's peaceful, quiet, close to home and very well prepared for children. It's perfect". In some cases the family character of the island is the single most important factor that affects the decision to come to Menorca. This was the case for Claudio, a middle class tourist in his early 30s, very fluent in English, from the north of Italy. "It's important"- he pointed out- "that the place is normally not very well-known and that there is some structure for the baby". He

has a very young baby and if he is not happy, Claudio and his wife will not enjoy their holidays. "Actually this [the family orientation of the island] is one of the most important items for us. So you know if he is not happy, we are not happy at the end of the day. If he can't sleep, we can't sleep either". They opted for Menorca instead of Mallorca or Greece after examining whether the conditions of the resorts were suitable for children. "Greece" – Claudio concluded- "is not very well oriented for the baby. Mallorca and Eivissa, for example, are better for younger people. or at least people without baby".

The question is not only that people adapt the holiday to the needs of their family, but that the family itself is the holiday. Pleasure is not gained by sightseeing but in the enjoyment of the sea, the sun and the sand and experiencing the intimacy of the family in a laid back environment. Take, for example, the case of the Marshalls from Bristol. For them, the summer holiday is an intense family time, which has a critical role in strengthening their bonds. Going on holiday implies staying together 24 hours a day for two weeks, which is something that rarely happens in Britain. "It's just really nice"- Linda said- "you know we are all sweet together here. It brings you closer again". During the annual summer holiday, the coexistence is easy and smooth and the problems are temporarily suspended. As Linda pointed out "it's nice to spent, you know, two weeks together and go on without no polites..." The husband is frequently the member of the family who is most excited by the prospect of both being together for two weeks and reinforcing the family bonds. This is the case of Tim Peterson from Essex. He travels up and down in the country a lot and the annual summer holiday is the best opportunity he has to enjoy the company of his family and children. "I work in telecoms"- he told me – "and I travel a lot up and down Britain. I spend a lot of time away from my family. so when we come away on holiday we like to be all together and not busy. not rushing about, easy pace and just relax". When the family grows up and the children disperse, summer holidays can be one of the few annual moments when the family recomposes. In the following passage Claire Hughes from Sussex explains how nice is to have all her sons there. "It's lovely to have them because you can enjoy what they are doing. See them". The holiday is an opportunity to enjoy things together like a few years before

when the children were younger. "Well, in particular, in the first week you spend a lot of time with them and you get to know them more. You do more things, you've played tennis, you've played in the swimming pool and so on... It's lovely. And they are more relaxed and chat more to you. They tell you more things. So I think in that way you get closer to them. You get to know them in a nice way". These three quotations from Claire, Linda and Tim evidence the important role that holiday might have in reinforcing a sense of togetherness in the family.

Children are the central figures of any family holiday by the sea. As in few other cases, coastal family holidays are conceived to a large extent for the enjoyment of children. Most of the families that I interviewed decided to come to Menorca on holiday largely to accommodate their children. The most explicit case was the Davis family from Hexham. They normally go on holiday to France, however this year their children did not want to go again, "they tried to convince us not to go to France this year for the summer holiday", Peter explained to me. When they go to France they stay with some friends in the village where they used to live 10 years ago. "We go back and we stay in the village where we used to live with a French family who still live there and they really, really enjoy being there. But it's not new [for the children]. It's too familiar now. It doesn't seem like going away for a holiday". The children wanted to go somewhere different; they wanted a proper holiday on the beach, like everybody else. The decision to come to Menorca was the result of a complex family discussion in which the children actively participated. "In fact the children chose at the end"- Peter admitted – "You want to go on holiday, you choose". This example reveals that the happiness and welfare of the family becomes a priority when people have to accommodate children. As Tim Peterson from Essex pointed out "It's important that where we go is something we all like. Not just one of us". It does not make sense to take the risk of visiting exotic countries, taking last minute holidays or travelling independently. "With children you go for safe", Tim concluded.

Children have a remarkable influence in the development of family holidays. My fieldwork outcomes demonstrate this influence, thus endorsing the conclusions of

Thornton et al (1997) on tourist-group holiday decision-making. Children actively participate in major decisions of the holiday, for example, the process of booking the hotel. This was the case of the Peterson family from Essex. "It's normally a family discussion"- Tim explained – "But this holiday was picked up by my daughter. She just looked through the brochure and picked the hotel with the biggest pool". My fieldwork outcomes agree with Thornton et al (1997) in the fact that the influence of children is even more notorious in small-scale decisions, especially when tourists are on the actual holiday. It is because of the children that tourists hire a pedalor. ride in a banana boat or visit a water amusement park instead of visiting a prehistoric monument or a museum. Families like the Petersons do to a large extent what the children want to do. If the children want to stay by the pool, they will not go to the beach. "They don't like to leave the hotel pool", Tim explained. If the children find Burger King, they will take their lunch there. The question is to give to the children something to do that they like, because, as Tim remarks, "if the children are happy and have fun, we will got some rest for a little while". My fieldwork outcomes also confirm the assumption of Thornton et al (1997) according to which children do not only influence through their ability to negotiate with their parents, as in the case of the Peterson family going to Burger King, but also as a result of their caring requirements, especially when they are babies. In fact the influence of children in decision-making is stronger when they are younger than when they are older. Having a baby imposed a very strict timetable and pattern of practice on the holidays of Bernat and Maria, a couple in their 30s from a village near Barcelona. "There are times when you really feel like throwing him in the bin"- Bernat recognised- "Well, having a baby is great but you rely on a very strict timetable. You don't have your own timetable but you depend on just one timetable, the baby`s. Everything revolves around him all the time".

On holiday, parents devote more time than usual to knowing their children more and following their development closely. Children become the focus of attention and subsequently an important topic of conversation. I have gathered numerous comments involving children that suggest the parents' joy about them. Take, for the example, the Hernàndez family, a couple in their 30s with a 6 year old daughter from a suburb near

Barcelona. Samantha, their daughter was receiving numerous compliments from her parents, probably more than usual. "She is the nicest of the hotel, aren't you?"- Paco remarked- "not the foreigners not the Germans. Spanish!". The parents were particularly impressed by the capacity of Samantha to meet people on the beach and by the pool. "She is a genius. She has met girls from San Sebastian, Badalona and Granollers. From everywhere. She gets on well with everybody. She even met an English girl who is called Samantha like her". Samantha was the main figure of the holiday receiving much more attention than usual. The happiness of the parents depends very much on the happiness of the children. The question is not only that people adapt their holiday to the needs of their children; the question is that the children, the family, are the holiday. It should not come as a surprise that a number of families constantly reiterate that "If the children are happy, we are happy". The importance of the children on holiday is manifest in comments from people who do not travel with children anymore. In the following quote, a holidaymaker explains the case of an old couple they met in the hotel bar. They do not travel with children anymore, a situation that makes their holiday much more boring. "One of the people that we met here was saying that when it is her and her husband it's quite boring. They just sit and walk and drink. When you have a child with you, you do more things and you meet more people ... with the children"

Performing identities.

Mass tourism is a site of politics and identity formation. I agree with Haldrup and Larsen when they, paraphrasing Löfgren (1999), view tourism as "a cultural laboratory in which people derive pleasure from performing and narrating alternative identities and ways of being together" (2003: 24). In the case of family tourism, the focus is on everyday politics. The family tourist gaze is not directed at the extraordinary material world of castles, cathedrals and national parks but at the 'inner' world of the family and the everyday. Drawing on Haldrup and Larsen (2003), Hirsh (1999) and Chambers (2003) on tourist family photography, this section examines how 'between home and away' an identity as a united, stable and loving family is being formed and performed. I

demonstrate both the exclusionary and the nostalgic character of this identity, which mainly responds to the disintegration of family life as we know. Despite concerning the private and the personal, these identities are right in the middle of a 'public' battle about 'class taste' and 'moral correctness'.

In most of the interviews I conducted the family is being presented as a tale of success and timeless love. Most quotes that I have introduced in this section evoke a nonexistent happy, stable and united family. This is the case for example when Linda Marshall concludes that "It's just really nice, we are all sweet together here"; or when Claire Hughes congratulates herself for being all together on holiday and 'getting closer'; or when Tim Peterson and Peter Davis see the summer holidays as an opportunity to spend time with their children. A similar narrative of a united, loving family emanates from the way families perform together. Tourists not only present their families as tales of success and love, they also act as such, playing with children on the beach, avoiding frictions or sharing the same room in the hotel. These narratives of the family respond to the dominant mythologies of the family as the natural basic institution, paraphrasing Hirsch, as 'a spiritual assembly based on moral values' whose bond 'stems from instinct and passion' (1999: xv). As family photography does, family holidays come to rescue a 'mythologized version of the family' which no longer exists (Chambers 2003). The narratives of the family that I gathered follow to a large extent the conventions that Haldrup and Larsen (2003) relate with family photography. Underlying family holidays there is a discourse of emotion and proximity that insists on intimacy and inter-familial social relations. Simplicity and tenderness are regarded as the 'natural' state of the family, thus conveying a fixed, timeless unity based on love.

The particular family identity that is being formed and performed on coastal holiday excludes as much as it includes. It simultaneously contains elements of cohesion and de-identification. The academic literature on family photography endorses this interpretation of the family as an excluding identity. Thus for example, in her analysis of old family portraits Hirsch realises the excluding nature of the family when she concludes, "familial looking so powerfully inclusive and identificatory can also draw its

lines of exclusion and dis-identification" (1999: xiv). This means that the family is embedded in a larger political and economical framework that contributes to reproduction and naturalisation. In the case of the coastal holiday, the lines of exclusions are drawn between family holiday and the teenage clubbing type of holiday. The tale of success, love and stability that is presented excludes teenagers, anti-social behaviour and nightlife in general. Family tourism positions itself systematically against these 'anti-family' elements. This marked contrast between families and teenagers is a key theme in the holiday narrative of Eddy and Pam Jeffrey, a couple in their 50s with a 12 year old daughter from Merseyside. They decided to come to Menorca because "it is more a family island, not as sophisticated". They wanted to get away from "this sort of holiday where people spend their time drinking, that kind of entertainment". By distinguishing Menorca from a 'drinking' and 'teenage' type of holiday, they identify the island with simplicity and moral correctness. The antagonism between family holiday and teenage holiday frequently adopts a geographical dimension in the form of a contrast between Menorca and Eivissa, and sometimes also Mallorca. The popularity of Menorca depends very much on the 'immoral' attributes that are associated with its closest neighbours. Thus for example, a geographical juxtaposition between Menorca and Eivissa is a central theme in the holiday narrative of the Howard family, Jehovah Witnesses from Essex. This was the first time that the whole family travelled abroad together and they were very careful in choosing the 'right' destination. "I heard"- Melissa remarked- "that this [Menorca] is better for families. We are not really nightclubers so Eivissa wouldn't be for us really. I don't know whether the teenagers might like that sort thing. I think this is nicer when you have to consider a 7 year old as well as a 20 year old. It incorporates all ages. If they want to go into the town, they can. (...)This is nicer and much more family orientated". Although Jessica has never been to Eivissa, she identifies the island with nightlife, thus differentiating it from family friendly resorts like Menorca.

The familial identity that is being performed on a coastal holiday responds to a large extent to the 'dis-integration' of family life, as we know. At a time when family relations are getting more fluid and less permanent, there is more than ever the need to reinforce the stability of the nuclear family. Going on holiday works in a similar way to

photography. "Families"- Haldrup and Larsen argue – "are in constant need of performing acts and narratives that provide sense, stability and love to their familial relations. The more family life becomes fluid and based on choices and emotions, the greater the task of tourist photography to produce accounts of timeless and fixed love" (2003: 26). The fact that the husband rather than the wife and the children is normally the member of the family who is most excited at the prospect of having a family holiday supports this contention. The need to perform an identity as a happy, united and stable family is stronger in the person who participates less during the year in the family life. Contrary to the wife, for the husband the family is mainly a territory of leisure. During the week, people like Tim Peterson or Peter Davis stay away from home for long periods of time and assume only a few family duties. The fact that the identity being performed on coastal holiday responds to the 'dis-integration' of family life evidences that family tourism is a territory of imagined nostalgia "where you learn to miss things you never had" (Löfgren, 1999: 148). Like in the case of cottage culture that Löfgren (1999) analyses, family tourism is fuelled by a number of longings. A key motive for the families I have interviewed, in particular for fathers, is the nostalgia for a paradise lost, for a golden age of simplicity. Holidays are conceived as a return, a motion backwards both in physical and personal terms. Families on holiday are on their way to childhood, to a fixed version of family life that no longer exists, to paradise (Löfgren, 1999: 149, Chambers, 2003: 101-107).

The coastal holiday is a site of politics about the family and the everyday, that is, about the private. However, the identities that are being formed and performed by the hotel pool are right in the middle of a battle about 'class taste' and 'moral correctness', that is, a battle about 'the public'. The personal is a central element in the formation of morality, class or ideology. It should not come as a surprise that identities are being formed and performed in public. Holidays are presented as a travel in-wards, to the feminised private life of the family, as a search for authenticity between themselves, as a retreat from the hard realities of male dominated public live. However, there is no privacy for the family in their search for the ideal domestic life. Children and parents will share the same room and they will be relaxing by the pool under the close inspection of other families' gazes.

Taking the family to a big hotel on holiday is rather than a retreat an exposure of the family to the anonymous public, although sanitised from 'anti-family' elements such as gays, lesbians, teenagers and ethnic minorities. The personal is political.

Testing grounds

Coexisting together for two weeks, frequently even in the same room, is not always easy. Underlying the image of a united, stable, loving family there are a number of conflicts and tensions, which tend to be systematically denied or at least temporally suspended for the time of the holiday. These tensions include overdose of togetherness; realities that do not match expectations; conflicting projects; parents who are tired of being with their children all the time, who as a result spend most of the day playing in the children clubs; wives that feel frustrated with their husband's inclination to do nothing; all these tensions are also part of the family holiday. What Löfgren points out in relation to cottage culture in the following passage applies almost exactly to coastal family holiday. "The cottage utopia, charged with so many assumptions and yearning daydreams, creates a constant tension between winter anticipation and summer frustration. Often the few vacation weeks fail to live up to the heavy load of winter expectations. The other side of cottage life is claustrophobia, too much pottering about or an overdose of togetherness" (1999: 152). The significance of coastal family holidays means that they are also a testing ground for conflicting projects. "Summer"- continues Löfgren- "is the time of kin reunions but also of conflicts between generations and sibling rivalry: who controls the summer life in the shared cottage? Middle-aged children all of a sudden find themselves defined as kids again, as parents tell them what to do and how to do it" (1999: 152).

The holidays of the Davis family from Hexham were characterised by the kinds of tensions mentioned above. As I explained earlier on, their two week holiday in Menorca was already the result of a compromise between the different preferences of parents and children. The same conflict of interests between the parents, who prefer sightseeing, and

the children, who prefer to stay by the pool, lasted the holiday. They arrived at a compromise involving the partition of the day into two halves, mornings by the pool and afternoons for sightseeing. "Yes. I think we did compromise"- Peter explained to me – "When we had the car, we mostly spent the morning by the pool. That's the time for being with their friends and burning off some energy. And then in the afternoon we go out and we look at something else. They complain, of course, when we have to leave. But they have found what we are going to see interesting, I think". This was not the only tension in the family. The frictions were increasingly sharp with their older teenage daughter. As is normal at the age of 14, she was feeling increasingly uncomfortable staying with her family all the time. In the following quote Louise explains the conflict around bedtime. Her older daughter was insisting on staying with her friends until late, but that was not well received by her parents and was generating problems of coexistence with her younger brothers. "The conflict of ages and interests comes around that time. Because we've got a 7 year old who is absolutely shattered but determined to stay until 11:30 and the 14 year old, who is not so shattered and wants to stay until 2:30. And she can't really get into the bedroom and go to bed without waking up the 7 year old. You get all this sort of ...you know". Louise and Peter wanted to enjoy the company of their children as much as possible on holiday and to convince themselves of what a nice family they have, however her older daughter has grown up and is increasingly uncomfortable with the role of the child she has to play.

An identity as a united, stable and loving family is not always successfully performed on holiday, as Louise recognises "it can works both ways". Being together for two weeks might reinforce the family links, but it might also generate suspicion and discomfort as in the case of the Davis family. As Louise explained, "they can get on each others nerves so much that they start to argue. But that's part of life isn't it? They have to compromise all the time on what things suit one and what doesn't suit the other". It was not easy for the Davis family to accommodate the divergent interest of its members. Although they have a good time, they also get on each other's nerves.

Conclusion: family tourism and the coastal Hotel.

Drawing on Kracauer (1995), in the previous chapter I understood the coastal hotel - the site of family tourism - in opposition to an anthropological notion of place, as a fleeting, ephemeral and superficial geographical reality. In doing so, I raised the possibility of both a way of being-in-the-world without roots and a kind of togetherness without organic communities. Coastal hotels however are by no means irrelevant and insubstantial; they are also sites of politics related with the family and the everyday. The case of family tourism challenges the common identification of mass tourism as a depthless and inauthentic experience. Social sciences have often ignored the 'substantial' and 'political' character of family tourism. In identifying the tourist as a solitary adventurer subject on a quest for authentic sights, the dominant figurations in tourist studies do not correspond with the collective and familiar reality of most people's holidays. These concluding remarks resume the discussion on highly commodified spaces of mass tourism by considering the implications of the family for the character of the place. In conferring an aura of simplicity and innocence to the destination, the family is one of the few workable utopias that give sense and purpose to the depthless and fluid environment of the coastal hotel. Through the family the values of authenticity and genuineness are partially reintroduced. Being just a workable utopia however family tourism is ultimately unable to provide a full view of the world.

A key feature of Menorca is its identification as a family orientated resort. Its association with families bestows on the island an aura of simplicity, innocence and a lack of sophistication, which makes Menorca different from its neighbouring resorts. In understanding the island in opposition to Eivissa as a family island, Menorca is recurrently associated with quietness, simplicity, relaxation and, most importantly, high moral standards. Menorca is something different from, paraphrasing Pam, a holidaymaker from Merseyside, "this sort of holiday where people spend their time drinking". The academic literature on family photography gives evidences of a number of situations in which the identification with family life is also critical for enhancing the standards of a place. A good example is the work of Chambers on the colonisation of

suburbia through family photography. According to Chambers, photography became not only a medium for the documentation and celebration of domestic events, but also "an Anglo-dominant visual witness of the invasion and colonisation, and thereby the claiming and domestication, of 'new' spaces by white Europeans" (2003:103). He concludes that the feminised identification of suburbia with family life was crucial in the domestication and naturalisation of geographical segregation of the urban population in the post-war flight to suburbia.

The fact that Menorca is a family destination makes the place less exotic and more acceptable. This is possible to a great extent because of the capacity of the family to domesticate and de-sexualise places, even those as problematic as a nudist beach. The fieldwork material that I analyse in chapter 7 on nudism evidences how the 'family character' of nudism in Menorca is critical in making these potentially sexually charged places natural and acceptable. Take for example the Hernàndez family from a suburb near Barcelona. They would practice nudism only on a beach with 'family' nudism. "Well, if it was a nudist beach with families then I would try, well you know a place with families rather than people who look at you". They contrast the familiar nudism of Menorca with the type of nudism that is characteristic in the area where they live, just north of Barcelona. "In Barcelona there are a lot of gay and lesbian couples", they tell me. They would not practice nudism on a non-family beach because of the implications that it would have for their young daughter. "It's for the girl. For me it's not a problem, I bring my wife and I don't care if there are two men or two women. But Samantha [their daughter] would say mum these men are kissing each other. However if the beach were of a family kind she would see them all naked and nothing would happen". The association of a nudist beach with families is able to de-sexualise both the place and the practice of nudism, making them more natural and acceptable. However, this normalisation that 'the familiar' brings about relies on the exclusion of non-heterosexual nudity. Family nudism refers to a particular moral landscape without gays and lesbians, without 'other' bodies that might remind Samantha of the existence of different sexualities.

As well as making the place natural and acceptable, the association with family tourism is also able to re-enchant the superficial and nomadic spaces of mass tourism. Being a family orientated resort confers meaning and purpose to a mass tourist site like Menorca, thus preventing it from depthlessness and banality. In doing so, family tourism contravenes the reality of places such as coastal hotels, a site of fleeting encounters and 'superficial' ways of being in which there is no purpose or meaning in being together. The family is one of the few 'workable' utopias that give sense and purpose to the fluid and depthless reality of mass tourism. However, it is a utopia that looks backwards not forwards. As in the case of cottage culture that Löfgren (1999) analyses, the family holiday is fuelled by a number of longings, in particular the nostalgia for a golden age of simplicity. I have collected numerous comments that suggest how the holidays are critical to the rescue of a mythologized, fixed version of the family that no longer exists. Consider for example the passage introduced earlier in which Claire Hughes celebrates the company of her three children. She describes the holidays as a major event that increases the cohesion of the family. Now that their children are grown up it is one of the few opportunities she has to speak to them and get to know them more. This passage suggests to what extent the holidays are conceived as a motion backwards to a fixed version of the family that no longer exists.

Family tourism demonstrates the complex spatial logic of mass tourism. It reveals that coastal hotels not only embody processes of demythologisation and deterritorialisation but also of re-enchantment and reterritorialistion. As Katz points out "the nomadic and smooth space of advance capital continues to call up nostalgic depth effects through various forms of place making" (1999: 148). Family tourism is one of these 'forms of place making' that make up the open and unstable nature of the coastal hotel. As Kracauer points out in relation to movie theatres "Rather than acknowledging the actual site of disintegration that such shows ought to represent, the movie theatres glue the pieces back together after the fact and present them as organic creations" (1995: 327-328). Through family tourism, the values of high art are reintroduced and the place is again considered in relation to the depth which bourgeoisie culture identifies with

genuineness and authenticity. However, the family is not a genuine utopia, it is simply a workable utopia that is ultimately unable to provide a full view of the world.

Chapter 6

The 'virgin beach': romanticism, disembodiment and spectacular nature.



Figure 6.1 A romanticised view of Macarelleta.

I start this account of the beach in Macarelleta and Cavalleria, two of the most popular virgin beaches of Menorca. The former is a small cove on the south coast with a tropical look, white sands, very transparent turquoise waters and pinewoods on its shore (figure 6.1). The latter is an open beach in the north with a rather wild and Atlantic look, the sands are yellow and clayey, the coast is much more dramatic and there is not much vegetation because of the effect of the north wind (figure 6.2). The so-called virgin beach is one of the most distinctive tourist phenomena of the island. Menorca is popular amongst the urban middle classes of Barcelona and Madrid as one of the rare destinations in the western Mediterranean in which it is still possible to enjoy 'natural', 'unspoilt' quiet beaches, literally called 'virgin' beaches in Spanish and Catalan, without the crowds and environmental disasters that characterise most of the Spanish coastal resorts. Menorca is different from "the carefully curated resorts of the French and Italian Riviera [which] parcel out the beach with the precision of a Mondrian Painting" (Lenček and Bosker, 1999: xxiii). Like in Garland's novel *The Beach* (1997) the unspoilt coastline of Menorca responds instead to the image of the primitive garden of Eden, a paradise of noble savages and simple hedonism. The main attraction of the so-called virgin beach is the possibility of a more direct and sensual contact with nature.



Figure 6.2 Panoramic view of Cavelleria

I start this account in Macarelleta and Cavalleria instead of mass tourist beaches like Son Bou or Punta Prima because they are the best expression of the Robinson myth that underlies the hedonistic experience of the beach. Romantic-inspired notions of virginity, marginality and isolation are at the root of the tourist experience of the beach. Thus, this travel through the virgin beach is not a deviation from my focus on costal mass tourism, but a travel to one of its foundations. According to Urbain, Crusoe is the inverse figure of Fogg, the ardent mobile tourist in a quest for authentic sites. The Crusoean myth is the expression of a sedentary vacationer who finds pleasure in mundane and predictable joys. "The tourist and the summer resident"- Urbain points out – "may encounter one another in the same physical space, but they nevertheless belong to two different worlds. For the former, the space is a place to pass through, for the latter it is a territory to inhabit" (2003: 4). The Robinson ideal not only implies a social rupture with modern life, but also the development of new routines and norms away from the rest, that is, the re(creation) of an alternative everyday life. As Löfgren points out "the Robinson desire is 'to get away from it all' - to find an unspoiled corner of the world, to relax and build an alternative life" (Löfgren, 1999: 9). In this context isolation, solitude and virgin nature are the three main elements of the Crusoean scenography.

There is no such a thing as a virgin unspoilt beach, however in places such as Macarella and Cavalleria there is a huge investment on nature. The 'virgin' beach is an exceptional setting to understand the romantically inspired approach to nature, the dominant approach in leisure tourism, by which nature is gazed upon and turned into spectacle. It is also an exceptional setting to test the limits of its contentions. On the beach, and in particular on the 'virgin' beach, leisure practices by which nature is gazed upon coexist with a number of embodied practices that do not pre-suppose a visual and cognitive relation with nature, such as sunbathing and swimming. This chapter considers the relevance of the visual sense in the tourist experience of the beach. However it neither treats the visual as a disembodied relation with the natural world nor it reduces nature to visual representation and ocular modes of sensing, thus concealing the complex, diverse, overlapping and contradictory ways in which people sense the world around them

(Macnaghten & Urry, 1998; Franklin, 2002). Together with practices of visual consumption, this chapter considers the array of related activities, emotions, thoughts and utopias through which people dwell and construct beach natures. The dominant cognitive and ocular approach to nature is rebalanced with an account that considers the part of thinking which is not cognitive; because, as Thrift recognises, only the smallest part of thinking is cognitive. The rest of it lies in the body; "it lies in the full range of micro-kinetic nerve languages that call us into being, not just vision. It lies in the swell of affective contagion which has its own reasons and logic which we are only just beginning to consider. It lies in the specific circumstances of spaces and times which are able to be sensed and worked with but are often only partially articulated" (Forthcoming: 11).

This chapter is divided in three parts. First of all, I examine the case of the virgin beach as a paradigmatic example of a romantic-inspired approach that reduces nature to landscape spectacle, scenery and visual sensations. Being predominantly associated with the image of the Edenic paradise, the virgin beach implies a conceptual and geographical opposition between culture and nature as well as nostalgia for both a pristine and de-humanised nature and a more authentic way of life. It also presupposes a detached and disembodied subject that has the privilege to observe nature from an outside vantage point. The emphasis on a solitary and semi-spiritual relationship with nature together with the obsession with crowds and mass tourism endorse the understanding of the virgin beach as a 'displaced translation' of the Crusoean myth. The second part of the chapter develops an embodied and gendered account of the virgin beach. A romantic-inspired approach to nature does not just imply observation but a set of practices and perceptions that are put together in a context of hegemony of the vision. Drawing on Jokinen and Veijola (2003), I acknowledge that what one sees depends upon the posture of the one who sees. Being the product of embodied and culturally mediated practices the virgin beach presupposes political and social meanings as well as power and gender relations. The virgin beach is in accordance with the masculine tendencies to master, conquer, penetrate and see from above. Drawing on performative accounts of nature and tourism (Franklin, 2002; Baerenholdt et al, 2004), the final section considers a range of

sensual experiences and performative dimension of the beach that exceed a romantic inspired approach to nature. I take as my starting point the recognition that the beach is a haptic geography as much as it is a visual one. The pre-dominant view of the beach as an spectacular geography ignores the importance of the haptic on the beach. Taking sandcastles as my example I demonstrate that the beach draws its significance not only from mental and intellectual work, but also from the embodied, manipulative and non-representational practices of the people that inhabit them. The building of sandcastles is seen as a performative experiment that uses the sand and the body to conjure up virtual worlds and alternative ways of being. This section acts as a prelude to the next chapter, which takes the case of nudism to explore different ways of knowing through the body, in particular the role of visuality and the sense of touch. Before properly starting the chapter I propose a short discussion on the concept of nature.

On nature

In a dwelling perspective, being is always being-in-the-world, a situated, embodied and contingent process of engagement with the environment. This means that to be in nature is not a question of being 'located' in nature or representing nature but practicing particular natures and practicing through particular types of nature. Paraphrasing Ingold, we are not spectators of nature but participants in it (2000: 196). Our involvement with nature, that is, our way of dwelling nature, is mainly practical not cognitive. Being-on-the-beach, being-in-nature is an everyday skilful, embodied coping or engagement with particular environments. Nature is always experienced in sensual and embodied terms. According to Franklin, "our knowledge of nature is mediated through our sensory apparatus and is significant in structuring our aesthetic response and evaluation of different natural configurations. The natural world is apprehended through its sounds, its smells, its tastes, its textures and its colours and shapes" (2002: 186).

Nature is something material, not ideal, that is socially constituted through both discursive and non-discursive everyday practices. "Each such nature"- Macnaghten and

Urry argue- "is constituted through a variety of socio-cultural processes from which such natures cannot be plausibly separated" (1998: 1). Nature is not an external and pre-given reality, it is always a localised and relational phenomena embedded in particular times and spaces. In using the notion of dwelling Ingold (2000) and Urry and Macnaghten (1998) are able to eschew the unproductive tension between naturalistic and culturalist approaches to nature. Nature is conceived neither as a neutral, external backdrop to human activities that has the power to produce unambiguous, observable and rectifiable outcomes, the point of view of environmental realism; nor as a particular cognitive or symbolic ordering of space, the point of view of environmental idealism (Ingold, 2000:189; Macnaghten and Urry, 1998: 1). As Franklin points out, "nature is always and everywhere socially constructed but it also a performed as well as a lived and dwelt experience" (2002: 7). Franklin rewrites, in turn, the approach of Macnaghten and Urry

> "Our approach will emphasise that it is specific social practices, especially of people's dwelling which produce, reproduce and transform different natures and different values. It is through such practices that people respond, cognitively, aesthetically and hermeneutically, to what have been constructed as the signs and characteristics of nature. Such social practices embody their own forms of knowledge and understanding and undermine a simple demarcation between objective science and lay knowledge. These practices structure the responses of people to what is deemed to be the 'natural'" (1998: 3)

This chapter considers a pristine Edenic nature on the margins of society. However the reality is that nature cannot be thought anymore apart from culture as a singular and external entity. Neither beach natures exclude humans (Castree and Broun, 1998) nor beach cultures are independent from the natural world. The question is not on the borders of nature and culture but on the interface and hybridisation of both realities. I identify with two key ideas from Haraway and her Cyborg manifesto (1991): her radical opposition to western dualisms and constituted totalities like the binary opposition between nature and culture, and her argument "for pleasure in the confusion of boundaries and for responsibility in their construction". Dealing with the interface of beach and tourist means considering "transgressed boundaries, potent fusions and

dangerous possibilities" (1991: 154), it also means considering hybrids like the one that is constituted between sand, water and lilos. Unspoilt' beaches are not as 'virgin' and natural as people think because they are materially and discursively a socially constituted type of nature. Tourist societies cannot be thought of as apart from things, both natural things like the beach and material things like the lilo. "The very possibility of social life proceeds through and is enabled by such actants" (Castree and Broun, 1998: 31). There is no such a thing as a virgin beach. Places such as Macarelleta and Cavalleria are Cyborgs, conglomerates of human and non-human entities. However in the increasingly urbanised societies where we live, there are huge investments on pristine Edenic natures. This chapter examines one particular case.

The 'virgin' beach

The tourist phenomenon of the virgin beach responds simultaneously to the figure of the traveller and the figure of the residential summer vacationer. There are evidences of 'the epic traversal of the one' and 'Edenic installation of the other' (Urbain, 2003: 24). Both the idea of vacation as an escape and the idea of vacation as seclusion are paradigmatic of a romantic-inspired approach to nature and tourism. As Urbain points out both travel mystiques are the sons of the same 'goddess of travel'. "In the religion of travel there are two high priests with contrary mystiques" (2003:24). The virgin beach tourist sees himself simultaneously as an explorer of a vast new world and as a discoverer of an earthly paradise. This ambivalence makes the virgin beach an interesting phenomenon.

On the one hand, the tourist phenomenon of the virgin beach is paradigmatic of a romantic-inspired approach to nature that privileges observation over embodied participation, the most recurrent approach to nature in leisure and tourism (Franklin, 2002: 188). It has a lot in common with "the practices of leisurely walking both by the sea and over hills and mountains, as well as Alpine and other climbing" (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998: 113) by which nature is gazed upon and turned into spectacle, scenery and visual sensations. In privileging spectatorial passivity over embodied performativity,

this phenomenon corresponds with the idea of tourism that informs Urry's notion of the tourist gaze. According to Urry, a fundamental part of the tourist experience is "to gaze upon or view a set of different scenes or landscapes or townscapes which are out of the ordinary" (1990:1). Inspired by the practices of travelling and sightseeing, he understands tourism as an example of visual consumption, a spectatorial and passive activity that transforms ever-new destinations into objects of the gaze. Although he mentions different types of gaze, Urry identifies a romantic-inspired gaze as the dominant mode of visuality in tourism, (1990: 46-47;). The romantic gaze presupposes a disembodied and solitary eye, detached from the object of the gaze in pursuit of the visual aesthetic pleasure that extraordinary sights provide. The virgin beach is an expression of the ardent and epic traveller in search of authentic sights.

On the other hand, the virgin beach is also an expression of the equally romantic-inspired Crusoean myth, which according to Urbain (2003) underlies the hedonistic experience of the beach. Ultimately, the virgin beach is the world of residential sedentary summer vacation, a place to stop and 'to get away from it all'. According to Urbain this implies that, "we are at the opposite pole here from exploration, adventure, and a fortiori, defamiliarization, in a definition of happiness based on predictable recurrent joys. The universe of residential summer vacation is primordially a universe of repetition" (2003: 288). On the virgin beach the Robinsonian tourist goes back into his shell, he recluses himself in a tiny little place away from the rest. The emphases on a solitary and semi-spiritual relation of nature as well as on the 'virginity' of landscape are further signs of Crusoean scenography. On the virgin beach dreams of discovery coexist with dreams of seclusion and intimacy.

This section examines the virgin beach as paradigmatic of a romantic-inspired approach to nature. I develop three arguments. The first part examines the idea of nature that this tourist phenomenon presupposes. Being predominantly associated with the image of the Edenic paradise, the virgin beach implies a conceptual and geographical opposition between culture and nature as well as a longing for a pristine and de-humanised nature. Nature is taken to exist on the margins of civilization, away from mass tourist society.

The second part addresses the dominance of the visual sense. The tourist phenomenon of the virgin beach is a good example of the kind of visual and cognitive approach by which nature is turned into spectacle, landscape and scenery. It presupposes a detached and disembodied subject that has the privilege to observe nature from an outside vantage point. Last but not least I examine the particular subjective disposition through which people experiment with the virgin beach, which I contend corresponds with the subject that Urbain associates with the myth of Crusoe. The virgin beach presupposes a solitary, self-controlled and semi-spiritual relationship with nature. It also implies simplicity, experimentation and attention to the local life. I conclude that the virgin beach is an expression of an artistic and elitist attitude that pursues distinction, taste and innovation.

A distant and paradisiacal nature

The tourist phenomenon of the virgin beach relies on a conceptual and geographical opposition between 'unspoilt' beaches, literally called 'virgin' in Spanish and Catalan, and 'developed' beaches, literally called 'urbanised'. A beach is 'virgin' if it is free from urban development and tourist exploitation. On the contrary a beach is 'developed' or 'urbanised' if it is full of hotels, apartments and villas. This is not only an opposition between different kinds of places; it is also an opposition between different kinds of tourism and patterns of use. Independent or semi-independent holidaymakers from urban areas like Barcelona or Madrid, the social group that have made popular the concept of the 'virgin' beach, prefer 'natural' coastal sites supposedly untouched by urban tourist development. This contrasts with English tourists on a package holiday that mostly prefer the local beach. The notion of the virgin beach not only implies a radical differentiation between nature and the urban but also between 'us' and 'them'. While the 'unspoilt' beaches are supposed to be for 'us', which does not always mean 'Spanish' (it might mean exclusively Menorcan or even Catalan-speakers); the 'tourist' beaches, which enjoy the lowest reputation, are the space of the other, in this case English and German tourists. A survey commissioned by the Insular Council (CIM) in 2001 confirms the existence of different patters of beach use depending on the origin of the tourists. As

the graphics in figures 6.3, 6.4 and 6.5 demonstrate, in developed beaches like s'Arenal d'en Castell, northen European tourism is predominant; while in 'unspoilt beaches' like Cavalleria or Macarelleta Catalan and Spanish holidaymakers are the majority.

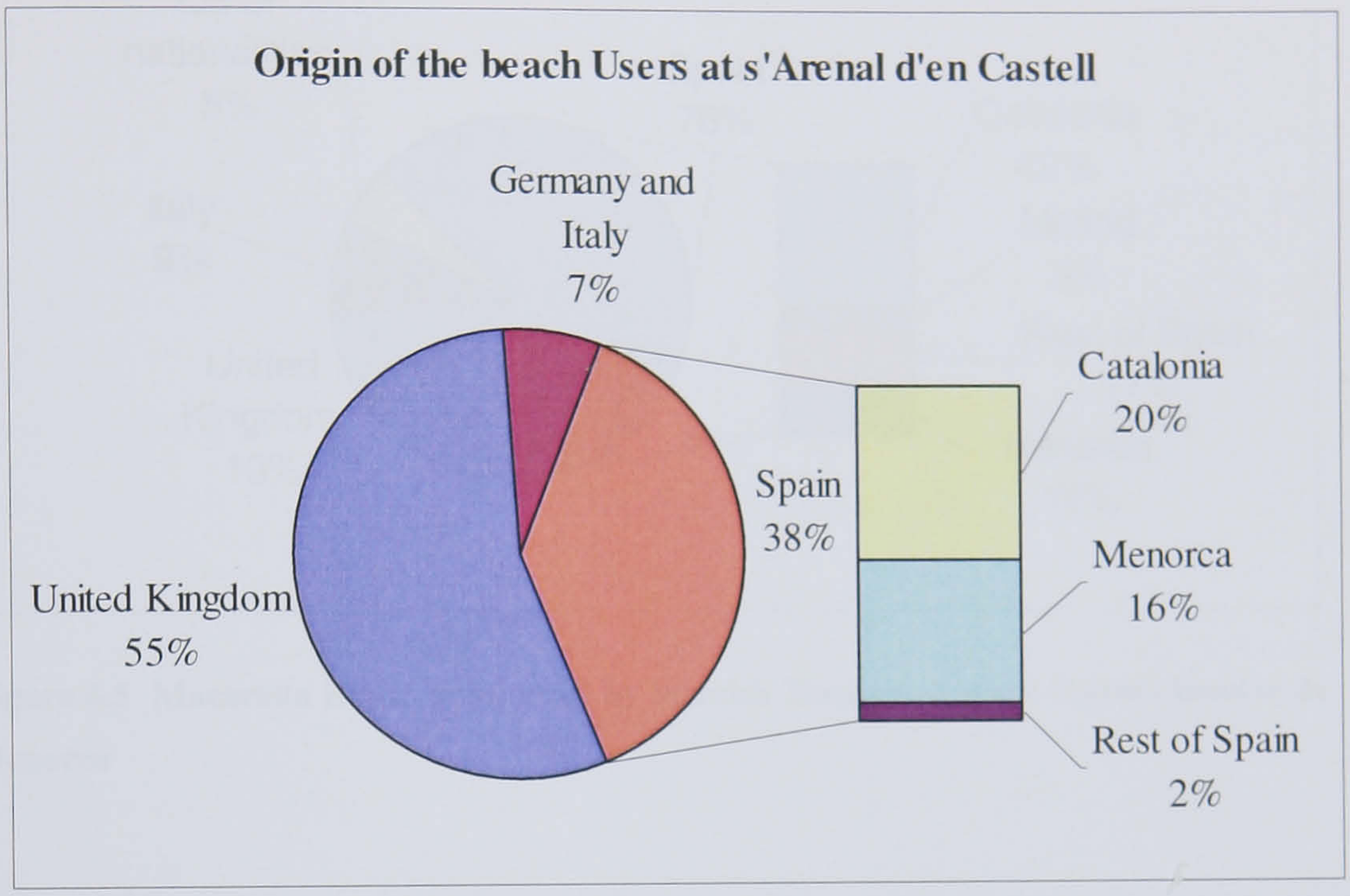


Figure 6.3 In S'Arenal d'en Castell, a highly developed beach, British holidaymakers are predominant. Source Consell Insular de Menorca

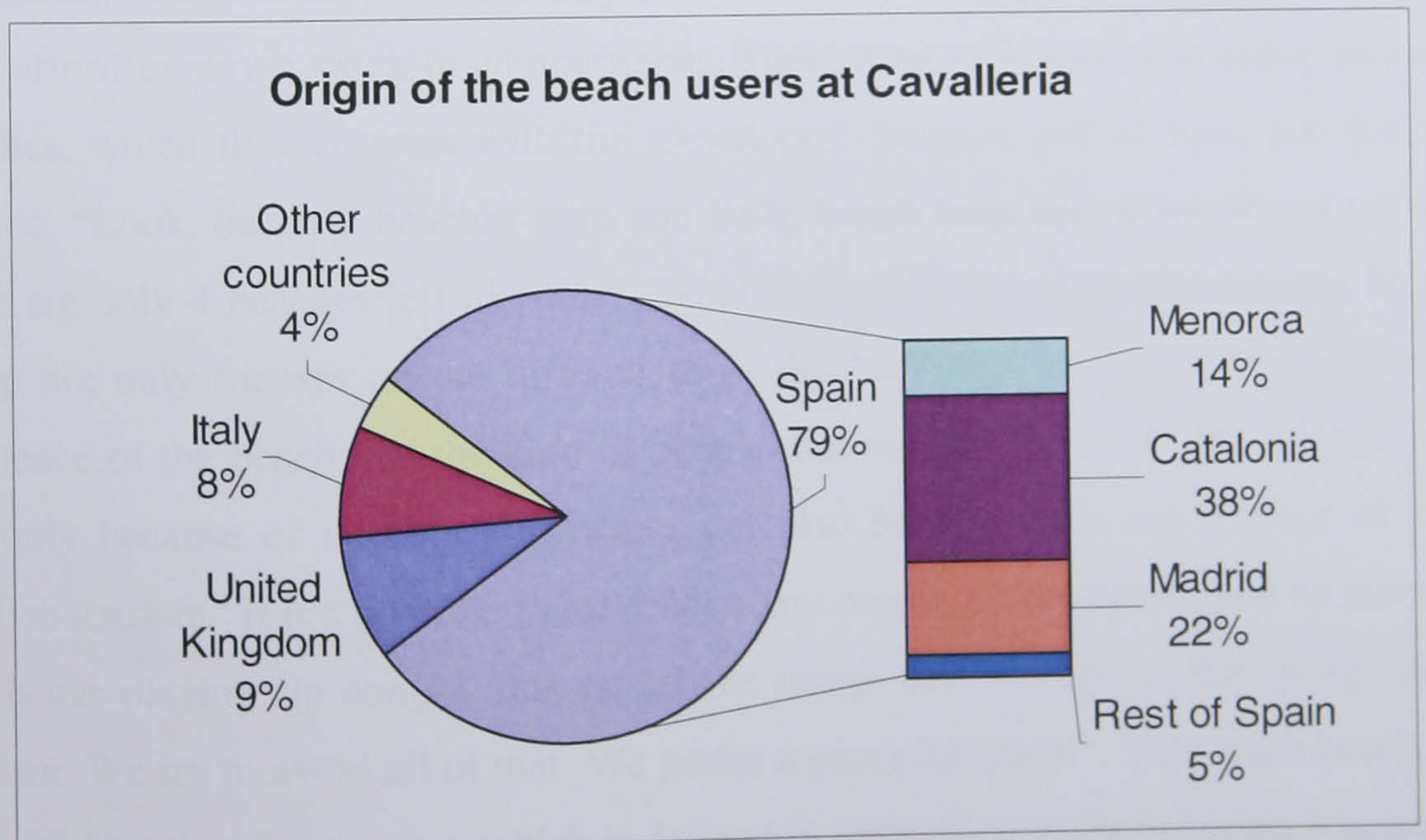


Figure 6.4 Cavelleria is dominated by Spanish tourism, mainly from Catalonia and Madrid Source Consell Insular de Menorca

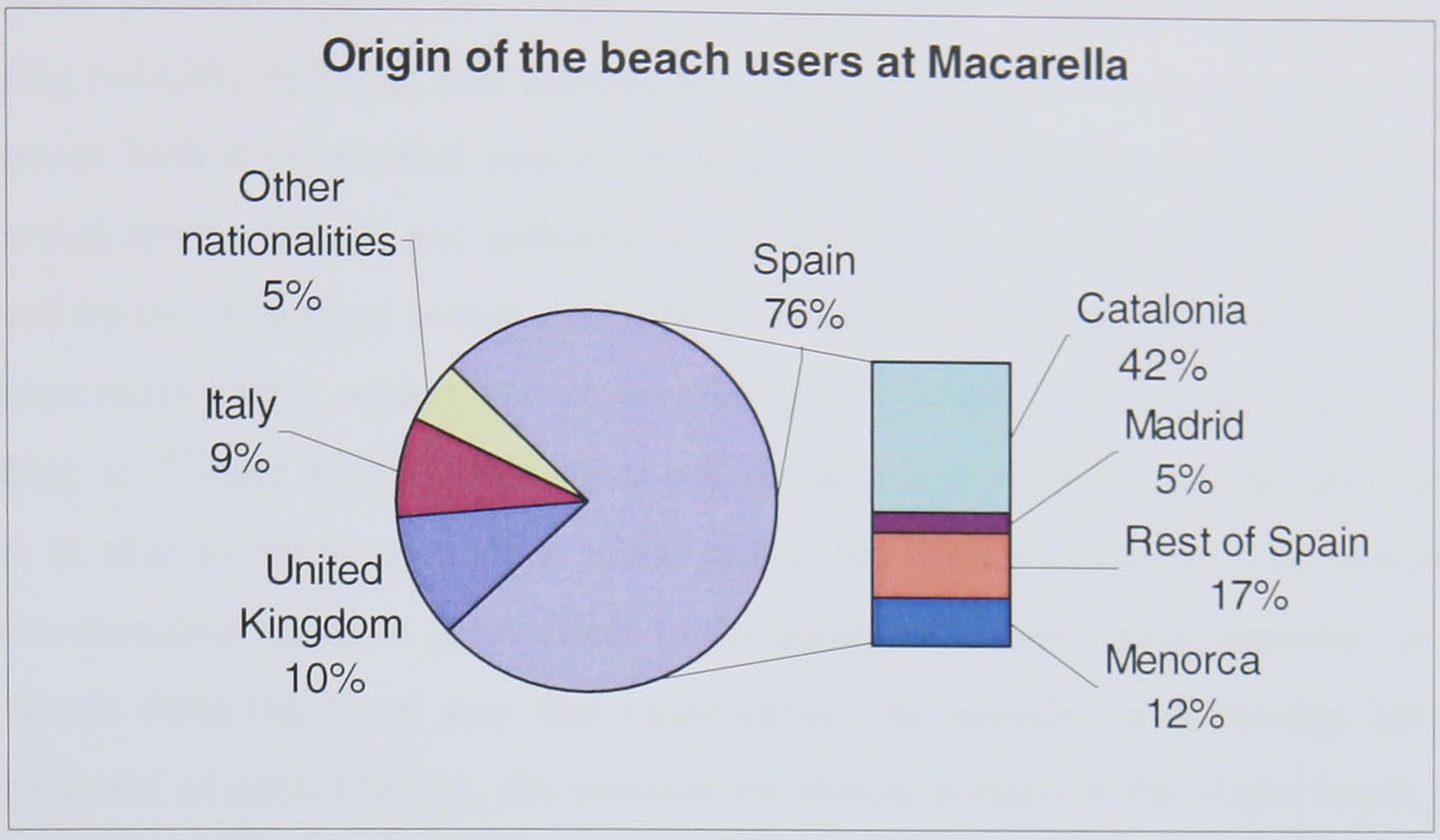


Figure 6.5 Macarella is also dominated by Spanish Tourism. Source Consell Insular de Menorca

Indeed tourists not only think of the virgin beach as a natural and authentic landscape untouched by urban development, but also as a particular moral geography. Take for example Josep and Beth, Catalan holidaymakers in their early 30s that I met in Cavalleria. This was the first time they had come on holiday to the island and they could only afford to stay a week in an apartment. They came to Menorca to enjoy its unique beaches, which they contrast with the 'developed' beaches full of bars, sun beds and stereos. "Look, because beaches with sun beds, beach bars and so on are everywhere, there are only 4 beaches left like this". What is significant in this quote is the fact that Josep not only focuses on the differences in the 'virginity' of nature but also on the ambience of the beach and the kind of people that use it. He prefers the 'virgin' beach not only because of its natural qualities but also because it is not a place of cheap English tourism "If it's possible I prefer not many people on the beach, and no stereos or beach bar playing 'la conga', that is, all the things that we sell to the cheap English tourism. We try to avoid all of that. We prefer a peaceful beach". The virgin beach is an 'Spanish' tourist phenomenon which is defined in opposition to British mass tourism.

The tourist phenomenon of the virgin beach reproduces a conception of nature as something radically different and independent from civilisation. The notion of virginity presupposes both a conceptual opposition and a geographical distance between those beaches that remain natural and authentic and those beaches that have been invaded and denatured by the wild mass tourist development. Nature is taken to exist on the margins away from mass tourist society and urban civilisation, which still remains at the centre. According to Urbain (2003), this clear-cut demarcation between natural and urban beaches is also an expression of a social and cultural differentiation. The sedentary summer vacationer makes a great effort to distinguish his 'innovative universe' of the virgin beach from the banal stay that characterises the seaside. In distancing himself from the world of mass tourism, the summer vacationer conceives the virgin beach as a place outside civilization and modernity. As Urbain points out, "he wants his world to be outside time, like the Crusoean site, as if it were inscribed in non-duration: an endless moment, or an eternal beginning" (2003: 23). Pushed at the margins, nature acts as 'the other' of civilisation, 'the other' of mass tourism; and as such it is identified with a pre-social state of innocence and with an uncontaminated life, that is, with values and practices that modern civilisation and mass tourist society have 'already' lost (Neumann, 1999; Macnaghten and Urry, 1998);

This clear-cut demarcation between nature and civilization is the central assumption of the romantic view of nature. According to Macnaghten and Urry in romanticism "instead of efforts to reinvoke a morality and ethics within nature by thinking through new ways to rework nature into the social, nature sustained her separation by departing from the predominant human sphere to the margins of modern industrial society" (1998: 13). A romantic conception of nature not only involves distance and separation, it also involves anxiety with civilisation and longing for a pristine and impossible nature. "The romanticisation of nature"- Franklin argues - "was not then an exercise in pure reason but deeply political and deeply implicated in renegotiating a view of nature based on a very different balance of power between the natural world and humanity. It is a discourse of nature racked by guilt and anxiety and in the face of its destruction and

reordering by modernist forces, it was transformed from fear and loathing to an admiration and pity" (Franklin, 2002: 88). As a good romantic, the summer vacationer is an 'incurable nostalgic' who fears that his universe is in danger threatened by the tourist invasion. He is like Crusoe, a melancholic figure longing for an impossible earthly paradise. His romantic nostalgia and anxiety are not an expression of an accidental departure from society but of a social rupture. As Urbain points out, "Our residential vacationer fits right into this historical scenario, for his outlook is not that of a shipwreck victim but rather that of an individual breaking with his own society" (2003: 20). Underlying the tourist phenomenon of the virgin beach there is a discomfort and disappointment with modernity.



Figure 6.6 EL Pilar. The beaches in the north have a wilder and more Nordic look. The coast is much more dramatic, the sands are rather yellow and there is not a lot of vegetation near the sea.

The virgin beach in Menorca is associated with two different kinds of nature, each of which corresponds with a different version of the Crusoean myth that underlies the

experience of the beach. First of all, the virgin beach is associated with a wild, cold and almost 'Nordic' nature. In particular for Catalan tourists the most emblematic virgin beaches are places like Cavalleria, Pregonda and El Pilar, all in the north (figure 6.6). This is the 'wildest' area of the island, very affected by the north wind. In this area the sands are rather yellow and clayey, the coast is much more accidental, the sea while still very transparent, is much darker; and there are no wooded areas surrounding the beach. Take for example the case of the Casas family from a middle class suburb near Barcelona, who spends their summer holiday every year in Fornells. They prefer the north to the south. They even joke about the fact that they are not going on holiday to Menorca, but to the north of Menorca. They prefer the beaches in the north, first of all, because of the wilderness of the landscape "On the one hand I prefer this type of beach, they are more virgin". "In the north" - he continues- "the water is normally colder. It's much more pleasant to swim and there isn't so much seaweed". They also prefer the north because of the kind of people you encounter. "On the other hand, it's because of the crowds"- Antoni explains- "the people in the north are different and quieter". The north is seen as familiar, quiet and well mannered while the south is seen as a world of crowds, noise and excess. "It looks more familiar, closer to us. In the south there are more people with stereos and music. It's another type of person". In associating the virgin beach with a cold and 'Nordic' nature, the Casas family distinguish their vacation from the world of mass tourism not only geographically but also morally. They do not associate the virgin beach with an ideal of simplicity but with an elitist world of taste, manners and self-control.

Secondly, the virgin beach is associated with a paradisiacal and tropical idea of nature. The dominant image of the virgin beach corresponds with places like Macarella, Cala'n Turqueta (see figure 6.7), Cala Mitjana, and Trebaluger, all in the south and south west coast of the island This is an area of small coves with a tropical look, white sands, very transparent turquoise seawaters and pinewoods behind the beach. The recurrent allusions to the classical elements of the tropical beach are evidence of the strength of this association. The tourists that I interviewed on a virgin beach constantly referred to transparent waters, white sands and exuberant vegetation. Take for example this passage

in which Idoya, a holidaymaker from the Basque Country in her earlier 20s, explains why she like Macarelleta the most. She alludes to the transparency of the water, the vegetation, the caves and the overall beauty of the place. "Because it is wonderful, it's a very small cove, I don't know. It was an astonishing place, the transparent waters, the caves and so on. I don't know, everything was wonderful, very pretty in particular the woods that mix with the sand on the beach". A major characteristic of a paradisiacal and tropical kind of nature is the fact that it is pleasant and welcoming. The seawaters in places like Macarella are not only nice and transparent, but also safe, calm and warm. Take, for example, the following comments by Patxi and Begoña, a couple from Bilbao in their mid 30s that were staying one week on a camp site. They held Menorca in high regard not only because of the virginity of its landscape but also because of the much more pleasant conditions of the sea. "Well we are used to another type of sea in the Cantabric"- Patxi explains – "and when you find these waters here, you say 'wow'". In particular they appreciate the warm temperature of the sea and its calm state. "Well, first the temperature, here you don't have any problem but there to go into the water you always have to push a little bit… And well, here the seawaters are very calm and safe. It's much more pleasant".



Figure 6.7 Cala'n Turqueta. In the south the beaches have a much more tropical look, with turquoise waters, white sands and exuberant vegetation.

It is a matter of fact that the dominant image of the virgin beach is the tropical paradise rather than the cold and wild Nordic nature. As a couple from a working class suburb near Barcelona pointed out, Menorca is supposed to be "the little Caribbean". This notion of paradise is, according to Roger, closer to the notion of garden than to the notion of wilderness. It implies an ordered and tamed nature as opposed to the disorder of the wilderness. "It refers to a closed, separated, interior space cultivated by man for his own pleasure, distanced from any utilitarian purpose" (2000: 36). It also implies a notion of closeness. In fact, both, the words paradise and garden mean etymologically 'enclosure' (Roger 2000: 36). The small and cosy coves of the south coast with white sands, turquoise waters and exuberant vegetation respond better to the image of Edenic paradise than the open, wild and dramatic coastal landscape of the north. What the summer resident wants above all, like Crusoe, is to discover a picturesque and deserted beach, an earthly paradise in which to stop and get away from it all. I agree with Urbain when he contends, "whether Corsican or Melanesian, his beach is above all wild and picturesque. He seeks an earthy paradise, a spit of land looking as though it had only just emerged from the limbo of the ocean's depth" (2003: 11). The virgin beach is the site of the Crusoean dreams of simplicity and naturalness. In short, what makes the virgin beach popular is its identification with "the image of the Savage, with the simple life and happy naïveté of the naked Indian, innocent of any social stigma" (Urbain, 2003: 129).

An external observer

The tourist phenomenon of the virgin beach is paradigmatic of a romantic-inspired approach to nature that privileges detached observation over embodied participation. It is a good example of a 'rational leisure' that favours a visual and cognitive approach which turns nature into spectacle. According to Franklin, this is the most recurrent approach to nature linked with tourism. "The reduction of nature to visual representations and an increasingly ocular mode of sensing it directly in countryside leisures describe perfectly the manner by which many people in the West experience it as tourists" (Franklin, 2002:188).). In the nineteen-century a wide arrange of leisure

practices came to see nature as scenery, views and perceptual sensations, which "led to an increasing visual objectification of an external and consumable nature, one in which the poor, agricultural labourers and environmental 'eyesores' were generally excluded" (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998:113). The reduction of nature to a visual representation and its conversion into spectacle participate in the occulocentrism that, since modernity, has dominated tourism and the experience of nature (Franklin, 2002; Macnaghten and Urry, 2002). According to Urry and Macnaghten "This increasing hegemony of vision in European societies and its ability to organise the other senses produced a transformation of nature as it was turned into spectacle" (1998: 113). Occulocentrism is not exclusive to leisure and tourism, it is a phenomenon that has dominated the whole western culture since modernity. According to Jay "the modern era has been dominated by the sense of sight in a way that set it apart from its pre-modern predecessors and possibly its post-modern successor" (1988:3).

The prominence of 'beach sightseeing' is the best expression of the occulocentrism that dominates the experience of the virgin beach. Independent or semi-independent tourists from urban areas like Madrid and Barcelona, the main consumers of the 'virgin beach', tend to organise their summer holidays in a sort of a coastal tour through the most significant 'virgin' coves of the island. As with the case of people who visit castles and cathedrals, a major objective in visiting virgin beaches is to capture and collect extraordinary views that have been previously constituted as signs. This was the case with Carlos and Sonia, a middle class couple in their 30s from Madrid who were visiting Menorca for the first time. Carlos is a businessman, so they could afford to rent a Villa near Ciutadella and a car for two weeks. The central activity of their holiday was to tour the main coves and beaches of the island, an activity that consumed most of their daily time. Despite having a young baby, they visited at least 12 different beaches, 10 of which were 'virgin'. They also visited some prehistoric monuments and the main towns and villages of the island; they participated in the festivals of Alaior and took dinner in some expensive restaurants. Carlos and Sonia did not spend their summer holidays just sunbathing and swimming, but also sightseeing extraordinary natures. Beach sightseeing is the sort of experience that Urry (1990) primarily identifies with tourism.

Beach sightseeing is not so popular amid northen European tourists on a package holiday. In fact, they are not even familiar with the concept of the "virgin" beach. Most British and German tourists will only visit one or two beaches during their holidays, neither of which is likely to be considered 'virgin'. Take for example the Walker family from Birmingham, like Carlos and Sonia a couple in their 30's with a young baby. They also spent 15 days on the island but in small self-catering apartment in S'Arenal d'en Castell. Theirs was however a much less ambitious holiday; they did not even rent a car. In two weeks they only used the local beach, a very tourist beach on which they spent about 5 hours a day. They left the resort twice, once to go shopping in Maó on a Saturday morning and the other to tour the island by coach, which included a brief stop at a tourist beach. Beach sightseeing is not popular amid British tourists who rented cars either. When for example the McPherson family, from the Scottish highlands, rented a car just for two days, they did not visit any beach, but the two main cities, some shopping centres, the coastal village of Fornells and the mountain of El Toro. The insignificance of beach sightseeing on mainstream beach holidays confirms that detached observation is not the pre-eminent way through which tourists like the Walker and the McPherson family approach the beach.

On a virgin beach a visual approach to nature that relies on an illusion of distance and detachment is predominant. This approach presupposes an external, disembodied subject that has the privilege of observing nature from an outside vantage point. The tourist phenomenon of the virgin beach reproduces a way of seeing that has a lot in common with the modernist scopic regimes that Jay (1988) identifies with Cartesian Perspectivalism and, in particular, the Art of Describing, which rely on an illusionary distance between the subject and the object of the gaze. Underlying this tourist phenomenon there is both a notion of perspective and the presupposition of a static and external eye that follows the logic of the gaze, rather than the glance, "thus producing a visual take that [is] eternalised, reduced to one point of view, and disembodied" (Jay, 1988:7). It is a way of seeing in which – paraphrasing Jay again- "the participatory involvement of more absorptive visual modes [is] dismissed, if not entirely suppressed.

as the gap between spectator and spectacle [is] widened" (Jay, 1988: 8). In the phenomenon of the virgin beach the formal premises of modernist opticality are identified, according to Krauss, "the premises that connect a dematerialization of the visual field to the dilated instantaneity or a peculiar timelessness of the moment of its perception" (Krauss, 1988: 53). There is indeed an insistence in understanding the visual as a static, self-sufficient and autonomous sense which ignores our embeddedness in the flesh of the world (Crary, 1998; Jay, 1998)

The way tourists speak about the virgin beach is an expression of the pre-eminence of a visual approach to nature that relies on an illusion of distance and detachment. Implicit in the arguments of middle class tourists from Madrid and Barcelona- the main consumers of the virgin beach- is a disembodied and external conception of the subject as one that has the privilege to observe the beach from an outside vantage point. Their arguments are very rich in descriptions, comparisons and opinions. These rhetorical forms are central in sustaining an illusion of distance and a sense of perspective. Tourists are not apprehending the beach as participants, paraphrasing Ingold, by taking up a view in it, but as spectators, that is, by making a view of the beach (Ingold, 2000: 42). In this context nature is turned into landscape and spectacle, that is, into the object of the gaze.

Contrary to British tourists on a package holiday, Catalan and Spanish tourists tend to use a very descriptive language to speak about the beach. Their comments, which focus mainly on the characteristics of the visual surface, are very rich in adjectives, details and images. Their descriptions tend to be long, picturesque and colourful, almost visual, leaving not much space for the body, its feelings and sensations. In the following dialogue, José and Dolores, a couple on honeymoon from a town near Alacant, comment about the beaches they liked more. Using a vivid and almost visual descriptive language, this passages focuses on the aesthetic qualities of the beach, thus suggesting the importance of the practices of visual consumption. It very much presupposes an eye-mind detached from the object of the gaze that describes, evaluates and compares.

Pau: Which beach did you like more? And why?

José : This is the beach that I like the most.
Dolores: Cala Mitjana is lovely too. I like in particular the small cave inside. It's very nice so small like that
P: So which one would you choose? This one?
D: Certainly this is also very good as well as Cala Mitjana. He also likes Binigaus a lot, but that was another type of beach.
P: Why?
D: I like this one because it has very transparent waters. It's lovely. I like the other one for the cave, and I also like Binigaus because it was very quiet. We went to the other side and there weren't a lot of people and that was very good.
J: More nature. These are natural beaches

The use of a comparative language is also characteristic of the way Catalan and Spanish tourists speak about the virgin beach. Take for example the following passage from Alberto and Pilar, a middle aged couple from Barcelona with a rather hippy look who visited Menorca for just 5 days on the premise of showing the island to their teenage son. They used to come to Menorca as backpackers before their son was born, probably sleeping in caves and camping on the beach. They stressed the virginity of the beaches of Menorca by comparing them with the over-developed beaches in Barcelona. "The water, these are things that you generally don't find in Barcelona, this type of water, the virginity of the landscape, all of these". Indeed their views on Menorca and other Mediterranean destinations were mutually interdependent. They also used a comparative trope to stress how much Menorca has changed since their last visit. "Well, being a bit more alone on the beach is something that you don't have in Barcelona. However this year has been horrendous. Other times we have been alone on the beach, but this year we haven't". The use of a comparative language suggests perspective and detachment as well as the pre-eminence of observation over participation.

The comments of the tourists that I interview on the virgin beach were also very rich in opinions. It is not rare at all to come across a holidaymaker who makes a judgement about the state of the island and its society. The most recurrent argument is to praise the protection of the coast, although I have also gathered a number of comments that condemn the massification of the island and its 'unreasonable' focus on foreign tourism. The following comment of Montserrat and Pere, Catalan Holidaymakers in their 50s

who come regularly every summer, express admiration for the 'miraculous' conservation of the island and hope that the current development will not ruin it.

> " So, limiting the number of people is good. I hope at least this would keep the island like it is now. I hope this rhythm of development will not continue for a long time because if so it will ruin the island. This is the charm of Menorca. If there are so many apartments and hotels as there are in other places, the charm will disappear"

The comments of Catalan and Spanish tourists in relation to the 'virgin' beach tend to be very rich in descriptions, comparisons and opinions. This way of speaking reassembles in particular the modernist scopic regime that Jay calls "the art of describing" which he associates with Dutch seventeen century painting. This scopic regime while still presupposing a neutral and detached observer is different from the proper Cartesian perspectivalism in the fact that it does not emphasise a geometrical, rationalised concept of space but rather a more empirical visual experience. According to Jay "it casts its attentive eye on the fragmentary, detailed, and richly articulated surface of a world it is content to describe rather than explain" (1988: 13). This, indeed, is the same visual and aesthetic sensibility that transforms nature into landscape (Duncan, 1993, 1999; Daniels and Crosgrove, 1993). According to Cosgrove (1998), landscape does not imply a relation of immersion and integration with the environment, but a visual sensibility towards the natural environment in which the individual assumes the role of an external and disembodied observer. "To speak of landscape beauty or quality is to adopt the role of observer rather than participant. The painter`s use of landscape implies precise observation by an individual, in critical respects removed from it" (1998:18). Like the tourist phenomenon of the virgin beach, the notion of landscape relies on a modernist binary opposition between subject and object. According to Cosgrove "The separation of subject and object, insider and outsider, the personal and the social are already apparent at the birth of the landscape idea" (1998: 26). Both landscape and the virgin beach are the expression of mastery and control over the natural world.

Playing at being Crusoe

The virgin beach does not only correspond to a particular conception of nature and a way of seeing; it also corresponds to a particular subjective disposition. This section focuses on the set of attitudes, embodied gestures and feelings through which people experience the virgin beach. I contend that the virgin beach presupposes a solitary, self-controlled and semi-spiritual relationship with nature. It also implies simplicity, experimentation and attention to the local life. I conclude that the virgin beach is an expression of an artistic and elitist attitude that pursues distinction, taste and innovation. This particular subjective disposition corresponds with the romantic-inspired subject that Urbain (2003) associates with the myth of Crusoe. Our vacationer is a 'displaced translation' of the mythical figure of Crusoe, the discoverer of earthly paradise and the inventor of beaches. This figure has the same subjective characteristics that Urry (1990) associates with the subject of the tourist Gaze, the romantic ardent traveller. As Urry points out, "there is a romantic form of the tourist gaze, in which the emphasis is upon solitude, privacy and a personal, semi-spiritual relationship with the object of the gaze" (1990:45).

As in the case that Urbain describes, our vacationer refuses the popular tourist beach, the beach as a funfair, which is generally associated with British packaged tourism. At the centre of his discourse, there is a lament for the destruction and corruption of the place As Urbain points out, "Expressing scorn for emptiness on the one hand and obsession with the overfull on the other, purists frequently laugh into a dirge" (2003: 7). Take the example of Oriol, a holidaymaker in his 20s from Barcelona, one of the few people I met travelling on his own. He was cycling around the island for two weeks because, as he explained to me, when he is travelling alone the bike keeps him company. He was however a bit disappointed about the type of people he was encountering on the beach. Thus, for example, he regretted "after half an hour, arriving exhausted to that cove, finding out that it's full of boats, full of people that come with their speedboat and set their stall up on the beach, and even full of children that inflate balloons and make a sort of birthday party". In general he does not like to go to the beach in summer when it is so

crowded. Instead he prefers to go to the beach in winter on his own to avoid the stress of the day. "On the beach I like quietness. I like it as a place of escape, have a swim and refresh myself. I'm not the sort of person who spends the whole day on a beach with their family, an umbrella and a freezer". Oriol, like so many other tourists cannot bear the spectacle of the virgin beach being deflowered by mass tourism.

Our vacationer, like Urbain's subject, does not want to go where too many people go. There is a general concurrence in regretting crowds and urging for a solitary and private experience of the virgin beach. It is a matter of fact that people are actively trying to avoid the company of big crowds by, for example, looking for remote isolated corners at the very end of the beach or behind a rock where it is possible to enjoy a quiet and semi-private experience of nature. The lack of crowds is certainly one of the crucial elements that make the virgin beach different and better in the eyes of its consumers. Being alone on the beach, or almost, is for a lot of people one of the most precious experiences of the holiday. This was the case of Raúl, a holidaymaker in his 30s from Barcelona. After spending a week with some friends, he was planning to stay few days alone in a 'secret' cave near the sea. He used to be part of the neo-hippy community that roam through the island every summer, but now he has a permanent job and only come for a few weeks in August, if he has no other plans. In the following quotation he acknowledges, in a rather mystic tone, being alone on the beach in a 'magic' hour of the day like the dawn or the dust as one the most exciting prospects of the holiday.

> "Well, It's an important moment to me. I don't mind sharing the beach. What I don't like are the crowds. Well it is a bit selfish asking for a beach to myself. It's a dream. But it is enough just a moment, an instant… that's why I look for dawns and sunset. And I have found them. I have experienced a lot of sunrises. At first light I am already up, I take my breakfast and I have 2 or 3 hours only for me. I am the only one, and this is already fantastic. it is already a gift. It's great"

This quotation suggests not only the importance of a solitary experience of nature, but also the value of approaching the virgin beach with a semi-spiritual and contemplative attitude, a central element of the romantic-inspired approach to nature according to Urry

(1990: 45) and Urbain (2003: 8). The moment in which Raúl is alone on the beach at dawn is an intense and profound moment, dense with meaning and transcendence. It is a matter of fact that the virgin beach is full of special, and deep moments like the one Raúl describes, which are open to some kind of spirituality. Although most allusions are vague, there are numerous passages from interviewees that highlight the significance of a transcendental and contemplative attitude on the virgin beach. Núria and Helena, for example, two friends from Barcelona in their 20s that I met in Macarelleta, alluded to the "moments of gratifying silences and good chats". For them, the virgin beach is a place open to spirituality and contemplation. Lui and Sofia, a young couple in their earlier 30s from Milan, were even more explicit. They admitted feeling in contact with God on the beach "To me it is a feeling of... being in touch with god, with the lord. It's a paradise, it's wonderful". As Urbain points out "The purists worship beaches like others worship mountains" (2003: 8).

The virgin beach is an expression of the Crusoean desire for a more simple and natural life. There are numerous evidences that link the virgin beach with the ideals of simplicity and naturalness. The most radical example is the neo-hippy community that roam the island during the summer, an unconventional and controversial group of holidaymakers that I will discuss extensively in the next chapter. For them, the virgin beach is a place to experiment with alternative and simpler ways of life and to feel closer to nature. One of their members defined their philosophy as "the philosophy of enjoying a direct contact with nature and discovering your own instinct". Mainstream holidaymakers also associate the virgin beach with the ideals of simplicity and naturalness. As figure 6.8 suggests tourists enjoy sitting on the sand without the mediation of sun beds, parasols and other gadgets normally used on the beach. People want to be as close as possible to nature and feel the sun, the sea and the sand on their skin. Activities like nudism, diving or mud baths are also an expression of the importance of a simple and unmediated relation with nature. It is a matter of fact that on the virgin beach conspicuous consumption does not have a place. Bars, shops and restaurants would destroy the sense of naturalness and simplicity that tourists are looking for. Even cars are out of place. For the experience of the virgin beach to be

authentic requires physical effort. The association of the virgin beach with the ideals of simplicity and naturalness is an expression of the crusoean desire to 'get away from it all' and to 'return to one's own' (2003: 297).



Figure 6.8 Carlos and Sonia enjoy sitting on the sand without a towel or a sun bed. In the picture they are covered with mud.

On the virgin beach an attitude of respect for the site and an attention to the local life is prevailing. I met a significant number of holidaymakers, especially in Cavalleria, who felt a special attachment to the virgin beach. People repeatedly expressed their desire to penetrate the island and reach its most peaceful and remote spots. Some even expressed their desire to become a local. In general they were the same people who demonstrate an accurate knowledge of the island, its toponomy and even its socio-politico affairs. It was not rare to be asked about the now abolished eco-tax or the political future of the island. A lot of people, in particular Catalans, care for Menorca, for its future and, in particular, for its everyday state. This attitude of care is manifest in the following passage in which Josep and Beth, Catalan holidaymakers in their 30s, narrate an incident with other

tourists who left rubbish on the beach. The incident they described takes place in El Pilar, one of the remotest and wildest beaches of the island.

> "Yesterday in El Pilar I had to warn 4 people. They just had finished a watermelon and they took a plastic bag, they put the leftover in and they left it behind a rock. Bloody hell, I said. If we carried our daughter and our food, four adult persons could bring their rubbish back. And then I approach them and I asked them if they were about to leave their rubbish there. …No… well … because of the flies and so on. The problem is that if everybody did the same, the beach would become …"

Caring for the place as if they were locals, Josep and Beth play at integration and participatory observation. According to Urbain this behaviour has much in common with the "pioneer-artist". "He has 'an explorer's approach; he wants to understand the place in depth and to respect its population, whose dwellings, meals and customs he will share, and to respect the site, whose natural beauties he will bring back home" (2003: 17). Our vacationer is an experimental tourist who wants to discover places and itineraries and who breaks with the highly structured reality of mass tourism.

Although he has stripped off his clothes and may even have became a nudist, our vacationer has not fully renounced the manners that characterise early seaside vacationing. I do not totally agree with Urbain when he contends that in the aftermath of the Second World War the early image of the maniacal and well-mannered Robinson has been replaced by an occult and sentimental version of Robinson, who approaches the beach as a space of desire, instinct and love instead of authority. "He has gone over to the other side of the island"- he suggests- "to the side of pleasure, leaving behind on the first beaches, as if released in his custody, the docile and well-behaved Friday of the early stage of seaside vacationing" (2003: 129). On the virgin beach a serious and restrained attitude as well as a self-controlled disposition of the body and its emotions are expected. The 'virgin' beach is not a place of strident and grotesque behaviours, but of contentment and relaxation. The virgin beach is mainly experienced through a self-controlled but unwound disposition of the body and its emotions as well as very passive and sometimes even 'sensual' types of activities. Holidaymakers tend to spend most of

their time quiet and relaxed, lying on the sand with rarely anybody screaming or bringing a loud CD. People mainly sit, smoke, look at the horizon, read the newspaper, swim or just float on the water with a lilo. Most of the tourists that I have interviewed explicitly acknowledge the virgin beach as a place of relaxation and stillness. Thus, for example, when asked about how they feel on the beach, most of my respondents used expressions such as "very relaxed, very well" or "I feel comfortable, relaxed and mindless…". Menorca and its beaches have been traditionally linked with relaxation and quietness, to the extent of being nicknamed as *l'Illa de la Calma*, literally the peaceful island. Brochures, postcards, tour guides and other forms of tourist literature generally picture the island as a peaceful and well-mannered resort, thus contrasting it with busy and noisy Mediterranean resorts like Mallorca or Eivissa.

The particular subjective disposition that is predominant on the virgin beach, and in particular the serious and restrained attitude that prevails, is an expression of an elitist and cultivated taste. I agree with Neumann when he suggests in relation to the Grand Canyon, "aesthetic appreciation was more than a matter of training the ear or the eye. It also meant that a properly educated visitor should approach wilderness as through approaching the symphony, opera or art museum – by practicing the rules of appropriate social conduct, self-restraint". "Properly attending the Canyon"- he adds- "involved an ability to control the emotions in an environment best comprehended through silent and distant contemplation" (1999:132). Indeed the kind of subjective disposition that is predominant of the virgin beach is the expression of a middle class taste. Beaches like Macarella or Cavalleria are not only exempt of urban development but also of the dis-inhibited and carnivalesque behaviour that the working class brings to the beach.

Contested visualities: embodied and gendered landscapes.

In the previous section I introduced a passage by Josep and Beth narrating an incident with other tourists who left rubbish on the beach. The incident took place on a hot day in El Pilar, one of the remotest and wildest beaches of the island. I go back to this passage because it evidences that visiting an unspoilt beach like El Pilar is not just a question of visual consumption and cultivated taste. There is also the matter of bringing our bodies with us, with all the problems that this entails. "Bloody hell"- Josep complains – "if we carried our daughter and our food, four adult people could bring their rubbish back". In order to enjoy the transparent waters of El Pilar Josep and Beth had to walk for nearly an hour through an uncomfortable sandy footpath carrying their young daughter and all the bags with the food and the towels. Indeed, their experience of that virgin beach is not just about contemplation, it is not even just about swimming and sunbathing; it also implies an unexpected physical effort. It is a fully-embodied experience. The innocent comment of Josep and Beth complaining about the lack of consideration of other tourists calls attention to the same crucial fact that de Botton (2003) alluded to in an article in "The Guardian"; that we all have to take ourselves along with us, that tourism is not unmediated disembodied experience.

> "Perhaps the deepest reason why our travels let us down stems from the perplexing fact that when we look at pictures of places we want to go to see (and imagine how happy we would be if only we were there), we are prone to forget one crucial thing: that we will have to take ourselves along with us. That is, we won't just be in India/ South Africa/ Australia / Prague/ Peru in a direct, unmediated way, we'll be there with ourselves, still imprisoned in our own bodies and minds- with all the problems this entails" (de Botton, 2003: 2)

This section proposes an embodied account of the tourist phenomenon of the virgin beach which does not forget the fact that 'we will have to take ourselves along with us'. Being paradigmatic of a cognitive approach to nature that privileges detached

observation over embodied participation, the tourist phenomenon of the virgin beach is based on the concealment of the embodied and non-representational practices through which people experience nature. As Ingold points out "The notion that we can stand aside and observe the passage of time is founded upon an illusion of disembodiment" (2000: 196). An occulocentric and cognitive approach to nature produces the impoverishment of bodily relations and the dematerialisation of vision (Franklin, 2002; Macnaghten and Urry, 1998; Mulvey, 1999; Krauss, 1988). I agree with Franklin when he argues, "visualism, the dominance of the visual, partially disembodies relations with the natural world" (2002: 188). It also produces an illusion of distance and detachment between the subject and the object of the gaze. "Visualism"- Franklin argues – "distances the observer from objects under view and encourages a fleeting, restless, processual character of experience" (2002: 228). By focussing on the dominance of the look, Franklin (2002) but also Macnaghten and Urry (1998) rewrite a major topic of feminist writing on the gaze. "In our culture" –Irigaray points out– "the predominance of the look over the smell, taste, touch and hearing has brought about an impoverishment of bodily relations. The moment the look dominates, the body looses its materiality" (Irigaray, 1978:123; quoted in Pollock 1998). The concealment of the body, the dematerialisation of vision and the illusion of distance and detachment are expressions of the very condition of modernity. As Franklin drawing on Thrift (1999) points out, "the very condition of modernity with its emphasis on rationality and cognition creates distances and barriers to understanding the very things that happen to our body" (Franklin, 2002: 228).

We can neither treat the visual as a disembodied relation with the natural world nor reduce nature to visual representation and ocular modes of sensing, concealing the complex, diverse, overlapping and contradictory ways in which people sense the world around them (Macnaghten & Urry, 1998; Franklin, 2002). In the first part of this section I demonstrate that the virgin beach, despite presupposing a disembodied illusion, is the result of a particular way of using the body. The visual consumption of nature does not just imply observation but a set of practices and perceptions that are put together in a context of the hegemony of vision. Following Jokinen and Veijola (2003), I

acknowledge that what one sees depends upon the posture of the one who sees. I identify three different postures through which tourists visually consume the virgin beach, each of which has different implications. In the second part I consider the virgin beach as an example of urban and middle class practices of dwelling. Being the product of embodied and culturally mediated practices the virgin beach presupposes political and social meanings as well as power and gender relations. I present the virgin beach in accordance with the masculine tendencies to master, conquer, penetrate and see from above. I also identify a dense web of images and representations through which the virgin beach is being produced and reproduced.

Embodied visualities

I take as my starting point the work of Jokinen and Veijola on embodied visualities. They contend that "Visuality, of all senses, is the most embodied one: what we see depends on our posture and position" (2003: 260). The differences in vision are not only the result of different 'sensual subjectivities' or cultural mediations but also of different 'sensual objectivities' and embodied postures. There is no visuality without the embodied aspects of the vision. I use the work of Jokinen and Veijola to argue that the tourist phenomenon of the virgin beach is never really just an example of contemplation but a set of practices and perceptions that are put together in a context of hegemony of the visual. It is not only the fact that the sight is part of the sensuous apparatus of the body, but that visuality depends upon a particular way of using the body. We can neither treat the visual as a disembodied relation with the natural world nor reduce nature to visual representation and ocular modes of sensing, concealing the complex, diverse, overlapping and contradictory ways in which people sense the world around them.

Despite the appearance of objectivity, there is no stable, harmonious and objective way of seeing on the virgin beach; different ways of seeing coexist, each of which have different implications. Vision is not a natural or an unmediated act; vision is a contested terrain, an open and unstable reality. This is the central argument of the edited collection

on "vision and visuality" that Foster (1988) coordinates. There is neither an 'objective' and essential way of seeing nor a natural hierarchy of sight. As Jay points out "the scopic regime of modernity may best be understood as a contested terrain, rather than a harmoniously integrated complex of visual theories and practices" (1988: 4). The apparent visual coherence of a place like the virgin beach is the result of the persistent physical and ideological management of the object of the view, as well as the hegemony of a cultivated taste. On the virgin beach there are active mechanisms that conceal the unstable and open reality of vision. It is a matter of fact that each scopic regime seeks to close out the difference in vision. I agree with Foster when he claims, "it is important to slip these superimpositions out of focus and to disturb the given array of visual facts" (Foster, 1988: ix).

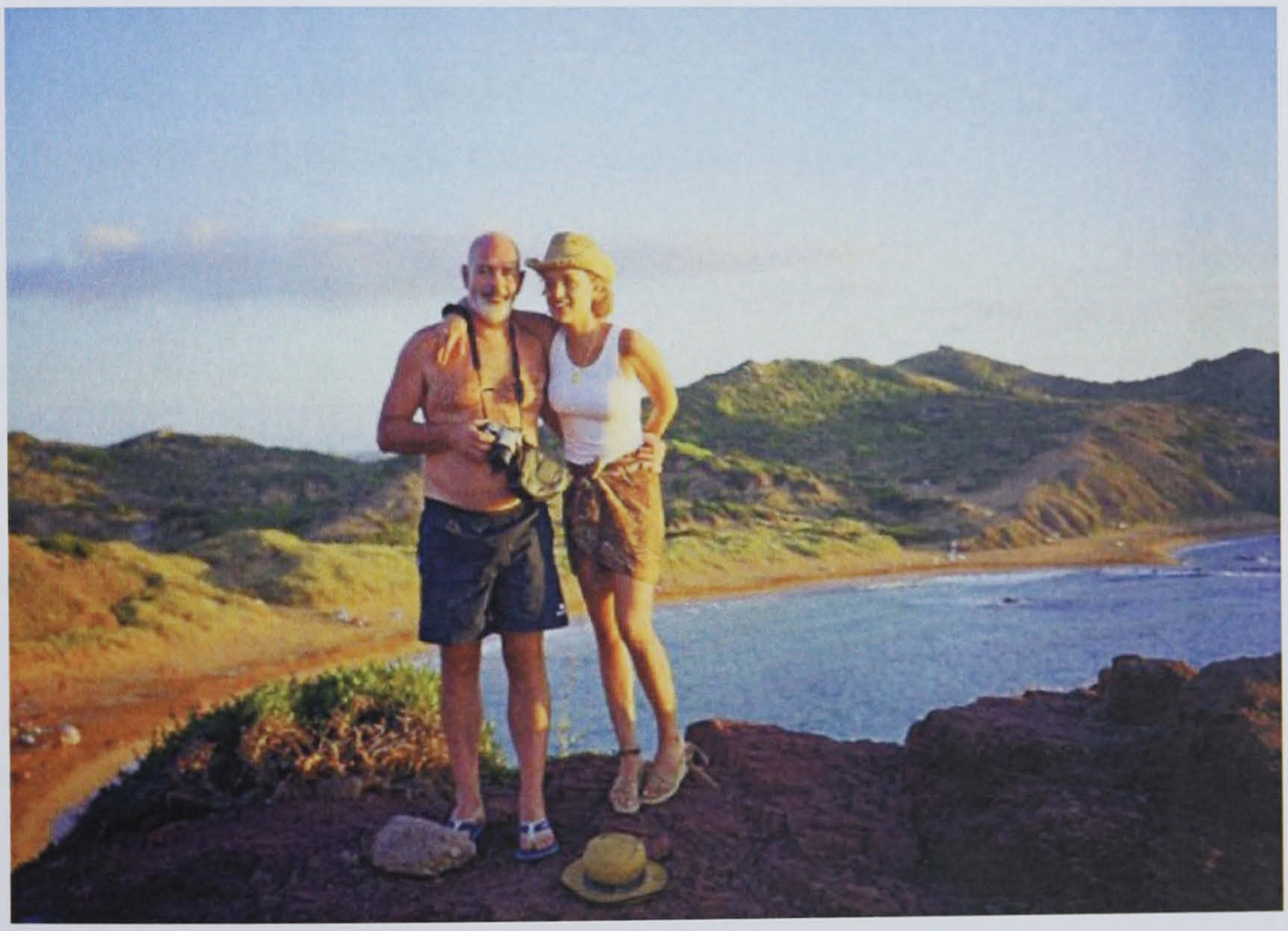


Figure 6.9 In most beaches there is a natural promenade from which you can get a panoramic view of the area. A romantic picture of a couple taken late in the afternoon at Cavalleria.

I have identified three different postures through which tourists visually consume the virgin beach, each of which reveals a different point of view. First of all there is the view

from the car while driving through to country lanes that lead to the virgin beach. The car, especially now that most have AC, procures a panoramic and distanced view of the area that conceals the non-visual characteristics of the landscape. When driving to beach the outstanding rural Menorcan landscape appears and disappears like a theatrical or cinematographic stage with the soundtrack of a CD or a radio and without the heat and the dust of the road. Secondly there is the view from the lane that goes from the car park to the beach. At some point in this lane there is a natural promenade from which people can get a panoramic view of the area. Although this promenade is almost never signposted as a viewpoint, tourists will stop to contemplate the beach and take a picture of the area, especially if it is the first time that they visit the beach. In figure 6.9 I reproduce a romantic picture taken from a promenade in Cavelleria. They will visually inspect the beach with the excuse of deciding where to settle down. They will also look to the far distance wondering, for example, whether that is the place they visited the day before. In the following passage, Louise, a middle class holidaymaker in her early 40s from the North East of England, describes the particular moment when she procured the first panoramic view of the area from a promenade on the track that lead to the beach. Contemplating the sea, the boats and the landscape from that promenade was an intense moment in which her gaze intermingled with her wish to be there.

> Pau: What do you like about that beach [Cavalleria]?
> Louise: .. mmm... a mixture of the ... you follow a footpath and you look down on it first. So you can see the whole, you can see the whole bay first. And you just say oh I would just love to be in that sea down there. You can see just a few boats that are crossing the sea. You can just see all down there, it just looks perfect.

These two embodied postures have in common the fact that both procure a detached and disembodied view of the landscape. The differences are in the fact that one reveals a static scene while the other reveals a landscape in movement. On the virgin beach holidaymakers do not only think of themselves as external observers of nature, but they also tend to keep a physical sense of perspective over the landscape. Beach sightseeing is neither an act of immersion into the landscape, into the green and blue, nor is it a direct and intimate engagement with nature a in the case of hunting and angling

(Franklin 2001). Rather the observer-participant generally keeps a safe distance from the landscape, from the trees the cliffs or the fields. Holidaymakers on a virgin beach would rarely penetrate the woods, or move beyond the sandy beach and the shallow waters; even more rarely they would pay attention to the particular tree or bird that inhabits that place. It is more important to enjoy a panoramic vision of the area, to glimpse the place they wish to see. These two standpoints, in particular the promenade, embody the visual characteristics that Jokinen and Veijola relate with the mountain, the first of the three points of view on nature they identify. The mountain presupposes a downward perspective that masters the sight and reaches the sublime. This point of view is well in accordance with the historically masculine tendencies to master, conquer and see from above something else that is historically female: nature, wilderness and mysteriousness (2003: 264-266).

On the virgin beach there is however a third point of view that breaks with the masculine tendencies to master, conquer and penetrate; the view from the beach itself. In general the sand enjoys a generous vista not only to the landscape but also to the immensity of the horizon. When sitting on the sand you do not procure a detached and external panorama from above, but a view from inside, from bellow. This is the case, in particular, in small coves surrounded by cliffs and hills like Macarelleta. You also produce a view to the horizon and to the infinite, which for a lot of people is what makes the beach better than the swimming pool. Contrary to what happens from the car and from the promenade, the view to the horizon is not fast and short, but long, slow and persistent. Sitting on the sand enables you to appreciate the slow movement of the landscape, such as the progression of a boat, or the change in the reflections of the sun on the sea. The view to the horizon is, like no other view, an act of contemplation, a 'spiritual' gaze, which is inwards as much as outward. Looking at the horizon for a long time is a practice that enables people to relax and think profoundly. Take for example the case of Núria and Helena, two friends from Barcelona in their 20s. Looking at the horizon and hearing the waves enables them to reflect properly, to go inside and to go beyond. They even defined their life on a virgin beach as a "contemplative life". This third standpoint embodies the characteristics that Jokinen and Veijola identify with the

abyss (2003: 266). The abyss procures an inward and upward perspective that enables the consumption of pleasurable, scary but safe emotions. While the view from the promenade is in accordance of the masculine tendencies to master and penetrate, the view from the beach is a much more feminine way of seeing, sensual, relational and spiritual.

The 'virgin' beach as a form of dwelling in nature

There is no landscape without a cultural and embodied aspect. It is through the practices and movements of the body of the observer as well as the cultural mediations in which the virgin beach is interlocked that the place gets its attributes. According to Jokinen and Veijola, "The border zone between culture and nature in the landscape *happens*, is practised through and within embodied subjects who inhabit the landscape, move and feel (in) it, smell it, yield to its forms and curves and fight them" (2003: 274). Places are not the result of cognitive construction but of a complex set of practices through which people engage with nature. As Ingold points out, "A place owes its character to the experiences it affords to those who spend time there – to the sights, sounds and indeed smells that constitute its specific ambience. And this in turns depends on the kinds of activities in which its inhabitants engage. It is from this relational context of people`s engagement with the world, in the business of dwelling that each place draws its unique significance" (2000: 192). Although it presupposes a disembodied, cognitive and detached approach to nature, the virgin beach is still the result of an embodied and practical engagement with the environment (Franklin, 2002; Ingold, 1995, 2000). In identifying the tourist phenomenon of the virgin beach with a particular type of dwelling, I reproduce Olwig's (1996) substantive critique to the notion of landscape. It is not enough to study the landscape as a scenic text, it is also necessary a substantive understanding of landscape that derives "from the historical study of our changing conceptions and uses of land/landscape, country/countryside" (Olwig 1996: 645).

The 'virgin' beach is an expression of an urban and middle class way of approaching the natural environment. It corresponds with the type of dwelling in nature that Urry & Macnaghten term 'leisure landscapes'. This kind of 'dwellingness' is distinctive in the exceptional power of the visual sense, the pre-eminence of an aesthetic sensibility and the temporal and geographical estrangement from everyday life "In such leisure landscapes"- Macnaghten and Urry argue- "work, leisure and domestic routines are geographically and temporally estranged from each other and the physicalities of the situated body are leisured and have nothing to do with those of land per se" (2000:7-8). The holidaymakers who come to Menorca to enjoy places like Macarella or Cavalleria, who are predominantly from Barcelona and Madrid, do not engage with the natural environment as insiders, like the peasant does, working the land as a way of economic survival. Their dwellingness is not that of the land, but that of the 'landscape'. Holidaymakers do not develop an unalienated relationship with nature based on use values that dominate agrarian economies. They approach nature as consumers and pleasure-seekers through practices that not only pursue the visual consumption of the place but also 'to get away from it all' and re-live a simpler and more natural life. Like the original concept of landscape, the tourist phenomenon of the virgin beach participates in the "dissolution of the relation of human beings to the earth as the natural basis of production" (Cosgrove, 1998: 61).

Because there is no landscape without a cultural and an embodied aspect, any landscape presupposes political and social meanings as well as power and gender relations. As Jokinen and Veijola points out, "A landscape is a construction that builds differences in gender, age, class, ethnicity and sexuality, and, thus, its viewer and subject"(2003: 274). There are neither neutral ways of dwelling (and seeing), nor approaches to nature unrelated with the production of the social subject. There is indeed a complex moral geography that shapes the costal landscape of Menorca, which is related with class, age and gender. In particular, the notion of virginity presupposes a distinctive gender construction and sexual order. It is an expression of a sexual metaphor of mastery, domination and penetration (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998: 124) thus demonstrating that subjects and spaces are sexed and gendered. In using the notion of 'virginity' the

emphasis is placed on masculine efforts to exert mastery over a feminised nature that is presupposed untouched, empty and separated from the space of modernity. Paraphrasing Jokinen and Veijola, "feminized first purified and then penetrated, space of travel and conquests, it provides the scene for writing yet another history between men" (2003: 269). The virgin beach is a history of a masculine subject deflowering a feminised nature.



Figure 6.10 A typical postcard of Menorca with romanticised images of 6 unspoilt beaches. As a subtitle it mentions the declaration of Menorca as a Biosphere Reserve. Despite addressing a wider audience, a majority of postcards use Catalan language in order to convey authenticity.

The virgin beach is not a natural and unmediated landscape. Like in the case of the Grand Canyon that Neumann (1999) examines, the virgin beach is interlocked in a dense web of images, practices, representations and visual technologies which are co-responsible for its formation. In calling attention to this web of cultural practices and representations I do not intend to reduce the analysis of the virgin beach to the discovery

of some hidden metanarrative, but to remark upon the sense of materiality and eventfulness of a cognitive and visual approach to nature. As Crang points out "Analysing inscription and marking, without looking for practices, can only produce a mortuary geography drained of the actual life that inhabits these places" (Crang 1999: 248). Photography is the most relevant component in this web of cultural practices and representations, but it is not the only one: I would like to introduce four artistic or pseudo-artistic manifestations, which are intimately related with the virgin beach: the postcard, the travel book, the T-shirt and local artistic manifestations.

Of those mentioned above, the postcard is the most significant pseudo-artistic manifestation related with the virgin beach. It is literally impossible to be a tourist in Menorca and not to come across a postcard with an appealing image of a virgin beach. The image of a paradisiacal and empty beach is nowadays the most representative postcard of Menorca. (figure 6.10). The postcard is important not only in strengthening the image of Menorca and its beaches as virgin, but also as a material actant. A postcard is not just an image, but an object with the capacity to trigger multiple practices and dreams. Thus for example, it is not rare at all to find tourists who choose the beach by looking at postcards. Tourist guides and travel books are equally responsible for the popularity of the 'virgin beach'. There has been an implosion of literature that stresses the beauty of the landscape, the sea and the environment of Menorca in which the notion of the 'virgin beach' is central. The list includes tour guides with more or less taste for the natural environment, but also photographic books, specialised guides of plants, birds, and even novels and essays. Their role is relevant not only in the formation of a particular image of Menorca and its beaches but also as material actants with the capacity to trigger multiple tourist practices. Postcards, travel books and tour guides channel and give order to the tourist experience of Menorca.

The T-shirt is a particularly interesting pseudo-artistic manifestation related with the virgin beach. The T-shirt is a product that has become a must-buy souvenir for everybody who visits the island. Their commercial success relies on producing good artistic designs that allude to the natural beauty of the island. Everything evokes a

natural image of Menorca and its beaches; the commercial logos, with expressions like "the natural t-shirt of Menorca"; the colours and the materials of the T-shirt; and in particular the references that the T-shirt contains, e.g. the beach, the sea, a lighthouse, a bird, a turtle, a bicycle and so on. In wearing these T-shirts people are also wearing an image, an idea, and sometimes even a slogan about Menorca. Like the previous examples, the T-shirt is a material actant that unsettles different connections, dreams and desires about Menorca and the beach. The local artistic creations work in a similar way. Outside the tourist field there are countless examples of songs, poems, novels and paintings that recreate the ideas of unspoilt landscape and virgin beach. They are critical in transforming the beach into an enchanted place that triggers dreams and desires, a place for another life.

Beyond spectacular natures

The 'virgin' beach is an exceptional setting not only for examining a romantic inspired approach, by which nature is gazed upon and turned into spectacle, the dominant approach in leisure tourism; but also for testing the limits and contestations of this approach. An account of the tourist experience of the beach is incomplete if it focuses only on the visual consumption of the beach even when considering this already as an embodied practice. Working within a visual framework neither exhausts the experience of the beach nor overcomes the limitations and contradictions of vision. Vision tends to assume a distal and idealistic form of knowledge that exaggerates the atomistic and the individual (Paterson, 2004: 168). This emphasis on passivity and detachment underscores the potential of an embodied and performative account of the human interface with nature (Franklin, 2002: 5-8). Vision has little to tell us about practices such as swimming, sunbathing and building sandcastles, which presuppose an active engagement with the environment. If the beach were, like a castle or a cathedral, just another tourist spot for sightseeing, tourists would leave the place earlier, shortly after visiting the beach, taking a picture and buying postcards in the souvenirs shops. They would not spend much more than one hour on the beach. The fact that they stay so long -

up to 8 hours - evidences the fact that the beach is not only about the visual consumption of spectacular natures. On the beach there are other articulations of senses, movements and taskscapes that penetrate the surfaces and superficialities of modern visual natures. The experience of the beach recurrently exceeds the rational and the visual.

This final section considers a range of sensual experiences and performantive dimensions of the beach that exceed a romantic inspired approach to nature. I take as my starting point the recognition that the beach is a haptic geography as much as it is a visual one. The predominant view of the beach as a spectacular nature is one that I challenge with the recognition of the haptic. By taking sandcastles as my example, I demonstrate that the beach draws its significance not only from mental and intellectual work, but also from the embodied, manipulative and non-representational practices of the people that inhabit them. Contrary to vision touch assumes a reciprocal and performative form of knowledge that exceeds representation. The beach shares with other leisure activities such as hunting and angling (Franklin, 2001, 2002) and adventure sports (Cloke and Perkins, 1998) a performative character (Franklin, 2002; Baerenholdt et al, 2004; Edensor, 1998, 2000a, 2001; Coleman and Crang, 2002 and Crang and Franklin, 2001). This section acts as a prelude to the next chapter, which uses the case of nudism to explore different ways of knowing through the body, in particular the role of visuality and the sense of touch.

The beach is a haptic geography as much it is a visual one. Being on the beach is a matter of feeling rather than seeing. What makes the beach a distinctive and pleasant experience is the direct exposure of the skin to the sun as well as the possibility of manipulating the sand and moving the body into the warm Mediterranean waters. Swimming, sunbathing and building sandcastles- the most characteristic beach activities- affirm a tactile and kinaesthetic relation with the environment. The feeling of the sun caressing the skin, the sensual movement of the body into the seawater, the transformation of the inert masses of sand into splendorous castles; all suggest a haptic order of the sensible. Thinking of the beach in terms of touch holds the key to articulating an embodied and performative account that does not drain the beach of life,

matter and enjoyment. Sound is also an important part of the experience of the beach although not quite so much as vision and touch. The waves kissing the sand and the trees rustling the wind create a rhythmic and uninterrupted rumour, which is often relaxing and inspiring. The soundscape confers a peaceful and tranquil character to the beach.

There are many modalities of touching, each of which enables a different set of feelings and modes of being. As I will demonstrate in the next chapter, the experience of the beach is closer to the notion of the caress than the grasp. Being on the beach is not about grasping the environment. It is not like climbing or surfing, a strong and sometimes violent contact with the mountains or the waves. It is a much more quiet, sensual and peaceful relation with the natural elements. On the beach people do not intend to take possession of the environment but to find delight in their relationship with it. "If one could posses, grasp and know the other, it would not be other. Possessing, knowing, and grasping are synonymous of power" (Levinas, 1997: 90). Being on the beach is not about knowing and mastering the environment, but interlacing with it, that is, opening up the body to the natural elements, letting the sun get in and enjoying the feeling of the water on the skin. In rewriting the warmth of the caress people establish on the beach a relationship with what always slips away, a relationship which is impossible to translate into knowledge and power "and must not be so translated, if one does not want to distort the meaning of the situation" (Levinas, 1997: 88). The caress does not act as a form of consciousness that limits the experience of nudism, reducing its complexity to sizeable translatable meanings. The act of caressing is a moment overfull of action that exceeds the rational and the visual. It is a form of sensibility that transcends the sensible (Paterson 2004: 173) a moment of resonation and amplification of life.

Sunbathing is one of the beach activities in which the pre-eminence of touch and the caress are more apparent. Although important, the key element of sunbathing is not the tan, the visual spectacle of coloured bodies, but getting the tan, that is, feeling the caress of the sun on the skin. Sunbathing is first and foremost an act of openness to the sun as well as an awareness of temperature. Letting the sun get in, warming the skin and feeling relaxed and sleepy are some of the main delights people find in sunbathing. The practice

of sunbathing breaks with the romantic inspired approach by which nature is gazed upon and turned into spectacle. What sunbathing has to offer is not a collection of views but the possibility of a highly sensualised, intimate but pleasurable relation with the natural environment. Most people think of sunbathing in haptic sensual terms as a pleasurable feeling. This is the case for Ruth from California.. "I love the feeling of the sun on my skin"- she emphasises- "It's just the best!". Very often this feeling is described as relaxing and energetic. Take for example the case of Javier, a solitary traveller in his early 30's from Valladolid that I meet in Cavalleria. He elaborates on the relaxing qualities of the sun. "It's very relaxing, a bath of sun is very relaxing. I love it". He even compares himself with a Lizard "I am like a Lizard. I can stay here until the sunset". Most of the observations I collected did not come as clear and rational statements but simply as general appellations to sensuality. Sometimes these appellations are punctuated by emotion and even a metaphysical discourse. In the following quotation Janet from Paris describes sunbathing primarily as an awareness of temperature. She qualifies such feelings as relaxing and almost spiritual. "I like being in the sun"- Janet explains - "because when I just close my eyes and I feel I'm getting very warm I think... I feel I'm getting more and more relaxed and I think it's good for my body and for my soul and for everything". Although none of these quotations explicitly mention touch, the pre-eminence of feeling over seeing is clearly apparent.

The experience of the beach draws largely on the non-representational qualities of touch, in particular on its receptivity and reciprocity. Far from being merely a supplement of vision and representation touch is a proximal mode of knowledge that often escapes the rational and the visual. Touch affirms a performative form of knowledge that exceeds representation, decentres the singular and coherent subject and overcomes the fixed and gendered positions of identification, voyeurism and narcissism. "By thinking about touch, place and knowledge"- Hetherington points out- "we do not have to begin with some phenomenological understanding of a subject who makes meaningful the object world [...] rather we can think of place as emergent from the hybrid and uncertain performances in which subjects and objects 'dance' together in ordinary and familiar ways" (Hetherington, 2003: 1937). On the beach we do not feel our bodies as having

distinct boundaries with the elements, with the sun, the sea and the sand, but as being interlaced with them. Paraphrasing Paterson "we feel our world and the world of the other as being co-implicated" (2004: 175). The sense of touch establishes a distinctive relation with the environment, in which there is no clear separation between subject and object as singular coherent entities. Modalities of touch provide a framework of proximity, openness and inter-subjectivity, that is, a space "between-us" (Paterson, 2004: 167).

Our experience of the beach is mainly practical not cognitive. We are not spectators of the beach, but participants in it. Despite being paradigmatic of a romantic inspired approach to nature, the beach shares with other leisure activities such as hunting and angling (Franklin, 2001, 2002) and adventure sports (Cloke and Perkins, 1998) a sensual and performative character. The experience of the beach incorporates, paraphrasing Edensor, "distinctive ways in which we express ourselves physically, simultaneously performing and transmitting meaning while sensually apprehending 'nature' and sustaining wider ideologies about nature and the role of the body in nature" (2001: 82). The beach draws its significance not only from mental and intellectual work, but also from the embodied, manipulative and non-representational practices of the people that inhabit them. The experience of the beach is not only about collecting views, but also manipulating and feeling the environment. "These"- Franklin points out in relation to hunting and angling- "are not dominated by visualism, at least not to the same degree as touristic nature leisures; indeed they are predicated not on the collection of 'views' but on the *manipulation and collection* of other things in which different configurations of senses become operative and which may be season and lifecycle related. They are predicated on an intimate knowledge and familiarity rather than the one-off, dispassionate visit" (2002: 189, his italics). Building sandcastles is probably the best example of the performative character of the beach. Drawing on Thrift (1997) and Radley (1995) in the next section I think of sandcastles as performative experiments that use the sand and the body to conjure virtual worlds and alternative ways of being.

It is in the very process of dwelling, of practical coping or engagement, that the beach is constituted. As Baerenholdt et al point out, "Neither the material existence of a physical place nor the memory of particular pleasurable visions makes tourist places come into being. These are nothing but potentials, possibilities, dreams, anticipations. Places however only emerge as 'tourist places' when they are appropriated, used and made part of the living memory and accumulated narratives of people performing tourism" (2004: 3). As with any other particular nature, the beach is not an external and pre-given reality, but a localised an relational phenomenon embedded in particular time and space. The beach is something material that is socially constituted mainly through everyday practices, tasks and movements such as building sandcastles, swimming or walking (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998, 2000; Franklin, 2002). The beach is not the result of a process of inscription but of sedimentation. Through dwelling, embodied practices, memories and social relations are incorporated into this particular landscape. As Ingold points out "The *landscape as a whole must likewise be understood as the taskscape in its embodied form*: a pattern of activities 'collapsed' into an array of features" (2000: 198, his italics). In using the concept of dwelling and taskscape I am pointing to the fundamental temporality of the beach. The beach is not a fixed entity, but a living process that is continuously unfolding through movement and manipulation. As Ingold points out, "there can be no places without paths along which people arrive and depart; and no paths without places that constitute their destinations and points of departure" (2000: 204). It is only as people feel their way through the beach that it comes into being.

The beach itself is neither an inert blank nor a radical outside, but a concatenation of material forces that has capacities and effects, inherent properties and potentialities (Anderson & Tolia-Kelly, 2004). The sphere of the material is active in shaping the experience of the beach. There is no place for a conception of the tourist as a solitary entity detached from the material and spatial environment mastering the world. I agree with Edensor on the need to reinstate the affordances of place and space, that is, "those qualities which are spatial potentialities, constraining and enabling a range of action" (x). Reinstating the affordances of the beach requires avoiding abstraction, that is,

reducing the beach to models of the social world, fetishes of some social superstructures. lifeless products that represent society. It is necessary to acknowledge the concreteness of the beach, its mundane and sensual qualities, its specific relations with the human world as well as its context of use.

The sensual qualities of the sand and sea are central to the tourist experience of the beach. Both the sand and the sea are concatenations of material forces with inherent properties that act and afford. In the case of Menorca the material conditions afford many sensual pleasures. The conditions of the sea, for example, are ideal for swimming, diving and playing in the water. The Mediterranean sea is warm, clear and welcoming. In the middle of the summer the seawater reaches 25 degrees, comfortably allowing people to spend long periods of time in the water. Feelings of safety and comfort are key affordances of the sea in Menorca. The transparency of the water, the seclusion of most of beaches and coves, the lack of tides and the often calm conditions of the sea, all contribute to a sense of safety. The environmental standards of the sea are very high. There are no serious problems of pollution. The main exception are the floating materials that often reach the coast depending on the direction of the wind. The bottom of the sea is rich with vegetation and fauna, making the island a popular spot for divers. The sensual qualities of the sand are also important to the experience of the beach. The sandy areas of Menorca are generally clean, welcoming and well preserved. In the south the sand is generally white, fine and quite sticky. While having a tropical character, the beaches in the south are pleasant environments to walk and play in that trigger multiple desires. In the north the sand is normally thicker, less sticky and of different colours. In some places it rather yellow and clay-like while in others it has tints of black and grey. The beaches of the north coast have a rather cold look but can be much more pleasant. The sand is not only less sticky but also contains a lot of clamshells and other marine products that people like to collect. Not all the elements of the beach are pleasant. The presence of seaweed, which has a key role in the production of sand, is often considered to be smelly and even 'disgusting'

Tourists are not teleological solitary and all-powerful subjects inscribing the sand with meaning, but uncertain and nomadic beings that are creating new worlds of meaning through the sand. Drawing on Deleuze & Gutari (1998) and Actor Network theory (Latour, 1999; Hitchings, 2003) this thesis assumes an understanding of subject as a relational effect generated by a network of heterogeneous, interacting processes and materialities. There is a complex network of materials and technologies through which we dwell on the beach. The towel, the umbrella, the sun cream, the lilo, the beach ball, the goggles, the flippers, the bucket and spade all form part this network. The experience of the beach is formed, in part, by the many small materialities such as the smell of sun cream, the pleasure found in sculpting the sand, the luxury of floating on a lilo, the relief found under the shadow cast by an umbrella. The beach, like any other particular nature, is a crisscross of different mobilities and proximities, social-material networks, flows of anticipation, performance and memories. Beaches, paraphrasing Baerenholdt et al, are not 'isolated islands of pleasure' but 'hybrids bridging the realms of humans and non-humans' (2004: 2).

Picture essay: sandcastles

More than any other leisure activity, building sandcastles challenges the common identification of the beach as a passive and voyeuristic space. Like sunbathing and swimming, building sandcastles is a leisure activity that penetrates the surfaces and superficialities of modern visual natures. It is an example of an everyday, skilful, embodied coping or engagement with the natural environment. In the form of a picture essay, this concluding section proposes a short insight into the socio-material reality of the sandcastle. I demonstrate how the beach draws its significance not only from mental and intellectual work but also from embodied, manipulative and social practices of the people that enjoy it. I also demonstrate the performative and ludic character of the beach. The sandcastle is one of the most characteristic performances through which people domesticate and inhabit the beach. As Baerenholdt et al point out, "through the sand, the space of the beach is domesticated, occupied, inhabited. The castle transforms

the endless dull masses of white, golden, fine grained or gravelled sand into a habitat. a kingdom imbued with dreams, hopes and prides" (2004: 3). Contrarily to the previous sections, these concluding remarks do not refer exclusively to the virgin beach. Building sandcastles is also a very popular phenomenon in urbanised beaches such as s'Arenal d'en Castell.

The sandcastle is one the most visible expressions of the ludic and convivial character of the beach, according to Urbain, one of its most fundamental dimensions (2003: 218). The beach responds to at least three characteristics that Huizinga (1949) associates with the notion of play. First of all, the beach is a temporary sphere of activity that stands consciously outside ordinary life. Despite being the result of a number of material and non-material networks, it proceeds within its proper boundaries of time and space according to its own rules. Secondly, the experience of the beach is intrinsically free. The beach is a place to enjoy that is not associated with any material or economical interest. It is a public space where the children can run freely and meet other people without the intermediation of the school, the hotel or theme park. Finally, the experience of the beach absorbs the participants intensively and utterly. People forget worries and preoccupations to focus on themselves, their castles and their games.



Figure 6.11 Playing at burying in the sand

There is however an additional characteristic that evidences the ludic and convivial character of the beach: the sand itself. The sand is not only a very safe place to play but also a very manipulative and plastic material with endless potentialities for playing. The sand is probably the best playground. Children can bury themselves (figure 6.11); try a handstand and, even more important, make a sandcastle (figure 6.12)



Figure 6.12 Building a big fortress



Figure 6.13 A classical Castle

The sand is a very malleable and fluid material that can be easily transformed into splendid castles (figure 6.13) sophisticated canals (figure 6.14), real animals and so on. Few other spaces have the plasticity and the potentiality of the sand



Figure 6.14 A sophisticated complex of towers and canals

Play is, according to Thrift (1997) and Radley (1995), a 'performative experiment' that uses the body to conjure up virtual -'as-if'- worlds, in other words, to configure "ways of being that can become claims to 'something more'" (Thrift, 1997: 147; Radley, 1995: 13). Play is an experience irreducible to the relations of power and control. The key element of play is located beyond the rational auspices of western societies, in the *elusory* capacity of the body (Radley, 1995: 5). Playing is something more than scripting upon the body or liberating it from social norms. It is an expression of the capacity of the body-subject to create non-denotative meaning through its senses, movements and tasks, in other words, through its ability to dwell-in particular things (Thrift, 1997: 147-8). The beach is a good example of a 'virtual' and performative space unfolded through play. Through the manipulation of the sand alternative ways of being are configured, new geographies are opened out, new connections and assemblages are tested and some meanings and utopias are spatialised. The attraction of the beach lies "in being able to articulate complexes of thought-with-feeling that words cannot name, let alone set forth, it is a way of accessing the world, not just a means achieving ends that cannot be named" (Radley, 1995: 13).



Figure 6.15 A small construction. Through the manipulation of the sand different meanings and utopias are spatialised.

The beach is not just a game or a performance; it is also a place in which it is literally possible to make a virtual word real and material. By building castles, canals and walls, children and adults transform with their hands the inert masses of sand into utopias, meanings and geographies. As Baerenholdt et al point out, sandcastles are "tangible yet fragile constructions, hybrids of mind and matter, imagination and presence. The castle only comes into existence by drawing together particular objects, mobilities and proximities" (2004: 2) Being a performative and material experiment, there is an intrinsic temporal dimension in most sandcastles. What makes sandcastles attractive is not the castle itself, the material product of the play; but the process of making them, the play itself.



Figure 6.16 A castle

The castle is a virtual story performed in and through the sand. Behind any child castle there are always secret stories of knights, soldiers, invaders, wars and princesses.



Figure 6.17 A father and a son playing at destroying sandcastles

The pictures that accompany this text are only frozen instants of these performances. Picturing castles conceals its most important dimension, the dimension of time, its fluid and changing character. Only one picture evidences the temporal and perfomative character of the sandcastle. In the figure 6.17 a father and his son are seen competing against each other at destroying sandcastles. They are playing at war through the sand.

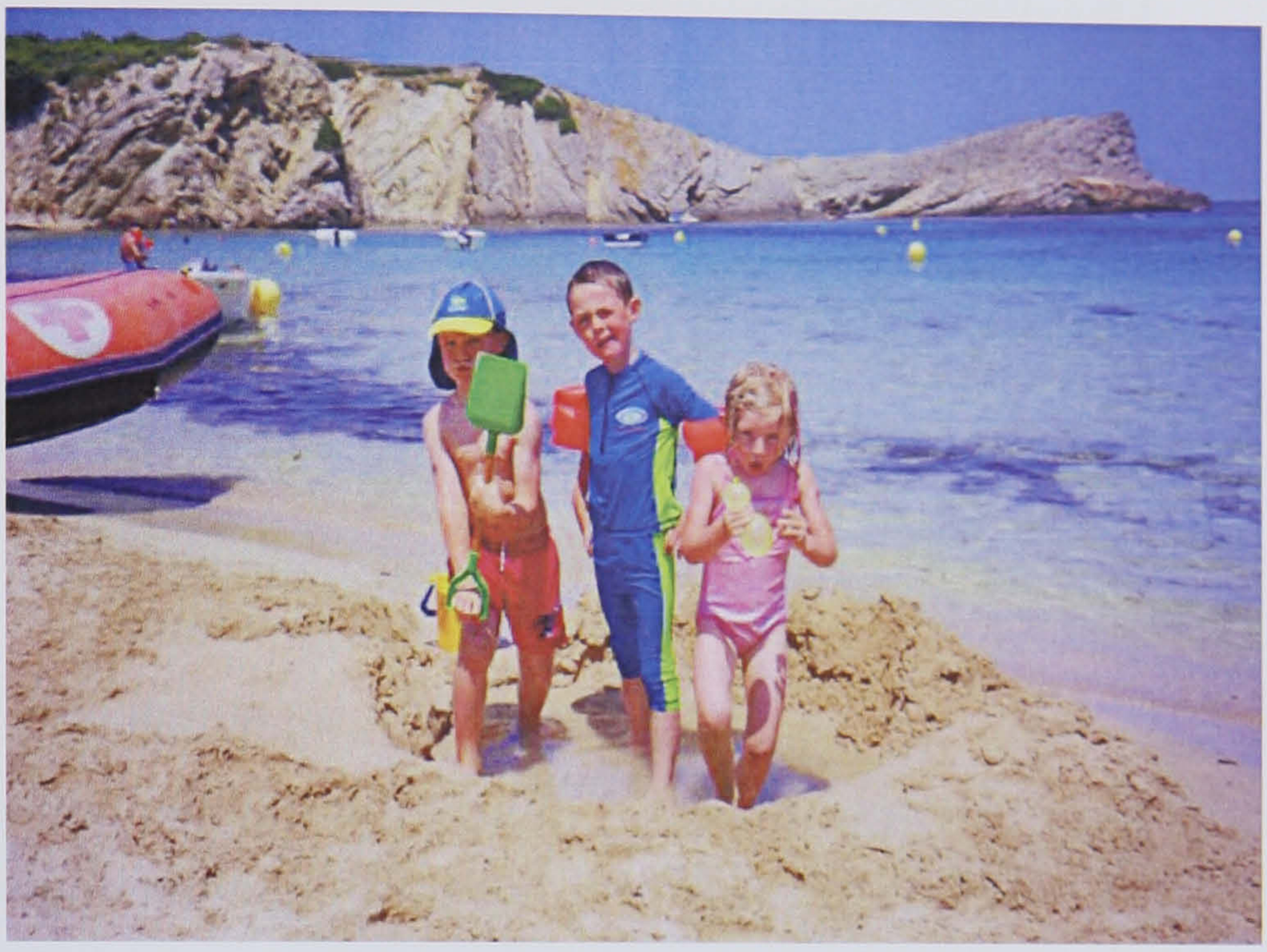


Figure 6.18 "Major engineering works"

Some 'constructions' have a stronger sense of performativity than others. This is the case with the 'constructions' pictured in the figures 6.18, 6.19 and 6.20. They are complex systems of holes, walls and canals, 'major engineering works' according to one of my respondents. In fact they can hardly be called a construction, they are just piles and holes of sand. They are uncompleted products, unfinished performances, stories made of sand.



Figure 6. 19 A hole in the sand

The purpose of making holes (figure 6.19) is to arrive deep into the water underneath; the walls are made to protect the hole from the erosion of the sea. First children will build a hole and then a wall to separate their new 'swimming pool' from the sea. Once this task is completed they will open a canal in order to let the seawater fill the hole. However a few minutes latter a wave will break the wall thus destroying their constructions (figure 6.20). Excited with the challenge that the sea poses, the children will rebuild bigger walls to protect their hole from the sea.



Figure 6.20 Building a swimming pool



Figure 6.21. A crocodile

Such a strong sense of performativity is almost inexistent in most of the adult constructions. The sandcastles in figures 6.21, 6.22, 6.23 and 6.24, do not have the temporal dimension that children's castles have. They are finished products mimetic representations of real things, such as a crocodile, a turtle and a Venetian mask. They are static sculptures, creations without stories of princesses and knights.

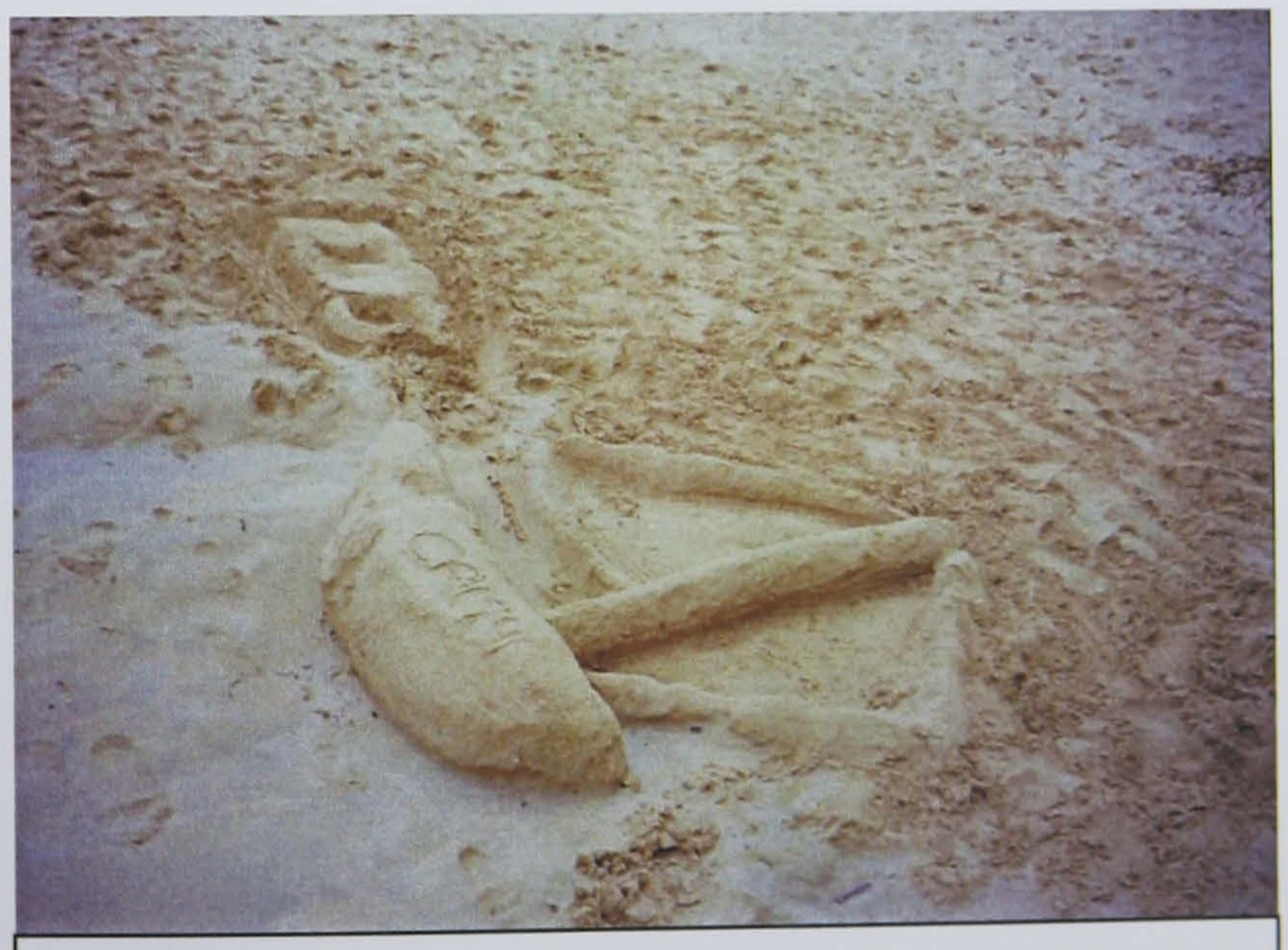


Figure 6.22 A boat



figure 6.23 Trying the Taj Majal

Indeed the adult builders enjoyed making a castle; it brought them the opportunity to be a child again. However, they are frozen pictures, inscriptions rather than performances. They are, paraphrasing Crang "mortuary geographies drained of the actual life" that inhabits the children's castles (1999: 248)



figure 6.24 An Italian mask

No matter what the differences, all sandcastles are intrinsically ephemeral. They are evanescent and fugacious creations that the waves, the wind and people will vanish away, soon after being conceived. They are not made to last, but for the sake of being made. As Baerenholdt et al point out, castles are always fluid and changing. "Tunnels and towers may collapse as the sun shines, the wet sand dries up, and the texture changes. The rising tide may cause water to penetrate the ramparts surrounding the moat and undermine the fortifications of the castle. The work of erosion and sedimentation alters the sandcastle slowly or with sudden ruptures. It changes their appearance and inspires new reconstructions, a submerged moat may inspire the construction of a channel to the sea, a collapsed tower affords space for an enlarging the stronghold" (2004: 6). Its changing and fluid character evidences that the sand is an autonomous and lively materiality empowered with movement. The sand is not a passive raw material, but a material actant with the capacity to trigger human action (Latour 1999; Whatmore, 1999; Hitchings, 2003). Children are playing with the sand and the sand is playing with the children.

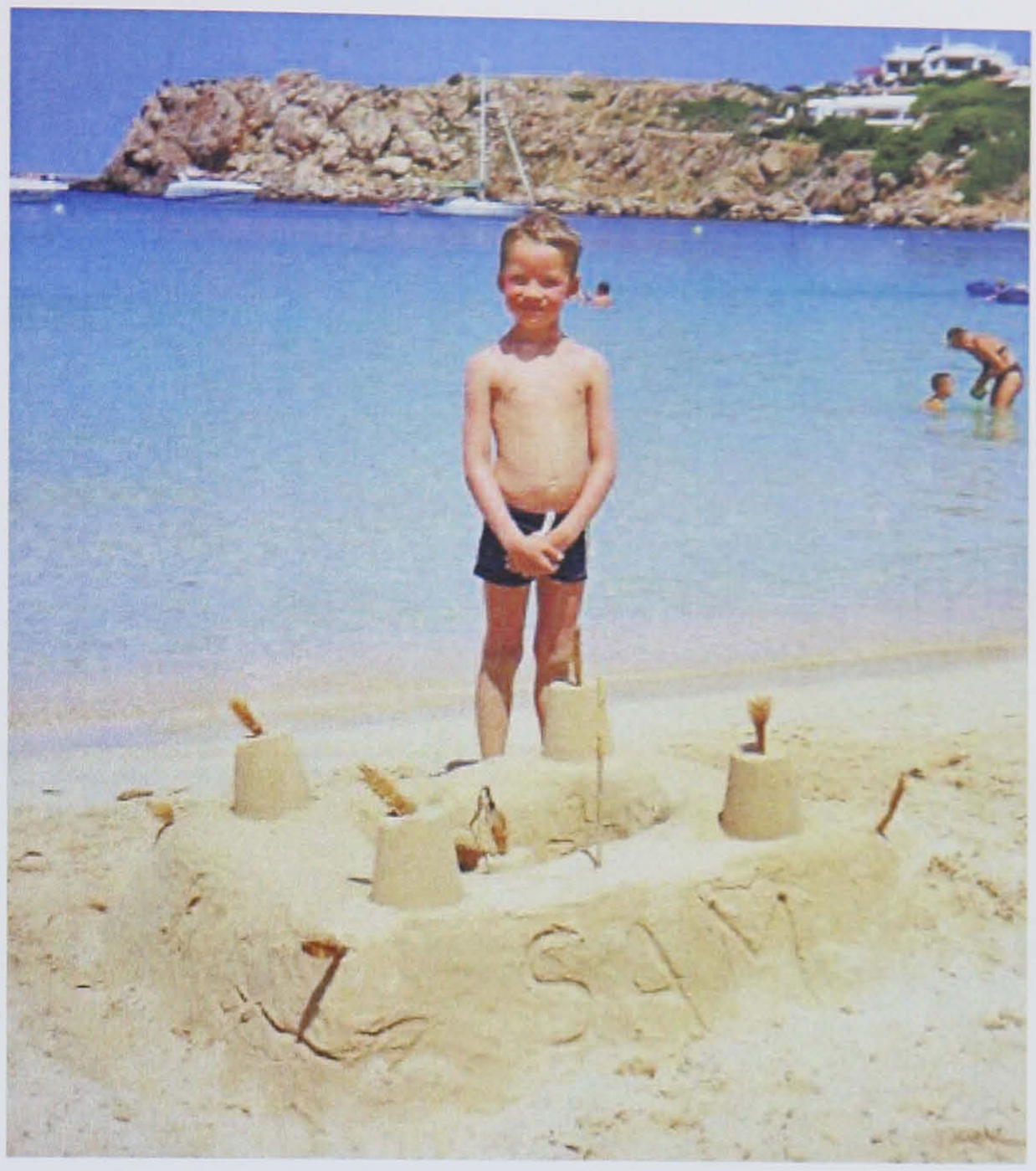


Figure 6.25 Sam posing behind his castle

I would like to finish this section with a closer examination of the castle in figure 6.25. It is a simple castle with straight lines coroneted with dried leafs of seaweed. It is not the product of mass production; it is rather simple and crafty. The most interesting detail is the inscription on the outside walls of the castle where you can read in big letters the name of the builder, SAM. Behind the castle Sam stands, proud of his work, as we can see in the face. This castle calls attention to the performative character of the beach. Sam inhabits and domesticates the beach by playing, creating, modelling, performing and so on. Sam may be very innocent, but his actions are by no means banal. His castle is a performative experiment in which he tests his abilities, he spatialises his dreams and ideas and he opens out new geographies and connections. In building his castle, Sam is opening new worlds of meaning, he is creating his world.... and the sand is made of children's dreams.

Chapter 7:

The naked body on the beach: nudism, visuality and the skin

The beach is, paraphrasing Urbain, the land of the naked men (2003:197). There are few other public places in western societies in which nakedness is so accepted than on the beach. Even in the most crowded and developed beaches the exposure of the flesh is a fundamental component of the experience. In Menorca nudity is intrinsically linked with the so-called virgin beach. It is not strange to meet people practicing nudism in most of these beaches. There is something natural in being fully naked in the white sands and turquoise waters of places such as Macarelleta or Trebalúger. As Bell and Holliday suggest nature has been persistently seen as the appropriate location for nakedness (2000: 130). Being associated with an Edenic image of nature, on the virgin beach, the naked body is effectively de-sexualised and re-naturalised, cast off from the corruption of civilisation, sex and culture.

This chapter analyses the phenomenon of nudism on the beaches of Menorca. Nudism is an exceptional case study for understanding not only the exposure of the flesh on the

beach, but also the role of the expressive, sensual and elusory faculties of the body in the experience of place. Thus, this is a chapter about 'the domain of bare life' in a double sense. It is about nudity but also it is about the unspeakable and invisible side of the body-subject that according to Thrift makes the world intelligible before the action of reason (2000: 39). The popularity of the beach relies enormously on the capacity of the body to create life, space and meaning in a way that refuses the objectifying gaze and the control of the discourse. As Game points out "the desire to put one's feet or body in the sand, to be in the water, can be understood as meaning embodied - feel, touch, fluid - and possibly non-speakable" (1991: 177). This chapter uses the case of nudism to explore different ways of knowing through the body, in particular, the role of visuality and the sense of touch. I analyse the particular articulation of the visual and the haptic sense that make possible the experience of the beach and also the utopias, pleasure and desires that are associated with them. I agree with Merleau-Ponty that knowledge and ideas are not the opposite of the sensible, and cannot be detached from flesh. "They could not be given to us as ideas except in a carnal experience" he argues, where knowledge has "been acquired only through its commerce with the visible, to which they remain attached" (1968: 150). By virtue of being elusory the body spatialises, it creates places by means of uniting us directly with people, spaces and things through its own ontonogesis, that is, through the entire sequence of events involved in its development as organism (Merleau-Ponty, 1968: 136). As Grosz points out, body and space are mutually defining, "there is a two-way linkage that could be defined as an interface" (Grosz, 1995: 108).

This chapter is divided into five sections. First of all, I present an overview of the practice of nudism in Menorca. Nudism is a fluid, flexible and quite spontaneous practice that is manifest mainly in unspoilt beaches, coexisting with mainstream beach users without major problems. The second section proposes an understanding of nudism based on Non-Representational Theory and the notion of play as formulated by Thrift (1997, 1999, 2000) and Radley (1995). I think of nudism as a 'performative experiment' that uses the body to 'conjure up virtual worlds' and alternative ways of being. It is an expression of the *elusory* capacity of the body-subject to open out experience and to

create non-denotative meaning. By using Non-Representational Theory, I propose an embodied account that focuses on the 'domain of bare life' (Thrift, 2000) thus giving credence to what remain invisible and non-rationalised in the body. The third section analyses the uneasy relation between nudism and the visual sense. Being inextricably linked with sexuality, the visual sense brings to the fore the possibility of being used as an object of sexual stimulation. The kind of visuality that is associated with the practice of nudism does not correspond with the dominant way of seeing in leisure tourism, as it is defined by Urry (1990). If it did, the practice of nudism would be an intolerable and voyeuristic experience. The practice of nudism presupposes an counter-hegemonic way of seeing which is circumspect and liberating. The nudist gaze, like the feminist gaze breaks with the logic of the mastering gaze and in particular the dynamic that produces detachment, spectacularity and voyeurism. It is a kind of non-seeing, a gaze from within, aware of its context and responsibilities, flexible and inclusionary. The fourth section focuses on the sense of touch and the kinaesthetic. What makes nudism a distinctive and pleasant experience is the direct exposure of the skin to the natural elements as well as the sensation that moving the naked body provides. Being closer to the notion of caress than the idea of grasp, the sense of touch enables a more intimate, reciprocal and truthful relation with the environment, which breaks with the objectifying distance between subject and object that is associated with visuality. Nudism is a performative experiment that uses the body, in particular the skin, to open out new geographies and to create a different world of experience and emotion that escapes representation. The last section moves the focus from the body-subject to the social. Nudism is a particular way of being together that has a lot in common with Maffesoli's notion of neotribalism (1996). Although most of my respondents did not assume the social character of nudism, being naked on the beach is intrinsically a social and political practice that challenge key social definitions related with the body and the everyday. I conclude with a particular example of nudist neo-tribes that take the social, liminal and transgressive character of the beach to an extreme.

Mapping the practice of nudism in Menorca

The tourists who practice nudism in Menorca are people like François and Janet, resident tourists in their late 20s from Paris. When they come to Menorca for their annual summer holiday, they occasionally practice nudism on the beach. Although they might go nude with their family and friends, normally they do it alone, as a couple. I met them in Macarelleta; they were lying naked on their towels reading a novel. Neither is it uncommon, in Menorca, to meet people like Javier, a holidaymaker from Valladolid in his 30s travelling alone (figure 7.1). He likes coming to Menorca just for few days to 'get away from it all' and visit some friends. I met him in Cavalleria where he spent a morning alone reading a biography of Miles Davis with just a towel and small bag. It is also very common to meet people like Alberto and Pilar, a 40 year old couple with a 14 year old son from Barcelona. They came to Menorca on holiday after a long time to show the island and its beaches to their son. Before he was born they used to join the 'hippy' community that roam the island every summer. Now they regularly practice nudism in the Costa Brava. At Cavalleria, they settled down at the end of the beach, in the nudist corner, with an umbrella, sandwiches, water, towels and a newspaper to read. Both parents were naked but their son was not.

In Menorca the practice of nudism is manifest exclusively on virgin beaches. Nudism is intimately linked with unspoilt beaches like Macarelleta, Trebalúger or Cavalleria, which are characterised by their natural beauty, lack of services and distance from tourist and urban centres. Some of them, like El Pilar or Trebalúger even have difficult access. In Menorca there is no nudism on developed or urbanised beaches, in particular when they are located in major tourist centres like Cala'n Porter, Son Saura or S'Arenal d'en Castell. Nudism is not an option in those places where package tourists stay. I have neither heard of nor observed nudity anywhere else other than the beach. There is no nudism in urban areas, or in any sort of tourist accommodation, not even in natural areas away from the sea. The practice of nudism is limited to wildcat unspoilt beaches like those on which I met Janet and Françoise, Javier and Alberto and Pilar. This pattern

corresponds with the description of Douglas et all (1977) of the nudist phenomenon in California.



Figure 7.1: Javier from Valladolid. When naked, he feels much more integrated into the environment.

In recent years however there has been a timid integration of the practice of nudism in Menorcan society, which has partially blurred the distinction between developed and virgin beaches. At the same time that the most traditional nudist sites have been invaded by tourists reluctant to practice nudism, the practice of nudism has consolidated in semi-urban coastal sites, in particular in those 'quiet' sites mainly preferred by locals and resident tourists. In Sa Mesquida, for example, the nudist corner has become bigger, overstepping the natural boundary provided by a rock which used to mark the limit of the nudist part of the beach; in S'Olla de Binisafúller the distinction between the nudist and non-nudist scenes has been blurred and new nudist corners have appeared in Es Caló Blanc and Es Grau.

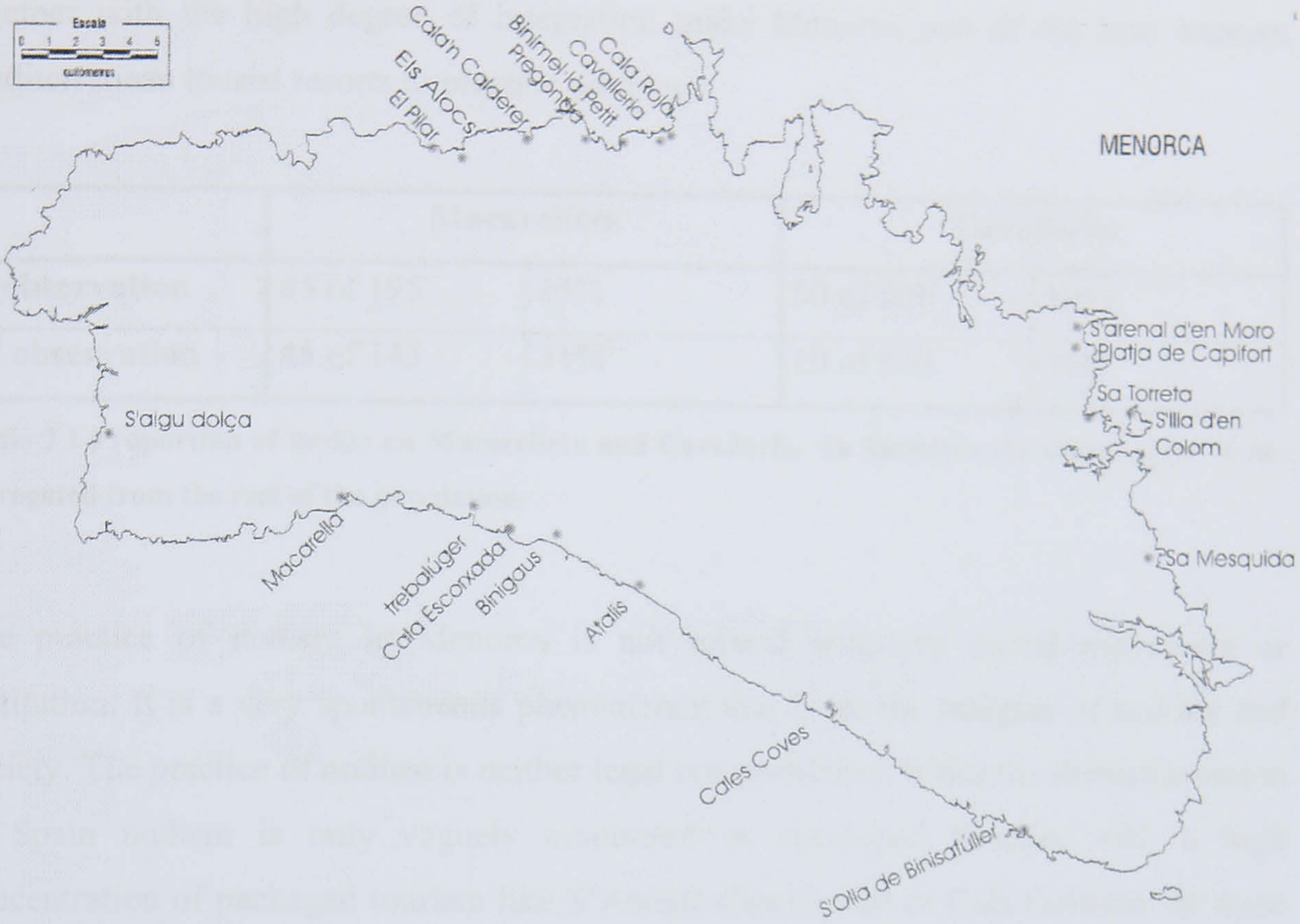


figure 7.2: Map of the nudist beaches of Menorca. My fieldwork sites were Cavalleria in the north and Macarelleta in the South

In Menorca there are according to the 'Club Català de Naturisme' (2004) 21 beaches in which the practice of nudism is common, the 'Federación Española de Naturismo' (2004) reduces the number to16 and the Associació Naturista Balear (2004) to just 7. It is difficult to specify the exact number of nudist beaches because there are no exclusively nudist beaches on the island. The nudist scene is not segregated from the rest of the population. As table 1 demonstrates, the nudist scene always shares the space with clothed beach users. In Menorca nudism is a fluid, flexible and quite spontaneous practice. The nudist scene easily appears and disappears in a lot of places throughout the summer season, especially in remote unspoilt coastal areas. It is not unusual to observe people naked on a rock or on a boat or on a small sandy beach. This high degree of fluidity can be observed even during a single day. There are times and days when the nudist scene is much more intense than others. Its spontaneous and fluid character

together with the high degree of integration make Menorca one of the best western Mediterranean tourist resorts to practice nudism.

	Macarelleta		Cavalleria	
1st observation	45 of 195	23%	50 of 500	10%
2nd observation	45 of 145	31%	10 of 500	2%

Table 7.1 Proportion of nudist on Macarelleta and Cavalleria. In Menorca the nudist scene is not segregated from the rest of the population.

The practice of nudism in Menorca is not related with any social movement or institution. It is a very spontaneous phenomenon that is on the margins of politics and society. The practice of nudism is neither legal nor prohibited. Since the democratisation of Spain nudism is only vaguely monitored in developed beaches with a high concentration of packaged tourism like S'Arenel d'en Castell or Cala Galdana. In these places local police might warn confused nudists few times a year, but I have never heard of any fine or arrest. In Menorca nudism is not the source of social conflict. I have neither observed nor heard of any public controversy related with public nudity. Nudism is not a matter of public concern, nor is it a matter of private concern. The untroubled character of the phenomenon of nudism is in keeping with the traditionally more relaxed approach to the natural functions of the body in South Europe (Douglas et al., 1977: 27).

In Menorca the practice of nudism as something different from skinny-dipping made a timid debut in the 30s with the emergence of radical ideologies and in particular anarchism. However it is not until the 70s with the dawn of mass tourism that the practice of nudism consolidated and adopted the current form, which corresponds with the radical type of social nudity that emerged in California in the 60s and 70s with the hippy movement. Like in California, the practice of nudism started spontaneously in wildcat beaches like Macarelleta and Cavalleria on the margins of political and social movements (Douglas et all 1977). The proximity of Menorca to Eivissa, a real Meca for hippies worldwide is a relevant factor in the consolidation of nudism (Rozenberg, 1990). Although Menorca never received a massive influx of members of the European youth

counterculture, the hippy vision and, in particular hippy practices, were geographically close and consequently a logical lifestyle to follow at a moment of huge political changes in the country. It was probably members of the 'Catalan left' who so proudly 'discovered' Menorca in the 70s, together with people form other urban areas of Spain, that consolidated the practice of nudism in Menorca. Despite the presence of neo-hippy communities roaming the island every summer, which I will examine later in the chapter, nowadays it is not possible to speak about social nudity linked to the hippy movement. With a few significant exceptions, the kind of social nudity that we find in Menorca does no longer shares "the hippy impetus (...) to politicise the liberation of beaches for nudity and sex as part of a body politics and politics of space" (Bell and Holliday, 2000: 132). Although the politicisation of social nudity is gone, part of the hippy vision remains at the core of the practice of nudism. As Douglas et all point out in relation to California "The hard-core hippies (...) have largely disappeared but their vision of the nude body remains in the fragmented form called 'being casual'. They are gone, but the causal young are more common than ever" (Douglas et all, 1977: 41).



Figure 7.3: Macarelleta is one of the most popular nudist beaches of the island.

This chapter focuses exclusively on two beaches, Macarelleta (figure 7.3) and Cavalleria. Together with Binigaus, Atalis and El Pilar, they are the better-known nudists sites in Menorca. Macarelleta is a cosy cove surrounded by cliffs, with a very appealing tropical look, white sands, very transparent turquoise waters and pinewoods behind the beach. It is very small, not more than 60 metres wide, and remote. 15 km away from the nearest town through difficult tracks, and 1 hour 's walk from the nearest resort through a footpath that even requires a bit of climbing. Together with Macarella, it is one of the most famous icons of the island; it is probably the most celebrated postcard image and therefore one of the essential highlights to visit. Macarelleta has traditionally attracted a higher proportion of nudists than anywhere else on the island. It is socially recognised as a nudist beach and it is even marked as such. There are up to five 'spontaneous' acts of graffiti that inform you of the nudist scene. Like in El Pilar and Binigaus there is a neo-hippy community that practices nudist camping illegally in the surrounding woods or in the prehistoric caves nearby. In contrast, Cavalleria is an unspoilt beach in the north of the island, 10 km away from Fornells. It is a much bigger and open beach with a wild, cold and almost Nordic look. In this area the sands are rather yellow and clayey, the coast is much more accidental, the sea while still very transparent, is much darker and there are no wooded areas surrounding the beach due to the strong wind that hits the area. Cavalleria has access by road, but no services such as a bar or showers. It is, like Binimel là, Favaritx, Trebalúger or s'Enclusa, an unspoilt beach that is not primarily identified with nudism but in which the practice of nudism is accepted and frequent. In Cavalleria the proportion of people practicing nudism is greatly reduced and exclusively localised in a corner at the end of the beach, as far as possible from the parking and the main transit routes. The people who practice nudism in Cavelleria are mostly couples and small groups of friends who enjoy relaxation and quietness. This makes the coexistence with clothed beach users easier than in Macarelleta.

Nudism and the non-representational

This section proposes an understanding of nudism based on Non-Representational Theory and the notion of play as formulated by Thrift (1997, 1999, 2000) and Radley (1995). I think of nudism in connection with dance as a 'performative experiment' that uses the body to 'conjure up virtual worlds' and alternative ways of being. Like play, nudism is an expression of the *elusory* capacity of the body-subject to open out experience and to create non-denotative meaning (Thrift, 1997: 145-148; Radley, 1995: 5). By using Non-Representational Theory, this section proposes an embodied account that focuses on the 'domain of bare life' (Thrift, 2000) thus giving credence to what remains invisible and non-rationalised in the body. Nudism is a set of corporeal experiences most of which are neither cognitive nor intentional, but mundane and unspeakable. There are strong ethnographical evidences that endorse this understanding of nudism, which focuses on the body and the domain of bare life. I have gathered a number of remarks that appeal more or less explicitly to the sensual and embodied attraction of being naked on the beach. In contrast, there are few empirical evidences that endorse an understanding based on aesthetic, sexual or moral arguments.

I think of nudism in connection with dance as an example of play in the sense that Radley (1995) and Thrift (1997) use it. Play is, according to Thrift, a 'performative experiment' with the body (1997: 145); it is about using the body to conjure up virtual -'as-if'- worlds, in other words, to configure "ways of being that can become claims to 'something more'" (Thrift, 1997: 147). Play is an experience irreducible to the relations of power and control. The key element of play is located beyond the rational auspices of western societies, in the *elusory* capacity of the body (Radley, 1995: 5). Practicing nudism is something more than scripting upon the body or liberating it from social norms. Nudism is an expression of the capacity of the body-subject to create non-denotative meaning through its senses, movements and tasks, in other words, through its ability to dwell-in particular things (Thrift, 1997: 147-8). Paraphrasing Radley, the naked body on the beach is not only an elusive body with the capacity to depart from the clothing rules that are imposed upon it, but an *elusory* body, elusive and also empowered

with the capacity to open out experience and even to sketch out alternative ways of being (Radley, 1995: 9). The point of nudism lies "in being able to articulate complexes of thought-with-feeling that words cannot name, let alone set forth, it is a way of accessing the world, not just a means of achieving ends that cannot be named" (Radley, 1995: 13). It is because of the *elusory* capacity of the body that nudism can be considered a practice of subjectification and becoming (Thrift 1997:127; Grosz 1999). The beach is a 'virtual' or experimental space in which alternative ways of being are configured, new geographies are opened out, new connections and assemblages are tested and some meanings and utopias are spatialised through the body.

The notion of play and playfulness that I am proposing is different from the one Urry (1990) associates with the post-tourist. The post-modern theory uses the notion play to suggest an ironic and distanced attitude that acknowledges the meaningless and superficial character of contemporary reality. The post-tourist is someone seeking immediate pleasure with a cool and self-conscious attitude that accepts the impossibility of authentic and meaningful tourist experiences. He is happy just having fun with fake experiences. "The post-tourist knows that they are a tourist and that tourism is a game, or rather a whole series of games with multiple texts and no single, authentic tourist experience" (Urry, 1990: 100). Urry relates the notion of post-tourist with the dominant role of mass media in western societies, which has resulted in an 'endless availability of gazes'. Now it is not necessary to leave the living room in order to see many of the typical objects of the tourist gaze. In our highly mediated societies, "there is much less of the sense of the authentic, the once-in-a-lifetime gaze, and much more of the endless availability of gazes through a frame at the flick of a switch" (1990: 100). This chapter does not use the notion of play to suggest inautheticity, banality and immediate pleasure but to reveal the capacity of the body-subject to configure meanings and open out geographies, that is, to expose the process that confers reality and meaning to the world. This chapter does not think of nudism as an inauthentic experience that provides tourists with immediate and carnal pleasure but as 'performative experiment' that uses the body to 'conjure up virtual worlds' and alternative ways of being, as a way of being-in-the-world.

By using non-representational theory this chapter proposes an account of nudism that focuses on what Thirft calls 'the domain of bare life'. the pre-cognitive and almost instinctual layer of the body that makes the world intelligible before the action of reason. According to Thrift the domain of bare life is "that little space of time that is much of what we are, a space not so much at the edge of action as lighting the world" (2000: 39). I propose a 'materialist' understanding of nudism that gives credence to the unspeakable and invisible side of the body-subject. I do not pretend to discover the hidden meaning of nudism but rather to work through it; in other words, I do not pretend to impose a pre-given meaning upon it or to apprehend it as another re-presentation; but to unveil the fabrication of a different world of meaning made with the body (Simonsen 2003, 1996; Radley 1995) Underlying this chapter there is an intention to reveal how the body, the flux of social life, functions as the deeper foundation of everyday life and sociality. Through the study of the experience of nudism I intend to reveal, paraphrasing Maffesoli, that "above and beyond the instituted forms that still exist and sometimes predominate, there is an informal underground centrality that assures the perdurability of life in society" (1996: 4). By using Non-Representational Theory, this chapter brings to the fore the capacity of the body, through its movements, limbs and organs, to turn on to things, space and living beings (Thrift, 2000; 39). The body unites us directly with people, spaces and things through its own ontogenesis, that is, through the entire sequence of events involved in its development as an organism (Merleau-Ponty, 1968: 136). According to Grosz the body is "capable of crossing thresholds between substances to form linkage, machines, provisional and often temporary sub or micro-groupings" (1995: 108). The experience of nudism evidences that body and space are mutually defining, that "there is a two way linkage that could be defined as an *interface*" (Grosz, 1995: 108 italics in original).

Focussing the discussion on the domain of bare life and apprehending nudism through the notion of play does not necessarily mean concealing the politics. "This little space of time- Thrift contends- is a vast biopolitical domain, that blink between action and performance in which the world is pre-set by biological and cultural instincts which bear

both extraordinary genealogical freight- *and* a potential for potentiality" (2000: 39). Nudism is an expression of the emancipatory politics of bare life, which Thrift (2000), drawing on Agamben (1998), relates with practices such as contemplation and mysticism. This is a bio-political 'project' that insists on the revitalization of the body in new forms of life and in particular, "the enhancement of the anticipation and conduct of certain bodily skills" (2000: 49). Nudism is also an expression of what Thrift calls the 'economy of the experience', "a new genre of economic output which can construct experiences in order to produce added value" (2000: 49). Nudism alongside with climbing and other adventure sports is a leisure activity that relies on the expressive, sensual and *elusory* capacities of the body and whose underlying attraction is the possibility of a highly sensualized, intimate and exciting relation with the natural world, the enhancement of the senses and even a thrill. (Franklin 2002, Cloke and Perkins1998)



Figure 7.4 Carlos appeals to the sensual attraction of nudism and the feeling of freedom that provides. On the image Carlos and Sonia have mud on their skin.

There are conclusive ethnographical evidences that endorse an understanding of nudism that focuses on the body, the everyday and the domain of bare life. In particular, I have

collected a significant number of remarks that appeal to the embodied and sensual attraction of being naked on the beach. These appellations, or 'revelations' as they may better be called, did not emerge in the interviews as clear or rational statements, but often just as gaps or openings to something else that can barely be articulated in words, thus eluding precise definition. In most of the cases these 'revelations' emerged when I asked why the interviewees practice nudism. Most of my respondents considered nudism as a pleasant and comfortable feeling, although hardly anybody could define the feeling with precision. This was the case of Nuria, a university student from Barcelona in her earlier 20s who was staying on a campsite with a friend for just a week. She simply admitted, "I like this feeling a lot", without being able to expand the argument. A few of my respondents explicitly acknowledge the impossibility of rationalising the kind of embodied pleasure that nudism provides. This was the case of Alberto and Pilar, from Barcelona. In the following quotation, Pilar admits the fact that the main attraction of nudism remains outside the domain of reason, in the body. When I asked why she practised nudism she replayed, "Well, I don't know really, it is a question that I have never thought about. It is more comfortable, I feel looser". Sometimes appeals to the embodied and sensual attraction of nudism are cloaked in a metaphysical discourse. Take for example the following remark by Carlos, a businessman from Madrid in his mid 30s who, together with wife and their young baby, was visiting Menorca for the first time (see figure 7.4). "I think"- he argues- "it is for the same reason as the sea, for the feeling of freedom. Nothing constrains me". "With this"- he continues- "I get the feeling that I am looking for, of freedom, of not having to keep my composure". The most explicit comments acknowledging the embodied and sensual attraction of nudism was by Françoise and Janet, from Paris. In the following dialogue they explicitly refer to the particular corporeal feeling of being naked on the beach, which they relate with the ones that adventure activities such as climbing provide.

Pau: Why nudism?
Janet: Because it's more comfortable to be all your body lying in the san
Françoise: I admit all year along you have to wear your clothes, so you wait for… it's nice these moments where you can be naked and feel the wind on your skin and feel the sand on your skin and nobody thinks anything bad.
P: Would you like to add something?

F: I just like to feel the wind on my body. So I do a lot of climbing and I do it without t-shirt and it's even better to have nothing on me. So I like to be nude
J: You feel the cold, when you climb it is also to feel the cold, to feel everything to feel the elements

This quote suggests that what makes nudism attractive is the enhancement of sensations and the thrill that this leisure activity enables.

The centrality of the body and the 'domain of bare life' are also apparent amongst people who refuse to practice nudism. In most cases no consistent reasons are given for not joining the nude scene. The rejection of nudism is based on a 'non-rational' fear and almost instinctual embodied discomfort, which is difficult to put into words. Take for example the following remarks by Joan and Magalí, a couple in their 30s from a town near Barcelona. Although they refer to their lack of habit, self-confidence and intimacy, ultimately they do not give any moral or social reasons for not joining the nude scene. They simply recognised that they do not feel comfortable enough to take their swimming costume off.

Pau: Why don't you practise nudism
Magalí: I think it is a question of habit
Joan: Yes, For me it is a question of habit. It is easier if children already practice nudism with their parents, that is, if you get used to it when you are young.... Yes I think it is a question of being used to it.
M: It doesn't really bother me. He doesn't feel comfortable enough. But, honestly I am top less and I haven't taken my pants off because, as I was just telling him, I haven't waxed. To be completely honest, the only reason is I haven't waxed and … you say look... I'm not comfortable enough
Pau: I imagine that the fact that it's so crowded on the beach is also an influence
M: Exactly, this is important too.
J: Here you feel crowded by people. You don't have the privacy that you are looking for. But in my case it's clearly my lack of habit. I mean, I am not used to practicing it, so I wouldn't feel comfortable enough.

Although Joan tries to find a rational argument to explain why he would not practice nudism, it is apparently an indefinable, almost instinctual discomfort with the idea of being naked in public.

There is little evidence to endorse an alternative understanding of nudism based on aesthetic, sexual, social or moral arguments. There are no empirical grounds to relate the practice of nudism with the pleasure of displaying a sculpted body. A quick look at a nudist beach would confirm not only that a lot of people do not have a body nice enough to exhibit but also that very few people have any exhibitionist or voyeuristic impulses. Neither is there enough evidence to endorse an understanding of nudism as a sexually driven experience. I have not observed, nor even heard of, any sort of sexual act on the beach during the day (like on any other beaches, it is a different story at night). Neither have I observed anything that could be understood as seduction. On the nudist beach there is a strict code of behaviour that not only represses explicit sexual urge but also subtle sensual body language. Not surprisingly, most of the people join the nude scene with their partner and some even with their children. Although it is a recurrent argument amid practitioners, there are not enough empirical grounds for understanding nudism as an act of liberation from the repression of clothing and conservative morality. Nudism would no longer exist if it were exclusively a moral and ideological practice. In the case of Menorca, the current evident lack of social conflict and ideology in relation to nudism would make it totally irrelevant. Despite being popular amid practitioners and academics, none of these arguments is consistent enough to explain the practice of nudism. They fail to understand the relevance of the embodied practices that configure the experience of nudism; in particular the mundane and non-representational practices, which I contend are the main attraction of nudism.

In short, my empirical evidence suggests the centrality of the body, the senses and non-representational practices. They reveal that both the attraction and discomfort of the practice of nudism lies in the body, somewhere beyond representation. In most cases, the experience of nudism can only be referred and vaguely located in the body but not fully represented. The non-representational character of the experience of nudism makes an analysis of what happens in the naked body difficult. At this point we are confronted with the challenge to find more appropriate ways to know the tourist body as well with the cost and effects of such knowledge. As Grosz points out, "the most intense moments

of pleasure, the force of their materiality, while certainly broadly evocable in discourse, cannot be reduced to adequate terms, terms which capture their force and intensity. A distinction must be drawn between discourse and experience even with the understanding that language or systems of representation are the prior condition for the intelligibility of experience" (1995: 222). It is not clear to me that discourse and representation are always possible and desirable. Representation might lead to an increase in the degree of control and alienation in our bodies "To submit processes and becomings to entities, locations and boundaries, to become welded to an organizing nucleus of fantasy and desire whose goal is not simply pleasure and expansion, but control and the tying of the new models of what is already know, the production of endless variations of the same" (Grosz, 1995: 223)

Nudism and the visual

The nudist beach is an exceptional stage to examine the complexities of visuality. The unusual character of the place, in which naked bodies get together without explicit sexual intention, reveals there is no stable, harmonious and objective way of seeing. There is a plurality of ways of seeing, each of which have different implications. The unusual character of the nudist beach also reveals that not all ways of seeing produce a sense of distance, detachment and objectification. Vision is not a natural and unmediated act; vision is a contested terrain, an open and unstable reality, which is socially and culturally embedded. This is the central argument of the edited collection on "vision and visuality" that Foster (1988) edited. There is neither an 'objective' and essential way of seeing nor a natural hierarchy of sight. As Jay points out "the scopic regime of modernity may best be understood as a contested terrain, rather than a harmoniously integrated complex of visual theories and practices" (1988: 4).

This section analyses the uneasy relation between nudism and the visual sense. The starting point of this section is the fact that the visual is mostly experienced as a threat or an impediment rather than a source of pleasure. Being inextricably linked with sexuality.

the visual sense brings to the fore the possibility of being used as an object of sexual stimulation. The suspicion of the visual that is predominant on a nudist beach reproduces some of the anti-visual themes that have characterised 20th century Western thought. In the second part of this section I contend that the kind of visuality that is associated with the practice of nudism does not correspond with the dominant way of seeing in leisure tourism, as it is defined by Urry (1990). If it did, the practice of nudism would be an intolerable and voyeuristic experience. The notion of the tourist gaze while universalising a particular middle class masculine travel experience reintroduces a version of a detached free subject mastering the world from outside. In the final part of this section I examine the possibility of a counter-hegemonic mode of looking on the nudist beach. The nudist gaze, like the feminist gaze, breaks with the logic of the mastering gaze and, in particular, with the dynamic that produces detachment, spectacularity and voyeurism. The fact that the viewer subject cannot avoid the reciprocity of the look diminishes the power of the look, making it impossible to make invisible his sexual identity and responsibilities. The practice of nudism presupposes an alternative way of seeing which is circumspect and liberating. The nudist gaze is a gaze from within, aware of its context and responsibilities, flexible and inclusionary. It is almost a kind of 'non-seeing' in which a number of illusions and determining factors fall apart. The nudist beach is a place in which women in particular can enjoy 'the pleasure of unconsciousness'.

Downgrading the eyes

On the nudist beach, the visual is mostly experienced as a threat or an impediment rather than a source of pleasure. The practice of nudism is imbued with a profound suspicion of vision and its hegemonic role in leisure and tourism. This suspicion of vision has a lot in common with some of the anti-visual themes that are pervasive in 20th century French thought (Jay: 1994). On a nudist beach the visual brings to the fore an uncomfortable connection with sexuality and in particular with scopophilia, that is, with the possibility of "using another person as an object of sexual stimulation through sight" (Mulvey,

1999: 383). Being observed reminds us of the unacceptable situation of being used as a source of sexual pleasure, a possibility that most people, in particular women, dislike. The potential association with sexuality makes nudism a problematic and censurable practice.



Figure 7.5 Núria and Helena form Barcelona looking in the opposite direction to the camera. Amongst women, in particular, the visual is experienced mainly as a threat.

The suspicion of the visual is a pervasive theme in nudist discourse. None of my respondents mentioned anything that could be misunderstood as a visual pleasure. Instead a negative image of the gaze repeatedly emerged as a threat or an impediment. In particular amongst women, the visual was widely associated with the possibility of being used as a visual object of sexual stimulation (Mulvey, 1999). In the following quote, for example, Ruth identifies the possibility of being observed as the main threat to the practice nudism. "I'm very comfortable being nude as long others are not looking at you like you are weird so we kind of come to the little nude section of the beach. It's not a big deal". Ruth and Tom are two Spanish teachers from California who took a week

holiday in Menorca after visiting Barcelona and Paris. Núria from Barcelona also expressed her concerns about the possibility of being observed naked. "Why should you feel uncomfortable?"- She asked herself -"Well if you feel observed by somebody else or if you feel criticized, or there is something that you are interested in. I don't know … I think it is always another person that pisses you off". Despite their discomfort at being observed, they accepted to pose for a picture (see figure 7.5). The fact that they did not look at the camera brings to the fore an uncomfortable association of visuality with sexuality

The denigration of vision on the nudist beach is not only related to the possibility of being the passive object of somebody else's gaze. The possibility of being the active subject of public exhibition is censured too. It is not only unacceptable to observe other bodies, but also to put one`s own body on display, to actively pursue the gaze of the others. In the following quotation Antoni and Eulalia explain the difference between acceptable and unacceptable nudism. They conclude that public nudity is unacceptable when it involves exhibitionism, that is, the active display of the naked body. Antoni and Eulalia are a middle class couple with three children from a village near Barcelona who spend their holiday in Fornells every summer.

> Pau: And would you practice nudism with all sorts of people? Or just on your own?
> Antoni: We practice it provided that it is not to clown around.
> Eulàlia: Exactly
> Antoni: Only if its sunbathing and swimming
> Eulalia: Well if practicing nudism was…
> Antoni: No exhibitionism
> Eulalia: [If there is] exhibitionism by other people, that is, if you feel observed, well we probably wouldn't do it. But if it is part of a normality and of a body of people that accepts it, then it is all right

In this quote the visual appears again as a threat or an impediment. Nudism is an acceptable experience only if it is not organised around the sight, if it is not a spectacle of bodies, a game of gazes. The visual sense sexualises the naked body.

The denigration of the visual is not just a discursive theme; it is something continuously performed with the body. The suspicion of the visual is embedded in the attitudes and composures of nudist practitioners. It is a matter of fact that people are not looking at each other very often, and never directly or in an offensive way. It is also manifest that people try to avoid the presence of others by both settling themselves in isolated areas of the beach away from the main transit routes and keeping a safe distance from the rest. Tourists rarely interact with other people when they are naked. The embodied composure that nudists adopt denies the public character of the practice of nudism, making it feel as if it was a private moment. On the nudist beach there is a rigid composure of the body that represses even acceptable sensual practices. Most of the people stay in their plot, in the nudist corner, normally in silence without displaying any sort of erotic body language, not even kissing or hugging. In short, the body is uncovered but not sensually enacted; it is not on display.

The denigration of the visual that is predominant on the nudist beach reproduces at least four arguments which, according to Jay (1994), are characteristic of 20th century French thought. First of all, the nudist discourse shares with scholars such as Merleau-Ponty (1968), Heidegger and others a suspicion of the Cartesian perspectivists gaze. In the discourse of tourists such as Ruth, Núria and Antoni, there is an explicit rejection of the perspectivist and objectifying Cartesian gaze, and in particular the spectatorial distance between the viewing subject and the viewing object. Nudists are uncomfortable with the possibility of a detached and disembodied subject observing and mastering the scene from an outside vantage point. (Jay, 1994: 263-328). Secondly, the nudist discourse reproduces a Foucauldian approach to the gaze. Like Foucault (1997), the nudist discourse focuses on the disciplining and normalising effect of being the object of the gaze. The gaze is seen as a threat or an impediment, as an objectifying agent and as part of the apparatus of surveillance of the body. Furthermore, nudists remain generally blind to the possibility of disrupting the power of the gaze (Jay; 1994: 381-416). Thirdly, the nudist discourse is imbued with a pervasive suspicion of spectacle, an argument which rewrites the work of Debord (1995). On the nudist beach it is unacceptable to put one's body on public display, that is, to actively pursue the gaze of the others (Jay 1994: 416-

433). Finally, the nudist discourse reproduces Levinas' ethics of blindness. The widespread suspicion of vision leads nudist practitioners to embrace an ethical attitude which does not rely on the visible, but on non-visible sources. An ethical attitude on a nudist beach is to keep your eyes shut, that is, to thwart "the violent avidity of the gaze in the service of generosity" (Jay, 1994: 556).

Nudism and the tourist gaze

The kind of visuality that is associated with the practice of nudism does not correspond to the dominant way of seeing in leisure tourism, as it is defined by Urry (1990). If it did, the practice of nudism would be an intolerable and voyeuristic experience. Inspired by the practice of sightseeing, the notion of the tourist gaze, while universalising a particular middle class masculine travel experience reintroduces a version of a detached free subject mastering the world from an outside vantage point. The practice of nudism breaks precisely with the kind of visual consumption that Urry associates with tourism, that is, with the possibility of spectatorial and passive activity that transforms ever-new 'destinations' into objects of the gaze.

According to Urry, a fundamental part of the tourist experience "is to gaze upon or view a set of different scenes or landscapes or townscapes which are out of the ordinary" (1990:1). The tourist gaze is directed to features that are separated from everyday experiences; thus presupposing a system of social activities and consciousness which is constructed in opposition to non-tourist forms of experience, particularly those related with the home and paid work. Although different types of gaze are mentioned, it is the romantic gaze that is placed as the dominant mode of visuality in tourism. "The romantic gaze- Urry argues - is an important mechanism which is helping to spread tourism on a global scale, drawing almost every country into its ambit as the romantic seeks ever-new objects of that gaze" (1990: 46-47). The emphasis of the romantic gaze is upon "solitude, privacy and a personal, semi-spiritual relationship with the object of the gaze" and it is contrasted with the collective gaze, which characterises the carnivalesque

experiences of places like Blackpool and Benidorm and which requires the presence of large number of people (1990: 45). Urry links the tourist gaze with "the emergence of relatively novel modes of visual perception which became part of the modern experience of living and visiting new urban centres, particularly the grand capital cities"(1990:136). He links the tourist gaze with the expanding popularity of novel modes of visual perception, such as photography and the novel urban experience of the flâneur, a major product of the nineteen century urban reform of cities like Paris and, according to Pollock, "one of the key figures to embody the novel forms of public experience of modernity" (1988: 67). "The strolling flâneur –Urry reckons- was a forerunner of the twentieth-century tourist and in particular of the activity which has in a way become emblematic of the tourist: the democratised taking of photographs- of being seen and recorded and seeing and recording them"(Urry 1990, 138)

The notion of the tourist gaze is problematic not least because it ignores a significant part of the activity that takes place in the body. As different scholars suggest, it privileges visuality and, in particular, the act of sightseeing, over other sources of embodied experience, such as the sense of touch (Chaney, 2002; Crouch, 1999, 2002; Joniken & Veijola, 1994, 1997; Desmond, 1999). It overlooks the fact that "the tourists are seeking to be *doing something* in the places they visit rather than being endlessly spectorially passivity" (Franklin and Crang, 2001:13 italics in original). The notion of the tourist gaze does not take into account the multisensual and active character of the body-subject and, in particular, what remains invisible and non-rationalised, which I contend is central to understand the attraction of nudism. Urry's notion of the tourist gaze is also problematic because it privileges a masculine middle-class and imperialistic imaginary. As Chaney points out "the gaze in its untroubled authority is masculine in the presupposition that it articulates normality, and imperialist in the way it appropriates other cultures" (2002: 199). Underlying the notion of the tourist gaze there is a particular gender construction that corresponds with the notion of the flâneur. "The Flâneur" – Pollock points out- "is an exclusively masculine type which functions within the matrix of bourgeois ideology through which the social spaces of the city were reconstructed by the overlaying of the doctrine of separate spheres on to the division of public and private

which became as a result a gendered division" (Pollock, 1988: 67) In doing so the notion of the tourist gaze risks reintroducing a version of a detached free subject mastering and representing the world from outside while universalising a particular middle class travel experience based on the illusion of collecting places. "The Flâneur"- according to Pollock- "symbolizes the privilege or freedom to move about the public arenas of the city observing but never interacting, consuming the sights through a controlling but rarely acknowledging gaze, directed as much to other people as to the goods and sales" (Pollock, 1988: 67).

The notion of the tourist gaze does not correspond with the visual experience that is characteristic of the practice of nudism. In privileging detached observation over embodied participation, the notion of the tourist gaze is paradigmatic of an occulocentric and cognitive approach that turns natures, cultures and bodies into spectacle. It is an example of the mastering Cartesian gaze that transforms even the naked body into an object of visual consumption. As Pollock points out, "we find similarities in the moves of the flâneur [on which Urry's notion of the tourist gaze relies] and the male imaginary: controlling the fear, distancing (from the motherly, the crowd, the cover, the ursprung), using women as the material of imagination, downgrading females' tasks and duties" (1988: 29). Indeed the kind of visuality that is associated with the notion of the tourist gaze is the kind of visuality that is experienced as a threat or an impediment on the nudist beach. As I have argued in the previous section the possibility of being the passive object of somebody else's gaze is strongly censured. The notion of the tourist gaze not only brings to the fore an uncomfortable connection with sexuality but also with domination, normalisation and surveillance.

The nudist gaze, alternative eyes.

This section takes as the starting point the work of Barcan (2001) on female nudism, bodily exposure and the gaze. She proposes an understanding of nudism as a 'performative experiment' that uses the body to conjure up virtual worlds and alternative

ways of being. In particular she contends that on a nudist beach "a different kind of space is opened up at such sites, involving quite distinctive intercorporeal relations, which in turn help to produce new body images" (2001: 314). What makes her work particularly relevant is the fact that she considers the visual domain as the most significant performative experiment related with the practice of nudism. She suggests the nudist beach offers the opportunity to experiment a counter-hegemonic mode of looking, a possibility that is often dismissed. "It is possible for a different regime of perception to obtain within the confines of a particular set of spatial, corporeal and discursive circumstances. This is especially the case with regular nudists" (2001: 308).

Taking the work of Barcan as the starting point, this section examines the possibility of a counter-hegemonic mode of looking on the nudist beach. The mere fact of thinking about alternative modes of looking is significant in itself since it already breaks with a widespread suspicion of the visual. Both nudists (Barcan, 2001) and social theorists (Jay 1994) have systematically dismissed the possibility of the eye subverting the oppressive power and becoming a sensual support of an ethical attitude. Based on the feminist approach to the gaze developed by Pollock (1988), Mulvey (1999), Nash (1996), Joniken and Veijola (1997) and Barcan (2001) this section demonstrates the similarities between the nudist and the feminist gaze. Like in the case of feminist art, the nudist gaze breaks with the logic of the mastering gaze and, in particular, with the dynamic that produces static positions of detachment, spectacularity and voyeurism. The fact that the viewer subject cannot avoid the reciprocity of the look diminishes the power of the look, making it impossible to make invisible his sexual identity and responsibilities. The practice of nudism presupposes an alternative way of seeing which is circumspect and liberating. The nudist gaze is a gaze from within, aware of its context and responsibilities, flexible and inclusionary. It is almost a kind of 'non-seeing' in which a number of illusions and determining factors fall apart. The nudist beach is a place in which women in particular can enjoy 'the pleasure of unconsciousness'.

The dominant mode of visuality on the nudist beach has a lot in common with the feminist gaze, as it is defined by Pollock (1988). In her work on female and (feminist)

interventions in the history of art, Pollock examines different feminist ways of producing visual art. Her goal is not only to decipher and disrupt "the dominative pleasure of the patriarchal visual field" but also to discover "ways to address women as subjects not masquerading as the feminine objects of masculine desire and hatred" (1988:15). She identifies as the main characteristic of the 'feminist' gaze the fact that it disrupts the illusionary distance between subject and object. "If the dominant pacification of populations takes place through passive consumption of meanings naturalized through realist modes of representation, feminist critical practice must resist such specularity, especially when the visible object *par excellence* is the image of woman. It has to create an entirely new kind of spectator as part and parcel of its representational strategies" (Pollock, 1998: 181) She shows how women have been active in articulating pictorial spaces that do not function primarily as a site for mastering male gaze, but as a site of relationship, liberation and movement. As Pollock points out "one of the major means by which femininity is reworked [in female painting] is by the re-articulation of the traditional space so that it ceases to function primarily as the site for a mastering gaze, but becomes the locus of the relationship" (1988: 87).

The practice of nudism is intimately linked with a counter-hegemonic way of looking that does not produce static positions of identification, distance, voyeurism, narcism or fetishism. The nudist gaze like the feminist gaze that Pollock describes disrupts the logic of the mastering gaze, and in particular the spectorial distance that informs the notion of the tourist gaze and the flâneur. Being-nude-on-the-beach is not about the visual objectification of (female) bodies, in other words, the "freedom to move about observing but never interacting, consuming sights through a controlling but rarely acknowledging gaze" (Urry: 1990: 67).

It is a matter of fact that the nudist beach is not articulated as a spectacle of bodies, as a hedonistic and Carnivalesque space; on the nudist beach the body is uncovered but not enacted. It is very common for nudists to put their swimming costumes on to visit the surrounding areas, to cross the beach and even to play tennis. On the nudist beach there is a rigid composure of the body that represses even acceptable sensual practices. Most

of the people stay in their plot, in the nudist corner, normally in silence without performing any sort of erotic body language, not even kissing or hugging. It is very rare to see a naked woman with her legs open or a naked men touching his penis. It is also a matter of fact that people are rarely looking at each other, and never directly or in an offensive way. Nudists spend their time mainly lying on the sand, reading the newspaper, having a swim or just sitting on the edge of the sea, looking for clam shells or nice little cobble-stones. On a nudist beach there is neither an active display of bodies nor a visual search for them.

Neither is the nudist beach organised according to the rules of visual perspective. At least in Menorca it is difficult to find a place from which to enjoy the display of bodies from a safe distance and without being seen. To enjoy visually the display of the bodies you need to be right in the middle, looking from within. The nudist beach rewrites De Certeau when he contends that "It is below 'down' on the threshold where visibility ends, that the city's common practitioners dwell" (de Certeau, 2000: 102). The practice of nudism in Menorca is also strange to technological devices such as photographic cameras. By putting distance between subject and object and blurring the intervention of the producer, visual technologies create an illusion of detachment and disembodiment. On the nudist beach the gaze is not mediated by sophisticated editing processes that create a spatial and temporal distance between subject and object, thus making possible the pleasure and the privilege of the 'invisible guest'. As Mulvey points out, "the camera becomes the mechanism for producing an illusion of Renaissance space, flowing movements compatible with the human eye, an ideology of representation that evolves around the perception of the subject; the camera's look is disavowed in order to create a convincing world in which the spectator's surrogate can perform with verisimilitude" (1999: 389). The lack of institutional regulation and marketing makes this point even more manifest.

The key feature of the nudist gaze is, paraphrasing Mulvey (1999), the place of the look. On a nudist beach there is neither an organisation of the space that enhances the visual perspective of the gaze, thus 'producing an illusion of renaissance space', nor a dynamic

that makes voyeurism easy and natural, thus producing a spectacularisation of the bodies. The context in which nudism takes place breaks the immunity of the subject. On a nudist beach the viewer subject cannot avoid the reciprocity of the gaze, making it impossible to render invisible the sexual identity of his body and the responsibility of his acts. By reworking the traditional object/subject relationship, the nudist gaze, like the feminist gaze that Pollock analyses, is breaking with the immunity and passivity of the spectator. On the nudist beach, paraphrasing Pollock, "the eye is not given its solitary freedom" (1988:87). Without the protection of physical and ideological devices, the male viewer on a nudist beach is exposed as being a voyeur, that is, as a sexualised individual that is active in creating the scene. And when this happens the privilege and pleasure of looking at other bodies is gone. "When the sexed nature of these social figures is rendered explicit, the illusion that they represent humanity in general is destroyed" (Joniken and Veijola, 1997: 36)

The practice of nudism presupposes an alternative way of seeing which is circumspect and liberating. On the one hand, the nudist gaze, which refuses to stare aggressively at its objects, rewrites the Heideggerian idea of a pre-reflexive or circumspect vision. In contrast with the 'abstracted, monocular, inflexible unmoving rigid, ego-logical and exclusionary' vision, the circumspect type of vision is described as "multiple, aware of its context, inclusionary, horizontal and caring" (Jay, 1994: 275). According to Jay, "here the viewer is situated within a visual field, not outside it; his horizons are limited by what he can see around him. Moreover, his relation to the context in which he is embedded is nurturant, not controlling" (1994: 275). The kind of vision that is predominant on a nudist beach presupposes embeddedness rather than spectatorial distance. The nudist gaze is a gaze from within, aware of its context and its responsibilities, flexible, multiple and inclusionary.

On the other hand, I agree with Barcan that Nudism involves 'a new way of seeing', almost 'a kind of non-seeing', which reinforces a sense of empowerment, in particular amongst women. It is not only the fact that nudism disrupts the logic of the mastering gaze, and in particular the spectatorial distance that makes the visual consumption of

bodies possible. Indeed the reciprocity of the gaze together with the virtual and experimental character of this practice diminishes the objectifying power of looking. It is also the fact that "judgements about the bodies of others and self-consciousness about one's own body gradually fall away"(Barcan, 2001: 314). A nudist beach is a place in which, in particular, women can enjoy 'the pleasure of unconsciousness', that is, the freedom that is provided by the temporal suspension of gender, race, class and other determining factor. In liberating the viewer from a number of illusions the nudist gaze rewrites Brecht's conception of radical art. According to Pollock, "the point [of one of Brecht's most well-known strategies in art] was to liberate the viewer from the state of being captured by illusions of art which encourages passive identification with fictional worlds. For Brecht, the viewer was to become an active participant in the production of meaning across an event which was recognized as representation but also as referring to and shaping understanding of contemporary social reality"(1988: 163).

In short, the practice of nudism is an example of a 'performative experiment' that uses the body to create a new kind of space and in particular new modes of looking. Through mundane but systemic embodied work, the practice of nudism not only breaks with the mastering gaze, but it also enables new 'body images', new political articulation of the body and subjectivity which does not reproduce the spectorial distance between subject and object. The practice of nudism is a kind of non-seeing in which a number of illusions related with the body fall apart, but also a 'kind of costume', which strengthen alternative articulations of the body and the subject. As Bell and Holliday point out (2000), public nudity in particular mobilises nature to naturalise particular gender roles and sexual relations. Paradoxically most people underestimate the 'political' and progressive implications that the practice of nudism has.

Nudism and the sense of touch

The sense of touch is at the centre of the practice of nudism. Most of my respondents recognise that what makes nudism a distinctive and pleasant experience is the direct

exposure of the skin to the natural elements as well as the sensations that moving the body naked produces. This section examines the role of touch and the kinaesthetic in the practice of nudism. I use the case of nudism to explore a particular way of knowing through the body that escapes representation; to demonstrate the elusory capacity of the body-subject to open out new geographies, and create non-denotative meaning through the skin. First of all, I examine how the sense of touch enables a distinctive relation with the environment, which breaks with the objectifying distance between subject and object that is associated with visuality. In disclosing a much more intimate, reciprocal and truthful relation with the environment, the practice of nudism is closer to the notion of caress than the idea of grasp. I also explore the capacity of the sense of touch to articulate non-denotative meaning and to function as the basis of an ethical attitude. I think of nudism in connection with play as a performative experiment that uses the body, in particular the skin, to create a different world of experience and emotion that escapes representation. Finally I unveil how the sense of touch articulates a much more truthful and intimate experience of nature. I also relate nudism to the process that Thrift (2000) calls the general reconstruction of time.

Most of the nudists that I have interviewed think of nudism primarily as a haptic experience. The main attraction is to feel rather than to see. In particular, most of the comments suggest the significance of feeling the sun, the wind and the water all over the body without the interference of a wet swimming costume. Take, for example, the following quotation by Ruth from California. Although she also mentions the aesthetic pleasure of getting a tan, she acknowledges as the main attraction of nudism, the feeling of the natural elements directly onto the skin. "Well it's beautiful to be tanned all over and just feel that you don't have a wet suit digging into you and get sand stuck all in you. It's just comfortable". Pepe agrees with Ruth about the attraction of feeling the natural elements without the interference of swimming costumes. He implicitly associates this particular embodied feeling with an emotion of 'freedom'. "It's the same for me"- he points out- "for the freedom, because I am more comfortable. I do not like feeling a wet swimming costume on my skin when I am swimming or sunbathing". Pepe and Anna are two holidaymakers from Mallorca and Barcelona in their early 30s who

were camping for few days on the beach. However, the most complete and explicit statement relating nudism with the sense of touch is made by Françoise and Janet from Paris.

> *Janet*: I admit …all year along you have to wear your clothes, so you wait for ,… it's nice these moments where you can be naked and feel the wind on your skin and feel the sand on your skin and nobody thinks anything bad.
> *Pau*: Would you like to add anything?
> *Françoise*: I just like to feel the wind on my body. So I do a lot of climbing and I do it without t-shirt and it's even better to have nothing on me. So I like to be nude
> *Janet*: You feel the cold, when you climb you also feel the cold, to feel everything to feel the elements

In this statement Françoise and Janet describe the kind of haptic feelings that make the practice of nudism attractive. They think of nudism as a smooth, almost 'sensual', contact with the natural elements. They explicitly mention a feeling of temperature and motion. The kind of sensual enhancement that nudism brings about has a lot in common with adventure activities such as climbing.

The main attraction of the practice of nudism is the possibility of a distinctive relation with the environment based on haptic experiences. According to Rodaway (1994) the sense of touch refers to two faculties of the body, the contact of the skin with the environment and the kinaesthetic, the ability of the body to perceive its own motion. Nudism is a haptic experience that involves both an awareness of presence and locomotion. It entails a distinctive sensation of temperature and pressure, in particular, the feeling of the natural elements directly on the skin without the interference of a swimming costume. The experience of nudism is about the whole body reaching out the sun, the sea, the wind and the sand. The attraction of nudism is also related with the pleasure of moving the nude body, especially in the water.

The sense of touch articulates a distinctive relation with the environment, which is more truthful, intimate and reciprocal than the visual sense. First of all, the sense of touch provides an illusion of immersion, solidity and presence. As Peterson points out in

relation to haptic computing technologies, the sense of touch offers a much more real sense of the objects. It not only allows the person to see three-dimensional shapes but also to feel them and interact with them. The sense of touch restores the aura of the object, its sense of time and space, its materiality. "Seeing is believing, but feeling is the truth" (Peterson, forthcoming: 17). Secondly, the sense of touch entails a much more intimate and reciprocal relation with the environment. As Levinas (Jay, 1994: 557) and Rodaway (1994) point out it is a way of knowing that puts the accent on proximity and involvement. Contrarily to the visual, which produces distance and detachment, the sense of touch presupposes contact and interaction. According to Rodaway "Touch is above all the most intimate sense, limited by the reach of the body, and it is the most reciprocal, for to touch is always to be touched" (1994: 41). Finally touch is also the most embodied sense. The faculties of touch and the kinaesthetic are dispersed and decentred; they are spread all over the body. It is not just a point of the body that touches. "Touch involves the whole body reaching out to the things constituting the environment and those things, or that environment coming into contact with the body" (1994:44). To touch is a perception of the whole body from within.

The sense of touch articulates a more truthful, intimate and reciprocal relation with the environment. In doing so, it breaks with the logic of the Cartesian perspectivist gaze, and, in particular, the spectorial distance between subject and object that is congenial to sight. As Jay points out in relation to Levinas, "Instead of the distance between subject and object congenial to sight, touch restores the proximity of self and other, who then is understood as neighbour" (1994: 557). The sense of touch does not reproduce static positions of identification, voyeurism and narcism, rather it is a site of relationship and affection. Touch is not about detached and disembodied contemplation but about doing, that is, about active participation in the world. As Jay points out "Touch, moreover, is connected with the primacy of doing over contemplation, in particular a kind of doing that reveals the vulnerability of the self to the world" (1994: 557). Because of its emphasis on proximity and involvement, the sense of touch has been seen, for example in Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of the visual, as the most primordial sense of all. In his attempt to overcome the platonic dualism between subject and object congenial to

sight, he proposes to reintroduce vision into the world of the tangible and the flesh. "Since the same body sees and touches"- he contends -"visible and tangible belong to the same world". In doing so he considers the tactile world as the primary space in which all forms of human experience belong, even vision and thinking. "Every vision takes places somewhere in the tactile space" (1968: 134). The sense of touch has also been seen as the basis in nurturing an ethical responsibility. For Levinas the haptic sense is a much more reliable source than the visual sense to nurture an ethical attitude. For Levinas an attitude of care for the other means refusing to turn him or her into an object of aesthetic contemplation. As Jay point out, "Caring thus meant keeping the eyes shut, thwarting the violent avidity of the gaze in the service of generosity" (1994: 556). An ethical interaction does not manifest in the visual, but in touch.

There are many different ways of touching; each of them is linked with different feelings, ideas and emotions, in other words, with different modes of being-in-the world. The particular haptic experience that makes the practice of nudism attractive is closer to the notion of caress than to the idea of grasp. Nudism is not about grasping the environment. It is not like climbing or surfing, a strong and sometimes violent contact with the mountains or the waves. It is a much more quiet, smooth, sensual and peaceful contact with the natural elements of the environment. The haptic experience of nudism is the caress of the wind, the sun and the water.

> "The caress is a mode of the subject's being, where the subject who is in contact with another goes beyond this contact. Contact as sensation is part of the world of light. But what is caressed is not touched, properly speaking. It is not the softness or warmth of the hand given in contact that the other seeks. The seeking of the cares constitutes its essence by the fact that the caress does not know what it seeks. This "not knowing", this fundamental disorder is essential" (Levinas, "Time and the Other", the levinas Reader, p 51 (quoted in Jay, 1994: 558))

Being intimately linked with the idea of the caress, nudism is a kind of contact with the environment that, contrary to climbing or scuba diving, does not intend to take possession of it. Nudism is not about knowing and mastering the environment, but a symbiosis with it. Nudism is about opening up the body to the natural elements; it is

about letting the sun get in, enjoying the feeling of the water on the skin. In resembling the notion of the caress nudism goes beyond contact and knowledge. It is an emotion that gets its force from an intimate and almost sensual contact with the environment.

The composure of the body that is predominant on a nudist beach endorses this interpretation of nudism as a smooth and almost sensual contact with the environment. Nudists enact their bodies smoothly, gently and without displaying violence or eroticism. Nudist tends to adopt a contented and relaxed corporeal attitude that removes not only aggressive movements but also objectifying gazes. Nudists tend to remain quieter and more static than an average clothed tourist. They are to be found either laying on the sand, reading the newspaper, having a swim or just on the edge of the sea, looking for clam shells or nice little cobble-stones. It is quite rare they will for example play beach tennis or walk along the beach fully naked. On a nudist beach there is a rigid code of behaviour that explicitly censure corporeal contact with other tourists and, in particular, any kind of erotic body language, even acceptable sensuality, such as kissing or hugging. When naked, people tend to be less sociable but more aware of their movements and corporeal expressions. The naked body is neither an erotic body nor a sportive body. They seek a pleasant and almost sensual contact with the environment.

The sense of touch is not just a passive receptor of sensual information, a physical relation with the environment, but a form of production of feelings and emotions. As Peterson points out in relation to haptic computing technologies, "Like mimesis, haptics can escape representation to become a form of production, to enhance operations, to provide a richer user experience, to promote experimentation through free flowing play and creativity. But primarily, haptics can escape representation in order to create a whole set of forces and corresponding sensations, a fusion of feelings" (forthcoming: 9). The attraction of nudism is intimately linked with the *elusory* capacity of the body-subject to open out new geographies, and create non-denotative meaning through the skin. Paraphrasing Radley, the point of nudism lies "in being able to articulate complexes of thought-with-feeling that words cannot name, let alone set forth, it is a way of accessing the world, not just a means of achieving ends that cannot be named" (Radley, 1995: 13).

In focusing on the capacity of the body to create non-representational meaning through the skin, I propose a 'materialist' understanding of nudism that gives credence to the unspeakable and invisible side of the body-subject, in particular to its capacity to turn onto things, spaces and living beings.

The set of feelings and emotions that come through the practice of nudism are mostly related with nature. I think of nudism in connection with play as a 'performative experiment' that uses the body, in particular the skin, to create a distinctive experience of nature, more tactile and emotional, which escapes representation. Indeed as Bell and Holliday point out, the articulation of a distinctive relation with nature is at the centre of naturist movements in the west.

> "The practices and discourses of the contemporary naturist movements in the west - and those to be uncovered in their histories - are at least in part about articulating a particular relation to nature. While 'social nudity' in this context need not be linked to or enacted in the natural landscape, the evolution and current manifestations of naturism nevertheless centre on a philosophy' which is all about bodies in nature"(Bell & Holliday, 2000: 127)

In the case of nudism, touch and the kinaesthetic enable a more truthful, intimate and sensual relation with the natural environment. Having a lot in common with the haptic experience of the caress, nudism presupposes an emotional and non-cognitive bond with nature that resemble the feeling of love, friendship and fusion. The practice of nudism is a particular form of dwelling, sensing and practicing nature which overcomes the logic of cartesian perspectivalism.

The practice of nudism is an expression of the emancipatory politics of bare life, which Thrift (2000), drawing on Agamben (1998), relates with practices of contemplation and mysticism. This is a bio-political 'project' that insists on the revitalization of the body in new forms of life and in particular, "the enhancement of the anticipation and conduct of certain bodily skills" (2000: 49). In particular, nudism participates in the process that Thrift (2000) identifies as 'a general reconstruction of time', which constitutes a key background within which nature is apprehended in modern western societies. According

to Thrift in the last 150 years a number of body practices have taken shape which constitute and value a present orientated stillness as well as an 'unqualified affectivity' and which balance an increasingly frenetic world. These mystical and contemplative developments are based on a slowed-down perception that 'stretches out the moment' and 'expand the size of consciousness', allowing an intensified attention to the body and its movements. According to Thrift these developments are a key background againts which nature is apprehended in modern western societies. "They form, if you like, an embodied 'unconscious', a set of basic exfoliations of the body through which nature is constructed, planes of affect attuned to particular body parts (and senses) and corresponding elements of nature". (Thrift, 2000: 45). Relying on the haptic experience of the caress, the practice of nudism has a lot in common with these contemplative and mystical practices. A major attraction of nudism is the possibility of an expanded awareness of the moment as well as an intensified sense of the body and its movements. Paraphrasing Thrift, the practices of nudism "are 'performed dreams' (...), 'virtual actualisations' of time which allow consciousness to become acute without necessarily being directed by drawing on the non-cognitive" (2000: 45).

Nudism and the social

Being-naked-on-the-beach is not just about the 'body' and the 'individual', nudism is intrinsically a social and public activity. Nudism is a particular way of being together. This is the case despite the fact that most people rarely talk to each other on the nudist beach. This section examines the kind of sociality that is characteristic of the nudist beach, which has a lot in common with Maffesoli's (1996) notion of neotribalism, which I have already introduced. The nudist 'community' is a very fluid kind of gathering, which is not linked to a coherent ideological project. What binds people together is not a rational project but simply a feeling, a lifestyle and an ambience. The case of the nudist beach challenges a common account in social sciences that identifies the increasing relevance of the body as an expression of an individualistic and post-emotional society. Although most of my respondents did not assume the social character of nudism, being

naked on the beach is intrinsically a political practice. The nudist is a cultural laboratory that challenges, but also naturalises, key social definitions related with the body and the everyday. In thinking of nudism as a political practice, I complement the previous section in which I have related nudism with the emancipatory politics of bare life (Thrift, 2000; Agamben, 1998). The chapter concludes with a particular example of nudist neo-tribes that takes the social, liminal and transgressive character of the beach to an extreme.

The kind of togetherness that is characteristic on the nudist beach has a lot in common with the type of gathering that Maffessoli (1996) identifies with the notion of neo-tribalism. As I have explained in chapter 4 Maffesoli thinks we are witnessing a process of de-individualisation and vitalism, which is manifest in the emergence of a new kind of holism and solidarity out of an ephemeral and fluid contemporary reality. In contrast with the stability induced by classical tribalism and organic communities, neo-tribalism is a type of communality that is characterised by fluidity, occasional gathering and dispersion. The emphasis of neo-tribes is not on rationality but on empathy and affection. What binds these contemporary groupings together is not a rational project or an ideology but simply an ambience, a lifestyle or an emotion. There is a disdain for any projective attitude. As Maffesoli observes "we are witnessing the tendency for a rationalised social to be replaced by an empathetic sociality, which is expressed by a succession of ambiences, feelings and emotions" (1996: 11). What is important is the moment, the execution of being together and creation for its own sake. "The tribes we are considering" - Maffesoli contends – "may have a goal, may have finality; but this is not essential; what is important is the energy expended on constituting the group as such. Thus developing new lifestyles is an act of pure creation of which we should be aware" (1996: 96).

Like the neo-tribes that Maffesoli describes, the nudist beach is an ephemeral, fluid and ill-defined social reality. In fact, the nudist community can barely be called a group. Its core is composed of 'ordinary' people like Françoise, Janet, Alberto, Pilar and Javier, most of them holidaymakers between 25 and 40 years old from urban areas like

Barcelona, Madrid and Bilbao. Despite having a similar background, nudists do not establish any kind of formal or informal institutional organisation on the beach. It is a fairly spontaneous grouping that is not linked to a social movement or a political idea. There are neither formal nor informal requirements for participating on the nudist beach; everybody can join in. The nudist beach is a very dynamic scene that is constantly appearing and disappearing in a number of places, in particular on remote and unspoilt beaches. It is not rare to meet people naked in a small cove, on a rock or even on a boat. Its changing character can be observed even during a single day. There are times of the day at which there is a higher proportion of people naked than at others. Furthermore, in Menorca the nudist community is not segregated from the rest of beach population. Nudists share the some space with non-nudists without major problems. It is not unusual to meet groups of people like the Casas family, a middle age couple with three children from a village near Barcelona, among whom only Antoni, the husband, practiced nudism (See figure 7.6). The nudist beach is an open, fragmented and fluid space.



Figure 7.6. Not all members of the Casas family practice nudism. In the picture Antoni is fully naked, his wife is in top less and their children clothed.

The foundations of the communal ethic in places like Macarella or Cavalleria rely neither on an ideology nor on a communal project but simply on a 'warm companionship' and the physicality of being together. The crucial point is the act of creation as such, the present experience; the collective feeling that emerges from the 'simple' act of being naked. The people that I met on a nudist beach had few things in common apart from being naked together and adopting a rather serious and relaxed posture. Nudists may have a similar geographical, social and perhaps even political background. However this does not work as the foundation of a communal ethic. The reason for being together is not related with class, culture or politics, but simply with a feeling and lifestyle. As I have explained in the previous section, what makes the nudist beach attractive is a set of embodied sensations mainly related to the sense of touch. In particular, the majority of comments suggest the significance of feeling the sun, the wind and the water all over the body without the interference of a wet swimming costume. What is important is the moment, the act of being together naked in a civilised way.

The case of nudism challenges a common account in the social sciences that identifies the increasing relevance of the body as an expression of the individualistic, over-rationalised and post-emotional character of post-modern societies. Scholars like Turner and Shilling do not see the body as the foundation of new forms of sociality, but as a sign of its disintegration. Turner, for example, denies the social character of embodied practices such as tattoos or nudism. Instead he relates them with a growing individualism and the emergence of the post-emotional actor (Mestrovic, 1997). In post-modern societies social relations are becoming thin and cool as a result of globalisation. Subjects are increasingly blasé like members of an airport lounge, "indifferent to traditional signs of commitment and remote from the conventional signs of caring" (Turner 1999: 49). In this context, embodied practices such as the modern tattoo is not seen as expression of identity and attachment but simply a cliché, an ironic sign of consumption. "The modern tattoo is an expression of the growing individualism of contemporary society" (Turner, 1999: 49). Shilling's notion of body project does not focus on sociality either. Embodied practices such as tattoos (Sweetman, 1999), fitness

(Sassatelli, 1999) or nudism are an expression the individualism and rationalisation that dominates the post-modern societies, they are "attempts to construct and maintain a coherent and viable sense of self-identity through attention to the body and more particularly the body's surface" (Sweetman, 1999). According to Shilling the body has an increasingly central role in the modern person's sense of self-identity. "There is a tendency for the body to be seen as an entity which is in the process of becoming: a project which should be worked and accomplished as part of an individuals's self-identity" (1993: 5). The increasing centrality of the body is intimately linked with both the extraordinary rationalisation of our societies and the disintegration of modern certainties. "We now have the means to exert an unprecedented degree of control over bodies, yet we are also living in an age which has thrown into radical doubt our knowledge of what bodies are and how we should control them" (1993:3).

Scholars like Shilling and Turner understand the subject, and the body, exclusively in terms of reflexivity and rationality. They acknowledge neither the elusory and creative character of the body-subject nor the relevance of what is non-cognitive and non-representational. The body is exclusively seen as the product of a process of cultural construction. However the case of nudism challenges the idea of a stable, ordered and rational subject. It reveals a rhizomatic and de-centred picture of the self. The notion of a teleological, solitary and all-powerful subject has to be replaced by an open, uncertain and nomadic subject who does not posses an absolute control of his/her destiny (Thrift, 1999; Grosz, 1995, 1999; Latour, 1999; Deleuze & Guttari, 1998).

Concluding remarks: nudist tribes

Although most of my respondents did not assume the social character of nudism, being naked on the beach is intrinsically a socio-political practice. The nudist beach is a cultural laboratory that challenges, but also naturalises, key social definitions related with the body and the everyday. On the one hand, nudism works as a deconstructing activity. Uncovering the most intimate parts of the body in public destabilises a number

of mainstream social dispositions related with the body and the everyday. In doing so it reveals the precarious nature of the body, its fluid, uncertain and modifiable character. The cultural is a 'biological' necessity of the body; as Grosz (1995) points out, the body is organically, biologically incomplete. It is an undetermined, amorphous, a series of uncoordinated potentialities that require social triggering, ordering and long term administration. First and foremost, the practice of nudism destabilises the 'natural' division between the private and the public side of the body. As Douglas et al point out nudism deals with one of the most basic and important rules in our societies, the rule against public nudity (1977: 9). The practice of nudism also destabilises established forms of inter-corporeal relations, in particular in the field of vision. As I have already pointed out, nudism breaks with a romantic notion of visuality that presupposes detachment and objectification. The practice of nudism opens up a different kind of space, involving distinctive ways of seeing and feeling (Barcan 2001:314). Finally, being naked in public without sexual purpose destabilises the common association between nudity and sexuality, thus questioning the erotic character of the naked body. On the other hand, nudism not only destabilises dispositions of the body that are taken for granted, but also naturalises a number of certainties related with the body and the everyday. Nudism is simultaneously a deconstructing and legitimising activity. As Bell and Holliday point out, on a nudist beach nature is mobilised to naturalise particular gender and sexual relations. "In this logic the body is re-naturalized and simultaneously de-sexualised: rather than casting off culture/civilization to release either animalistic or 'natural (culturally suppressed) passions (...) a strict code of morality is instead naturalised". Nudism is not only about de-sexualisation, it is also about civilization and morality. "Nature"- they conclude- "is thus simultaneously civilizing and the other of civilization" (2000: 137).

Nudism is intrinsically a social and political activity. This is the case despite the fact most of my respondents did not assume this character. In order to make it an acceptable practice, a majority of nudists conceal the social, political, and sexual implications of being naked in public. There is an explicit effort not only to de-socialise, but also to de-sexualise the practice of nudism. While just a few of my respondents related nudism

with any kind of moral or social claims, the majority of them made an explicit effort to distinguish it from sexuality and in particular from scopophilia and exhibitionism. The way people enact their bodies on the beach also suggest the concealment of the public and sexual implications of nudism. Most of the nudists keep a rigid and thoughtful composure of the body on the nudist beach. They normally stay in their plot, in the nudist corner, generally in silence without performing any sort of erotic body language, not even kissing or hugging. They also tend to avoid, as much as possible, contact with other people when naked. Most of the nudist practitioners would put their shorts on to visit surrounding areas, walk across the beach or even play tennis. By avoiding the social, political and sexual implications of this practice, the underlying aim is to make nudism as normal as possible; to reduce it to a question of feeling and lifestyle.



Figure 7.7 In Macarelleta there is a vocal minority of nudists who, inspired by the hippy movement of the 60s set up a hedonistic and utopian community in which materialism, hypocrisy and clothing are abolished.

In Menorca there is a vocal minority of nudists who, inspired by the hippy movement of the 60s, take the social and political character of nudism to an extreme. Contrary to mainstream nudists, they do not try to minimise the challenges nudism brings about, instead their strategy is to claim the public and transgressive character of nudism. They are a group of people mostly in their 20s who come not only from Barcelona, Madrid and Bilbao but also from elsewhere in Europe. During the summer, they spend long periods of time living on unspoilt beaches such as Binigaus, Macarelleta and El Pilar, either occupying nearby prehistoric caves or camping in the wooded area surrounding the beach. They manage to live with very little infrastructure, constantly challenging the ban on camping. In Macarelleta I met a group of about 30 people (see figure 7.7). Because of the legal challenges, they did not use tents, they were living just with sleeping bags, a hammock, some sarongs, minimal cooking equipment, lots to smoke and some games and musical instruments such as juggling, drums and guitars. They knew of a cave nearby to shelter in case the weather conditions were not suitable. Most of them come to Menorca alone or in pairs with the intention of joining the community of Macarelleta at some point. Most of them stay on the island only for a month although some stay up to three months.

Like the neo-tribes that Maffesoli (1996) describes, this is a very fluid, ephemeral and changeable kind of grouping. People are joining and leaving all the time. However in this case, they are properly a community. They do not just *visit* the beach for 3 or 4 hours a day, but they *live* on the beach for long periods of time. These radical nudist communities also match Maffesoli's neo-tribalism in their emphasis on empathy. What binds together the community of Macarelleta is not a rational project but a radical lifestyle and a strong promise of belonging. Like in Garland's novel *The Beach* (1997), the main attraction of Macarelleta is the possibility of participating in a secluded community and living a utopian and hedonistic existence. In taking the desire of nature and the principles of libertinism to an extreme, Macarelleta is an expression of modern primitivism (Klesse: 1999) and utopian migration (Rozenberg: 1990). They do not only share with the hippy movement of the 60s a radical opposition to the values and practices of the west but also the desire to set up a utopian community where they can

shed materialism, hypocrisy and clothing. "The modern primitive's rejection of modern society"- Klesse points out- "presents itself as a commitment to sexual freedom and bodily expression, coded in a naïve longing for the authentic primitive a profoundly essentialist concept" (1999: 18). The people I met in Macarelleta do not conceal the social and political implications of being nude. Instead, their strategy is to claim its public and transgressive character. They think of nudism not only as a question of embodied feeling, but also as the foundation of an alternative way of living, more primitive, authentic and hedonist. In contrast with mainstream nudists they do not adopt a rigid composure of the body that conceals any kind of sexual body language. The question is not to make nudism normal, but to challenge the values and the practices of western societies. Thus for example neo-hippies do not only go naked to swim and sunbathe; they are also naked most of the day, in the wood while playing guitar, juggling (see figure 7.8) or even selling jewellery (see figure 7.9).



Figure 7.8 Two members of the neo-hippy community juggling on the beach. The neo-hippies bodies are not only uncovered but also enacted.



Figure7.9 two members of the neo-hippy community selling jewellery on the beach. Despite refusing western materialism, neo-hippies are introducing new commercial practices to the beach

The neo-hippy experience of Macarelleta is not something radically different from the other beach experiences that I have analysed here. The community of Macarelleta simply takes to an extreme the liminal and transgressive character of the beach (Passariello,1983; Preston-Whyte, 2004; Shields, 1991). Macarelleta is an expression of the Robinson myth that underlies the hedonistic experience of the beach. As I pointed out in chapter 6, Romantic-inspired notions of virginity, marginality and isolation are at the root of this tourist experience. According to Urbain, the Robinson ideal is inspired by social rupture, the departure from everyday modern life and the desire to get away from it all in an unspoilt corner of the world (Urbain, 2003; Löfgren, 1999: 9). Macarelleta is a liminal space, in which the stress of normal working lives is temporarily suspended; materialism, hypocrisy and clothing are abolished; egalitarism and sexual freedom flourishes and bonds of friendship are forged. Macarelleta works as the

primitive Garden of Eden, a world of youth, hedonism and happiness. However Macarelleta is also an illusion, an impossible utopia, a lie. As the picture 7.9 demonstrates there is a long history of contradictions, territorial conflicts and hypocrisies underlying Macarelleta. Today the Mediterranean beach is a place of crowds, congestion and pollution. Even in Macarelleta it is sometimes difficult to find a place to put your towel. However the allure of the beach as a place to get away from modernity and civilisation, a place to play at being Crusoe, endures.

> "Whatever the beach, it is still possible, in the presence of the timeless wash of waves, the sibilance of sand, and the warm kiss of the sun, to forget the nagging sense of fealty to cash, work, and responsibility. After all is said and done, we still came to the beach to slip through a crack of time into the paradise of self-forgetfulness" (Lenček and Bosker, 1999: 286)

Chapter 8
Conclusion

In western societies, tourism is no longer a discrete and self-contained activity separated from everyday life, but an important cultural laboratory in the production of places, bodies and subjectivities. This PhD has proposed an understanding of tourism as a practical and embodied way of being-in-the-world. In chapter 2 I considered the use of dwelling, embodied and performative metaphors in tourist studies. These metaphors are argued to produce an account of tourism which addresses the mobile and complex reality of the 21st century without delocalising, disembodying or isolating tourists. Building on Ingold (2000) my most relevant contribution has been the development of the notion of dwelling, which I have considered despite the sedentary connotations it holds. I have also explored the possibilities of a situated, elusory and expressive body in tourist studies as well as a de-centred and rhizomatic understanding of tourist agency that neither undermines the material and non-material networks folded into the human world nor overemphasises human action, concealing the messy human condition. These theoretical developments have informed an ethnography of mass Mediterranean tourism in Menorca, which focuses on both the commodified spaces of the coastal hotel and the

Edenic nature of the beach. In chapter 3 I introduced the tourist reality of Menorca, the case study of this thesis, and the methodological process that I conducted. While being a paradigmatic example of the functioning of mass Mediterranean tourism, Menorca has also a number of singularities that make it different from its neighbouring resorts. This combination makes the island an ideal setting for exploring the everyday life of tourist, their bodies, practices and subjectivities.

Mass tourist sites are among the best examples of post-modern cities of leisure, ephemeral, ludic and nomadic spaces built on fantasy and pleasure. In Chapter 4 I examined the pre-eminent tourist space of the coastal hotel and through it the kind of dwelling that is characteristic of fluid and highly commodified environments. Drawing on the work of Kracauer (1995) and Maffeosli (1996) I addressed three main issues: the emergence of over-rationalised, nomadic spaces surrounded by the fleeting; the role of fun, spectacle and the banal in the formation of spaces and subjectivities and the possibility of community out of a superficial and fluid environment. Among other elements I detailed the organised entertainment programme in hotels and the kind of sociality that is characteristic of the pool. The underlying theme of the chapter was the possibility of a way of being-in-the-world without roots, of togetherness without organic communities. Despite being places of void and banality to which there is no meaning, purpose or utopia attached, coastal hotels are by no means insubstantial or irrelevant. In chapter 5 I considered the case of family tourism, which challenges the common depiction of mass tourism as a depthless and inauthentic experience. Family tourism has been seen as a cultural laboratory where people perform different social relations and identities related to the family and the everyday. Finding pleasure in the mundane and the familiar, family tourism responds to the Crusoean image of the sedentary vacationer. Different figurations of the tourist have been revised in order to see how these perspectives deal with the fact people go on holiday with their families.

Tourism has often been reduced to a practice of visual consumption. However, the fact is that tourists are increasingly doing something with their bodies in the places they visit rather than endlessly spectatorial passivity (Franklin & Crang, 2001: 13). The beach is

an exceptional setting to analyse the embodied character of tourism, in particular the role of the visual sense, its limits and contestations. On the virgin beach, practices of visual consumption coexist with a number of embodied practices that do not presuppose a visual and cognitive relation with place. In Chapter 6 I examined the tourist experience of the virgin beach, a paradigmatic example of a romantic approach by which nature is gazed upon and turned into spectacle. I concluded however that we can neither treat the visual as a disembodied relation with the world nor reduce destinations to signs and visual representations, thereby concealing the complex and contradictory ways in which people sense the world around them. By taking sandcastles as my example I also demonstrated that the beach draws its significance not only from mental and intellectual work, but also from the embodied and manipulative practices of the people who inhabit them. The popularity of the beach relies enormously on the capacity of the body to create life, space and meaning in a way that refuses both an objectifying gaze and the control exerted by discourse. Drawing on Thrift (1997,1999, 2000) and Radley (1995), in chapter 7 I used the case of nudism to explore different ways of knowing through the body, in particular the role of visuality and the sense of touch. In pre-supposing a counter-hegemonic way of seeing which is circumspect and liberating, the practice of nudism breaks with the logic of the mastering gaze and in particular the dynamic that produces detachment. However, what makes nudism a distinctive and pleasant experience is the direct exposure of the skin to the natural elements, as well as the sensation that moving the body produces

The changing relationships between subjectivity, embodiment and space have been a core theme of this PhD thesis. I have explored these links primarily through the notion of dwelling, the pivotal theoretical development of this research project. The use of this concept in relation to mass tourism has allowed me to suggest a way of being in the world that embraces mobility and banality. The fluid and superficial character of mass tourism is not the result of lack of dwelling, an expression of disengagement and inauthenticity; but on the contrary it is a paradigmatic example of dwelling in the world in western societies today. The fluid character of our societies cannot be an excuse to re-introduce an ungrounded and dehumanised subject. We are dwelling-in-mobilities-

and-banality. The use of the concept of dwelling has also allowed for an understanding of tourism that privileges the ordinary and the mundane instead of the exotic and the spectacular. In identifying tourism as a way of being-in-the-world priority has been given to everyday embodied practices and performances instead of consciousness or structure. Doing tourism is not only a matter of being in space or representing the space. It is, above all, a matter of practising space and practising through space (Crang, 1999: 248). That is, tourists are not only in a place, but also involved with that place, although not necessarily in the same manner as non-tourists.

While denoting a general sense of involvement I have used the concept of dwelling in two different ways. On the one hand, I have used this concept to reflect on contemporary dwellings and the relevance of tourism in everyday life. In our increasingly dis-organised and mobile societies, tourism is no longer an exception but a norm; it is no longer a discrete activity contained in special locations and times, but one of the most significant way through which we inhabit the world around us. Tourism is, paraphrasing Franklin, "a metaphor for the way we lead our lives in a consumer society. The manner of the tourist"- he continues -"has come to determine a generalised stance to the world around us" (2003:5). In particular I considered the possibility of 'authentic' social experience in highly commodified, nomadic spaces surrounded by the fleeting; and also the centrality of the body and the domain of bare life in contemporary everyday cultures. On the other hand, I have used the concept of dwelling in opposition to travel to identify a sedentary kind of vacation that privileges the mundane instead of the exotic. I have focused on spaces of dwelling rather than travelling, of pleasure rather than seriousness. Neither the beach nor the coastal hotel can be identified with the popular image of the male middle class ardent traveller in search of new sights, which Löfgren identifies with Phileas Fogg (1999: 9). Rather they are an expression of the Crusoean desire to find an unspoilt corner of the world to relax and build up an alternative live (Löfgren, 1999: 9). The pleasure of mass tourism is not the excitement of the new and the unusual but a return to the familiar and the formation of a different and 'more authentic' everyday life.

A large part of this PhD thesis has been committed to speaking about the body. In a dwelling perspective, the body is the means through which we are practically involved in the world. Lived experience, social practice, knowledge and feelings are always intrinsically corporeal and sensual. This PhD has reflected on the general embodied nature of tourist dwelling but also, and more specifically, on the central role of the body in tourist experience. Coastal mass tourism is not only embodied but also about the body. Activities such as sunbathing and swimming revolve mainly around the body and its movements; they are 'performative experiments' that use the body to conjure up virtual worlds and alternative ways of being, that is, to evoke meanings, emotions and desires. I have made two major contributions. On the one hand, I have unveiled the existence of a plurality of ways of knowing through the body in tourism. My work on the beach has challenged a common understanding that reduces tourism to a romantically inspired visual and cognitive experience. There are multiple ways of seeing and sensing in tourism, all of which are embodied and culturally mediated. They always presuppose political and social meanings as well as power and gender relations. On the other hand, I have suggested the importance of the expressive, sensual and elusory faculties of the body in tourism. The body is neither merely a thing through which we tour the world, nor only an object of representation, cultivation and exhibition. The body is an active entity, paraphrasing Thrift (1997: 142) it is a body-subject engaged in body-practices of becoming. Not striping tourist bodies of their specificity, their corporeality and the vestigial traces of their production as bodies has been a major challenge of this PhD thesis.

This PhD thesis has not only departed from detached and disembodied accounts of mass tourism, but also from flattening and mortuary (Crang, 1999: 248) understandings that negate the humanity and the authenticity of this tourist experience. I have taken seriously what is considered fun, banal and depthless, so as not to contribute to the social reproduction of seriousness that often characterises tourist studies. Taking account of the thick sociality of mass tourism without downplaying its pleasurable character has been a major challenge of this PhD. As Franklin and Crang point out, "we need to be able to say tourism matters because it is enjoyable, not in spite of it" (2001:

14). I have also recognised the creativity of tourists, although without dismissing the highly commodified and often superficial character of mass tourism. This PhD has refrained from presenting tourists as lacking in initiative, unadventurous and insipid, that is as 'turistas vulgaris', as a kind of foreign species that destroys the attraction of the place. Instead, tourists have been presented as embodied and situated subjects practising and performing particular spaces and times while integrated in a number of material and non-material networks. Overall, the intention of this PhD has been to produce a situated but lively geography of mass tourism that neither celebrates nor dismisses the banality and tackiness of this tourist phenomenon. While the celebration of its banality negates the complex and often-questionable politics underlying mass tourism, its detraction reproduces the social hierarchy of travellers and tourists, which I do not accept.

Coastal mass tourism is paradigmatic of the kind of pre-fabricated and superficial experiences that are characteristic of fluid and highly commodified western societies. It is a cultural phenomenon orientated to the masses that offers pure entertainment and often flirts with the banal. Mass tourism does not respond to the depth that bourgeoisie culture identifies with genuineness and authenticity but to the banality that is often associated with mass media and other popular cultural phenomena. There is no meaning, purpose or totality underpinning the phenomena of mass tourism, but simply 'workable' utopias, and immanent experiences. Tourism can be a superficial reality that goes at odds with the values of higher art. However as Lippard (1999) points out, like art, it interrogates the normal, teaches us how to see and is a form of transformation, even cannibalism of other places and cultures. Tourism gives a privileged access to major themes of contemporary reality. In focusing my attention on the coastal hotel, I have made an effort not to dismiss mass tourism as inauthentic and inferior. Instead I stress its transformative capacity as well as its intrinsically social character. It is not the possibility of transcendence and meaning that makes places such as the coastal hotel progressive but the fact that the immanence of the human condition is not concealed. Mass tourism is a site of 'bare life' in which the anonymous individual confronts the question of the provisional condition of human existence without the protection of any

superstructure. Stripped of the nostalgia for anthropological places and organic communities, human life can emerge in the absence of the mythological structures of meaning.

Taking Menorca as my case study, I have vindicated the unexplored and devalued field of mass Mediterranean tourism as a major cultural laboratory in the production of places, bodies and subjectivities in Western European societies. The Mediterranean is a leisure periphery of Europe, but also a centre of social innovation and cultural encounters. It is a place of borders and divisions but also of exchange and flow, a bridge of blue sea. This research project not only takes Menorca as its case study but also begins its journey from the island. I have proposed an insight into contemporary mobile societies that results from an inverse travel to that of mass tourism; a journey from Menorca to England, from the 'periphery' to the 'centre'. This thesis is not an example of a local study, nor is it an exercise in academic tourism. Rather it is a research project in-between different places, dwelling-in-mobilities. This has been a research project in-between different places but also in-between cultural and academic traditions which, like contemporary societies, is not spatially contained but has a sense of travel and hybridity at its heart. I advocate a situated research that is able to dwell in a place and with its people but which is also able to break with the sanitised insulation that the nation state often imposes and which dismisses places such as Menorca as irrelevant peripheries. A research that is able to capture the thick sociality of life. Overall this is an open research project that works within a universalism that does not imply homogenisation, a globalisation that does not imply subordination, a humanism that recognises the diversity and creativity of human life.

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