THE TOURIST AT HOME

This village loves this village because its river banks are full of iguanas sunning themselves and its fishes love to bite.—SANTIAGO CHUB

"WHAT'S HERE?" asked some friends from Maine as I walked them through the New Mexican village I live in. They had seen the place written up in a guidebook as "picturesque." "Nothing," I said with a certain mendacious pleasure, thinking how opaque the village's surface is.

"Is there anything over there?" asked a couple I met on the bridge; they were staying at the local inn. "Depends on what you're looking for," I replied, secure in the knowledge that there was nothing over there they would see.

Yet when I give my own walking tours through the rutted dirt streets (and few of my visitors escape them), it seems to me that everything is here: culture, nature, history, art, food, progress, and irony. There is the old village itself and its vestigial claims to "authenticity"; the church (relatively new as southwestern churches go, having replaced an older one in 1884); the 18-year-old upscale development to the west for contrast (and for an architectural tour of another nature; it's a good survey of imagined "Santa Fe style"); the movie set in the distance; the curan-

Manuel and Clara Anaya with replica of Nuestra Señora de los Remedios, Galisteo, New Mexico (photo: Lucy R. Lippard). The miniature church was made by Mr. Anaya; the actual adobe church, with the same distinctive double cross (which he helped to construct), is just below the hill on which this stands.

dero's "office" with its skull on a pole; what used to be here and there (scattered adobe ruins); the quite new community center and the brand new firehouse (partially built by community work parties); yard art; an extensive petroglyph site; the cloud shows and encompassing light on ranchlands and mountains; the (diminishing) biological diversity of the creek and bosque; the mouthwatering tamales at the Tienda Anaya; and, of course, the people. We have it all, but for an outsider, it's hard to find.

The next question is, should it be easier? What's in it for a town like this, with few local businesses? Who would profit from a higher profile? Will signs begin to proliferate along the highway? Will local artists lend themselves to making this place a "destination" rather than a fly-through? Will a proposed café/gallery and/or restaurant change our identity? We may soon have to answer these questions, as the state and county tourism bureaus look farther and farther afield for attractive "authenticity." Dean MacCannell has said that the concept of the authentic is a potential "stake driven into the heart of local cultures."

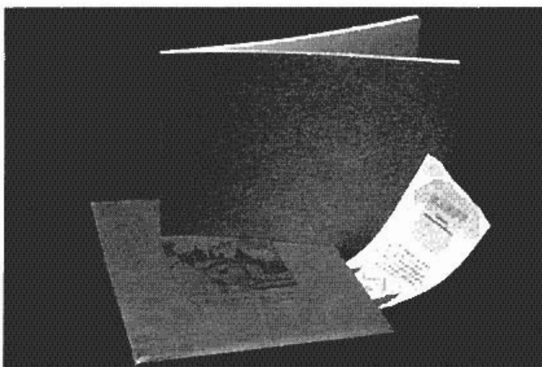
THE LOCAL IS DEFINED by its unfamiliar counterparts. A peculiar tension exists between *around here* and *out there*, regional and national, home and others' homes, present and past, outsiders and insiders. This tension is particularly familiar in a multicentered society like ours, where so many of us have arrived relatively recently in the places we call home, and have a different (though not lesser) responsibility to our places than those who have been living in the area for generations. Jody Burland has remarked on the "peculiar reciprocity of longing" at the heart of tourism which binds outsiders to insiders. Tourists may long for warmth, beauty, exoticism, whereas locals may long for escape, progress, and an improved economy: "Between us there can be a moment of strange, perhaps misleading comprehension." Local residents both possess and *become* a "natural resource which produces more pleasure, and tourists are necessary to its conversion to wealth." Smiles and solicitude are part of the negotiations. The exchange contains the contradictions that define a multicentered society.

Tourism is the apotheosis of looking around, which is the root of regional arts as well as how we know where we are. Travel is the only context in which some people *ever* look around. If we spent half the energy looking at our own neighborhoods, we'd probably learn twice as much. When we are tourists elsewhere seeing the sights, how often do we stop and wonder who chose the sights we are seeing and how they have been constructed for us? We do often wonder about the sights we're *not* seeing—houses and gardens glimpsed behind the walls, historic sites and natural wonders sequestered on private property or closed on Tuesdays.

The tourist experience is a kind of art form if it is, as Alexander Wilson says, its own way of organizing the landscape and our sense of it. "We tour the disparate surfaces of everyday life as a way of reintegrating a fragmented world." It is an art form best practiced domestically, challenging artists to work in the interstices between the art scene and local audiences. This can mean demythologizing local legends and constructing antimyths that will arm residents against those who would transform their places in ways that counter local meaning (which in itself is unstable). So the resident who accepts the role of tourist at home becomes responsible not only for the way the place is seen but for how it is *used*. Jim Kent, a sociologist based in the legendary Colorado ski town notes, "So many people complain about the people who bought Aspen.

What about the people who sold Aspen?"

Being here and being there, being home and being away, are more alike than we often think. Even as we learn them, our places change, because no place is static, and no resident remains the same as s/he lives and changes with the experiences life and place provide. People visit, they like the place, they retreat or retire there, becoming what have been called "amenity migrants." Then, prey to the "drawbridge syndrome," they begin to complain about the tourists and other newcomers. In Aspen, they say "if you've been here a year, you remember the good old days." A former county commissioner observes, "What defines you as a local, in my mind, is whether you give more than you take." Yet locals can be takers too, from a littering habit that pervades the rural United States to more permanently destructive behavior. It was a local, mad at his girlfriend, who poisoned and brought down the great historic tree called the Austin Treaty Oak, in Texas. At Higgins Beach, near Portland, Maine, drunken party goers deliberately stomped on the nests and eggs of endangered terns. All over the West, local people target shoot at ancient rock art. Vandalism, not necessarily by "foreign" tourists, recently destroyed an arch in Canyonlands. The examples are chillingly ubiquitous.



Louis Hock and Elizabeth Sisco, *Local Interpretations,* 1991 (photo: the artists) Book and supermarket coupon, in conjunction with the artists' project *Corral at Banff, 1991: Community Transactions,* Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff Center for the Arts. The exchange of cash register coupons at the Safeway checkout for a booklet of local comment which could be redeemed at the public library made a point about the role of local transactions in an international tourist town and the commodification of such transactions. The book came in a paper bag, like a tourist's purchase, with Walter Phillips' picture *Corral at Banff* on it. (The Canadian artist was a popularizer of the town.) The book ("an alternative souvenir") is drawn from interviews with thirty-nine long-term residents about their town, and thanks to the contributors "for allowing us into their homes as intimate tourists." The coupons included two quotes from the book: "If you live in a National Park you have a responsibility to work toward protecting it. That's the payment for the wonderful pleasure of living here"; and "The *ideal* tourist–he's a happy Texan who's been around the world, is broad-minded, and can afford a vacation."

Many towns are not so much potential destinations as service stops along the way to more desirable places. Considered negligible, they are unseen, recalling tourism in its innocence, when travelers were the strangers, providing entertainment for locals, when the passing tourists looked out upon views that were the same before they came and after they left. But all too soon came the deluge. Opposing tourism in the West, if only theoretically, has suddenly become "like being against ranching, or Christianity," writes Donald Snow in a bitter elegy for Montana titled "Selling Out the Last Best Place":

We're getting the endless strips of motels, junk food restaurants, and self-serve gas depots out along the interstates that make our towns look like every other greasy little burg everywhere else in Walt Disney's Amerika. We've

got increasingly egregious pollution problems now, here in the paradise of the northern Plains, and we have seriously outstripped the abilities of local government to handle even modest levels of new home development. Recent news in my hometown paper is that a new hydrologic study of Missoula County has found significant levels of septic contamination in every single well... including one well drilled 220 feet down to bedrock.... If all that isn't stupid enough, we spend what paltry money we raise from a tourism tax right back on more tourism.

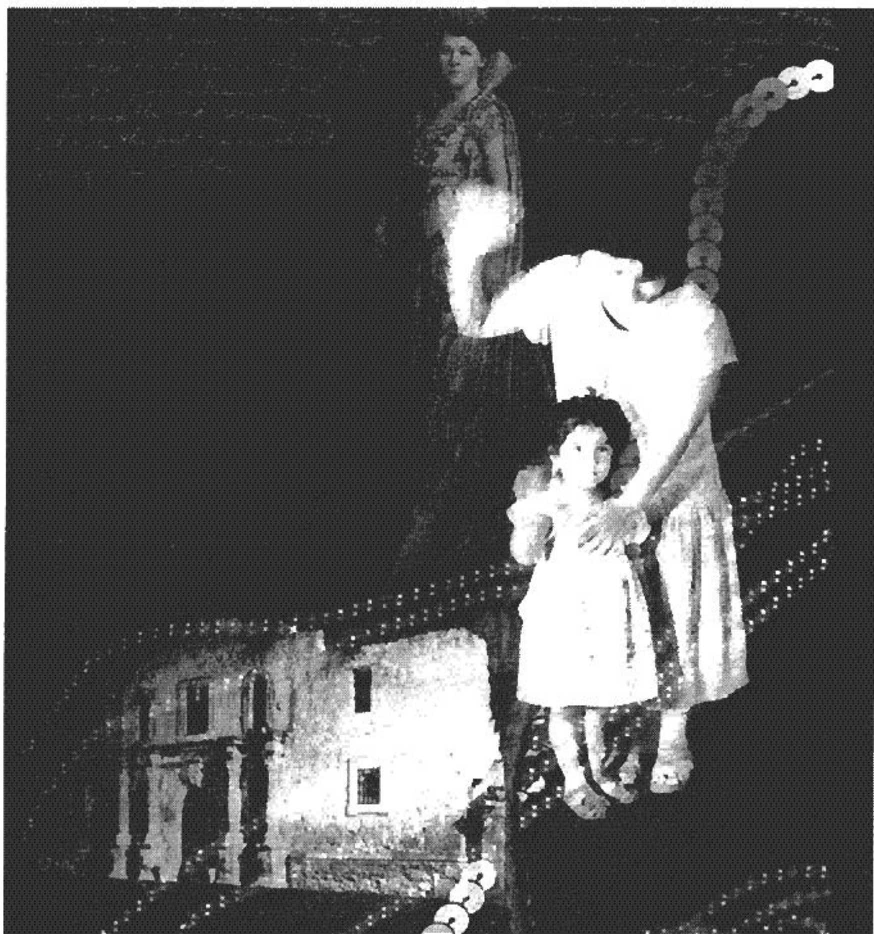
Over a period of years, John Gregory Peck and Alice Shear Lepie have studied three North Carolina communities and charted the effects of rapid growth, slow growth, and "transient development" (weekend and special event tourist trade) on three criteria of central importance to local people: *power* (land ownership, sources of financing, local input, and the relationship of local traditions to development projects); *payoff* (benefits and potential upward mobility for how many residents); and *tradeoffs* (the social impact on communities). Under the best of conditions, balance seems achievable. Yet when tourism becomes the only option for economic survival, our labor force becomes a nation of service workers, dolled up to look like our ancestors as we rewrite the past to serve the present. Although this situation might provide a chance for retrospection, the romantics, the generalizers, and the simulators usually get there first. Towns can wither on the vine as they preserve the obsolete out of stubbornness or impotence, or they can inform their residents' current lives. Past places and events can be used to support what is happening in the present, or they can be separated from the present in a hyped-up, idealized no-place, or pseudo-utopia, that no longer belongs to the people who belong there.

In recent years, a lot of cities around the country have come up with PR campaigns called Be a Tourist in Your Own Town. It's an interesting idea if it's taken way past the overtly commercial motives that inspire it. Instead of discounted trips to restaurants and museums offered in order to stimulate local markets, this could be a time to focus on latent questions about our own places—areas we've never walked through, people we've never met, history we don't know, issues we aren't well-informed about, political agendas written on the landscape. It is a task taken seriously by the innovative Center for Land Use Interpretation and its publications and tours. (See pp. 20, 150.)

John Stilgoe's studies of "locally popular" places such as the Blue Springs Cafe, just off the interstate at Highland, Indiana, and the Ice House Café in Sheridan, Arkansas, or even the ubiquitous Wal-Marts, suggest that people are less interested in the visual impact, in the architectural containers, than in "something different" from the corporate style and, above all, in "high quality product and service within the container." Thus the tourist looking for the locally validated, the truly "authentic," is unlikely to stumble into it because *from the outside* it looks like nothing special. Most locals, perhaps even some proprietors, would like to keep it that way. In tourist towns, at least, residents feel displaced. They need their own refuges, which are always endangered—potential tourist spots, if the secret gets out. MacCannell has pointed out that in San Francisco, "everything that eventually became an attraction certainly did not start out as one. There was a time when... Fisherman's Wharf was just a fisherman's wharf, when Chinatown was just a neighborhood settled by the Chinese."

Years ago, theater innovator Richard Schechner got a job as a tour guide to prepare for an article on tourist performances. Creative Time's 1995 *Manhattan Passport—7 Two Token Tours* encouraged New Yorkers to rediscover their borough by "re-contextualizing typical tourist attractions with areas of the island other than those in which you might live and work." The seven cleverly titled excursions included "Take the A Train" (Harlem), "More Than Harlem on My Mind" (Washington Heights and Inwood), the "Melting Pot Tour" (the U.N. and Roosevelt Island), and the "Cultural Cornucopia Tour" (Lower East Side and East Village). The latter stopped at the Henry Street Settlement, Gus's Pickle Stand, Liz Christie Gardens, the 6th Street Indian restaurant row, Nuyorican Poets Café, St. Marks on the Bowery, the Russian and Turkish Baths, and four yoga dens. This is cultural tourism

Kathy Vargas, *My Alamo*, 1995. From a series of altered photographs with handwritten texts. Vargas was raised and still lives in San Antonio, where the Daughters of the Republic of Texas ironically control the Alamo, the city's best-known tourist site. The text reads: "Then there's the Order of the Alamo, with their duchesses, princess and queen at Fiesta time. Beautiful dresses my mom would let me wave to until I finally said, 'When I grow up I want to be one of them.' My mother explained why I couldn't: expensive dresses and 'old' families. My mother never used the word 'racism,' only 'money' and 'lineage.' But it was the first time I looked at who I and my family were honestly."



at its liveliest, though it is unclear how actively it addressed the problematics of gentrification, homelessness, redlining and other pressing social ills in relation to cultural issues.

A provocative community exercise in being a tourist in our own towns would be to ask people what local existing sites or buildings, artifacts, places they'd like to see preserved, and *why*. Times Square might not have been on my list during the forty years I lived in New York, but now that it's too late, it is suddenly on everyone's list. As early as 1914 the area was described as "a little bit of the underworld, a soupçon of the halfworld—there you have the modern synthesis of New York as revealed in the neighborhood of Forty-Second Street." First-run movies showed in the odorous and slightly dangerous theaters of my youth, now gone, as is Grant's, where New Yorkers could buy a hot dog and be goggle-eyed tourists on the seamier side of their home town—not to mention the squalid porn shops, hustlers of every stripe, adult movies billed as "XXXstasy," and the sometimes violent street life. All gone now, replaced by Disneyfication, to make Times Square a safe place for mallrats and anathema for locals.

What is at stake in Times Square, according to literary scholar Andreas Huyssen, is "the transformation of a fabled place of popular culture in an age in which global entertainment conglomerates are rediscovering the value of the city and its millions of tourists for its marketing strategies." And where will Times Square's marginalized population (which made the place what it was for better and for worse) go now? Wherever they turn up, it's unlikely that a new place will ever achieve the historical and populist grandeur of its predecessor. Or can Times Square be reincarnated elsewhere? Maybe Disney will take that on too, if we don't. As architect Michael Sorkin concludes sadly, "of course, it's terribly true that the demise of Times Square, its conversion to another version of the recursion of Vegas (which has now built its own Times Square, even more pared down and distilled than the vanishing 'original'), must be blamed squarely not on the energetic advocates of sanitized fun but on our own failures to propose a better idea."

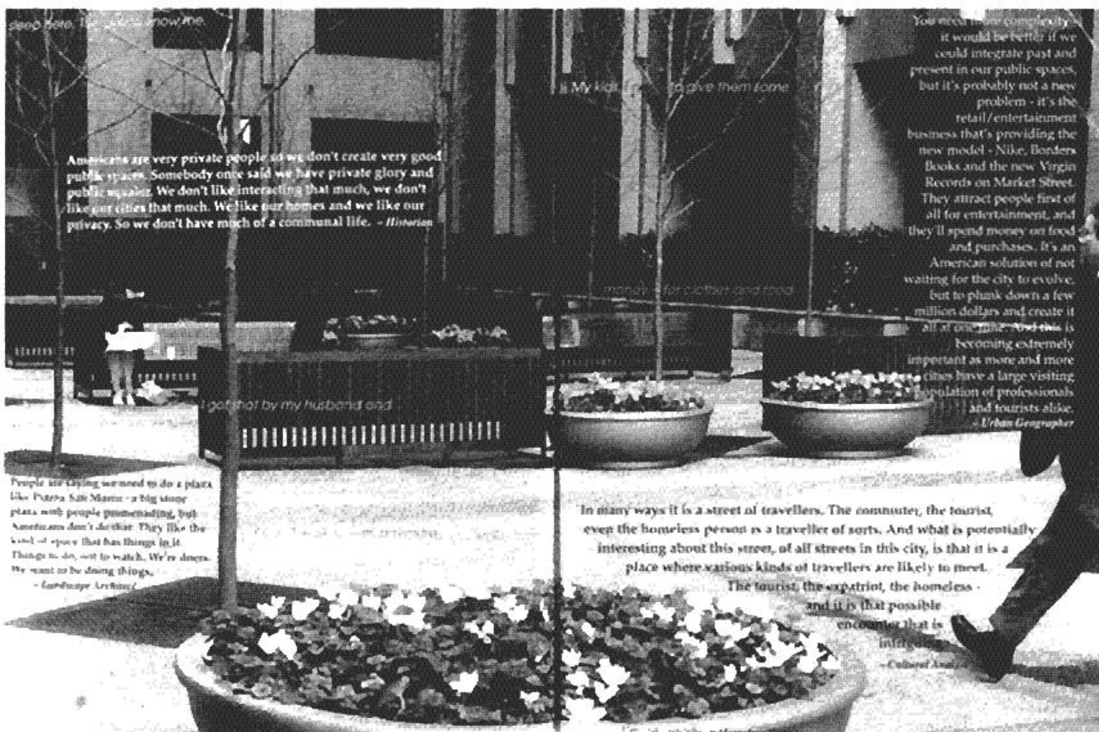
San Francisco has often been celebrated by its multifaceted artist and writer population. In 1984, a group of "activist punks" organized street theater action tours of corporations involved in nuclear energy and military intervention (modeled on the "Hall of Shame" tours of nuclear corporations in 1981 and preceding the "War Chest Tours" at the 1984 Democratic Convention). These enabled the anarchist Left, wrote David Solnit, to "collectively take their politics out of the underground shows and into public spaces." Fourteen years later, his sister Rebecca Solnit lauds San Francisco's scale and its street life, which "still embodies the powerful idea of the city as a place of unmediated encounters," unlike other western cities which are "merely enlarged suburbs, scrupulously controlled and segregated."

The city has been the site of several artists' tours, such as Jo Hanson's $5 tour of "Illegal Sights/Sites" in the early 1980s. Conceived as part of her "Art That's Sweeping the City," the environmental tours to ten sites were guided by community activists, exploring "the living city under the tourist attractions...focusing on the web of urban issues/relationships through litter and dumping." The selected sites included Chinatown ("where you will see more of the alleys and markets than the tourist shops"), "Bay View and Hunter's Point, the Shadow of Candlestick Park, the victimization of unique Black communities by illegal dumping from outside," "Ocean Beach and its devastation," and "Twin Peaks, the breathtaking grand view strewn with litter down its steep slopes."

In 1994, artist Bernie Lubell and writers/professors/activists/artists Dean MacCannell and Juliet Flower MacCannell led a carefully considered bus tour of "unconventional sites" in San Francisco. Before they began they asked their passengers to make "metaphors of the city," handing out blank notebooks, a blank postcard, and a sheet of "suggestive words." They hoped to reconnect "the tourist quest to the fundamental human desire to see and know something else, resisting the conventional forms that have grown up around that desire, over-organizing and killing it." Aiming to produce "a common narrative of the city," the tour guides were convinced that "only emptiness can fill a space with possibility."

The tour ended up at the Palace of the Legion of Honor, where a new wing was being hastily built over a century-old pauper's graveyard despite protests from archaeologists. By involving their tourists in a current, unresolved controversy, Lubell and the MacCannells forced an intimate relationship with the place—and with death, and perhaps with the imposed stasis, which is tourism itself.

A year later the three artists met again to discuss the tour, revealing some of their own motives. Lubell's "biggest surprise was the contribution of the tourists on the bus," the bits of information and insights garnered from them.



Susan Schwartzenberg (with Ali Sant and Amy Snyder) *The Plaza*, from *Cento: A Market Street Journal*, 1996, offset book, 5-1/2" x 7" (commissioned by the San Francisco Art Commission Market Street Art in Transit Program).

Dean MacCannell saw the "tour itself as the missing key: the buttonholing, imperious, insistent sharing of the overlooked." Juliet MacCannell wanted to end the tour by "getting lost" and calling attention to the fog, "so they wouldn't be able to 'see' in any usual sense," so that San Francisco would become for them "a conspicuously imaginary object." Imagined places are, after all, one result of conventional tourism.

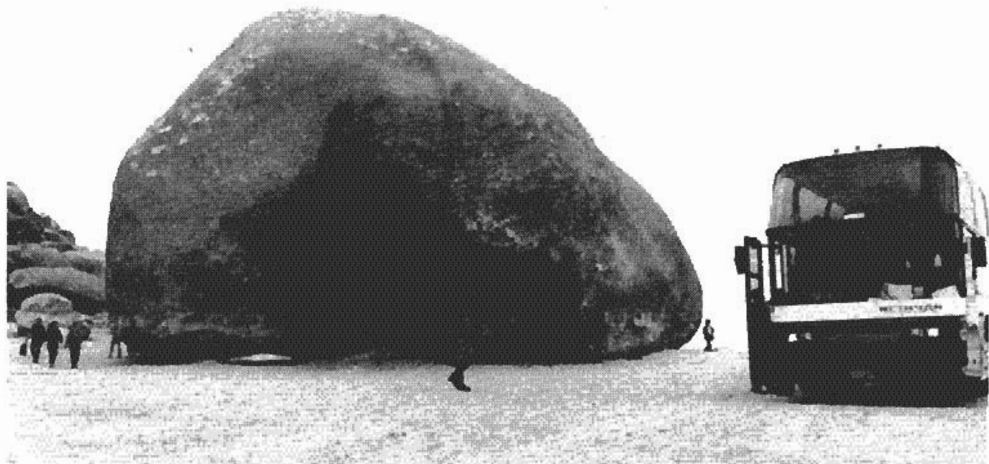
In 1996, Capp Street Project sponsored the four members of the Chicago collective called Haha (Richard House, Wendy Jacob, Laurie Palmer, and John Ploof) who took turns living with four local residents and shadowing them as they went about their daily lives. In the gallery they exhibited the resulting audio tours of the city sites visited, providing a curious inversion in which a local viewer was made privy to an outsider's experiences of nearby familiar sites, literally "shadows" of real experience.

Susan Schwartzenberg's *Cento: A Market Street Journal* was commissioned by the San Francisco Art Commission as part of a series intended to animate and illuminate the Market Street area for those passing through it. This compact, densely illustrated 116-page artist's book is "a combination walking tour guide, personal journal, and map," which was offered free to visitors from June 1996 to January 1997. The artist has lived in the city for some twenty years and makes no attempt to oversimplify her experience for rapid consumption. She describes Market Street as "not a place, but a sequence of places strung together where all manner of life experiences are acted out." After researching a variety of tour guides and historical archives, Schwartzenberg took to the streets with camera and tape recorder and interviewed anyone who was ready to talk. "Sometimes we talked about San Francisco and Market Street, but more often we talked about work, success and failure—life and its uncertainties."

Beautifully designed, crammed with images, quotations, interviews, and pockets of unexpected history, the Market Street journal is more experimental art than visitors' guide, but what a rich compendium of the kind of miscellany that turns out to be significant when a place means enough to enough people. For example, the hotels that historically harbored merchant seamen and immigrants—they now cater to the elderly, the transient, the homeless, and to single (often Filipino) men—have been the first to fall to the wrecking ball. Development decrees that soon someone will build new hotels aimed at an entirely different clientele. Schwartzenberg's book also seems to be intended more for resident tourists than for those from elsewhere. As "a collage of voices and impressions," it replicates the random screen of daily encounters more accurately than the ordered view that is demanded, and needed, if the average tourist wants to make sense out of superficial experience. At the same time, the tourist's goal is supposedly to go backstage; if s/he succeeds, s/he is more likely to fall into the Market Street montage—"a confusing string of events and encounters we try endlessly to decipher." Schartzenberg quotes a private investigator: "It's a kind of psychological archeology. Everyone leaves traces—it's a matter of looking for them." Perhaps the ultimate in guidebooks is *The Visitor's Key* to Iceland, described by poet Eliot Weinberger as following "every road in the country step by step, as though one were walking with the Keeper of Memories. Iceland has few notable buildings, museums or monuments. What it has are hills and rivers and rocks, and each has a story the book recalls. Here was a stone bridge that collapsed behind an escaping convicted murderer, proving his innocence....

Phil Young (Cherokee), *Genuine Indian Postcards 2,* 1991, mounted photo detail of *Genuine Indian Trading Post and Burial Site,* mixed media installation at John Michael Kohler Art Center, Sheboygan, Wisconsin, 1995 (photo: Kohler Art Center). The piece includes a number of antique and modern Indian souvenirs mixed with those created by Young, confusing and reframing the stereotypes. The burial site was a heap of dirt inside the gallery, trenched and marked as though undergoing an archaeological excavation.

Center for Land Use Interpretation, *Bus Tour of Giant Rock* from *Hinterland: A Voyage into Exurban Southern California,* 1997. Videos were shown on the Hinterland tour buses, as "the tour guide interprets the real world in a sort of land use theater, where the audience is brought to the ever-changing set." The caption in the guide book reads: "Several people are known to have lived in a cavity, hollowed out, in and under this giant rock. In 1942, one occupant, an alleged German spy, blew himself up with dynamite as deputies were questioning him (the deputies survived, miraculously). Five years later, a former test pilot and UFO abductee, George Van Tassel, moved his family into the rock, and the location became known as a site of major UFO activity (Van Tassel built the Integratron energy machine three miles south of the Rock). Located north of Landers, it has since become a popular rave location, attracting as many as 3,000 partiers."

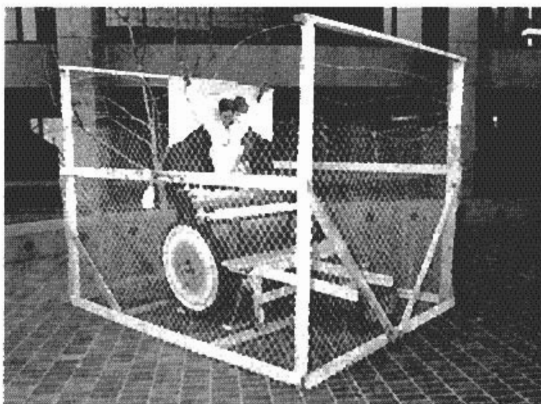


This farm refused shelter to a pregnant woman, and was buried in a landslide that night.... Here lived a popular postman in the eighteenth century .... What other modern society so fully inhabits the landscape it lives in? Where else does the middle class still remember?"

TOURISM HAS LONG-TERM EFFECTS on our places, given its connection to development, traceable back to the 1820s when fashionable tours wended north from New York, transforming Saratoga Springs, the Erie Canal abuilding, and Niagara Falls. Now that tourism is the last economic straw to be grasped (as it often was in the mid-nineteenth century too) the damnedest places are deemed tour-worthy. If your town hasn't been naturally endowed, if it's too new or too flat or too modernized to be intriguing, then attractions must be created from scratch—a theme park, an amusement park, a marina, a spa, a museum, or just a vast shopping opportunity. (On the other hand, I have heard of one town that posted a sign on its outskirts reading: WE AIN'T QUAINT.)

Theme parks and proliferating bed and breakfasts are not isolated phenomena of individual entrepreneurship. Resource exploitation and tourist development often go hand in hand. Corporations whitewash clear-cutting and strip-mining by masking their devastations with "parklands" as a "gift" to a gullible public, while government, too, is hardly above disguising its own agendas. In 1995, for instance, the New Mexico Department of Tourism ads featured Carlsbad Caverns, with no mention of the pending Waste Intensive Pilot Plant (WIPP), a national nuclear waste dump about to open at a nearby site that will imperil the same scenic routes through the "Land of Enchantment" that tourists traverse to get to the Caverns. For those aware of the federally funded WIPP, the glowing encrustations pictured in the ad bear an eerie subtext, predicting one effect of the nuclear waste to be dumped there.

From turn-of-the-century boosterism when the hoopla was aimed at attracting railroads, businesses, and permanent settlers to the age of rapid transience when money spent is what counts, any place can be marketed, developed, and drastically changed in the process. Whether all the residents will like the transformation is another story. Some may be reluctant to make their homes a zoo but can be persuaded by the promise of jobs. Some would rather run their own business or farm their own land than build roads, clean toilets, make beds, and provide valet parking for the more fortunate. Some are forced onto the highway not by choice but by the need to follow an elusive



David Avalos, *San Diego Donkey Cart*, 1986, wood, chainlink fencing, barbed wire, acrylic paint, hardware, 9' high, 6' wide, 10' long (without fencing) (photo: Dan Muñoz, Jr.). On January 5-6, 1986, this piece, sponsored by SUSHI, Inc., Performance and Visual Art Gallery, was in the courtyard at the San Diego Federal Courthouse, until it was ordered removed "for security reasons." (A judge thought it was a good place for "some kook" to plant a bomb.) See p. 48.

seasonal job market. In the process, the dangers of tourism have escalated from being cheated to being murdered.

Viewed from the perspective of the places "visited," even in those disaster areas that are victims of downsizing and deindustrialization exacerbated by NAFTA and GATT, tourism is a mixed blessing—sometimes economically positive, usually culturally negative, and always resource-depleting (as measured by the "demo-flush" figures in which toilet use becomes an indicator of success for summer and weekend resort towns). Tourism leads to summer people leads to year-round newcomers leads to dispossession and a kind of internal colonialism. As an increasing amount of the world's acreage is "opened up," the search for the "unspoiled" intensifies, exposing the most inaccessible places to commercial amenities and barbarities, from vandalism to jet-skis.

Tourists come to the American West, for instance, looking for places destroyed by shifting economies: Indian ruins, ghost towns, abandoned farms, deserted mines, and nineteenth-century spaces frozen in the governmentally managed wildernesses. For years now, Oregon, Colorado, and other states whose tourists have tended to come back and stay, have engendered a "bumper sticker jingoism": WELCOME TO OREGON, NOW GO HOME or, more brutally, GUT SHOOT 'EM AT THE BORDER. A popular Cape Cod T-shirt reads: I CHEAT DRUNKS AND TOURISTS. In Maine, some "natives" put out signs at the southern end of the turnpike: NEXT TIME JUST SEND THE MONEY, and the state has spent a good deal of money on campaigns begging the locals to be *nice* to tourists. One motive is plain old territorialism. Those same tourists at home may have similar attitudes about Mainers invading their own turf.

Sometimes we are tourists, sometimes we are toured. Even those who hate to travel, even those who live in out-of-the-way spots, have been exposed to tourists either in passing or as a sight to be seen. As we live what we perceive as ordinary lives, we are under surveillance—if not by the government then by the citizenry. I remember how startled I was when my picture was taken by some Japanese tourists leaning out of a bus as I schlepped my laundry through SoHo. Disheveled and purposeful in my black jeans, I was obviously a native. Turnabout is fair play, though as a tourist I'm more given to sidelong glances than stares and lenses. In Lower Manhattan, tourists are merely a nuisance. But in poorer "destinations," the divide is far greater, as Jamaica Kinkaid writes:

> *That the native does not like the tourist is not hard to explain.... Every native would like to find a way out, every native would like a rest, every native would like a tour. But some natives—most natives in the world—cannot go anywhere. They are too poor. They are too poor to go anywhere. They are too poor to escape the reality of their lives; and they are too poor to live properly in the place where they live, which is the very place you, the tourist, want to go—so when the natives see you, the tourist, they envy you, they envy your ability to leave your own banality and boredom, they envy your ability to turn their own banality and boredom into a source of pleasure for yourself.*

If appalling disparities between classes are taken for granted, bypassed, and forgotten in metropolitan and international tourism ("It's none of my business; I can't do anything about it; it's their country"), they remain glaringly obvious when one is a tourist at home. Negotiating the contra-

dictions demands a sensibility finely tuned to local politics and the global forces that drive it. Places presented to tourists as false unities are then broken down into thousands of fragments, since no place is seen exactly the same way by several people—let alone by people from different backgrounds, temperaments, and needs. As novelist John Nichols has said of his hometown:

> *To make it palatable to visitors, our living culture in Taos is embalmed, sanitized, and presented much like a diorama in a museum: picturesque and safe. Tourists would rather not know that in many respects life here approximates the way four fifths of the globe survives.... When commerce and social interaction take place solely with transients, culture and responsibility die. The town itself develops a transient soul.*

One of the obvious contradictions in tourism concerns what is being escaped from and to. Absence (sometimes) makes the heart grow fonder. If we live away from native ground and then go home to visit, we can see the place anew, with fresh eyes. Some return to their hometowns to find the mines and factories they escaped now glorified as museums. The sad tale of Flint Auto World, a theme park simulating the immediate past in the corporate-abandoned town of Flint, Michigan, was told with tragicomic wit in Michael Moore's film, *Roger and Me*. Long popular in socialist countries, industrial tourism is catching on again in the United States. An edifying example is the themification of the history of tumultuous labor relations in Lawrence, Massachusetts, and in Lowell, where the first national park devoted to industry has caught on. Are the visitors simply the curious, the history buffs? Are they those who worked in factories or remember their parents' and grandparents' experiences? Are they lefties looking for landmarks of rebellion? The ways in which places and their histories are hidden, veiled, preserved, displayed, and perceived provide acute measures of the social unconscious. Yet their relationships to broad economic issues seldom surface overtly in daily lives. We live in a state of denial officially fostered by State denial.

Such grand-scale abdication from the present does not bode well for the future. One can only wonder what our hometowns will look like when the fad passes. Will the ghosts of fake ghost towns haunt the twenty-first century? Or will our places be ghosts smothered in new bodies we would never recognize as home? Tourism is a greased pig, a slippery target, like its offspring—sprawl. The new populations that spring up around tourist sites become a necessary evil, as purported insurance in the event that the tourist boom falls slack. But "sustainable tourism" may be an oxymoron along the lines of "military intelligence." Those of us at home in towns, counties, and states soon to be converted for display value are unprepared for these changes. We wake up only when it's too late to channel or control them. Soon my private village walking tours may run into other, more public ones. There may even be "sights" to see. Two centuries ago, William Blake wrote, "You never know what is enough, unless you know what is more than enough."