# Tourist Photography and the Tourist Gaze

## An empirical study of Chinese tourists in the UK

by

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# Abstract

This study seeks to deepen knowledge and understanding of the tourist gaze and tourist photography. The original concept of the 'tourist gaze as proposed by John Urry is inherently Western-centric and, as a consequence, it is arguably of limited value as a conceptual framework for appraising the tastes, gazes and, more generally, the visual practices of the increasing number of non-Western tourists'. At the same, despite the fact that, in recent years, smart phone cameras have become widely used by people both in their everyday lives in general and in their travels in particular, few attempts have been made to explore and analyse the potential transformations brought to the landscape of the tourist photography by the increasing use of smart phone cameras.

The purpose of this thesis, therefore, is to re-conceptualise and study empirically the tourist gaze and tourist photographic behaviour, as influenced by a variety of social, cultural and technological factors, amongst non-Western tourists. More specifically, it aims to explore the visual preferences of Chinese tourists in the UK, to consider critically what and how they take photographs of, and to evaluate the extent to which their gazes, their performance of gazing and their photographic practices are shaped by social, cultural and technological factors. In order to meet this aim, the qualitative research method of visual autoethnography is employed during two field studies with Chinese tourists in the UK. More precisely, a first field study was based on a seven-day package tour undertaken with eighteen Chinese tourists, visiting a total of thirteen destinations around British destinations. The second field study, in contrast, involved the researcher undertaking a five-day holiday with six Chinese tourists to the Isle of Wight off the south coast of England. During these two field studies, the researcher adopted the role of 'researcher-as-tourist', engaging in travel with the respondents, staying in the same accommodation, joining in with their activities and taking photographs with them. These first-hand travel and photographic experiences conspired to become an integral part of the resultant data resources which were not only analysed but also shared with the respondents during interviews with them.

From the data collected during the two field studies and, indeed, the autoethnographic experiences of the researcher, it became clearly evident that smart phone cameras had become the principal means of taking photographs amongst Chinese tourists. Moreover, smart phone cameras have also altered the landscape of tourist photography, primarily by de-exoticising this practice and further enhancing its

'playfulness' and increasing its social functions. During the field studies, the Chinese tourist respondents engaged in a variety of visual and photographic activities, purposefully including but by no means being confined to an interactive game of photo-taking and photo-sharing, imagining authenticity, sensing the passing of time from gazing on natural spectacles, and deliberately observing what they considered to be 'advanced' aspects of the toured destination. Based upon these identified performances and practices, this thesis proposes the concept and framework of the Chinese tourist gaze. That framework essentially establishes what Chinese tourists prefer to see during their travels and seeks to explain why and how they see certain specific spectacles or tourist objects. At the same time, it theoretically re-situates both their gazes and their ways of gazing within a network of influential social, cultural and technological factors, including: the travel patterns of the élite in pre-modern China; the cultural characteristics of Chinese people; the intertwining of contemporary communication and photography technologies; and, the fusion of the Chinese nation-state, its economic policies policies and the resultant social and environmental problems that have emerged over the last three decades. Moreover, the framework points to potential future transformations in the Chinese tourist gaze, such as the de-exoticisation of that tourist gaze.

The principal contribution of this thesis to extant knowledge is the concept and framework of the Chinese tourist gaze, as this may provide future researchers with the foundation for continuing to study and more profoundly understand the tastes, gazes, practices of gazing and other visual activities, including photography, of Chinese tourists. Indeed, given the inherent Western-centric bias in the relevant literature, an appropriate theoretical framework enabling them to do has, arguably, not previously existed. In addition, the dimensions and characteristics of tourist smart-phone-photography revealed in this research are of much significance, contributing to a deeper, richer understanding of transformations in the practice of tourist photography and, in particular, of why and how contemporary Chinese tourists take photographs. Furthermore, through identifying and exploring how the Chinese respondents in this study shared their photographs, greater knowledge and understanding has emerged of Chinese tourists' technological travel communication and connections as well as their attitudes towards and use of the multiplicity of social networking sites and mobile-apps.

**Key words: Chinese tourists, Chinese culture, smart phone, the Chinese tourist gaze, tourist photography, visual autoethnography**

# Acknowledgement

# Declaration of Originality

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# Chapter 1

# Introduction: Tourism, Photography and the 'Gaze'

## 1.1 Introduction

Reflecting social and technological developments since the Western Industrial Revolution, the relationship between photography and tourism has become increasingly close. Indeed, the intimacy between these two practices is revealed by Haldrup and Larsen (2003: 23-24) who articulate that 'taking photographs is an emblematic tourist practice; it is almost unthinkable to travel for pleasure without bringing the light-weight camera along and returning home without snapshot memories'. Similarly, Markwell (1997: 131) also points out that 'to be a tourist is to be, almost by necessity, a photographer'.

This increasing intimacy between photography and tourism may be attributed to multiple social and technological factors, such as the burgeoning cultural economy, the expanding affordance of cameras and the 'dramatic speeding-up of transportation and communication' (see Urry and Larsen, 2011; Osbourne, 2000; Robinson and Picard, 2009). Surely, the combination of transportation and communication systems have globalised travel and the tourist gaze, in part by increasing tourism reflexivity, thereby allowing tourists to identify more potential tourist places/destinations and to boost their imaginative and corporeal travel opportunities (see Urry, 2002). At the same time, the more recent extensive use of digital cameras and camera phones has not only increasingly enabled tourists to concretise memory, but has also contributed a more 'playful' and 'experimental' travel experience (Haldrup and Larsen, 2010, see also Urry, 2002). As a result, there are now greater opportunities for people originating from many non-Western countries, which were conventionally visited by the western tourists, to gaze upon and consume the 'west', both through TV and in corporeal travel (Urry, 2002). For example, in the year 2000 there were just over one million Chinese tourists travelling in Europe (Fang and Fu, 2006); by 2012, when the WTO expected this number to have risen to 4.6 million (http://www.chinainternetwatch.com/1470/100-million-chinese-tourists-will-travel-outside-china-by-202/), China had become the world's top source of international tourists.

However, it is evident from the existing tourism photography literature that limited academic attention has been paid to non-Western tourist photographic behaviour in

general with few, if any, studies focusing on Chinese tourists and their photographic practices in particular. In other words, the majority of academic research into tourism photography has primarily shed light on the dimensions of photographic practices conducted by Western tourists (e.g. Garrod, 2009; Haldrup and Larsen, 2003, 2010; Jenkins, 2003; Markwell, 1997; Scarles, 2009; Urry, 1990, 2002). As a consequence, deeper, nuanced insights into embodied non-Western tourists' performances remain to be revealed.

To some extent, this Western-centric bias in the relevant literature can perhaps be attributed to the dominant perspective that nationality and/or country of residence should not be employed as either behaviour or marketing segmentation variables in tourism studies. Indeed, many commentators, such as Dann (1993), McCrone (1992) and Urry (1992b), support this position, claiming that this variant should not be considered a valid explanation or predictor of tourist behaviour. Indeed, it is argued that owing to the effects of globalisation, burgeoning mobilities in various forms, and the increasingly global structure and nature of information and communication, contemporary society and people's social lives are becoming progressively de-territorialised and de-traditionalised (see Urry, 2000). As a consequence, people's tastes, values and norms have become less determined by 'societal' institutions, such as education, government and family (McCrone, 1992; Urry, 2011) and more reflective of global cultural trends. Also, it is presumed that not only non-Western alternative cultural warrants but also the non-Western tourists' behaviour (see Foucault, 1988), which is largely shaped by these warrants, will be respectively subjugated to the surveillances of the doxa, tourism planners and people serving as orthodox tourists in Western societies (see Urry, 1992: Dann, 1993).

Nevertheless, it may still be argued that, when investigating tourist practices in general, the variable of nationality and/or country of residence should, in fact, be employed alongside other social and technological factors that may influence the ways in which tourists behave, since contemporary mobile society remains significantly more complex than many sociologists have assumed (see Latour, 1993). That is, culturally-fashioned travel traditions, the nation-state and other social institutions still collectively play a significant role in shaping the behaviour of tourists from numerous non-Western countries, such as China (see Alt, 2006; Nyiri, 2006, 2009; Oakes, 1998). Indeed, research has revealed that distinctions in national culture may contribute to differences in tourist behaviour and attitudes (see Pizam and Sussmann, 1995; Pizam and Jeong, 1996; see also Kaplan, 1996) whilst specifically, Griffiths and Sharpley (2012)

demonstrate how a sense of nationalism, as opposed to nationality, may determine tourists' attitudes towards a particular destination and, hence, their behaviour.

Given this predominantly Western bias in extant studies of the tourist gaze and tourist photography practices, the overall aim of this thesis is to explore the gaze and photographic performances of Chinese tourists, focusing in particular on the extent to which such visual practices are constantly shaped and tailored by the advances in technology and the evolving fabric of Chinese culture, travel tradition and society. Therefore, this chapter commences with a brief introduction to the touristic performance of gazing and photographing as forms of human behaviour, thereby providing a foundation for the understanding of the tourist gaze and practice of tourist photography. Subsequently, a brief overview of the contemporary literature is provided, enabling the identification of gaps in theory and knowledge, some of which this thesis seeks to address. The specific research questions, aims and objectives are then introduced, as is the methodology employed in the thesis, and finally, this chapter summarises the overall content and structure of the thesis.

## 1.2 Human Behaviour: Tourists' Gazing and Photographic Performances

Broadly-speaking, human behaviour may be described as socialised, culturally fashioned, intersubjective, reflexive and embodied. In other words, despite being reflexive and embodied, a individual's behaviour is potentially subject to the influence of some other people as well as the 'external' culture and society, in which he/she resides. According to some commentators, 'lumpy, fragile, aged, gendered and racialised' (Veijola and Jokinen, 1994) human bodies are dwelling in, sensing and ascribing meanings to the world (see Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Ingold, 2000), following a process through which individuals' 'lay knowledge' (Crouch, 2002: 210), memories and capabilities are acquired. At the same time, their performances of sensing and ascribing meanings to the world are well-rehearsed and influenced by a series of intertwined social, cultural and technological factors (see Rose, 1996; Latour, 2005) which may lie beyond performers' consciousness (see Shotter, 1993; Thrift, 1996, 1997, 2008). Nevertheless, it should not be argued that human behaviours are deterministic and that the human body is a passive surface upon which society is inscribed (Thrift, 1997). Rather, the expressive body may, to some extent, avoid compliance with social controls. Putting it another way, people's engagement with their world may be considered reflexive and embodied (see Radley, 1995; Lefebvre, 2008). On the one hand, individuals typically adopt the morals, values and behavioural modes of the society of which they are members; they become socialised or, as Berger and Luckman (1967) propose, their reality is socially constructed. On the other hand, they

are also able to determine their social reality; a society is not distinct from but created by the individuals that comprise it and, thus, social reality results from the social action of individuals.

Significantly, tourists' gaze and photographic performances collectively may be seen as a typical and widespread example of such complex human behaviour, and they can be considered from a number of perspectives. First, in this so called 'consumer society' (Baudrillard, 1998), tourists' gaze and photographic practices are socially fashioned and 'institutionalised' (Foucault, 1991, 1994). In other words, tourists' tastes and visual practices are influenced indirectly by social changes but, arguably, directly by the tourism industry. More specifically, on the one hand, with constantly engendered changes in social structures and the progressively accelerating accumulation of information and images in contemporary society, tourism businesses and tourist subjects alike are becoming increasingly reflexive in terms of cognition and aesthetics (see Lash and Urry, 1994). In particular, recent decades have witnessed the continuing evolution of globalisation, the endless emergence of new kinds of life style, and a new realisation of the significance of relations between people and between people and nature which, collectively, have resulted in an ever greater variety of tourist types, needs and patterns of behaviour (see Martin and Mason, 1987; Hall and Weiler, 1992; Urry, 1992a; Butcher, 2003).

On the other hand, tourism in this contemporary and mobile 'consumer society' (Baudrillard, 1998) may be regarded as a 'system' (Leiper, 1979) or an 'industry' (Leipler, 1983; Smith, 1988), which involves at least tourists, tourist places, transit routes and all the organisations and businesses that facilitate and provide goods and services for tourists (see *Figure 1.1*).
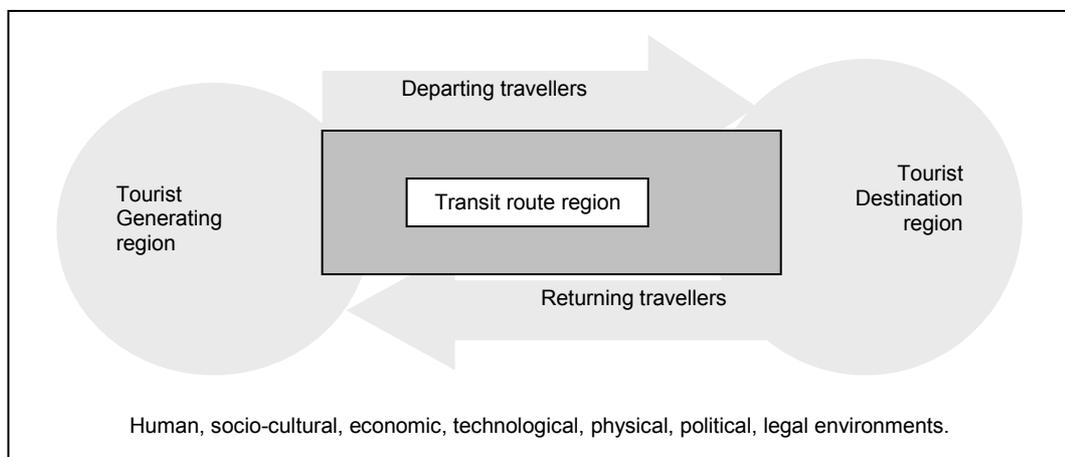


**Fig. 1.1** The Tourism System *Source*: adapted from Leiper (1990)

As will be particularly discussed later, analogous to Foucault's (1991) 'prisons', 'schools' and 'clinic', this tourism system or industry is influenced by the invisible hand of social power; at the same time, however, it operates its own 'micro-physics of power' in order to sustain its functioning within society (see Foucault, 1991). In this dynamic process, tourists' tastes and experiences are habitually identified and evaluated by tourism businesses before products are designed, promoted and distributed to meet tourists' demands. Equally, power is exercised upon tourists by the tourism industry, which, through its promotional materials, entices and guides them to travel and visually consume something that has been staged and prescribed as 'must see' (see MacCannell, 1999; Osborne, 2000; Jenkins, 2003; Scarles, 2009; Urry and Larsen, 2011). Therefore, although tourists undoubtedly possess the 'free will' to decide where to travel and what to see and visit, and also although whilst at the destination they might benefit from opportunities to rewrite the prescribed discourses/meanings of tourist places through their photography (see Scarles, 2009), it is nevertheless inevitable that their photographic practices are consequently tailored or directed (Markwell, 1997; Jenkins, 2003; Garrod, 2009; Urry and Larsen, 2011). Thus, it is evident that tourist photography is not entirely 'natural', but subject to the influence of tourism institutions and other 'external' forces.

Second, the practice of tourism itself is intersubjective. According to Crouch (2005), tourism is undertaken or engaged in by people amongst other people who may or may not be known to them; therefore, tourists' 'presence and practices may influence / may be influenced by others' (Crouch, 2005: 29). With specific reference to tourist gaze and tourist photography, this suggests that what and how tourists gaze upon and frame in their cameras may be equally subject to the presence and the visual performances of both local people and other fellow tourists (see also Moufakkir and Reisinger, 2013). For example, in addition to the studied 'family gaze', whereby tourist photographers primarily cast their focus (and cameras) on family members and the construction of a 'blissful family' through the production of visual images (Haldrup and Larsen, 2003), it has been also identified that the tourist photographic practices could be easily transformed by the framed locals' 'reverse gaze' (see Gillespie, 2006). Indeed, it is suggested that these intersubjective practices may even encourage tourists' sociability in travel (see Markwell, 1997; Yeh, 2009).

Furthermore, tourists' photographic performances may also be tailored by their national cultural characteristics. In order to explore this issue in more detail, it is useful to begin with a consideration of the definition of culture. According to some commentators (for example, Taylor, 1871; Heobel, 1960; Terpstra and David, 1985; Fan 2000), it is

evident that although a uniform definition remains elusive, culture may, on the one hand, be described as the fusion of shared behaviours, values, beliefs, customs and attitudes that distinguish a particular society. Importantly, these components of culture are not completely independent. Rather, they are interrelated and the construction of social behavioural traits is particularly exposed to the influence of the other four elements (values, beliefs, customs and attitudes). This suggests that, at a basic level, culture can be studied at the level of national culture, such as 'Chinese culture' (Fan, 2000) and, as a consequence, countries can be classified in terms of four cultural orientations including power distance, individualism-collectivism, masculinity-femininity and uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 1980).

On the other hand, many other scholars, such as Latour (2005), draw on 'actor network theory' in their work which, in essence, emphasises the relationship between humans, non-humans and things (Graves-Brown, 2000) when engaging in activities. From Latour's perspective, culture exists neither in the mind of individual human beings, nor does it exist independently in the world around humans. Rather, it is a relational achievement between humans and non-humans, including the creative presence of organic beings, technological devices and discursive codes, as well as people, in the fabrics of everyday living (Whatmore, 1999; Graves-Brown, 2000). Following this argument, it is then reasonable to claim that culturally fashioned tourist behaviours are not only influenced by the collectivity of nationally shared values, beliefs, customs and attitudes, but are also authorised, afforded, encouraged, permitted or indeed forbidden by technologies (for example, cameras) and tourist objects (Latour, 2005).

Numerous commentators, including Chan (2006), Ku (2006), Nyiri (2006, 2009) and Yeh (2009b), have identified that Chinese tourists not only prefer to gaze upon the differences between China and other nations, but also tend to photographically capture visual images primarily for family obligations, even if their families are absent (cf. the 'family gaze' as studied by Haldrup and Larsen (2003)). Nyiri (2006, 2009) attributes these behavioural tendencies simply to the political disciplines imposed by the post-socialist state. However, Chinese tourists' photographic practices may also be determined in part by the influence of traditional Chinese culture. Conventionally, viewing the mentally 'inside' is believed to be more salient than gazing on the 'outside' world, in order to 'cultivate the true self' and 'find the central clue to the moral being' (Confucius and Ku, 1920: 16). In addition, the combination of conforming to family obligations and paying homage, loyalty and duty to the country plays a crucial part in the moral law which a moral person must follow (see Che'n, 1986; Fan, 2000). Hence, when Chinese tourists physically gaze upon or frame an overseas country destination,

it is more likely that they simultaneously open their 'second gaze' (MacCannell, 2001) to mentally gaze back upon China, and to evaluate and to comment on both similarities and disparities between the two countries (see Chan, 2006). In this process, patriotism is often performed, albeit perhaps subconsciously, whilst at the same time national identity is concomitantly reinforced. Alternatively, Chinese tourists tend to think about what their families want to see and, as a consequence, they frame particular images for those who are at home and have yet to visit the destination, since photographing for the family is typically considered to be a part of the family obligation (see Yeh, 2009).

Last, notwithstanding the fact that tourists' performance of gazing and photographic activities are exposed to the influence of a series of social, cultural and technological factors, taking photographs may be an active, expressive and poetic means by which tourists engage with the act of travel. Putting it another way, tourists' photographic performances do not simply represent the collection of signs of sites / places (see Yeh, 2009); they also include a variety of cognitive acts, such as interpreting, evaluating, and drawing comparisons, which collectively allow for the making mental connections between signs and their references (Urry and Larsen, 2011:17). This, in turn, enables tourists to individually re-write / re-figure the pre-figured discourses of tourist places (see Couch, 2005; Scarles, 2009).

To some extent, taking photographs is an especially active and popular way of relating to, expressing and producing the tourist's 'self' according to what is allowed and what is denied (Garrick, 2002). Here, producing the tourist's 'self' largely refers to staging or supporting idealised memories of travel. To demonstrate, in his empirical work in Malaysia, Markwell (1997) found that, in order to project the optimum memory, participants declined to photograph disturbing sights, thereby denying parts of the reality of rural Malaysia to those who would view the photographs. Likewise, interviewees in Scarles' (2009) research in Peru also performed a certain degree of selectivity in photographing something desirable. Moreover, owing to the digitalisation of cameras / photography in particular, not only have contemporary photographic images become dematerialised, immediately consumable and deleteable, but also camera screens can be thought of as converged spaces of picturing, posing and consuming. Consequently, the opportunity (not previously afforded in 'traditional' photography) now exists for experimentation in staging the tourist's 'self', whereby visual engagement becomes playful, wilful and childlike with the potential to disrupt mental rationality (de Certeau, 1984; Thrift, 1997).

### 1.3 Identifying Gaps in the Extant Literature

#### *1.3.1 Introduction*

As discussed earlier, human behaviour is subject to social controls yet, reflecting the ability of individuals to think and act freely, it is also reflexive and embodied in nature. However, in much of the earlier research in tourism, tourist behaviour was generally conceived as the mechanical deciphering of social and industrial arrangements (see Cohen, 1979). In other words, the notion of 'free will' was not considered in the exploration of tourist behaviour whilst, more specifically, much of the focus in the research was placed on the production rather than the consumption of tourist places (Urry, 1990). However, largely inspired by some of the eminent sociologist Michel Foucault's works, John Urry in 1990 first coined the term 'tourist gaze' as the title of his seminal text, which he subsequently revised and expanded upon in the following two decades (see also Urry, 1992, 2002; Urry and Larsen, 2011). Notwithstanding the fact that, in his text, Urry actually pays more attention to the governance and objectifying power of tourism rather than the intricacies and richness of the touristic performances of gazing and photographing, his conceptualisation of the 'tourist gaze' nevertheless unpacks the previously assumed systematic and regularised nature of tourists' collective visual consumption of tourist places. In so doing, he largely paved the way for the subsequent tourism studies, especially those concerned with the gaze in tourism in general (for example, Crang, 1997; Larsen, 2001; Ong and du Cros, 2012) and with tourist photography in particular (for example, Markwell, 1997; Jenkins, 2003; Garrod, 2009). In this section, the author will first introduce Foucault's (1972, 1980) *power-knowledge dyad* and *clinical gaze*, which the tourist gaze is loosely linked to. Then, a critical overview of the dimensions of the tourist gaze and preceding research in tourist photography is provided, from which gaps in the extant literature are identified and discussed.

#### *1.3.2 Foucault's Power-Knowledge Dyad and Clinical Gaze*

Since the 17th Century, society has been progressively but thoroughly transformed. In the Middle Ages, the powerful monarchy undoubtedly controlled Europe; it 'presented itself as a referee, a power capable of putting an end to war, violence, and pillage' (Foucault, 1988). Also, people's everyday life and deeds then were respectively shaped and tailored by divine laws (see Touraine, 1995). To a great extent, men both collectively and individually were not encouraged to seek for reasons and rational laws to resolve the problems that they had encountered in their daily life. Yet, over the course of 17th Century, this feudal sovereignty was gradually substituted by discipline and instituted systems which comprised the functions of surveillance, normalisation,

control, punishment, correction, education and so forth. Furthermore, at the beginning of the 19ᵗʰ Century, modern capitalism emerged, the establishment of which, according to Foucault, was largely preconditioned by those disciplinary systems (see Rabinow, 1991:18). From then on, not only were Europeans in favour of seeking reasons and rational law, but also their everyday life became normalised and objectified by various social institutions.

Although his works are criticised for being elusive, for having different purposes and for employing different methods in each investigation (Hoy, 1986:2), it is still clear that Michel Foucault, arguably one of the most influential thinkers of the modern world, primarily focused on the study of  institutional power relationships or, in Hollinshead's (1999: 12) words, on 'the power of institutional truth'  in contemporary society. At the same time, being influenced by some of his predecessors, such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Foucault also sheds light on the gaze (*le regard*) (see Lanfant, 2009:242-3), though still in the broad context of institutional power relationships. This section, reviews to relevant topics by briefly introducing Foucault's power-knowledge dyad and clinical gaze.

*Power-knowledge dyad*: Employing the term  'power-knowledge dyad', Foucault is not referring to regulations and laws enacted by a state. Rather, he seems to suggest that contemporary society, on the whole, is shaped by an invisible hand or a force-power/knowledge dyad, which generates 'unfreedom' (Hollinshead, 1999:13). Admittedly, the state (especially the centralised government), along with its army, police and city council, in Foucault's era played a rather prominent role in developing the national economy and managing individuals, goods and wealth within families in its territory. Nevertheless, the state is far from being able to occupy the whole field of actual power relations. Instead, being superstructural in relation to a whole series of power networks, it solely can operate on the basis of the existing power relations (see Foucault, 1988). Therefore, Foucault transcends the limits of the state by studying power-knowledge dyad which is not only omnipresent in society but also places individuals and their docile bodies under universal surveillance, discipline and transformation.

More specifically, power, in Foucault's view, is not a concrete and isolated entity which belongs to states, institutes or a specific group of privileged individuals. As he claims:

> By power, I do not mean 'Power' as a group of institutions and mechanisms that
> ensure the subservience of the citizens of a given state. By power, I do not

mean, either, a mode of subjugation, which, in contrast to violence, has the form of the rule. Finally, I do not have in mind a general system of domination exerted by one group over another, a system whose effects, through successive derivations, pervade the entire social body. (1978:92)

Rather, it is a power of 'meaning(s) in circulation within talk and action which counts' (Hollinshead, 1999:13). In other words, the power is deemed to be the unspoken warfare which is waged silently and secretly through the language and actions of that body's daily routine and seemingly unspectacular enactments (Merquior, 1985:110-1), such as a teacher's instruction of students. In this process, corresponding technologies, apparatus and techniques appear essential which, to some extent, ensure that the pre-set tasks of control, discipline, correction and surveillance can be fulfilled. The panopticon in Foucault's (1991) *Discipline and Punish* especially serves as a vivid and cogent demonstration (see also Rabinow, 1991:19).

Furthermore, power and knowledge are believed to be inextricably intertwined. Foucault could not analyse one without taking account of the other. In recognition that '[t]he exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and, conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power", Foucault (1980: 52) meshes the two issues into 'power/knowledge dyad' in many of his works. The following example of the clinical gaze, to a great extent, concretises and illustrates the nominalistic relationships between power and knowledge.

*The clinical gaze:* Foucault's (1994) *clinical gaze*, in essence, suggests that individuals in a specific group/community/institution harness the power of surveillance to inspect the people and things in their proximity. In Hollinshead's (1999) interpretation, that is, individuals have eye-of-power. For instance, practitioners with preceding knowledge attentively inspect signs and symptoms which appear on the patients' body, in order to identify and define the disease to be known (Foucault, 1994:122). According to Hollinshead (1999), this eye-of-power can enable those individuals in that context to see and then understand phenomena from some vantage points, but not so well at all from others. The gaze also, to a great extent, concretises held knowledge of and about things over time as it restrictively hardens into normalising forms of discourse and into universalising forms of praxis (Hollinshead 1999:.9). To demonstrate, practitioners hopefully can understand and identify the disease(s) by being sensitive to the combination of difference/analogy (initially between the constituent parts of a single disease to be known and then between a known disease and a disease to be known (ibid: 122)), simultaneity/succession and frequency of occurrence of signs/symptoms.

Immediately after they see, the clinicians spontaneously and exhaustively describe or express in language what manifest(s) to them. As a consequence, seeing is accompanied by knowing, as the scientific knowledge is not only accessed but also concretised at the same time (Foucault, 1994:140; see also Lanfant, 2009: 249-52). In fact, the more experienced and knowledgeable the doctor, the more rapid his/her inspection will become. Sometimes even through a glance he/she is able to recognise the disease(s) to be known. As Foucault (1994) remarks below:

> The doctor's glance, which so often involves such vast erudition and such solid instruction, if not the result of the frequent, methodical, and accurate exercise of the senses, from which derive that facility of application, that alertness to relations, that confidence of judgement that is sometimes so rapid that all these acts seem to occur simultaneously, and are comprised together under the name of 'touch'? (p.148)

### 1.3.3 The Tourist Gaze

Several decades after the birth of Foucault's 'power/knowledge' and 'clinical gaze', John Urry (1990) proposed the concept of the 'tourist gaze'. His focus of academic interest then was not on studying the objectification and subjugation of people but those of regional cultures, economy and places. (see Franklin, 2001). Given that the model of the tourist gaze in the first edition of this influential and widely-acknowledged book had been criticised by some as overly general (e.g. Osborne, 2000; Lanfant, 2009), in his second (2002) and third edition (2011) (with Jonas Larsen in the third edition), Urry has not only progressively clarified this concept but has also discussed in detail the massive transformations occurring in the tourist gaze and also tourist photography in contemporary society.

Notwithstanding these transformations, the tourist gaze is, in essence, the aggregate of the socially organised, reflexive and embodied practices of visually consuming what is extraordinary, highly prevalent and vastly powerful in contemporary society (Urry, 1990, 2002; Hollinshead, 1999; Urry and Larsen, 2011). It partly parallels Foucault's (1994) 'clinical gaze' in terms of the relationship between power and knowledge and also that between seeing and knowledge. In fact, the reason why a specific tourist place is frequently gazed upon is that a significant number of tourists, more or less, know it or representations of it (e.g. images, fantasy, myth and discourse), which may befabricated by a powerful tourism industry and extensively mobilised via a variety of entities and technologies in their everyday life, including films, TV, literature, magazines, CDs, DVDs and videos. Knowing generates power and stimulates tourists'

daydreams, imagination, mental voyages and anticipation, which urge them not only to assume the place as 'the extraordinary' (Urry, 1990, 2002; Urry and Larsen, 2001) but also tour it in person. As Urry and Larsen (2011: 4) claim:

> Places are chosen to be gazed upon because there is anticipation, especially through daydreaming and fantasy, of intense pleasures, either on a different scale or involving different senses from those customarily encountered. Such anticipation is constructed and sustained through a variety of non-tourist technologies, such as films, TV, literature, magazines, CDs, DVDs and videos, constructing and reinforcing the gaze.

With the combination of knowledge, daydreams, imagination, mental voyages and anticipation, individuals may corporeally travel to, see, consume, objectify, mentally evaluate and take a photograph(s) of the place. Through perpetrating these (or some of these) activities, they can understand, personalise, authorise or even rewrite the pre-scribed meanings/mainstream discourse of this tourist place (see Scarles, 2009). Subsequently, after returning home, the fusion of personal experiences, memories and the photographs, having been accumulated, then further invoke individuals' daydreams and anticipation of a revisit there (see Baerenholdt *et al.*, 2004:2-3). Also, through the process of sedimentation (see Baerenholdt *et al.*, 2004; Ingold, 2011), this combination, perhaps, would become an integral part of the representation file of the place in the future, which can be drawn upon, or in Rojek's (1997: 54) words 'dragged', either by the tourism industry or successive tourists in the future to create some fresh values and fabrications for the place (see Crawshaw and Urry, 1997).

Nevertheless, the fame and popularity of a tourist place may also be eroded, as the tourist gaze is certainly neither 'fixed' nor static. To an extent, the broader cultural transformations of post-modernity, along with changes in the tourism patterns as well as the canon of social taste, could result in an alteration of the nature of the gaze (Hollinshead, 1999). The rise and fall of seaside tourism in England and North Europe, for example, can seamlessly demonstrate this (Baerenholdt *et al.*, 2004:6; Urry and Larsen, 2011: 32-48). Moreover, beside its dependence on social and cultural change and partial similarity to the clinical gaze, three other defining characteristics of the tourist gaze can be emphasised to pave the way for the subsequent idenfication of gaps in knowledge.

First, the notion of the tourist gaze arguably rests on the extraordinary/ordinary dyad. Since contemporary leisure tourism is established upon a fundamental binary

distinction between the ordinary / everyday and the extraordinary, it is reasonable, according to Urry, to argue that tourists gaze upon / are attracted by some aspects of tourist places or destinations which are deemed to be out-of-the-ordinary. Inevitably, perhaps, others have suggested that, on the contrary, tourists may seek out or be satisfied with the familiar or ordinary. However, in response to such doubts about the 'extraordinariness' of objects of tourist gaze (see MacCannell, 2001), Urry and Larsen (2011) in the latest edition of the text, *Tourist Gaze 3.0*, explain that tourists may see or gaze upon 'a unique object (e.g. the Forbidden City in Beijing), particular signs (e.g. the typical American skyscraper), unfamiliar aspects of what had previously been thought of as familiar (e.g. visiting museums which show representations of the lives of ordinary people, revealing their cultural artefacts)' and/or 'ordinary aspects of social life being undertaken by people in unusual contexts, or particular signs that indicate that a certain other object is indeed extraordinary, even though it does not seem to be (e.g. moon rock)' (Urry and Larsen 2011: 15-16). In other words, they suggest that much if not all of what a tourist will gaze upon is unusual or out-of-the-ordinary to the tourist in the context of the tourist's normal, day-to-day social existence.

Second, the tourist gaze is not seeing passively. Rather, it requires the cultural skills of daydreaming and mind-travelling and embraces cognitive work of interpreting, evaluating and drawing comparisons, and making mental connections between signs and their referents (Urry and Larsen 2011: 17).

Third, it is fashioned to a great extent by technologies, especially transportation, information, communication and photography technologies. This point, for one thing, suggests that the tourist gaze has been becoming increasingly universalised and globalised with the progressive development of transportation, information and communication technologies (see Urry, 2001). For the other, it refers to the fact that, due to the increasing intimacies between photography and tourism since the mid-nineteenth century (Urry and Larsen, 2011), taking and collecting images photographically has become not only a ritual in travel but also part and parcel of tourist gaze, thereby endowing the act of the gaze with a performative dimension. In his discussion of tourist photography, however, Urry famously proposes the controversial 'hermeneutic circle', claiming that tourists' photographic behaviours are entirely within the circle and, thus, what is sought by tourists is a set of pre-existing visual images that have been previously encountered in, for example, magazines or tourists brochures (Urry, 1990:136). Not surprisingly, perhaps, the modality of 'hermeneutic circle' has been long criticised for largely overestimating social and

institutional power in tourist photography and describing photographic activities as unreflexive and mechanistic (see MacCannell, 2001; Jenkins, 2003; Garrod, 2009).

### 1.3.4 Tourist photography

Urry's 'hermeneutic circle' has sparked much subsequent interest amongst researchers investigating the fusion of unreflexivity, reflexivity and embodiment of tourists' photographic performances. To date, not only have the 'hermeneutic circle' and the acts of concealing and revealing in the photographic process been evaluated and studied at length, but also the impacts of the combination of the characteristics of space and 'affordances' (Gibson, 1977) of advances in technologies (primarily the digital shift in photography / cameras) upon tourist photography have attracted significant attention. More specifically, it is evident from the extant literature that some commentators, such as Markwell (1997), Jenkins (2003) and Garrod (2009), tend to be enthusiastic in assessing the validity of Urry's (1990, 2002, 2011) 'hermeneutic circle', whereas others, including Garlick (2002), Haldrup and Larsen (2003), Baerenholdt *et al.* (2004), Larsen (2005), Scarles (2009) and Yeh (2009a), are more concerned with unpacking how tourists construct their personal / family memories through the process of 'concealing and revealing' (Foucault, 1982/1997: 225).

At the same time, the characteristics of space and 'affordances' (Gibson, 1977) of technologies referred to above are often taken into consideration, whilst researchers have also investigated the 'ritual' and 'play' (Crouch, 2002) characteristics of memory construction behaviour in tourist photography. In particular, digital cameras, which provide photographic images that are instantly consumable and / or deletable on screens (see Murray, 2008; Urry and Larsen, 2011), have introduced the more recent ritual amongst tourist-photographers of examining photograph(s) after a single shot or a longer series (Haldrup and Larsen, 2010), offering the opportunity for 'experimentation and control over how people and places are represented' (Urry and Larsen, 2011).

### 1.3.5 Identified gaps

Notwithstanding the significant contributions made by Urry and many other researchers, it should be noted that a complete understanding and analysis of tourists' gazes and acts of gazing and photographing has yet to be achieved, particularly when recognising tourism or, more precisely, participation in tourism, as a global phenomenon. Specifically, the great majority of the research to date has focused primarily on either the visual practices of Western tourists or has explored the interconnections between these practices and some technologies, such as media, conventional digital cameras

and transport (see Larsen 2001; Haldrup and Larsen, 2010). Generally, however, studies to date have, to a great extent, underestimated the role and influence of other social, cultural and technological factors in shaping and tailoring these visual practices, such as nation-state and travel traditions in tourist-generating countries, the increasing availability and use of mobile phones and the Internet, as well as the changing natures of the tourist gaze and photographic practices. Therefore, it is necessary to continue to explore the landscapes of the gaze in tourism and touristic photography activities, but particularly those conducted by non-western tourists.

More precisely, the tourist gaze, first, may be less distinctive from its everyday counterpart than Urry and Larsen (2011) have claimed. Indeed, a number of scholars, including Haldrup and Larsen (2010), have investigated this issue and have suggested that the tourist gaze has in fact been, as they put it, de-exoticised. However, their analysis seems insufficient or restricted as much as they focus their attention upon the influence of everyday media cultures and simply explore how many tourist practices are habitual and involve ordinary objects, places and practices (see Haldrup and Larsen, 2010). In particular, globalisation and continuing development of mobility and of information and communication systems has served to limit the distinction between home life and 'tourism life' while on holiday; tourists are able to maintain home commitments and activities whilst on holiday. Equally, such developments have also 'touristifed' everyday life and bestowed everyday tours and activities with some of the characteristics of tourist travels.

At the same time, it would appear that the advances in photographic technologies, and the extent to which these have been able to de-exoticise the tourist gaze and tourist photography have also been neglected in the academic research. Surely, although it is reasonable to contend that 'at least there must be certain aspects of the place to be visited which distinguish it from what is conventionally encountered in everyday life' (Urry and Larsen, 2011:4), the invention and growing popularity of digital cameras, camera phones and the internet may, to a greater or lesser extent, be contributing to the de-exoticization of the tourist gaze and a blurring of the boundaries between it and the everyday gaze.

For example, it is widely accepted that the camera function on mobile phones is used primarily in people's everyday life (Haldrup and Larsen, 2010) and, moreover, that camera phone users tend to 'elevate otherwise ordinary objects and events to photo-worthy occurances' (Okabe and Ito, 2003:26). And of course, camera phones have increasingly come to replace 'normal' cameras (digital or otherwise) in tourist

photography. However, tourist behaviour is described theoretically by many geographers as 'pre-formed' (see Thrift, 2008). In Thrift's (2008: 7) words, 'the roiling mass of nerve volleys prepare the body for action in such a way that intensions or decisions are made before the conscious self is even aware of them'. Generally, Thrift tends to over emphasise the role of cognition in people's actions whilst largely underestimating the well-rehearsed nature of human actions. That is, people's performances (include those manifested in travels) are to some degree well-rehearsed in their every life (see Edensor, 2001). It is, therefore, logical to suggest that the increasingly common action of camera phone users, referred to above, of elevating otherwise ordinary objects and events to photo-worthy occurances (see Okabe and Ito, 2003) is also well-rehearsed over time and continues to be practiced when they go on holiday and take pictures using digital cameras or mobile phones (Haldrup and Larsen, 2010). Hence, the resultant tourist gaze and tourist photography may be de-exoticized inasmuch as what is actually gazed upon and photographically framed may include authentically ordinary objects which are not packaged or perceived as extraordinary but become extraordinary through camera lens. Thus, when considering wider influences on the practice of tourist photography, it is important to associate the combination of tourist travel, the tourist gaze and tourist photography with the dimensions of contemporary networked society and to evaluate in particular the extent to which mobility systems and continuous developments in information and photographic technologies have resulted in the de-exoticization of tourism / tourist photography in people's social life.

Second, Urry's (1990, 2002) / Urry and Larsen's (2011) perspective conceals the national culture-fashioned characteristics of the visual activity of the tourist gaze and tourist photography (see also Winter, 2009), whilst it particularly should be pointed out that Urry and Larsen still do not fully recognise and explore the characteristics of reflexivity in tourists' acts of gazing, though they accept an element of the cognitive at play in the gaze. Indeed, in order to respond to emerging criticisms, these two scholars, in their paper *Gazing and performing* (2011) have explored the embodiment of tourists' gazing as well as the intersection of vision and the other senses (e.g. hearing, touching and tasting) in performing this visual practice (see Larsen and Urry, 2011). Nevertheless, it is important to note that they decline to investigate the extent to which cognitive activites perpetrated by tourists in sightseeing are related to cultural and social realities in their home countries. As previously mentioned, this kind of relationship potentially exists in the case of Chinese tourists and, therefore, this thesis will investigate this issue.

In addition to the aforementioned question regarding the extent to which the practice of tourist photography has been de-exoticized, a further limitation evident in previous research is the fact that the manner in which tourists actually engage in photographic activities has remained under-explored. More precisely, academic attention has most typically been paid to the way in which tourists use photography to construct memories of their experiences rather than on how they actually take photographs in the first place. In other words, few if any attempts have been made to explore the extent to which certain social, cultural and technological factors (see Rose, 1996) may shape and add richness to tourists' photographic behaviours.

Putting it another way, tourist photography, on the one hand, should arguably not be studied simply as a means to an end; that is, as a means of constructing memories. Rather, it should also be studied or considered to be an end *per se* (Latour, 2002). In effect, many tourists use cameras promiscuously, their photographic behaviours being one element of the actual tourist experience, of being and acting as a tourist, rather than merely being motivated by memory construction.

On the other hand, and as discussed earlier, human beings dwell in, sense and ascribe meanings to the world (see Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Ingold, 2000), engaging in a process during which their 'lay knowledge' (Crouch, 2002:210), memories and capabilities are acquired. At the same time, their performances of sensing and ascribing meanings to the world are well-rehearsed and influenced by a series of intertwined social, cultural and technological factors (see Rose, 1996) which may lie beyond their consciousness (see Shotter, 1993; Thrift, 1996, 1997, 2008). Following on from this, it could be argued that although the investigation of tourist photographic behaviours has been long established, with attention having been paid in particular to the embodiment of tourists' photographic performances (see Urry and Larsen, 2011) and the interactions between pre-existing images and photographic practices, to date no study has been undertaken in which some social, cultural and technological factors have been collectively considered as a basis for revealing rich and nuanced insights into tourists' photographic performances.

In particular, as the Internet, digital cameras and camera phones are used increasingly more widely both in people's travels and their everyday life, greater academic attention needs to be paid to evaluating the extent to which tourists' photographic practices are subject to these technologies and devices. Indeed, although some researchers, such as Haldrup and Larsen (2010), have studied the touristic performance of digital photography, drawing on 'actor network theory' (see Latour, 2005) and 'non-

representational theory' (see Thrift, 1997) in their research, it is still noteworthy that continuing advances in photography and mobile technology involving the digitalisation and 'Internetisation' of cameras (and camera phones) could tender far more intricacies in photographic activities than the identified characteristics of 'playfulness' and 'experimentalness'. Take, for example, the effects of burgeoning photoblogs and social networks; with tourists' growing interest in photography and the increasing popularity (if not ubiquity) of digital cameras, photoblogs and social networks, such as Facebook, Twitter, Fluckr or Weibo in China, it is increasingly likely that tourists will upload their photographs to user-generated social-networking sites. For instance, between two and three million photos are estimated to have been uploaded to fluckr.com, with 80% of users having personal exhibition places (Cox *et al.*, 2008).

To some extent, those photoblogs and social networking sites could be considered an extension of tourist photographers' 'front stage' of their everyday lives, where some photographers' 'works' and personal/family photographs are circulated, and where such photographs may be appreciated, 'liked' and commented upon by other users, with some of whom the original tourist photographers are familiar and others with whom they are not. Apart from the resultant enhanced 'sociability' of tourist photographers, this virtual element of their 'front stage' also potentially influences their photographic acts, since some tourist photographers may carefully manage their profiles, photo exhibitions and social networking front pages. Cohen (2005: 13) suggests a framework to explain how photoblogs may influence photobloggers' photographic behaviours. According to him,

> The complement of the first, one has yet to do X completely, but creates a framework for action in which one experiences X (in the present) as though it had already been done.

In other words, a tourist creates a photoblog which both exists and is yet to exist in the moment of taking the photo; that is, the photo that he/she is making now is not yet on the blog, but it is experienced as though it were already there (Cohen, 2005:13). Photo-taking is perpetrated with the blog partially in mind. Cohen (2005) has found that most bloggers have a sense of how they will post a photo as or before they take it whilst, generally, the number of created photographs proliferates owing to the increasing utilisation of photoblogs. Hence, he proposes that photoblogs give shape and intricacies to bloggers' photographic activities.

## 1.4 Aim of the study

In order to address the gaps in the literature identified above, the purpose of this multi-disciplinary research is to explore critically the gazes and photographic practices of non-Western tourists, thereby providing a counterpoint to the western bias within the literature. Thus, the project aims to theoretically re-conceptualise and study empirically the tourist gaze and tourist photographic behaviours, which are subject to a variety of social, cultural and technological factors. More specifically, it aims to explore what Chinese tourists prefer to see and photographically pursue in the UK and to evaluate the extent to which their gaze, performance of gazing and photographic behaviour are shaped by some social, cultural and technological factors.

## 1.5 Research Question

As discussed above, although academic attention has long been paid to the concept of the tourist gaze (Urry, 1990, 2002; Urry and Larsen, 2011) and practice of tourist photography (particularly the relationship between tourists and local people as mediated by photography), there remains limited understanding of the factors that respectively determine the tourist gaze and practice of tourist photography (that is, how and why tourists see and take photographs), particularly across different cultural groups. Specifically, to what extent are the (Chinese) tourists' gazes and photographic performances respectively influenced by social, cultural and technological factors? In particular, such factors involve the fusion of photography-related technologies, and travel traditions and and the continuously changing social and cultural patterns in the photographers' home country (China).

Also, it may be suggested that the study of tourists' gazes and photographic practices should be three-dimensional – that is, within a social-interaction framework, it should consider how tourist-photographers adapt their behaviour / ways of seeing in response to the reactions of those being photographed (see Moufakkir and Reisinger, 2013). However, this study is concerned primarily with the socio-cultural and technological factors that fundamentally influence how Chinese tourists gaze on people and places and subsequently photograph them. Therefore, the research purposefully will not focus tourist-photographers responses to the reactions of those being photographed.

## 1.6 Specific Objectives

Within the context of critically analysing the gaze and photographic practices of two groups of Chinese tourists visiting the UK (specifically, a group on a formal, organised tour in the UK and an informal group visit to the Isle of Wight), the objectives of this research are to:

1. Explore and theoretically establish the Chinese 'tourist gaze', its historical origins and connections with evolving Chinese socio-cultural structures;

2. Test and refine this established concept of the Chinese 'tourist gaze' in fieldworks;

3. Empirically investigate how Chinese tourists undertake their photographic practices and explore what factors determine the ways in which they perform tourist photography.

**1.7 Methodology**

This inductive study involves three phases, with a qualitative research approach – visual auto-ethnography – being employed at the 'Phase Two' fieldwork. To be more specific, the initial study at 'Phase One' primarily involves the literature review which focuses on studies of continuously changing social and social structures and institutions in China and other factors which could serve to influence the gaze and photographic performances of Chinese tourists.  At this phase, the concept of the Chinese tourist gaze is developed (representing the outcome of Phase One research), which will be tested and refined in subsequent research fieldworks.

As noted above, visual auto-ethnographic research is undertaken at 'Phase Two' (see Chapter 6 – Methodology – for more detail). At this stage, two separate empirical studies are undertaken. The first study involves the researcher embarking on a scheduled packaged tour to thirteen destinations throughout the UK, together with the eighteen Chinese respondents, whilst, the second one involves his participation in  a holiday in the Isle of Wight another six Chinese informants. During these two field studies, he is immersed in experiencing and framing traditional performances, landscapes, architecture and so on, without the focus of observation centring upon following his fellow tourists' photographic behaviours. Significantly, the researcher is required to scrutinise frequently the connections between his own personal visual performances and the influence of previously identified social, cultural and technological factors (see Ellis, 2004). Also, he is aware of potential biases arising from, first, the fact that his own presence may affect the practices of those tourist he is travelling with and, second, that the tourists may consciously or sub-consciously adapt their behaviour in the knowledge that they are taking part in a research study (see Brandin, 1999). During each field study, a set of photo-elicitation semi-structured interviews (see Collier Jr & Collier, 1986; Banks, 2001; Harper, 2002) are undertaken with the Chinese tourists, in order to elicit what, why and how they gaze and perform the photography and evaluate the extent to which the gaze and photographic behaviours have been influenced. To be more specific, both the researcher's and the

respondents' experiences are shared and further reflected upon in the interviews, and the verbal communications also evolve around the content of those photos presented by subjects.

At the 'Phase Three', the researcher undertakes an analysis of the responses collected from the informants in both field studies. Concurrently, both field notes and photographs will be drawn upon, either those which are taken by respondents or those taken by the author himself over the course of the two field studies. In so doing, a further opportunity arises to relive the tours and interview settings, to further review critically the subjectivity performed by both researcher and respondents (see Lacan, 2004) and to access additional insights into the photographic performances.

Generally, visual auto-ethnography, which is deemed as a convergence of visual elicitation interviews and auto-ethnography, could serve to 'access and mobilise deeper, nuanced insights into the embodied performances, practices and processes of the tourist experience' (Scarles, 2010). More precisely, unlike the conventional perspective of ethnography, visual auto-ethnography does not necessitate extended, detailed immersion to facilitate a comprehension of grounded ways of life and worldviews via observation (see Scarles, 2010). However, it does require the tourism researcher to become a 'researcher-as-tourist' (Scarles, 2009:467) and to situate himself/herself in the research setting, politically, socially and culturally (Behar, 1997; Ellis, 2004, 2009). At the same time, it embraces the researcher's subjectivity (Krieger, 1996; Spry, 2001; Crang, 2003; Anderson, 2006) and auto-ethnographic experience, which is to be shared with respondents via visual images. During interviews, the tourism researcher no longer passively listens and responds to the visually elicited narratives; instead, both participants (interviewer and interviewee) are encouraged and offered the opportunity to construct, relive and exchange their first-hand experiences (see Spry, 2001). As a consequence, the interview *per se* becomes a more active and dynamic process through which not only critical, profound and comprehensive responses may elicited, but also the tourism researcher may develop a fuller and deeper understanding of the self and the tourist other (see Krieger, 1996).

## 1.8 The Structure of Thesis Chapters

As *Figure 1.2* (on Page 23)  illustrates, the thesis is presented in nine chapters, with each chapter focusing on one or more objectives. Also, this thesis is essentially structured into four sections. More specifically, Section One provides a broad background and theoretical foundation for this thesis. In this section, Chapter 2 introduces, in detail, the history of vision and visuality in the Western societies. In

particular, this chapter focuses on the cultural and social context in which the tourist gaze formed, travelled, prevailed and married photography in the West. Then, based on numerous past studies, the study will explore how photography has materialised, concretised, created and mobilised the tourist gaze. Chapter 3 offers insights into pre-modern Chinese élite travellers' travel patterns and gaze as a comparison to the counterpart of Western societies. More precisely, the chapter first of all explains how Chinese traditional philosophies largely shaped individuals' travel behaviours and social ideology in  pre-modern Chinese societies. Subsequently, the chapter considers social mobilities and societal structure of the pre-Qin society, which significantly facilitated the formation of pre-modern Chinese élite travellers' travel patterns. The characteristics of pre-modern Chinese élite travellers' gaze are then explored and identified. To a great extent, the tourist gaze in contemporary China is inter-connected with this pre-modern élites' gaze, although it is potentially becoming de-exoticised or de-differentiated from its everyday counterpart; that is,Chinese citizens' gaze in their everyday life rather than in travel. In effect, it is becoming gradually de-exoticised as there has already been a global trend ftowards the fusion of tourist travels, the tourist gaze and tourist photography. Therefore, Chapter 4 analyses this global trend in detail. Partially based upon the discussions in the preceding four chapters, Chapter 5 theoretically establishes the concept and framework of the contemporary Chinese tourist gaze, although empirical field studies  are needed to test and refine this initial model.

Section Two exclusively involves Chapter 6, which not only elucidates the research paradigm, methodology, and research method of this study but also explains, in detail, how the two empirical field studies are undertaken and the collected data is analysed. Also, some other issues, such as the quality of the analysed data and ethical consideration are addressed at the end of this chapter.

The results of the two research field studies are presented and discussed in Section Three. More specifically, Chapter 7 concentrates upon the results of the second field study, discussing in particular how younger-generations of Chinese tourists take photographs, by employing their personal smart phones. Furthermore, the combination of those new dimensions and the implications of smart phones for tourist photography is also another focus of discussion in this chapter. Subsequently, Chapter 8 addresses the results for the first field study and refines the concept of the Chinese tourist gaze, initially formulated in Chapter 5. More precisely, this chapter respectively discusses those Chinese tourist respondents' acts of imagining the 'authentic', visualising time from the spectacles being seen, and deliberately observing some 'advanced' aspects

of the toured destinations. Grounded upon all of those visual and photographic acts identified in the two field studies, the author refines and refigures the concept of the Chinese tourist gaze. Section Four comprises the concluding Chapter 9, which not only reviews the contributions of this thesis but also suggests the possible negative implications that the Chinese tourist gaze will impose on the world as well as what it may become in the long-term future.
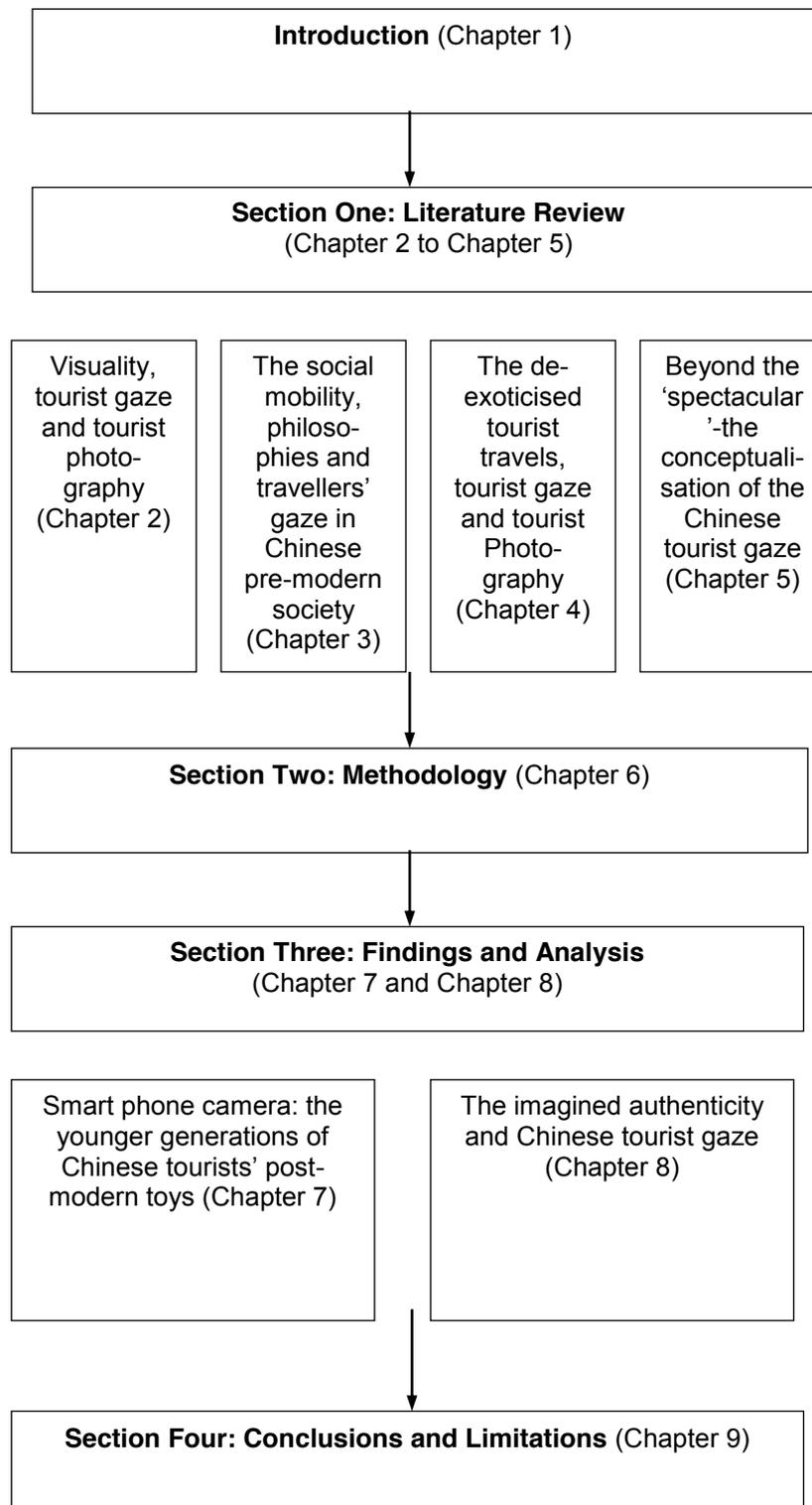


**Figure 1.2**: The structure of the chapters of this thesis

# Section One

# Literature Review

# Chapter 2

# Visuality, the Tourist Gaze and Tourist Photography

## 2.1 Introduction

In his paper *The tourist gaze 'revisited'*, John Urry (1992a) maintains that the tourist gaze is institutionalised and socially and culturally constructed. Indeed, from the works of numerous scholars, such as Adler (1989), Ousby (1990) and Löfgren (1999), it can be demonstrated that the tourist gaze in Western societies is not only institutionalised but has also long been subject to and influenced by cannons of taste in society. For example, up until the mid-eighteenth century, the English Lake District, far from being the revered landscape that it is today, was a place to be avoided; Daniel Defoe, for instance, travelling through the region on his tour of Great Britain between 1724 and 1726, found it to be 'a country eminent only for being the wildest, most barren and frightful of any that I have passed over in England' (Berry and Beard, 1980: 1). By the latter half of the eighteenth century, the landscape of the Lake District came to be viewed through the Claude Glass and captured in the 'picturesque' style whilst, by the early 1800s, pioneer tourists' tastes, influenced by the Romantic Movement, had progressively shifted from the picturesque to the 'sublime' (see Andrews, 1989; Ousby, 1990; löfgren, 1999; Urry, 1995). At the same time, their collective gaze was also transferred from picturesque English countryside views to the sublime views of spectacular mountains. Moreover, since its invention in around 1840 (see Urry and Larsen, 2011:164), not only has photography become an integral and essential extension of the tourist gaze; it has also increasingly bestowed the visual convention of gazing or sightseeing with the characteristics of 'performativity', 'experimentalness', 'creativeness' and 'playfulness' (see Baerenholdt *et al.* 2004; Haldrup and Larsen 2010).

Equally, and as suggested in Chapter 1 of this thesis, it can be argued that it is likely that the visual and photographic practices of non-Western tourists have also long been institutionalised and constructed, albeit by a different set of social and cultural influences and transformations. Specifically, oriental cultures and societies, such as those of China, could potentially contribute to what may be described as a 'Chinese tourist gaze'. However, as identified in the preceding chapter, there has been little evidence of academic interest in either unpacking the new, de-exoticised landscape of the tourist gaze and tourist photography in general or in exploring Chinese tourists' visual practices in particular, hence the focus of this thesis. In order to bridge these two

identified gaps in the current literature, this chapter firstly considers how the Western tourist gaze is institutionalised and socially and culturally constructed by outlining the gradually increasing importance of the visual, or sightseeing, in travel in Western societies. It then goes on to explore the connections between photography and the tourist gaze as well as the dimensions of the practice of tourist photography *per se*.

## 2.2 The Origins of Sightseeing

Generally, the most important phase in the history of travel and tourism in the Western world was, arguably, the period following the Enlightenment that witnessed the ascendancy of the eye (the ocular) over the ear (the aural), a period which was also intertwined with significant social and cultural change and the related transformations in cannons of taste referred to above. Moreover, William Gilpin, one of the most influential of late eighteenth-century English travellers and a leading proponent of the picturesque, which he described in his *Essay on Prints* (1768) as 'that kind of beauty which is agreeable in a picture', suggested that nature was promising raw material, not a satisfying finished product (cited in Ousby, 1990: 159); that is, nature could be viewed or portrayed in different ways according to taste and cultural influences. Thus, differing attitudes towards nature and distinctive recreations or representations of landscape over that period partially reflected transformations in ideology, cannons of taste and, consequently, the tourist gaze.

This section commences with a brief overview of the Grand Tour, a period that is not only widely considered to be significant in the history of Western tourism (Towner, 1985) but also, despite being predominantly characterised by the practice of hearing / listening, heralded the emergence of gazing or sightseeing. To be more specific, following the break with the Church of Rome in 1534 (Towner, 1985), an openly secular form of tourism, namely, the Grand Tour, was for the first time widely and systematically practiced by the young European – not merely by the British, as many assume: see Friedlander (1876); Schudt (1959) and Krasnobaev (1980) – élite as an opportunity for discourse (Adler, 1989:8). According to early studies (for example, Howard, 1914; Hutton, 1937), the period of Grand Tour stretched from the early sixteenth century until the end of the eighteenth century, its eventual decline typically being attributed to several factors which primarily include the French Revolution (Hutton, 1937:1), the development of the railways (Lambert, 1935:12), the growing popularity of travel amongst the middle classes, and changing cultural attitudes (Brand, 1957).

The initial purpose of the Grand Tour was to prepare the young aristocratic travellers for legal and diplomatic careers. Thus, whilst undertaking the Tour, they were not encouraged to gaze upon and appreciate natural views and landscapes, or indeed architecture or art. Rather, they were guided by their tutors to learn foreign languages, to obtain access to foreign courts, to converse gracefully with eminent men, to read classical texts relevant to particular sites and, not least, to speak eloquently about their experiences upon their return (Adler, 1989: 9). As was recorded, advice was proffered to 'confer with expert men and with many, to go a hundred miles out of one's way to speak with a wise man, rather than five to see a fair town…' (Essex, 1596:13). Therefore, to some extent, the use of sight was for no more than reading and the learning of classical texts and, although it is alleged that the senses of both seeing and hearing were given equal weight, the Grand Tour was predominantly characterised by discourse rather than seeing.

However, an alternative travel tradition gradually came to overlap and, eventually, eclipse this tradition of travelling for discourse, in which it was claimed that precedence should be given to the 'eye' and to silent / eyewitness observation rather than to the 'ear' and hearing. More specifically, during the seventeenth century, when there emerged 'a fashion in courtly circles for Natural Philosophy and an epistemological individualism which enjoins every man to 'see', verify and, in a sense, 'create' the world anew for himself, auricular knowledge and discourse were progressively devalued in favour of an 'eye' believed to produce 'direct, unmediated, and personally unverified experience' (Adler, 1989: 11; see also Rose, 1992: 8-18). As a consequence, treatises began to encourage the traveller to become a detached and 'curious' eye and for the journey to be an exercise in accurate observation (see Howell, 1642); scholars were gradually convinced that they should break with the past and that 'travel should precede rather than follow the interpretations of established texts' (Adler, 1989:14; see also Meirus, 1589). Nevertheless it should be noted that, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, aesthetic interest was rarely if ever revealed in European sightseeing practices, references to paintings, sculpture and landscape beauty being virtually non-existent in the travel literature of this period. Rather, travel was still primarily viewed as involving the documentation of facts with silent / eyewitness observation being treated as a part and parcel of developing a scientific or scholarly understanding of the world (Urry, 1995). Thus, travel essentially required an 'eye' cultivated and disciplined to 'emotionally detached, objectively accurate vision' (Adler, 1989: 18).

However, with the emergence of and support for scientific expeditions (the first of which was recorded in 1735: Pratt, 1992:1), facilitated in no small measure by the development of scientific research instruments that permitted impersonally conducted and comparable inquiries to be carried out by specialists (Petty, 1927:175-78; Elliot, 1970:36; Broc, 1974:221), lay travellers no longer expected that their observations would become part of science *par excellence* (Urry and Larsen, 2011: 157). Rather, they began to turn their attention to an appreciation of the arts and the beauty of landscapes in a more passionate, emotional and private way. Even so, the affective approach to visually appreciating the landscape had remained largely unchanged in the closing decades of the eighteenth century. Following the influence of Gilpin and the picturesque movement, gazing on landscapes was still framed by the search for or depiction of the ordered feminine beauty of the soft, hospitable, mellow landscapes created through the Claude glass (see Andrews, 1989:42)  However, by the early 1800s, there emerged the desire amongst tourists to view the tremendous and the melancholy, to gaze upon sublime mountains, ruins and natural views, and on upon landscapes that had become 'romanticized' in literature and art.

More specifically, by the eighteenth-century, the reputation of English artists in portraiture and in Hogarth's genre painting was well established. However, compared with other countries, particularly Italy, there were few painters in England who could elevate the depiction of landscape to an artistic level. Indeed, Walpole lamented that 'in a country so profusely beautified with the amenities of nature, it is extraordinary that we have produced so few good painters of landscape' (cited in Andrews, 1989: 24). Recognition of this limitation in English art engendered a growing nationalism and increasing pressure to produce English landscape paintings. Fortunately, from the second half of the eighteen century, not only were extensive untouched natural areas in England, such as the Lake District, increasingly 'discovered'. They were also recreated, 'improved' and framed in the idealised European styles of numerous paintings by pioneer French and Italian landscape artists, such as Claude Lorrain, Nicolas Poussin, Gaspard Doughet and Salvator Rosa that had been brought back to England by the Grand Touring aristocracy.

Initially, the works of Claude Lorrain in particular exerted a significant influence upon both English art and the appreciation of landscape. That is, not only did the mellow master-tint and tripartite structural principles of Claude's paintings rapidly become the fashion among English painters (see Andrews, 1989: 29), but his style structured the élite travellers' gaze and transformed the wild areas of England into 'picturesque' landscapes. As already noted, the concept of the 'picturesque', extolled by William

Gilpin and others, referred to a certain way of selecting, framing and representing the beauty of landscapes in a picture (see Ousby, 1990: 154; Townsend, 1997; Löfgren, 1999: 19). However, during the seventeenth century and partly as a result or the influence of Gilpin, along with Unvedale Price and Richard Payne Knight (Townsend, 1997: 365), it was gradually applied to the arena of travel and the practice of gazing on landscapes.

Specifically, numerous English landscape paintings were created in the Claudian style, breaking down a landscape into three distances: 'a background, a strongly lit middle or second distance, and a darkened foreground' (Andrews, 1989: 29). According to Andrews (1989), this kind of tripartite artistic structure was accompanied by the device of the *repoussoir* object, the dark foreground framing trees, or a tree and a ruin, or mountain sides, to prevent one's eye from straying outside the canvas and to push it into the middle distance. The dark foreground frame, which might extend round to the top of the painting an overarching bough, came to be used as a means of heightening visual perception in contexts other than painting and, as a result, the landscape or natural views were artistically framed and enhanced.

Consequently, even though they themselves were not artists, many élite travellers with a pair of trained eyes were inspired and encouraged to take a stroll in the countryside to identify or hunt for those scenes of which features and elements were believed to bear analogies to works of art, including Claudian paintings. More often than not, they were armed with miscellaneous maps, guidebooks and some other publications which offered detailed directions to exact viewpoints or selectively created 'stations' (Ousby, 1990: 155-157; see also Rutherford, 2013). For example, in the year 1753, Mrs Elizabeth Montagu wrote a letter and recorded her travel experience:

> Mr Pitt…ordered a tent to be pitched, tea to be prepared, and his French horn to breath Music like the unseen Genius of the woods…After tea we rambled about for an hour, seeing several views, some wild as Salvator Rosa, others placid, and with the setting sun, worthy of Claude Lorrain (cited in Andrews, 1989: 39).

From the above, it is evident that one of the pleasures of this experience for Mrs Montagu was the recognition and tracing of resemblances between art (including Claude's works) and nature. Addison (1712) categorises this kind of pleasure in secondary pleasures of imagination, and he remarks that universally people are particularly pleased when they compare 'the Ideas arising from the Original Objects,

with the Ideas they receive from the Statue, Picture, Description, or Sound that represents those Ideas'.

In addition to guide books and other publications, the Claude glass was widely used at this time, enabling these 'picturesque' travellers to 'create' and appreciate Claudian landscape views. This optical device is typically described as a lightweight, mobile convex mirror of blackened glass that fitted into (male) pocket. The gazer stood with his/her back to the scene and consumed it through the petite mirror in which the reflected landscape was nearly trimmed and recomposed in accordance to the eye's movement (see Urry and Larsen, 2011:157-158). More precisely, except in the foreground, details were hidden, and something like a *beau ideal* emerged, freed from particularities and deformities (Andrews, 1989: 68). In other words, the Clause glass served to abstract the scene reflected in it from its surroundings, simplifying the colour and tonal range, eliminating detail and hence, endowing the scene with an artistic character.

Over time, however, this created, unreal feminine beauty of Claudian landscapes gradually fell out of favour as, increasingly, artists, writers and indeed travellers began to appreciate the sublime beauty of mountains, objects and other natural views being gazed upon (Andrews, 1989: 42). As the Earl of Shaftesbury (1709) narrates in his *The Moralists*:

> I shall not longer resist the passion growing in me for things of a natural kind where neither art nor the conceit or caprice of man has spoiled their genuine order by breaking in upon that primitive state. Even the rude rocks, the mossy caverns, the irregular unwrought grottos and broken falls of waters, with all the horrid graces of the wildness itself, as representing Nature more, will be the more engaging, and appear with a magnificence beyond the formal mockery of princely gardens (cited in Hunt and Wills, 1975:124).

To some extent, this transformation in cultural taste could be attributed to what some consider to be prevalent melancholy character of eighteenth century English society, engendered by a number of factors including the dampness of the English climate, the richness of diet, sedentary occupations of the 'better sort' and the crowded conditions of big towns (see Cheyne, 1733). Equally, de Botton (2003: 171) notes that 'it is no coincidence that the Western attraction to sublime landscapes developed at precisely the moment when traditional beliefs in God began to wane... The landscape offered [travellers] an emotional connection to a greater power'.

Thus, at the same time, the 'sublime' can be defined fundamentally as 'an abstract quality in which the dominant feature is the presence or idea of transcendental immensity or greatness: power, heroism, or vastness in space or time' (Bell and Lyall, 2002: 4). From a theological perspective, creation was divinely ordered, with man at the centre and the natural world as his willing servant, whilst the earth's 'deformities' could be viewed as a result of the Fall or the biblical Flood, which reflected the evil in human nature (Ousby, 1990:131; see also Nicolson, 1959; Corbin, 1994). Take mountains and the sea for example. From the book of Genesis, the Psalms, and the book of Job, it can be seen that the land in the Garden of Eden is productive, yet there are no mountains or sea within the landscape of Paradise. The mountains and the seas were believed to be produced when the Flood, which was introduced by God to punish wicked human race, returned the world to a temporary state of chaos.

Under this religious influence, during the Dark and Middle Ages in Western society the mountains and the seas were believed to be contrasted against 'the beautiful', inspiring emotional feelings of astonishment, terror, awe, fear and dread (see Burke,2008) - emotions that, as previously observed, were experienced by Defoe during his visit to the Lake District in the 1720s. Moreover, even earlier the Romans had believed the mountains to be aloof, inhospitable, desolate and hostile (Nicolson, 1959). Thus, it was rare to find early European travellers, artists or writers prior to eighteenth century who described and praised the beauty of a mountain or of the sea (see Nicolson, 1959; Corbin, 1994). As the Romantic poet William Wordsworth expressed in a letter:

> Elaborate gardening, with topiary works, were in high request, even among our remote ancestors, but the relish for choice and picturesque scenery...is quite of recent origin. Our earlier travellers - Ray, the naturalist, one of the first men of his age-Bishop Burnet, and others who had crossed the Alps, or lived some time in Switzerland, are silent upon the sublimity and beauty of those regions;...The accomplished Evelyn, giving an account of his journey from Italy through the Alps, dilates upon the terrible, the melancholy, and the uncomfortable; but still he comes to the fruitful country in the neighbourhood of Geneva, not a syllable of delight or praise... (Quoted in Nicolson, 1959: 18).

Exceptionally, a few earlier writers and travellers, such as Dante and John of Salisbury provided vivid accounts of their encounter with a mountain in their writings. Nevertheless, it is evident from writings that the mountains they encountered were no more than allegories, and that sublime views of the mountains were seldom described. To demonstrate, John Salisbury writes at the end of his letter:

> I have been on the mount of Jove; on the one hand looking up to the heaven of the mountains; on the other shuddering at the hell of the valleys, feeling myself so much nearer to heaven that I was more sure that my prayer would be heard...Lord, I said, restore me to my brethren, that they come not into this place of torment. (Quoted in Laughlin, 1894: 6)

From this narrative, it can be seen that mountains were considered a symbol of moral elevation, and that what the author treasured most was his feeling of being morally improved and nearer to heaven rather than the actual sublime view(s) that he had encountered. In the late eighteenth century, however, it was Kant (1790) who identified the sublime for the first time as a negative pleasure, as the mind was both attracted to and repelled by the object – a paradoxical pleasure. From then on, the sublime was no longer completely the reverse of beautiful.

Despite the fact that the sublime was supposed to invoke negative pleasures, most late-eighteenth-century travellers were not prepared or were unable to appreciate directly the 'terrific', 'tremendous', and 'stupendous' (Ousby, 1990:146) landscape itself. Rather, in most cases they were actually in favour of a kind of negotiated 'agreeable' or 'pleasing terror', without being overwhelmed by it. As a consequence, many sublime natural views were either shaped and fitted into the prevailing Gothic taste or tailored by some other foreign style, such as Salvator Rosa's painting. The Arch in the Peak Cavern in the English Peak District serves as an example, inasmuch as the sweep of the arch was not considered altogether irregular but something in the Gothic taste; similarly, the curious limestone formulations of Dovedale were intentionally paralleled to a ruined castle (see Ousby, 1990: 142).

Inevitably, perhaps, these trembling pleasures were described in various poems, narratives and guidebooks, assuring that later visitors came prepared to experience the sublime landscapes through the earlier travellers' eyes and to react to their paradoxical feelings. However, some narratives were exaggerated to the extent that not all of the later generations of travellers were able to recognise the reality from the heated or over-emotional descriptions. Indeed, Robert Southey rebuked previous writers for their exaggerations:

> They told us of traces of horrible bareness, of terrific precipices, rocks rioting upon rocks, and mountains tost [sic] together in chaotic confusion; of stone avalanches rendering the ways impassable, the fear of some travellers who had shrunk back from this dreadful entrance into Borrodale, and the heroism of

others who had dared to penetrate into these impenetrable regions: into these regions, however, we found no difficulty in walking along a good road, which coaches of the light English make travel every summer's day (cited in Ousby, 1990: 147)

Nevertheless, as the fame of some English writers and poets grew, their works increasingly substituted the European-inspired Claudian style paintings in shaping the tourists' gaze, culturally framing the landscape and creating tourism destinations. Indeed, in some cases the writers and poets themselves became main attraction of the tourist places, contributing to the creation of a local literary landscape and signifying a further shift in collective taste from the 'sublime' to the 'literary'. William Wordsworth, foremost amongst Lakeland poets of the nineteenth century, is a prime example. Prior to the Romantic Movement, the Lake District was barely regarded as an integral part of England, its expansive area having previously been described by others, including Daniel Defoe as noted earlier, as 'wild', 'barren' and 'frightful' (Nicholson, 1978: 25). However, following the arrival of the Lake Poets, notably Wordsworth, this 'dreadful' and unproductive area was fundamentally transformed into the object of the popular tourist gaze, rapidly becoming one of the most visited areas of rural England from the nineteenth century onwards (Walton and Wood, 2013; Sharpley, 2009). More specifically, the Lake Poets presented the Lake District in the kind of language that not only enhanced its visual appeal, but also contributed to the subsequent rapid proliferation and circulation of place-myths (Urry, 1995).

With the belief that the 'cold rules of painting' could not convey the emotions stirred up by the subject, William Wordsworth in particular created a Romantic vision of the Lake District that struck a chord with tourist from the burgeoning towns and cities of the Industrial Revolution. These nineteenth century visitors travelled to the Lake District either to catch a glimpse of the poet himself, to visit his residences, or to consume the spectacle of Lakeland through Wordsworth's eyes. In retrospect, it seems that, along with the works of many other poets and writers, his poems created the easiest way for later tourists to convince themselves that that they were feeling appropriate or edifying emotions in the presence of a particular scene without necessarily spending much time actually looking at it (Ousby, 1990:187).

As the nineteenth century progressed, vision and sightseeing continued to combine to play a more vital role in shaping people's modern life and spatially constructing places in Western society and in other parts of the world. Berman (1983), Benjamin (1989), MacCannell (1999) and Urry (2002), for example, in their respective books, narrate in

detail how Paris was rebuilt during the Second Empire in the mid-nineteenth century 'as constructing the conditions for the quintessentially modern experience' (Berman, 1983: section 3). After the reconstruction was completed, the middle-class *flâneur* was able to take a stroll in Paris and to please his eyes by looking through the windows of the most elegant shops lining an arcade (see Benjamin, 1989: 36-37). Alternatively, he was armed with a camera and became a photographer or a solitary walker who discovered the city as a landscape of voluptuous extremes. Adept at the joys of watching, a connoisseur of empathy, the *flâneur* found the world 'picturesque' (Sontag, 1979: 55).

## 2.3. Photography: Materialising, Concretising, Creating and Mobilising the Tourist Gaze

### 2.3.1 The historical desire for photography

The *flâneur*'s camera, referred to above, served to enhance and, to some extent, concretise people's visual experiences in the late nineteenth century. So, how was photography invented? In stark contrast to the *flâneur*'s experience and the increasing popularity of gazing on (and recording) picturesque and sublime views, it was unusual to witness pre-photographic tourists propping up their easels by riverbanks or in meadows to recreate the landscape in paints; the majority of such tourists did not possess sufficient skill in painting to materialise or concretise their ephemeral experiential encounters with sublime landscapes or the picturesque in the way they desired. Thus, it was photography that came to offer the possibility and opportunity for this on a mass scale.

In retrospect, the invention of photography was not accidental; instead, it was intimately related to those desires which had already emerged in Western society. Indeed, prior to the invention of photography around the year 1840, numerous travellers had already expressed their 'frustration at not being able permanently to fix their impressions and experiences of the environment' (Batchen, 1999: 16). To demonstrate, the Reverend William Gilpin articulated the frustration of being unable to 'fix and appropriate the scene witnessed through his Claude Glass' (Batchen, 1999: 93):

> A succession of high-coloured pictures is continually gliding before the eye. They are like the visions of the imagination; or the brilliant landscapes of a dream. Forms, and colours in brightest array, fleet before us; and if the transient

glance of a good composition happens to unite with them, we should give any price to fix and appropriate the scene (quoted in Batchen, 1999: 93-4).

Similarly, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Thomas Gray, John Clare and John Constable also conveyed their frustration at not being able to capture their fleeting images, the transient images of nature (Crawshaw and Urry, 1997: 181). Adler (1989) describes the historical context for photographic practices as 'a convergence between post-Renaissance science and travel, and the shift to objectification and the recording of things'. Wilson summarises how photography permits humans to assume ownership of nature and places as graspable, mobile objects: 'the snapshot transforms the resistant aspect of nature into something familiar and intimate, something that can be held in the hands and memories. In this way, the camera allows people some control over the visual environments of the culture' (Wilson, 1992: 122).

To some extent, 1840 could be considered a special year, 'one of those remarkable moments when the world seems to shift and new patterns of relationships are established' (Urry and Larsen, 2011: 165). According to Urry and Larsen (2011:14), it is manifest that the births of the modern leisure (see Roberts, 2006: 32-34), photography, the railway system, mass tourism and its related services all converged around the year 1840 (see Table 2.1 below).

| Year | Event |
|------|-------|
| 1939 | The first national railway table, Bradshaw's Guide, was published. |
| 1940 | Louis Daguerre announced the invention of camera in Paris. |
| 1941 | Thomas Cook organised the first packaged tour in the UK. |

**Table 2.1**: 'Big events' in tourism around the year 1840
**Source**: Urry and Larsen (2011:14)

From 1840 onwards, tourism and photography gradually became fused together and the 'tourist gaze' was progressively stretched, materialised, concretised, performed and mobilised (see also Thrift, 1996; Löfgren, 1999). This point can be further explored in the context of the following dichotomous perspectives: the unprecedentedly wide circulation of photographs and tourists' subjective performance of photography.

### 2.3.2 The extensive circulation of photo prints

In the years following 1840, photography or, more precisely, the practice of photography, did not become immediately popular amongst the public in the Western

countries. The early cameras were expensive and clumsy which, combined with complicated photographic techniques, served to deter most tourists from employing photography as a means of capturing the fleeting images they encountered. Rather, prior to the advent of mass produced cheap cameras and simpler photographic techniques, a proliferation of photo prints (particularly postcards), gradually but relentlessly mobilised and exhibited places around the world. In Urry and Larsen's (2011: 165) words, 'they provided simulated mobility experiences that brought the countryside, ancient times and exoticism to the modern metropolis'. In particular, in the years around the start of the twentieth century, attending photo exhibitions and exchanging and collecting photo prints gradually became a popular and widespread hobby in Western countries. For example, according to Löfgren (1999: 77), in 1904 the Swedish population of about five million people mailed over forty-eight million postcards. As a consequence, the modern world has been recreated and increasingly become a world of visual consumption, a world of exhibition or a 'museum-without-walls' (Sontag, 1979: 110) whilst, for others, it has been reduced to 'cheap and transportable' surfaces (Wells, 2001: 20). As Mitchell (1989: 220) maintains, this era established the world as 'a picture… [and arranged]… it before an audience as an object of display – to be viewed, investigated and experienced' Consequently, as people became increasingly able to sit in an armchair and simply move their eyes to go sightseeing, without being troubled by the body, the visual experience became unprecedentedly 'democratised' (Sontag, 1979: 7).

### 2.3.3 Kodakisation

In the late 1880s, this trend of uneven popularity began to reverse. More specifically, targeting the new middle-class family in the west countries and tourism, Kodak launched its user-friendly lightweight and cheap Brownie cameras which did not necessitate prior photographic knowledge and expertise. As Kodak's slogan articulated: 'You Press the Button; We Do the Rest' (quoted in Urry and Larsen, 2011: 171). According to West (2000), through their marketing messages, Kodak scripted the cultural meanings and social performances of this new photography actor-network (see also Slater, 1999; Urry and Larsen, 2011). People and families were taught to 'appreciate their experiences and memories as objects of nostalgia', especially avoiding painful and unpleasant experiences (West, 2000: 1). The act of overlooking and forgetting thus became integral to the 'other' ofthis photography while nostalgia became a defining character its cultural viewpoint (Urry and Larsen, 2011: 171; see also Taylor, 1994). To a great extent, tourism fitted neatly into Kodak's objective of encouraging and 'teaching' people to take photographs, thereby optimising the company's sales of cameras and film. Therefore, the 'Kodak Girl' – the company's

advertising icon for almost eight years – encouraged individuals and families to take Kodak cameras with them, to beautify travel memories and to transform their vacation days as 'KODAK DAYS' (West, 2000:13). From then on, photography became a leisurely middle-class-family-centred performance of nostalgia (see Haldrup and Larsen, 2003; Larsen, 2005), a technology of 'self' (Foucault, 1982/1997: 225) and a practice of concealing and revealing (see Markwell, 1997; Scarles, 2009; Yeh, 2009). At the same time, the tourist gaze became, through photography, materialised, concretised, stretched and performed (see Crang, 1997; Haldrup and Larsen, 2010).

To illustrate, Haldrup and Larsen (2010) in their research found that family tourists tend to employ 'the beach', 'the sea' and 'the radiant sun' as set-pieces and the backcloth for staging personal stories revolving around social relations, particularly among the photographer's family companions, which can later be told and re-told through the medium of the photograph album or slideshow. Alternatively, Markwell (1997), in his study of tourist photography on a nature-based tour in Malaysia, found that participants declined to photograph disturbing sights, therefore denying part of the reality of rural Malaysia to those who viewed the photographs. He argues that the myth of the perfect holiday is reinforced in the concealing and revealing of photograph albums (Markwell, 1997: 150). Garlick (2002¨: 297) states that the myth identified by Markwell (1997) could be regarded as a means by which 'the tourist-subject (re)produces its memories, rather than that 'which is constructed simply for (re)presentation to those who have not travelled'. In addition, Garlick (2002) proposes another way of explaining the myth, which is also connected to the dynamic interactions between memory and photography. That is, tourists prefer to overcome unattractive side of life whilst travelling, so they select the objects or views to construct their holidays and memories.

### 2.3.4 The relationship between the tourist photographer and the host population

Nevertheless, the western middle-class families' curiosity to photograph and see the exotic destinations seems to have disturbed the guest-host relationship in tourism. Tourist photography has been long regarded as an encounter, which is essentially transitory, non-repetitive and asymmetrical, and the tourist photographers tend to achieve immediate gratification rather than maintain a continuous relationship (Cohen, 1984). To illustrate, Sontag (1979) treats the tourist photographic practice as an act of violation. She further explains that people are not satisfied as tourists until they have acquired the image for themselves, regardless of the wishes of those photographed. Cohen *et al.* (1992) describe it as an acquisitive act, which adversely influences the tourist-local relationship, because of its 'exploitative nature' (1992:216). Moreover, Cohen *et al.* (1992) further state that tourist photography has this 'exploitative nature' in

that it shares several characteristics of tourism, involving the comparatively short time span of tourism encounters, and the lack of reciprocity between the tourist and the local. Similarly, before them, some other scholars, such as Stalker (1988) even claim that photography could be described as predatory, aggressive and hostile, by stating that a camera could be deemed as a *gun*, which is 'loaded' with film, whereas lenses are attached with a 'bayonet' mechanism. By using this *gun*, a tourist 'shoots' people and places to 'capture' the images (1988:l). Teymur is also hostile to tourism photography. He argues that the process of photography acts as a 'highly selective filter, eliminating, absorbing, transforming whatever goes through it', and 'Seeing through the lens provides a respectable excuse for not having to know more, not getting involved' (1993:6). While acknowledging that tourism can provide settings and experiences which can lead to greater cognitive awareness and understanding in the tourists, Teymur is concerned that such educational function would only be realised 'if done with a critical and non-chauvinistic background'. He is critical of the tourist, who sees photography as a legitimate end in itself; who does not engage in any self-reflexive questioning of the relationship between the photographer and those being photographed.

Doxy (1976) suggests a process of changes in local people's attitudes towards tourists, which consists of four stages: euphoria, apathy, annoyance, and antagonism. To a large extent, this evolutionary model also theoretically applies to transformations in locals' attitudes towards tourists' photographic behaviours in the destinations, where the rapidly increasing density of tourists and the growing number of negligent photographic behaviours have largely disturbed, and even objected locals' daily life and images. This point could be corroborated by Martinez's and Albers' (2009) longitude study of imaging Pueblo people in Northern New Mexico, where it is clear that the locals' attitudes towards tourist photography have entered into the antagonism stage and there are some strict rules restricting commercial, amateur and tourist photography, for fear that photographers would transform the imagine of the local community through their lens of nostalgia.

### 2.3.5 The relationship between existing photographs and tourists' photographic performances

If indeed tourist photography is a kind of photographic act of nostalgia, as some commentators suggest, (Larsen, 2005; West, 2000), a question that immediately arises is: to what extent is this nostalgia-driven practice influenced by existing photographs? That is, what is the influence of existing photographs in books, brochures, magazines or, indeed, those taken by other tourists, on how tourist engage in photography?

Interestingly, the relationship between existing photographs (especially commercial photographs created by institutions, such as those in holiday brochures or travel guides) and tourists' photographic practices has been long controversial, the debate focusing primarily on the notion of the 'hermeneutic circle' as proposed by John Urry in 1990. According to Urry (1990), 'what is sought in a holiday is a set of photographic images, as seen in tour company brochures or on TV programmes'. In addition, he further articulates how photographic images shape tourists' anticipation or daydreaming about the places being gazed upon, their travelling and staging the experience (see Urry, 1990: 140).

Jenkins (2003) has confirmed the relevance of the 'hermeneutic circle' to explaining tourist photography behaviours through her research which employed combination of semi-structured interviews and so-called 'Visitor-Employed Photography' (Cherem and Traweek, 1977). She reveals that that not only do existing photographic representations encourage tourists to visit a particular destination but also that taking photographs that replicate existing images constitutes a major focus of activity for the tourist. Indeed, although the tourist is universally criticised for returning from a tour with photographs identical to those which motivated him or her to travel in the first place, it is argued that 'one of the rituals of tourism is 'doing' the particular sights already defined by professional photographers...and photographing these sights in the same way as they have already been photographed in the travel literature, preferably with your companions in front of them' (Horne, 1992: 112). Albers and James (1988) similarly comment on this apparent need by some tourists to take photographs similar to those they have seen in the brochures whilst, according to Markwell (1997), a tourist's degree of satisfaction with a particular touristic experience could well be measured by the opportunities provided within the tour to return home with photographs similar to or even the same as those contained in the tour brochures and postcards.

However, other researchers, such as Garrod (2008), have undertaken further studies based upon Jenkins (2003)'s work and have found that the 'hermeneutic circle' does not always explain or predict tourist photographic practices, suggesting that the concept has located such practices in the trap of determinism (MacCannell, 2001). More specifically, unlike Jenkins who chiefly focuses on brochures, Garrod (2008) employs postcards as the medium of images. In his investigation of tourist photography in Aberystwyth in Wales, he found that tourists do not in fact seek to replicate the images which in existing postcards. Similarly, Crang (1997) and Scarles (2004, 2009) do not view tourists simply as 'passive receivers' of destination images and who,

implicitly accept them and attempt to reproduce them. Rather, they believe that existing images provide a route through which tourists are able to mentally enter the landscape and re-make sense of it, on the basis of the 'bricolage' of meaning systems (see also Rojek, 1997: 52-74; Ong and du Cros, 2012). In particular, for post-tourists whose travels are less directed by the tourist industry, their photography is not primarily concerned with 'getting the shots' that are dictated by the 'markers' of tourist 'sights'. Rather, they potentially focus on distinctive places / sites to photograph with a view tending more towards art than order (Feifer, 1985: 270).

### 2.3.6 The framework of visuality

Having explored briefly some of the 'drivers' of tourist photography, the question now to be addressed is: how do tourists actually engage in photography? In other words, if indeed tourists do not simply exist in the 'hermeneutic circle' (Urry, 1990) driven by a set of predetermined knowledges and behaviours with a distinct beginning and end, how do they go about taking photographs?   According to Coleman and Crang (2002), tourism emerges as an intersubjective connection to and accommodation of the other. There is no beginning and no end, but a series of rhythms, flows, and fluxes, in-between points and stages that tourists move in and around (Scarles, 2009). Based on this perspective and the results for her fieldwork in Peru, Scarles (2009) proposes her 'framework of visuality', comprising key visual 'moments' and 'devices', which, to some extent, reflects the fact that 'visuals and visual practice are not mere aides in the tourist experience, but emerge through fluid interplays that light up the process of becoming by instilling life and mobilising deeper affiliations between self and other' (Scarles, 2009: 466). Photographic practices emerge during the three essential and interdependent moments of 'anticipation', 'rewriting', and 'remembrance and reliving', although these do not necessarily represent a linear process through which tourists pass (see Scarles, 2009: 477). Rather, the details of the key 'moments' are outlined as follows:

#### i. The moment of anticipation:

Overall, not only does anticipation embrace that what is seen and performed; it also emerges as a complex relationship between guiding, projecting and repositioning via creative, fluid practices that are mobilised by both producers and tourists. On the one hand, as photographs are inherently politically situated within prescribed narratives and, thus, may expose the interests they serve (Ateljevic and Doorne, 2000), tour operators usually employ them to 'hook' tourists, to stage a destination, and to mobilise a directed gaze and idealise travel experience. For example, on the basis of collective narratives and common knowledge, Machu Picchu in Peru is choreographed as a unique destination, coupled with iconic images of colourfully-dressed friendly people,

the jungle, llamas, and Inca ruins. Moreover, tour operators also provide an opportunity for reflexive performance, embodied visualities and imaginations of space as they socio-spatialise place: they endow place with character and enliven destinations according to preferred discourses. In most cases, they present potential performances as already practised and mobilise pathways of personal engagement that entice tourists to become 'imagined actors' (Scarles, 2004).

On the other hand, however, tourists are not naive with regards to the tour operator's primary goal of selling via 'tourisified' collective discourse. Therefore, they play a role in negotiating with this kind of 'selling'. At the same time, tourists are enabled and encouraged to make sense of potential encounters via a fusion of collective discourse, personal interests and past experiences. From Scarles' (2009) study, it is evident that many respondents experience fleeting moments of 'stepping into' place whereas few consciously engage in prolonged reflexive imagining. As a result, tourists could actively enliven destinations via imagined embodied practices.

### ii.  The moment of rewriting:

Generally speaking, many touristic encounters are active, expressive and poetic. In effect, as tourists move through space, collective discourses merge with subjective experiential encounters that unfold not as exclusively prescribed and anticipated but also immanent and personalised. Therefore, re-writing embraces photographs and photography as a series of dynamic and active practices as tourists respond to and accommodate destinations as they continuously unfold through experiential encounters. As with anticipation, however, it is necessary to distinguish between industry and tourist practices. Scarles (2009) utilises the practice of postcard production as an example that mirrors the actions of tour operators as they politicise discursive spaces according to desired narratives. More precisely, by the means of introducing new angles or images of local and regional characteristics that remain beyond the reach of brochures, postcard producers encourage tourists to explore beyond icons. Meanwhile, parallel to tour operators, postcard producers also enframe place to support deeper discourse of economic, social and political stability. Therefore, in Scarles' (2009) research in Peru, the country and tourist destinations are portrayed as completely quiet and safe, where tourists may walk around without any problem.

On arrival, it is revealed that tourists are tied and respond to anticipatory meanings and, hence, use photography to concretise their travel experience and confirm the existence of anticipated place characteristics. However, since the unfolding reality of the destination may lead to frustration, the anticipated meanings / experiences not being

realised, it is inevitable that tourists perform rewriting and selectively produce place and travel experiences. Moreover, in addition to producing and staging, rewriting also becomes immersed in embodied visualities as tourists use their entire bodies to express the range of their experiences: the excitement, fascination, boredom or even fear. To some extent, not only does photography offer structure and opportunity to capture the essence of self that transcends words and move action into kinaesthetic sense and flow (Thrift, 1999), but also it concretises effectual connections between the self and the 'other' that exist as moments of intense subjective reflection in corporeal/incorporeal union. Thus, photography becomes infused with personal geographies of emotions as it is bound up in constructing the event as concrete bodily performances and tangible memories (Haldrup and Larsen, 2003; cited in Scarles, 2009).

*iii.  The moment of remembrance and reliving:*

Generally, postcards are deemed to be unable to secure an intense affectual connection to place. In contrast, photography, as an act of nostalgia (see Haldrup and Larsen, 2003; Larsen, 2005) or a technology of 'self' (Foucault, 1982/1997: 225), is able to achieve such a connection. According to Scarles' (2009) research, the reflexive, embodied subjectivities of encounter between the self and the Other are integral to the performance of remembrance and reliving as tourists realise and collect memories of corporeal encounters through photographic practices (Edensor, 1998). Theoretically, memory should not be viewed as a drawer or store which is simply constructed in situ and transported into domestic space (see Bergson, 1910). Rather, it must be viewed as a temporal phenomenon, as the piling up of the past on the past. This consequently means that no element is simply present but is changed as new elements are accumulated from the past (Bergson, 1910). In other words, memories are continually moulded as tourists construct spaces of reencounter on their return home (see Hirsch, 1981; Rose, 2003). From the research, it is clear that photograph albums, frames, fridges and notice boards and so forth become platforms for re-enlivening experiences, moulding malleable memories and directly reconnecting and reigniting profound affectual affiliation to place (see Scarles, 2009: 484).

## 2.4  Digitalisation and Internetisation

### 2.4.1 Introduction

Although Scarles (2009) has unfolded and conceptualised the reflexive, embodied, intersubjective and fluid tourists' photographic practices, in her research she has largely overlooked the constant developments in the digitalisation and internetisation of

photographic devices and images since the late 1980s, developments which continue herald new modes of vision and tourist photography. As Villi (2014) observes, there is a need to update theory in order to reflect photography and photographic practices in the age of the digital camera, the camera phone (mobile phones with inbuilt digital cameras (Larsen and Sandbye, 2014:xvi) and digital communication networks. Indeed, although 'traditional' film-based photography was dominant for over a century since its invention, it has become almost non-existent as digital photography has become more commonplace (Urry and Larsen, 2011:181). For example, in 2004 Kodak stopped selling traditional cameras in North America and Western Europe and, in January 2012, filed for bankruptcy (Larsen and Sandbye, 2014: xiv), a somewhat ironic move given that the company had led the drive to develop digital photography but, subsequently, was unable to compete in the production of digital cameras (Mui, 2012). In place of traditional cameras, in 2004, the year that the Web platform Flickr was launched, more than 68 million digital cameras and 246 million camera phones were sold worldwide (Larsen, 2008). In particular, the adoption of smart phones amongst camera phones users is increasing dramatically. Following the advent of the very first smart phone, 'The Simon' from IBM in 1993, by 2013 around 42% of the mobile phone subscribers in the US were using smart phones, along with 44% of mobile users in five major countries in the European Union (France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the UK) (Sarwar and Soomro, 2013: 216). Significantly, this proportion continues to increase (Larsen, 2014: 35). It is also important to note that, in 2006, world-wide sales of camera phones exceeded those of stand-alone digital cameras and film cameras combined; moreover, in 2009, an estimated 2.5 billion camera phones were in use whilst, in 2013, the Apple iPhone 5 was the most popular camera on Flickr (see http://photosecrets.com/rise-of-the-cameraphone).

In addition to preserving and, perhaps, even reinforcing some of the traditional social functions of tourist photography (see Van House, 2011; Larsen and Sandbye, 2014: xxii), the increasing availability and use of digital cameras, networked smart phones and a multiplicity of social networking services have collectively introduced new dimensions to tourist photography. Indeed, it is probably true to say that nothing short of a technical revolution has occurred in photography over the last three decades. Nevertheless, few attempts have been made to evaluate critically the extent to which tourists' photographic performances in particular have been transformed as a consequence of this revolution, one exception being Michael Haldrup and Jonas Larsen who investigated how tourists in Turkey and Egypt were performing digital photography. On the basis of their research (Haldrup and Larsen, 2010) and Larsen's (2014) more recent essay in the book *Digital Snaps: The new face of photography*

(Larsen and Sandbye, 2014), this section considers the transformations in tourist photography practices that have resulted from the increasingly extensive utilisation of digital cameras and camera phones.

### 2.4.2 Exploring the dimensions of digital tourist photography

According to Haldrup and Larsen (2010) (see also Urry and Larsen, 2011), owing to photography's networked convergence with digital, mobile and the internet technologies, the technical opportunities afforded by photography devices have increased enormously. In short, not only do digital cameras and camera phones (including smart phones) provide tourists with the opportunity to experiment playfully and creatively in the ways in which they photographically frame tourist places, but also they enable tourist to instantly consume their captured visual images on screen whilst the means of subsequently storing and sharing these images have been also transformed.

More specifically, Haldrup and Larsen's (2010) ethnographic study of digital tourist photographic practices emphasises the significance of the screen of digital photography devices: The camera screen is the place where most photographs are inspected immediately after being taken as well as during their 'early days' (before 'uploading'). It has become a ritual to examine the digital-camera screen after a single shot or a longer series at the very scene or somewhere with shade. Consequently, consuming and, if necessary, deleting photographs have to an extent become integral elements of the process of producing photographs. From their research, it was found that if a visual image is regarded as aesthetically unappealing, tourists could delete it and probably retake another one without any emotional difficulty (see also Larsen, 2014). As a result, photographic experiments and creative attempts are afforded and the ways in which people and places are represented are, therefore, more controlled. Thus, it is suggested that flexible digital cameras represent a further twist to consumer society where 'the presentation of the self' takes a renewed importance (see also Urry and Larsen, 2011).

Moreover, if the tourist photographer employs a digital camera to take photographs then the computer screen plays an important role during the after-travel stage. That is, most photographs that survive deletion in-camera are uploaded to computers and subsequently viewed through the computer screen (and, in some cases, further manipulated or enhanced with the use of appropriate software). At the same time, a small selection of images may be 'mobilised' and dwell in emails or on social networking sites, such as Facebook and Flickr, where they may be further consumed

by others on screens around the world (see also Sarwar and Soomro, 2013). According to Haldrup and Larsen (2010), it is estimated that 2-3 million photos are uploaded to the Flickr, with four fifths of people possessing open exhibitions (profile) (see also Cox *et al.*, 2008). Hence, photo-sharing becomes additionally extensive and flexible.

With respect to camera phones, the now out-of-date mono-functional 'mobile phones 1.0' (Larsen, 2014:34) are thought to be have been used primarily in people's everyday lives (Haldrup and Larsen, 2010; see also Larsen, 2014; Lee, 2010; Goggin, 2006) or, in Okabe and Ito's (2003:26) words, to 'elevate otherwise ordinary objects and events to photo-worthy occurrences'. Their exclusive every-day use (as distinct from holiday / travel use) could be attributed to either their technical insufficiences or their potential ability to disrupt the mood of being on holiday (Larsen, 2014:34). However, as mobile phones have become increasingly 'smart' and their capabilities of taking much better photographs have become progressively stronger, this phenomenon has changed in recent years. As a matter of fact, 'mobile phones 2.0' (Larsen, 2014: 35) / smart phones today are used almost everywhere and are gradually substituting for stand-alone digital cameras amongst tourists, particularly those who want to capture images but could not be labelled as photography enthusiasts. Indeed, a subgenre of snapshot photography, named 'iPhoneography', has now been recognised, as the photographer Stephanie C. Roberts (2011) does in her photography guide to the iPhone. She writes that 'iPhoneography is the art of shooting and processing (editing and enhancing) digital images using an iPhone' (p.1).

The enhanced functionality of a smart phone with a quality in-built camera means that the tourist no longer needs to also carry a more cumbersome and heavy digital camera with them. Moreover, it should be notice that tourists carrying a large traditional around the neck neck have ironically been believed to represent 'commercialism, superficiality and a distinct lack of coolness' (Larsen, 2014: 36, see also Robinson and Picard, 2009). Shooting with a much smaller and more light-weight goes a long way to reducing the user's identity as a tourist. Larsen (2014) himself deeply feels the advantages of using a smart phone in travel. As he narrates:

> On a recent trip to Vietnam with my son, I delighted in the anonymity and lightness that my smart phone afforded. Having downloaded a cheap guidebook app, I had no cause to worry about carrying and looking after a book and camera since my guidebook-map-watch-camera phone fitted nicely into my

discreet money belt. And I also escaped the burden of sending postcards by texting a few photographs (Larsen, 2014: 36).

From Larsen's (2014) experience, as described in the above quotation, sharing a few photos enabled him to 'escape the burden of sending postcards' (Larsen, 2014: 36). Indeed, compared to digital cameras, it would appear that smart phones have become a much more powerful platform enabling users to share instantaneously their produced images and ongoing experience. In other words, smart phones facilitate photo-sharing with spatial and temporal immediacy, thereby partially transforming the essence of tourist photography from 'that has been' into 'being there' (Barthes, 1991: 44) and, commensurately, mediating an event from there-then to here-now (Villi, 2014: 50). This may serve as a stark contrast to the aforementioned photo-sharing enabled by conventional digital cameras. That is, when employing a conventional digital camera, tourists typically selected and uploaded some of their photographs to either a computer or social networking sites on their return home or to the hotel. This form of photo-sharing renders an event 'there-then' and most closely reflects the 'having-been-there' character of photography as described by Barthes (1991). In their research, Haldrup and Larsen focused only upon the opportunities offered by the MMS picture message service which, at that time, was the conventional means of photo-sharing (see also Goggin, 2006). However, nowadays, given the availability of WiFi or some other internet service, smart phones can be connected simultaneously to multiple social networking sites via corresponding mobile applications, such as Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest. As a consequence, the smart-phone tourist user is able to upload instantly the photograph(s) which s/he has taken to these social networking sites and to share them semi-publically with the audience who can then share the tourist's holiday experiences almost as they happen.

Nevertheless, smart phone users may worry about the availability of free WiFi in the destination they will travel to. If it is not available, high charges might be applied to the users as a result of the high volume of photos uploaded or shared. Alternatively, and as previously discussed, they may also be concerned that the smart phone would destroy the mood of being on holiday. Larsen (2014: 36) was subject to this concern. As he comments:

> Yet there is also something oddly frustrating and worrying about traveling with a camera phone in a foreign country. While it can be nice to receive a text from a friend at home, a call from work or an unknown number can cause stress. In

this sense, we may say the camera phone becomes too much of a phone and therefore disrupts the 'tourist escape.

Additionally, it should be noted that many social networking services or mobile applications, such as Wechat, Instagram and Pinterest, have been designed and promoted not only as fast and effective means of sharing photographs but also as an interesting and experiential way of further editing and personalising images. This kind of editing and personalisation to some extent reduces the representational power of the image or further ruptures the links between image and reality (Wells, 2003: 198). Take Instagram for example. As the advertisement for Instagram articulates:

> Instagram was launched in October 2010 by co-founders Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger. Instagram is a fast, beautiful and fun way to share your life with friends through a series of pictures. Simply snap a photo, then choose a filter to transform the look and feel. Pictures are shared on Instagram, and can be easily uploaded to other social media platforms including Twitter, Facebook and Tumblr.(http://instagram.com/press/)

From the narrative above, it is evident that, in addition to providing instant and convenient photo-sharing, Instagram also emphasizes improving the quality of people's mobile phone photographs and their experience of playing and editing those visual images. Indeed, despite the fact that the functionality of smart phone cameras has been progressively improved, it is generally recognised that the images taken on mobile phones still cannot match the quality of those taken on the single lens reflex (SLR) or mirrorless digital cameras typically used by professional photographers and photography enthusiasts. Therefore, Instagram provides cropping and filter packages which enable Instagram users (or 'Instagramers') to enhance the quality of their snap-shots. More specifically, the cropping service transforms the composition of the whole picture whilst the twenty filter options (including 'Amaro', 'Mayfair', 'Rise', 'Inkwell' and 'Hudson') can be used to idealise the colour tone. Particularly, some of the filters even could stimulate the look of old analogue photographs. Equally, numerous guidebooks, such as *Getting the Most from Instagram* and *An Idiot's Guide to Instagram*, have been written to teach the Instagramer how to make best use of these functions.

Thus, despite the fact that its originality / authenticity is inevitably undermined or compromised (see Kemer, 2003; Lister, 2003; Batchen, 2003), an edited image may become the Instagramer's desired and favoured one. Potentially, the Instagram profile is becoming an extension of a user's *front region* of their everyday life (see Goffman,

1959), where beautified photos are hopefully appreciated, 'liked' and commented upon by other Instagramers who may or may not be known to the user. The popularity of Instagram is demonstrated by the company's Annual Report of 2011. Although only launched in October 2010, by January 2012 the service's 15 million users had already taken more than 400 million pictures from all over the globe (Instagram, 2012). On average, some 60 photogarphs are uploaded to the application per second, with 51600 images having been liked (Instagram, 2012).

Of significance to this thesis, in addition to expressing and resituating individual identity (see Goggin, 2006), this virtual part of the *front region* and the acts of liking and appreciating by other users may also influence the Instagram user's photographic practices, since they may carefully manage their profiles and photo exhibitions. Certainly, the huge success of Instagram has motivated many tourism institutions, such as *Welcome to Yorkshire* to turn its eyes to this application and use it as a platform for promoting the image of a specific tourism destination and obtain tourists' ideas and comments about their experience of travelling in that destination. As a result, sharing photographs may, in turn, benefit people's travel experiences in future. (http://www.shinyshiny.tv/2011/10/how_travel_brands_and_destinations_are_using_ins tagram.html)

## 2.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter reflects upon the mainstream history of vision and visuality in Western societies. Prior to the Enlightenment, the behaviour of people residing in ancient Europe had been universally subjected to the discipline of and normalisation by the doctrines of Christianity. They did not have to study nature because employing the divine laws, which were prescribed either in the holy bible or in corresponding Christian literatures, could solve almost any problem they had encountered. However, the situation gradually altered after that watershed, and scientists began to turn their curiosity towards nature in order to seek for substituting reasons and rational laws. Nevertheless, scientific study demanded that observers adopted an absolutely objective position and therefore required them to gaze upon the nature without affection or any chance of being overwhelmed.

Observing nature in a thoroughly detached fashion was, however, difficult to achieve., (see Rose, 1992). Thus, with the advent of the Romanticist Movement in mid-eighteenth century England, consuming and appreciating the natural landscapes – initially picturesque views and subsequnetly sublime spectacles – progressively became the fashion in Europe. Meanwhile, the Claude glass, postcards, trains and

photography were respectively invented and widely used fromthe closing decades of Eighteen Century, not only further stimulating the Western travellers' curiosity about nature and faraway exotic lands but also helping them to practise visual consumption without being overwhelmed. Particularly around the year 1840, when Thomas Cook organised the first railway-based mass tourist tour within the UK and photography was invented in Paris, tourism in contemporary society was eventually established and the tourist gaze began to travel at an increasingly higher speed.

At the same time photography gradually evolved since its invention, and both kodakisation and the digitalisation of cameras significantly democratised the practice of photo-taking among tourists. As a consequence, taking and accumulating photographs became a ritual engaged in by incraesing numbers of tourists  all over the world.. Even so, the story does not end here, as smart phones, which have become almost ubiquitous in recent years, afford tourists the ability to take, edit and share photographs both in travel and their everyday lives. Thus, photography is potentially becoming increasingly more ordinary and the tourist gaze maybe becoming accordingly de-exoticised..

This is the history of vision and visuality in the West. So what does the corresponding history look like in China? It will undoubtedly differ from its Western counterpart in many respects, not least because the ancient Chinese collective gaze, behaviour, travel patterns and aesthetic tastes were completely immune from the long-standing influence of Christian doctrines. Rather, they were collectively shaped and tailored by another set of entirely different philosophies and values. Since the fundamentally different travel patterns, social tastes and gaze might underline the tourist gaze in contemporary China, which will be established later in this study, the next chapter therefore explores the travellers' gaze in pre-modern China.

# Chapter 3

# Social Mobility, Philosophies and the Travellers' Gaze in Pre-modern Chinese Society

## 3.1 Introduction

*So God created mankind in his own image,*
*In the image of God he created them;*
*Male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:27)*

As discussed in the preceding chapter, despite the significant and irreversible transformation in ideology with respect to the natural world in general and, following the Enlightenment, the decreasing relevance of religion and adherence to traditional religious ritual and practice in many Western societies – replaced, perhaps, by the individual search for spiritual meaning; see Houtman and Aupers (2007) – in particular, it has long been claimed that Western collective attitudes towards the natural world remain determined by a religious context. That is, the relationship between people and nature is implicitly influenced by nature is 'God-given' (see Nicolson, 1959). Hence, individuals in Western societies have not only collectively felt privileged to be the owner of the objective (natural) world but also, as a consequence, consider it to be what might be described as a 'standing-reserve'. In other words, the natural world is considered to be a 'stand-by', a resource or raw material, rationally ordered and ready to be exploited (see Heidegger, 1977; Sartre, 1956).

This privileging and conquering attitude towards the objective natural has primarily served as an integral part of the foundation of many contemporary (Western) theories of travel, vision and photography (for example, see MacCannell, 1976; Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Sontag, 1979). However, without critical and essential assessment, these influential theories cannot not be universally borrowed and directly employed to explain Chinese tourists' travel and visual activities, the reason being that, throughout history, Chinese society was never profoundly influenced by Christianity or Christian beliefs. Rather, for it was subject to the combined influence of traditional Chinese philosophies, such as *Yijing*, Taoism Confucianism, and Neo-Confucianism. Not only did these philosophies collectively encourage Chinese people to regard themselves as an

integral part of nature and the objective world rather than owning or controlling it, but also to utilise the knowledge they had gained to shape and tailor their own behaviours (Fung, 1922: 257; see also Chiang,1959).

Putting it another way, Urry's (1990, 2002) 'tourist gaze', following Foucault's (1994) 'clinic gaze', is authorised by an array of discourses in Western society (see also Urry and Larsen, 2011). Similarly, therefore, owing to the effects of Chinese philosophical discourses and the ideologies formed on the basis of them, Chinese travellers, especially those residing in the pre-modern China, neither spontaneously separated themselves from what they were gazing upon, nor generated enlightening knowledge to conquer the world. As Fung (1922: 259) argues,

> Mediaeval Europe under Christianity tried to know God and prayed for His help; Greece tried and Modern Europe is trying to know nature and to conquer, to control it; but China tried to know what is within ourselves, and to find perceptual peace.

Rather, they collectively adopted significantly different travel patterns and behaviours, their tourist gaze being characterised as 'reciprocal', 'transcendental', 'provocative' 'expressive' and 'masculine'.

To date, and despite extensive transformations in both Chinese society and Chinese ideology, it may be argued that this kind of gaze – a traditional 'Chinese tourist gaze' – has not disappeared completely. Rather, it has been, to some extent, passed down to or inherited by contemporary modern and postmodern Chinese tourists. Indeed, and as discussed later in this thesis, the acts of gazing and photographing performed by the, Chinese tourists participating in the empirical research in this study bore some similarities or connections to the behaviours of pre-modern Chinese travellers. That is, on the whole, their acts of gazing and photographing could still be characterised or described as 'reciprocal' and 'transcendental'. Therefore, in order to establish a conceptual foundation and framework the subsequent discussion of the research findings later in this thesis, the purpose of this chapter is to explore the social mobility and philosophies (including the fundamental Chinese philosophy *Yijing*) of traditional Chinese society and the subsequent nature of the gazes of pre-modern Chinese travellers.

**3.2 Philosophies in Pre-modern Chinese Society**

*3.2.1 Yijing-Chinese metaphysics*

Parallel to the fundamental role played by Christianity in the shaping Western philosophies and vision, *Yijing* can also be seen as acting as the foundation stone of mainstream philosophies, such as Taoism and Confucianism, in pre-modern Chinese society. Although there is no firm evidence of the precise origins of this philosophy, *Yijing* is widely considered to date back to the beginning of the Xia Dynasty around the eighteenth century BC (see Cheng, 1989: 168). Moreover, unlike Western metaphysics which originates from a quest for ontological being (see Heidegger, 1977), *Yijing* could be described as the Chinese from of metaphysics which searches for cosmological becoming and embraces reality in change. The following brief introduction to *Yijing* is drawn mainly from the influential work of Chung-ying Cheng (1974, 1979, 1987, 1989), who has produced a number of seminal texts on the subject.

According to Cheng (1989), the *Yijing* philosophy reflects the primordial existential situation of a human being when he finds himself in a network of relationships (p.168-208). More specifically, a human being in such a network finds that he is related to other persons and things in the world, to nature (heaven and earth) and to the world as a whole (including things he may not understand) and, furthermore, that he is related to things in the past as well as to things in the future. The distinction between his relationship with past and future events is that he may not change things in the past, but he may act to change the future. That is, he may have control over some things in the world and in time, whereas he is controlled by other things in the world and in time. He also finds that his understanding of himself and of the purposes of life may sometimes make a difference to his life; he finds that his life has potential and that he can cultivate himself to fulfil that potential.

At the same time, however, a human being recognises that he has many limitations, some of which he may overcome but others which he can only accept. In other words, man in his primordial existential situation can establish an understanding of his existential situation comprising elements of chance, open opportunities and restrictions. In Heidegger's (2010) words, man recognises himself as a 'being-in-the-world', and as such he can awaken his knowledge of his being a 'being-in-the-world' through self-reflection and historical reflection. Subsequently, this knowledge can make a difference to his being-in-the-world, for he can make a difference both to himself and the world (see also Ingold, 2000).

In his essay, Cheng (1989) progressively analyses the development of metaphysical thinking in the *Yijing* in terms of four phases (i) the 'existential phase'; (ii) the 'cosmologic phase'; (iii) the 'practical phase'; and (iv) the 'epistemological phase' (p.170-173). His analysis, summarised below, is essential to an understanding of the primordial relationships a philosopher of Yijing experiences and articulates in forming his metaphysical thinking about himself and the world (see also Cheng, 1974, 1979, 1987):

*The Existential Phase*

Man in his existence comes to experience the existence of the whole world of things and to experience his being as a part of the whole world (the principle of being-in-the-world).

1. Man in his existence also experiences the change and transformation of things and, hence, the change and transformation of time. For him, time is manifested in the change and transformation of things in the world and, consequently, time is real (the principle of being in change or being-in-time).

2. Man in his existence experiences openness to the world and time and a correlative or corresponding sense of uncertainty about the self in relation to this openness to the world and time. This sense of uncertainty gives rise to human anxiety, misgiving and worry about the world and time (the principle of being-in-misgiving).

3. Man in his existence experiences an urge to project himself (his will and his efforts) into the world and time so that he only participates in the world and time in order to make a change in and a transformation of the world and time (the principle of being-in-projection or of totalistic futurisation).

*The Cosmological Phases*

1. All things in the world are interrelated and the interrelationships constitute a context or field in which everything becomes defined and positioned (the principle of totality).

2. All things change and transform according to their relationships to each other, their positions in the world and their relationships to the whole world (the principle of universal change).

3. Change and transformation originate from the inner reality of things and point to a common source internal to all things in the world which is unlimited in space and time and inexhaustible in energy and power (the principle of comprehensive creativity).

*The Practical Phases*

1. In experiencing the world, man can achieve limited knowledge of things and their interrelationships to things in the world, and he can recognise that such knowledge is essential to his efforts to achieve his life goals (the principle of the practicality of knowledge).

2. In reflecting on himself he can achieve knowledge of himself and recognise that such self-knowledge (called knowledge of one's nature) is essential for forming one's life-goals and achieving them together with his knowledge of the world (the principle of self-knowledge).

3. In understanding the interrelationships between things relative to one's given situation and practical goals in life, one can decide what to do, not just for attaining one's practical goals but also what to do for cultivating and developing one's nature so that both practical good and ultimate good can be achieved (the principle of the efficacy of knowledge).

Cheng's analysis above appears slightly complicated, but it reflects either the inseparability of knowledge and action, or the counterpart of man and the world. In reality, this kind of inseparability is closely related to the existential situation of man. That is, whenever man has to learn to know the world by his actual engagement with it through his conduct and action, at the same time he has to learn to act according to his knowledge of the world. Knowledge emerges out of the interaction between performing and knowing and thus, in Chinese philosophical tradition, it is crucial to 'harmonise' (Cheng, 1989:172) the self and the world rather than, as extolled by the mainstream of Western philosophy, to dominate or conquer the world. In other words, the existential experience of change and the cosmological perception of pervasive change encourage man to continuously seek enlightenment about things and comprehension of the self. Therefore, instead of solely being a strategy for understanding universal principles and forming abstract concepts, knowledge becomes 'a matter of direct insight into the nature of relationships and a grasp of the particularity of things' (Cheng, 1989: 173). On the basis of this understanding of the ontogenesis of knowledge, Cheng formulates an epistemological analysis of the epistemological phase centring on the practicality of

knowledge motivated by the existential urgency of self-reflection and enlightened by the epistemological observation of nature:

*The Epistemological Phases*

1. Human knowledge is based on the practical concerns of man and, no matter how abstract human knowledge becomes, it always has a practical relevance and represents a practical interest in man (the principle of knowledge of practicality).

2. Human knowledge is always rooted in the existential insights of man and may be projected on the objective world to constitute that form of human existence which is both revealing and obstructing and also, to a great extent, self-fulfilling (the principle of knowledge of subjectivity).

3. Human knowledge is derived from the interaction between human self-reflection and human long-term observation of the world and is, in essence, cosmological in the sense of being both holistic and dynamic. How to project this cosmological insight on to individual particularity requires both imagination and an objective decision-making procedure (the principles of knowledge of interactive balance).

As the Yijing philosophy does not accept that all things in the world were created by God, the question needs to be asked: where do the changes come from? Lao Tse believed that there was a kind of invisible and shapeless dynamic force in the cosmological activities of things. He referred to it as 'tao' (see Hu, 1995: 40), claiming that although tao was not exclusively the origin of things, it constituted the very being and becoming of things as a whole (Cheng, 1989: 175).

It should also be noted that in Chinese philosophy, ontology is equivalent to the obscure notion of original substance (benti), not the notion of being. Literally, the Chinese character 'ben' concerns the meaning of things, human beings and their activities, whilst 'ti' refers to both the bone frame of a human body which gives it its shape and to the base and centre of human activities. That is, on the one hand 'ti' is the unchanging base and the framework for a system of activities whilst, on the other hand, it is also the source and origin of the system of activities (see Cheng, 1989: 174). Therefore, tao can be thought of as 'ti' of things and the source of all changes. As Lao Tse put it, tao is the foundation of all of the things in the universe (see Hu, 1995: 40). In pre-modern China, particularly in the highly divided society that existed prior to the Qin Dynasty, seeking tao / the truth and applying it to actions became the fashion amongst the élite (represented by Confucius) and aristocrats if they had the intention to cultivate their personal character (see Gong, 2001: 62-66).

### 3.2.2 Taoism, Confucianism and Moism

In simple terms, the search for *tao* in Chinese culture is analogous to the post-Enlightenment search for truth in modern Western societies after Enlightenment. Parallel to those Western scientists, the pre-modern Chinese élites and aristocrats could unlimitedly approximate to-but were not able to actually find tao. The things these Chinese élite could obtain were no more than knowledge, reasons and cosmological insights, which not only emerged in the negotiation between self-reflection and cosmological observation, but also could potentially serve as guidance for their acts. That is to say, the gained knowledge, reasons and insights were reflected upon, practised, tested, revised, clarified, reinterpreted and projected on to the Chinese individuals.

Nevertheless, the reflexivity practiced in pre-modern Chinese civilisation could not be paralleled in the Western modern society. One of the important reasons for this is pointed out by Giddens (1991: 38) who argues that, as literacy in pre-modern societies, such as pre-modern China, remained the monopoly of the few, the reflexivity was not introduced into the very basis of production and reproduction of knowledge. As a consequence, the routinisation of ancient Chinese people's daily life long remained bound up with tradition and philosophies in the old sense (see Giddens, 1991: 38). To illustrate, as mentioned earlier, Taoism and Confucianism had shaped and framed the ideology and people's everyday life for thousands of years in pre-modern China. Another significant reason is closely related to the exclusive purpose for seeking for tao; that is, to improve individuals' personal quality, rather than to gain power and control the nature. Because of this, the ancient Chinese élites and aristocrats were collectively not motivated to generate abstract knowledge from the things or phenomena they gazed upon, in a detaching and systematic way.

Despite the collective purpose for searching tao, however, it should be noted that key different philosophic schools addressed the relationship between nature and human beings in distinct ways. For example, Taoism claims that the nature is perfect in itself and that human beings are self-sufficient and, thus, do not require help from outside. In contrast, Moism argues that nature is not perfect in itself and that individuals are not self-sufficient and, thus, require guidance in order to become better men. Confucianism, however, adopts a compromise position, contending that nature is perfect and that men are not self-sufficient and need something outside in order to be better.

An understanding of Taoism, Confucianism and Moism is fundamental to an appreciation of Chinese pre-modern élites' travel pattern and gaze, which were actually

shaped and normalised by these schools of philosophy. Based on the classic works of Fung Yu-lan (1922, 2009) and Hu Shi (1995) classic works, therefore, the rest of this section introduces and briefly explores the dimensions of these most influential philosophies in ancient China..

*Taoism*

As discussed earlier, Lao Tse, widely recognised as the founder of Taoism, proposed that there is a kind of invisible and shapeless dynamic force that universally sways the cosmological activities of things. Simply stated, the omnipotent tao gives everything its nature, in which everything finds its own satisfaction. To demonstrate, as another well-known Taoist philosopher, Chuang Tse, articulates in his famous work *The Happy Excursion (逍遥游)*:

> In the northern ocean there is a fish, called the Leviathan, many thousand li in size. This Leviathan changes into a bird, called the Rukh, whose back is many li in breadth. With a mighty effort it rises and its wings obscure the sky like clouds. At the equinox, this bird prepares to start for the southern ocean, the Celestial Lake. And in the 'Record of Marvels' we read that when the Rukh flies southwards, the water is smitten for a space of three thousand li around, while the bird itself mounts upon a typhoon to a height of ninety thousand li for a flight of six months' duration. . . . A cicada laughed, and said to a dove: 'Now when I fly with my might, it is as much as I can do to get from tree to tree. And some-times I do not reach, but fall to the ground midway. What, then, can be the use of going up ninety thousand li in order to start for the South?' (translated by H. Giles, 1898, cited in Fung, 1922:241)

From Chuang Tse's text, it is evident that both the great Rukh and the small cicada are perfectly satisfied with their individual excursions. Moreover, they continue to be so as long as they live in accordance with their nature and without intentionally imitating each other. So, everything is perfect in its natural condition. Hence, any attempted alteration by human beings would do nothing but disturb nature and produce pain. As Chuang Tse writes:

> A duck's legs, though short, cannot be lengthened without pain to the duck, and a crane's legs, though long, cannot be shortened without misery to the crane, so that which is long in nature cannot be cut off, nor that which is short be lengthened. All sorrows are thus avoided.  (translated by H. Giles, 1898, cited in Fung, 1922: 241)

Moreover, any human virtue and social regulation is believed to be against nature. Knowledge, therefore, is deemed not to be useful but, indeed, potentially harmful. As Lao Tse claims:

> Cast off your holiness, rid yourself of sagacity, and the people will benefit a hundredfold. Discard benevolence and abolish righteousness, and the people will return to filial piety and paternal love. Renounce your scheming and abandon gain, and the thieves and robbers will disappear. These three precepts mean that outwards how is insufficient, and therefore they bid us be true to our proper nature: to show simplicity, to embrace plain dealing, to reduce selfishness, to moderate desire.

> Our life is limited, but knowledge is not limited. With what is limited to pursue what is not limited is a perilous thing.  (translated by L. Giles, 1905, cited in Fung, 1922: 242)

Therefore, what a human being should know is the fact that he has to live in accordance with his nature and be content with his destiny. Also, a human being is necessary to know tao, which naturally underlines the formation of his body, personality and ways of thinking. So what a human being needs to do is not only to comprehensively understand himself but also to introspectively reflect upon and discipline his behaviours and thinking:

> He who knows others is clever, but he who knows himself is enlightened. He who overcomes others is strong, but he who overcomes himself is mightier still. (translated by L. Giles, 1905, cited in Fung, 1922:244)

At the same time, as tao is considered to exist within in a human being, it can be known not by adding something artificial to it, but by taking away what has been artificially added to it before. As Lao Tse argues:

> He who devotes himself to knowledge seeks from day to day to increase. He who devotes himself to Tao seeks from day to day to diminish. He diminishes and again diminishes till he arrives at doing nothing. Having arrived at the point of doing nothing, there is nothing which he does not do. (Translated by Legge, 1893, cited in in Fung, 1922: 244)

Thus, the arguments of those who are simply interested in intellectual exercise are to Taoists of little value. Chuang Tse articulates:

> To wear out one's intellect in trying to argue without knowing the fact that the arguments are the same is called' three in the morning.' 'What is three in the morning?' asked Tse Yu. 'A keeper of monkeys,' replied Tse Chi, 'said once to his monkeys with regard to their chestnuts, that each was to have three in the morning and four in the night. But to this the monkeys were very angry, so the keeper said that they might have four in the morning and three in the night, with which arrangement they were all well pleased.' (translated by H. Giles, 1898, cited in Fung, 1922: 244)

Therefore, Taoism stood for nature as against manual manipulation or human intervention.

*Moism*

The fundamental idea of Moism is utility. The sanction of virtue is not that it is natural, but that it is useful (Fung, 1922: 244; see also Hu, 1995:118). As Mo Tse says:

> Righteousness is what is beneficial to us. Benefit is that which we are glad to have. (Translated by Legge, cited in in Fung, 1922:244)

Thus, Mo Tse's position in ethics is essentially that of utilitarianism. Basically, the core element of Mo Tse's philosophy is the doctrine of universal love, which seemed to him to be the most 'useful for the benefit of the country and the people' (Fung, 1922: 425). Mo Tse proposes that

> The business of the benevolent man must be to strive to promote what is advantageous to the world and to take away what is injurious to it. At the present time, what are to be accounted the most injurious things to the world? They are such as the attacking of small states by the great ones; the inroad on small families by the great ones; the plunder of the weak by the strong; the oppression of the few by the many. . . . Let us ask whence all these injurious things arise. Is it from loving others or advantaging others? It must be replied 'No'; and it must likewise be said' They arise clearly from hating others and doing violence to others.' Do those who hate and do violence to others hold the principle of loving all, or that of making distinctions between man and man? It must be replied, 'They make distinctions.' So then it is the principle of making

distinctions between man and man, which gives rise to all that is most injurious to the world. On this account we conclude that that principle is wrong. There is a principle of loving all which is able to change that which makes distinctions. . . . If the princes were as much for the state of others as for their own, which one among them would raise the forces of his state to attack that of another? He is for that as much as for his own. . . 'So then it is the principle of universal, mutual love, which gives rise to all that is most beneficial to the world. On this account we conclude that that principle is right. . . . Others may say, 'It is good, but it is extremely hard to be carried into practice.' But how can it be good, and yet incapable of being put into practice? . . . I apprehend there is no one under heaven, man or woman, however stupid, though he condemn the principle of universal love, but would at such a time (the most dangerous time), make one who held it the subject of his trust. I apprehend there is no one under heaven, however stupid, man or woman, though he condemn the principle of universal love, but would at such a time (the most dangerous time), prefer to be under the sovereign who holds it. (Translated by Legge, 1893, cited in in Fung, 1922: 246)

From the text cited above, it can be seen that the doctrine of universal love is not only beneficial to others but also to those who act according this principle. Moreover, unlike the Taoist, Mo Tse identifies the imperfection of human nature. Mankind is too shortsighted to see its own interests. Therefore, Mo Tse, again unlike the Taoist, saw the need of authorities to regulate human action. He taught that there is a personal God. Men should love each other, not only because so doing is advantageous, but also because it is the will of God. Even belief in the existence of spirits and ghosts as the invisible watchers over men's conduct is upheld as a valuable aid in maintaining morality (Fung, 1922: 246).

In addition, Mo Tse also emphasises the significant role of education. To demonstrate, Mo Tse employs the metaphor of dyeing to explain how important education is:

Master Mo Tse saw one dyeing silk. He sighed and said: 'Dyed in blue, the silk becomes blue; dyed in yellow, the silk becomes yellow. What it enters changes; it changes its colour accordingly. By entering five times, it is turned into five colours. Therefore it is necessary to take care of the dyeing. (Translated by Legge, 1893, cited in in Fung, 1922:247)

Following this, he cited a long list of facts to show how some men became good by associating with good men, and others bad by associating with bad men. Human nature seems to him to be a tabula rasa and its colour depends entirely on how one dyes it. This again is very different from the Taoistic conception of human nature.

Thus, Mo Tse worked out many devices for making people good. His ideal is to have the greatest number of people, with the necessary external goods, living together peacefully and loving each other. Mo Tse proposes:

> When a philosopher governs a country, the wealth of that country can be doubled; when he governs the world, the wealth of the world can be doubled. It is doubled not at the expense of others, but by utilizing the country and by cutting off useless expenditures. . . . What is it that is not easy to be doubled? It is the population only that is not easy to be doubled. But there is a way to double it. The ancient philosopher kings had a law saying: 'When the boy is twenty years old, he must have a home; when the girl is fifteen years old, she must have her man. . . ." (Translated by Legge, 1893, cited in in Fung, 1922: 248)

This is Mo Tse's ideal of progress. Progress is possible not through struggle and competition, but by universal love and mutual help. Overall, these claims and propositions cited above could demonstrate the decisive attitude of Moism to oppose nature. However, Suen Tse criticises Mo Tse by saying that:

> Mo Tse was blinded by utility, and did not know refinement.(Translated by Legge, 1893, cited in in Fung, 1922: 249)

Nevertheless, Mo Tse was undoubtedly a philosopher who sought to teach people to find happiness in the external world. He did not think, as Taoists did, that people are most happy in the state of nature and that they need and should do is to return to nature instead of turning away from it. He recognised that, in contrast to Taoists, people in nature are imperfect, foolish and weak, that in order to be perfect, strong, and wise, they need the help of the state, of virtue, and of a personified God. So, in his philosophy there was a strong sense of progress and of the future (see Fung, 1922: 249).

*Confucianism*

Confucianism, as noted above, represents a mid-point or compromise between the two extreme views on the relationship between nature and human beings as espoused by Taoism and Moism. However, during the period immediately following Confucius, there were two types of Confucianism. One, represented by Mencius, adopted a position closer to the extreme of nature; the other, represented by Suen Tse, stood nearer to that of art. The teaching of Confucius himself was nearer to the extreme of nature and so, consequently, Mencius was and remains considered as the true 'heir' of Confucianism (Fung, 1922: 250). In this section, therefore, the philosophies of Confucius and Mencius are reviewed briefly as representing Confucianism.

Human nature, according to the teaching of Confucianism, is essentially good. This seems to have been a tradition even before the time of Confucius. Because human nature is originally good, so the sanction of virtue is its being admirable and desirable. As Mencius argues:

> Men's mouths agree in having the same relishes; their ears agree in enjoying the same sound; their eyes agree in recognizing the same beauty; shall their minds alone be without that which they similarly approve? It is, I say, reason and righteousness. The sages only apprehended before us what our mind also approves. Therefore reason and righteousness are agreeable to our mind, just as good food is agreeable to our mouth. (Translated by Legge, 1893, cited in in Fung, 1922: 251)

Although human nature is originally good, it is not to be inferred that men are born perfect. They cannot be perfect until their innate reason is completely developed, and their lower desires are wholly taken away. Thus, Mencius says:

> The feeling of commiseration is the beginning of benevolence; the feeling of shame and dislike is the beginning of righteousness; the feeling of modesty and complaisance is the beginning of propriety; the feeling of approving and disapproving is the beginning of wisdom. . . . Since all men have these four feelings in themselves, let them know how to give them their development and their completion, and the issue will be like that of fire which has begun to burn, or that of a spring which has begun to find vent. If they have their complete development, they will suffice to love and to protect all within the four seas. If they be denied their development, they will not suffice for a man to serve his parents. (Translated by Legge, 1893, cited in in Fung, 1922: 252)

To develop reason is, on the one hand, to diminish the lower desires but, on the other hand:

> To nourish the mind there is nothing better than to make the desires few. (Translated by Legge, 1893, cited in in Fung, 1922: 252)

So, in order to develop people's natural faculties, some positive organisation is required. The simple Taoistic approach of returning to nature is insufficient and, hence, the State becomes indispensable:

> In the Book of History it is said: 'Heaven having produced the people in the lower earth, appointed for them rulers and teachers'. (Translated by Legge, 1893, cited in in Fung, 1922: 252)

But teachers and rulers cannot be separated. Most Chinese political ideals follow those of Plato's: the king must be a philosopher, and the philosopher must be king. This is particularly emphasised in the Confucianist's conception of the State. That is, the principal duty of the State is to maintain a certain amount of wealth to enable people to live, and then to teach them. Thus, one passage in the Confucian Analects reads:

> When the Master went to the state of Wei, Yen Yew acted as the driver of his carriage. The Master observed: 'How numerous are the people!' Yew said: 'Since they are thus numerous, what shall be done for them?' 'Enrich them,' was the answer. 'And when they have been enriched, what more shall be done?' The Master said: 'Teach them'. (Translated by Legge,1893, cited in in Fung, 1922: 253)

Moreover, within the State, teaching is considered more important than enrichment. In the Confucian Analects another passage reads:

> The Duke King of Tse asked Confucius about government. Confucius replied: 'The prince is prince, the minister is minister, the father is father, and the son is son.' 'Good,' said the Duke, 'If, indeed, the prince be not prince, the minister not minister, the father not father, and the son not son, although there is food, can we enjoy it?' (Translated by Legge, 1893, cited in in Fung, 1922: 253)

As for the individual, external things are determined by destiny. Confucius remarks:

> Death and life have their determined appointment; riches and honours depend on Heaven.(Translated by Legge, 1893, cited in in Fung, 1922: 253)

Mencius also articulates:

> When we get by our seeking and lose by our neglecting; in this case seeking is of use to getting, and the thing sought for is something which is in ourselves. When our seeking is conducted properly, but the getting is only as destiny determines, in this case our seeking is of no use to getting, and the thing sought for is that which is without us. (Translated by Legge, 1893, cited in in Fung, 1922: 253)

Therefore, what man should do is to seek what is in himself. The fact that he is not able to control what is outside him does not make him imperfect; he is given by Heaven the godly reason within him, in which he can find truth and be happy. As Mencius claims:

> He who has exhausted all his mind knows his nature. Knowing his nature, he knows Heaven. To preserve one's mind and nourish one's nature is the way to serve Heaven. When neither a premature death nor a long life makes any difference, but he waits in the cultivation of his character for whatever comes; this is the way in which he establishes his Heaven-ordained being. (Translated by Legge, 1893, cited in in Fung, 1922: 253-4)

> All things are already in us. Turn our attention to ourselves and find there this truth; there is no greater delight than that. (Translated by Legge, 1893, cited in in Fung, 1922: 254)

In this point, Confucianism is much nearer Taoism than Moism. Happiness and truth are in people's minds. It is in their mind, not in the external world, that they can seek for happiness and truth. People are self-sufficient, if only they develop their innate power. To learn is to cultivate people's character according to their rational nature, not to make intellectual exercise or simply to remember mechanically what the books address.

### Summary and Comparison

In the preceding section, the dimensions of Taoism, Confucianism and Moism respectively have been introduced. To summarise the distinctions between these three

philosophies, in the theory of existence, the power / tao that governs the universe is, for Taoism, the omnipotent Nature, for Moism it is a personified God, and for Confucianism is the Heavenly Reason. In the theory of the state, Taoism needed a 'laissez faire' government, if any; Moism needed the state to regulate different individual opinions, and Confucianism needed it to develop men's moral faculties. In the theory of life, Taoism espoused that human nature is perfect in itself and that everyone should live in accordance with their own nature; Moism, conversely, stated that human nature is not perfect in itself, and that one should love all equally in order to make possible the prosperity of all, whilst Confucianism claimed that although human nature is good, one needs efforts to 'develop', to 'nourish' and to 'complete' it and that, although one should love others, the difference in natural relations should be considered. With regards to the theory of education, Taoism taught a return to nature, Moism taught control of the environment, and Confucianism taught the way to self-realization.

Meanwhile, it has been seen that these three schools of philosophy and their representative philosophers struggled bitterly for dominance. The result of that great debating 'war' was the complete failure of weaker Moism, which soon disappeared, potentially due to the defect of its philosophical system (see Fung, 1922) while, after the Qin Dynasty, Taoism and Confucianism were gradually becoming intersected with each other. Many Chinese people, especially those élites who were greatly inspired by these two schools of philosophy, preferred to seek for tao and tried to become morally perfect men rather than objectively study natural phenomena and gain scientific knowledge. Sometimes, even though they had opportunities to obtain insights into scientific knowledge, they drew back with fear since they thought scientific research usually had nothing to do with moralism. As the example below illustrates:

> A Sung philosopher of the twelfth century once stepped over the moral bounds by speculating on the formation of mountain ranges and on the finding of seashells on the top of mountains. He observed that the waves of the mountain ranges indicated the fluidity of the mountains many thousands of years earlier, while the shells bore witness to the fact that their peaks must once have been at the bottom of the sea. But when and how the fluid suddenly coagulated into mountains, and how the bottom of the sea was raised to such a height, he had no means of discovering. There he stopped, fearing shipwreck if he should venture too far. There have been similar instances of observing nature both before and after this philosopher, but Chinese thinkers were always scrupulous,

in their mental excursions, not to drift too far away from the sphere of morality'. (Chiang, 1974: 249)

In spite of their illuminating and stimulating effects, these schools of philosophies could not single-handedly establishe élites' travel patterns and gaze in the pre-modern China. Indeed, those élites demanded opportunities to travel corporeally. Coincidently, significant travel opportunities were largely opened to the élites in the pre-Qin era, by the fusion of social structure, economic pattern, governmental policies, unsecured social stability and the special relationship between people and nation in the society. Parallel to the significant role the Grand Tour played in western contemporary travels, pre-Qin travels and migration, to a great extent, paved the way for the establishment of the unchanged mainstream élites' travel patterns in the five-thousand-year-old Chinese pre-modern society. In next section, not only are the travels and migration in pre-Qin society introduced but also how they had been pre-conditioned by those aforementioned external factors is explained.

## 3.3 Relentless Travels in the Forgotten Mobile Pre-modern Society

### 3.3.1 From the soil?

Villagers restrict the scope of their daily activities; they do not travel far; they seldom make contact with the outside world; they live solitary lives; they maintain their own isolated social circle. All of these characteristics contribute to the parochialism of rural China. (Fei, translated by Hamilton and Wang, 1992: 41)

The above passage paints one element of a picture of traditional rural life in China, particularly in pre-modern China, by Fei Xiaotong, whose work has been the basis of many investigations into pre-modern Chinese society. In his classic texts, Fei claims that Chinese society, both during and before his time, had been fundamentally rural, where people lived a solitary life, bonded themselves to the soil/farming, like 'plants' (Fei, 1992: 43) and resided within a family / village. The village is, in Fei's (1992) view, the basic unit of Chinese rural society. Moreover, because people could satisfy most of their needs within the village, they did not travel or move around much and the communities themselves did not interact with each other often (Fei, 1992: 41). Therefore, Chinese rural society was characterised by solitude and isolation, and an example of mechanical solidarity proposed by the sociologist Emile Durheim. Mechanical solidarity denotes a type of society whose establishment is a result of

people growing up together and there is no other purpose than being simply an outgrowth of human interaction. Literally, mechanical solidarity is opposite to organic solidarity, the latter explaining the evolution of societies, such as Western rural societies, in which a moral consensus was achieved to support their growth and development.

Fei's arguments have had a far-reaching influence on subsequent studies into Chinese social mobility in general and tourism in particular. Gradually, it became commonly believed that pre-modern Chinese society was characterised by people's intimacy with the farming, the land or the soil and consequential immobility (see also Gong, 2001: 2-3). Most successive scholars took this assumed immobility for granted and, as a consequence, paid little if any attention to social mobility and the structure and development of pre-modern Chinese society. Interestingly, some researchers, such as Robert Shepherd, even attributed the assumed social immobility of pre-modern Chinese society to Confucianism. There is actually no evidence to substantiate this claim, yet Shepherd (2009: 256) states that:

> The suspicion of spatial movement in China long predates the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949. Indeed, this suspicion lies at the core of Confucianism. From a Confucian perspective, people living outside of their family group are presumed to be not just out of place but also to be unanchored from the productive constraints of family ties and responsibilities and hence liable to engage in selfish or anti-social pursuits.

Shepherd does not identify the sources from which he drew this conclusion, a conclusion that in fact contradicts both the writings and activities of Confucius. By way of illustration, it is well-documented that not merely was Confucius himself living and constantly traveling out of his family group for more than thirteen years (Hu, 1995: 50), but also that he encouraged other people to leave home, to travel and seek for and practice tao rather than being bonded to the property, soil and family group. For instance, Confucius says:

> A gentleman who only thinks of his residence and the comforts of life, cannot be a true gentleman. (translated by Ku, 1898: 118)

> A wise and good man is occupied in the search for truth; not in seeking for mere living. Farming sometimes leads to starvation, and education sometimes leads

to the rewards of official life. A wise man should be solicitous about truth, not anxious about poverty. (translated by Ku, 1989: 140)

Actually, Fei explored only part of the picture of the evolution pre-modern Chinese society in the period following the Qin dynasty and, hence, subsequent scholars were perhaps too quick to accept and generalise his claims about the nature and immobility of pre-Qin dynasty society in particular or pre-modern Chinese society more generally. After the emperor Qin Shihuang unified China, the attitude of the government towards mobility and the wide-scale migration was reversed, principally because it proved difficult to collect tax from migrants and wanderers (see Gong, 2001: 43). As a consequence, a resident registration system began to be adopted. At the same time, the role of farming and the village community became more fundamental to social life. People started to be bonded to the soil, whilst both familiarity and trust were progressively established and strengthened within a village (Fei, 1992:43). Conversely, migrants and outsiders came to be seen by local villagers as intruders, criminals or more generally as people who were unreliable and untrustworthy and whose presence might be disruptive to villages and communities. Nevertheless, many farmers, craftsmen, traders, monks, poets and writers were still motivated to embark on journeys, whether to make a living, engaging in business, receiving religious education, seeking for and practising tao, or introspectively engaging with the nature (see Gong, 2001; Niri, 2003; Arlt, 2006).

In contrast, however, the pre-Qin era during which Confucius lived was special, inasmuch as China was divided into multiple smaller feudal states, each competing with the others to extend their individual territory. At the same time, trade, commerce and major cities, rather than agriculture and smaller villages played a more substantial role in society. To a great extent, these factors collectively conspired to facilitate social mobility. As a consequence, the distinction between dwelling and travelling/migrating was unclear, and always being on the road to another place was a universal social phenomenon. The remainder of this section, therefore, discusses social structures and social mobility of this extraordinary society, as they are two significant factors that shaped the pre-modern 'dwelling in travelling/migration' and, in particular, the 'reciprocal', 'transcendental', 'provocative' and 'masculine' pre-modern tourist gaze.

### 3.3.2 Social structure of Chinese society prior to the Qin Dynasty
Fundamentally, a number of external factors determined the establishment of the 'dwelling in travelling/migration' living patterns of people living in pre-Qin Chinese society, in particular: unsecured social stability; extremely low agricultural productivity;

unexpected natural disasters; the dominant social economy; governmental policies; influential philosophies; and, the loose relationship between people and the numerous small states that comprised China at that time. Below, the social structure of Chinese society prior to Qin Dynasty is considered in relation to these factors.

*Unsecured social stability*: At the end of the Chow Dynasty, the emperor lost power and was eventually forced to surrender the crown. Dukes and numerous other aristocrats took advantage of this opportunity and divided Chinese society into many smaller and competing feudal states or dukedoms. As a consequence, the stability of Chinese society as a whole could not be assured. Indeed, as mentioned above, it was not unusual for one small dukedom to attempt to conquer another in order to extend its territory or even unify Chinese society more widely. Certainly, relevant historical documents reveal that Jin, Cheng and Lu were strongest states at the beginning of this period although, subsequently, the Lu and Cheng states became progressively weaker whilst five others became, in turn, the dominant state. This was followed by a competition between the states of Chu and Jin to become the largest and most powerful (see Hu, 1995: 24). These continuous wars and periods of conflict did not allow people to remain settled in a particular place or state for any length of time; that is, when conflict occurred, they were obliged to migrate to some other place / state.

*Extremely low agricultural productivity and natural disasters*: during this historical period, agricultural productivity was very low and starvation was a common problem, as is revealed in the dialogue between Mencius and the feudal duke king Liang Hui Wang. Mencius went to visit King Liang Hui Wang and advised him to support his people and, in particular to develop effective policies to counter the challenge of widespread starvation. Two positive results were there that, for the most part, extended families no longer experienced hunger and senior citizens had the opportunity to eat meat at dinner (Mencius, quoted in Huang, 2007: 363). Nevertheless, low agricultural productivity and the potential for starvation largely prevented people from settling in a place for an extended period. At the same time, when a natural disaster such as flood occurred, it was necessary for people living in the affected region to migrate to some other unaffected area(s) within the same state or, indeed, in another state. To illustrate, in order to prove that he always cared about the people in his state, King Liang Hui Wang revealed in his dialogue with Mencius, that, when the east bank of Huang He River was flooded, he migrated the affected residents to the north bank of the river which had escaped the flooding. However, when the north bank of Huanghe River was subsequently flooded, the residents were migrated back to the east bank (Mencius, quoted in Huang, 2007: 363).

*The significance of business:* In the pre-Qin Dynasty period cities, rather than villages, were the political, economic, cultural and religious centres of every dukedom. Additionally, not only did business and trade play a dominant role in economy; they also to a great extent determined survival of a country. For example, as the historic book *Zuozhuan (左传)* documents, the destiny of the State of Wei was inextricably linked to business activities in its territory. In addition, the significance of business can be more or less revealed from the conversation between Confucius and his student Zigong:

> A disciple once said to Confucius, 'There is a beautiful gem here. Shall I put it in a case and lay it by; or shall I seek for a good price and sell it?'

> 'Sell it by all means', answered Confucius, 'Sell it by all means; but, if I were you, I should wait until the price were offered'. (translated by Ku, 1898:70)

Confucius and Zigong employed trading as a metaphor to discuss whether Zigong should accept a job offer. From the book *The Discourses and Sayings of Confucius (translated by Ku, 1898)*, it is evident that Confucius often used to employ business activities, instead of farming, as metaphors to facilitate his instructions. This approach was subsequently very rarely adopted by teachers and philosophers following the establishment of Qin Dynasty, where agriculture played a leading role in economy. Indeed, it is clear that Confucius despised both agriculture and the people who farmed the land, as evidenced by his frequent negative remarks on the subject.

Compared to farmers, of course, businessmen and craftsmen were able to travel more easily and frequently and, more often than not, they were travelling while dwelling or dwelling while travelling. However, partly owing to this higher degree of mobility, business was gradually replaced by agriculture from Qin Dynasty onwards.

*The loose relationship between people and the small feudal dukedoms:* The example above discussed how King Liang Hui Wang introduced policies to facilitate people's migration and mobility within his territory. Here, it should be noted that the residents referred to by the King might not in fact be his permanent subjects. As a matter of fact, people's relationship with a specific small territory was intensely loose. On the one hand, the kings were not considered conquerors and, hence, the people could not be labelled as the conquered and they did not belong to a specific king or government. On the other hand, a relationship between a king and his people could be established through tao. That is to say, if a king decided to attract more people to his territory for

military and economic reasons, he should improve the policy and regulations to facilitate it. For example, in order to attract increasingly more people to live in the State of Liang, Mencius encouraged King Liang Hui Wang, on the basis of tao, to no longer require either local people or migrants to pay tax for farming, house construction and business (Gong, 2001: 67-68). As a result of word of mouth, more and more people were attracted to the state, who subsequently farmed the land, did business in the city, served in the army, and even consulted the king on many matters (see Huang, 2007). Nevertheless, in future, it was likely that they would be attracted and migrate to another country. The king/government rarely enacted any law or regulation either to specifically limit the movement of residents within the country or to control the movement of travellers and migrants out of the territory. As a result, analogous to today's Europeans who are able to go wherever they wish to within most European Union countries, Chinese people at that time could freely travel to and reside in any small country freely.

Moreover, during this period in China's history, the king of a small state could migrate a city or, indeed, the entire state to some other part of China, which further loosened the relationship between people and the territory. Whilst such mass migration might sound unusual, there is evidence that it occurred for various reasons, though primarily as a result of being defeated by another state or to escape from natural disasters. For example, *Chunqiu,* a historical book compiled by Confucius, records a mass-scale migration among several small states along River Huai; in one year, the king of Xu moved his state to the territory of Chengfu, whilst the previous residents of Chengfu went to and occupied the state of Chen. In a circular process, Fangcheng people moved to the territory previously occupied by the state of Xu. Then, after two years, each state moved back to its original territory (see Gong, 2001: 66).

*Governmental policies*: As suggested earlier, kings and policy-makers recognised and accepted the fashion for people to be mobile and that, as a consequence, the population of a specific country / state was totally changeable. However, they typically sought to attract as large population as possible to their individual states since both economic development and the expansion of the territory necessitated a large labour force. Thus, they consulted with well-known philosophers, scholars and other élites to develop and implement a variety of instrumental policies, such as the aforementioned tax free policy which had been suggested by Mencius. At the same time, partly because it could open up opportunities to seek for, teach, discuss or practice tao, these philosophers, scholars and other élites spontaneously travelled among the small countries and states to offer advice to the kings. It is the collection of these enacted policies that helped to facilitate people's migration at that time.

*Influential philosophies: Yinjing* and subsequent philosophies, including Taoism and Confucianism, conspired to encourage the élites and aristocrats in the pre-Qin era in China to be constantly journeying in order to seek for and practice tao, rather than to look for additional opportunities to make a living or to seek a better career. For example, Shseun Tse, another influential philosopher at that time, although more than fifty years old, still travelled to the state of Qi to pursue and practice tao. Ordinarily, many élites and aristocrats were keen to approach and follow well-known philosophers/scholars who aspired for tao and were morally good, such as Confucius, Mencius, Mo Tse and Sheun Tse, on their journeys, as this was regarded as a more effective way of seeking, learning and practicing tao. Collectively, they formed a class of travellers. The philosophers/scholars normally took their students or followers to visit those duke kings who had a reputation for readily receiving the philosophers' advice and instructions of knowledge of tao (see Gong, 2001: 42). They usually stayed with a duke king for a certain period, preacheing knowledge of / insights into tao. However, if it became evident that their knowledge of or insights into tao could improve neither domestic policies nor local people's living conditions, they would leave the territory and head to another duke king, without being held back by comfortable life there. As Confucius remarks:

> When there is justice and order in the government of the country, to think only of pay is dishonourable. When there is no justice and order in the government of the country, to think only of pay is also dishonourable,"' (translated by Ku, 1898:118)

'       A man who is scrupulously truthful, cultured and steadfast to the death in the path of honesty, such a man should not serve in a country where the government is in a state of revolution nor live in a country where the government is in an actual state of anarchy. When there is justice and order in the government of the world, she should be known, but where there is no justice and order in the government of his own country, he should be ashamed to be poor and without honour; but when there is no justice in the government of his own country he should be ashamed to be rich and honoured. (translated by Ku, 1898:62-63).

But if, after having visited all of the kings and dukes, the philosophers and their followers realised that their knowledge and insights could not be officially adopted in making policies, they then preferred to indulge themselves in longer and more

extensive voyages, to visually appreciate nature, to seek for tao in nature and to transform their individual identities over the journey.

As noted earlier, after he had unified the warring states into one in the third century BC, Qin Shi Huang, or the 'First Universal Emperor' (Fung, 1922: 256) of Qin Dynasty, and his government enacted policies to limit and control ancient Chinese migration and social mobility. From then on, these limitations on mobility were maintained, even though Chinese society was in turn ruled and governed by many emperors of different dynasties. As a consequence, agriculture rather than business and craftsmanship became highly valued, Chinese people became bonded to the soil, and Chinese society was characterised by social immobility, as Fei (1992) describes in his book. Nevertheless, because of an absence of universal and critical reflection on the validity of knowledge and common sense, neither there was fundamental change in Chinese philosophies nor the long-standing tradition of seeking for tao. Instead, in the following dynasties after Qin there were an increasing number of élites commencing their tao's seeking voyages. More specifically, these successive travellers were not only desired for their insights into tao, but also they warmly welcomed the opportunities of becoming immortals and thus transcending their everyday lives on this planet. As a consequence, their travels and voyages became strategies of seeking for such transcending opportunities. Meanwhile, in their travels and voyages the subsequent pre-modern Chinese élite travellers were not exclusively in favour of sublime and panoramic views but also adopted a unique practice of seeing. The next section will proffer an introduction to those transcending voyages that commenced from the end of the Qin Dynasty, before elucidating those pre-modern élite travellers' gazes.

## 3.4 Transcending Voyages and the Gazes of Chinese Pre-modern Travellers after the Qin Dynasty

The ancient Chinese élites' understanding and definition of travel have determined the fabrication of their collective transcending travel pattern and ways of gazing. The resultant pre-modern Chinese tourist gaze is characterised as reciprocal, transcendent, provocative, expressive and masculine. Nonetheless, the majority of extant academic works on the history of Chinese tourism (for example, Arlt, 2006; Airey and Chong, 2011) have simply subsumed pre-modern Chinese travel practices into different categories rather than of investigating and discussing these underlying characteristics. Therefore, the purpose of this section is to discuss the attitudes of the ancient Chinese élites' towards travel, to identify their favoured travel patterns and, in particular, to critically appraise the nature of their gaze.

Originally, travel in Chinese early society was deemed to be a kind of privileged activity undertaken only by gods and immortals. Literarily, the English word 'travel' could be translated into dichotomous Chinese characters 'lǔ' (旅) and 'yóu' (游). In the ancient Chinese language, the meaning of 'yóu' (游) is travelling and carrying a gigantic flag, whereas 'lǔ' (旅) refers to travelling with at least one companion. Combining them, the original meaning of travel could be therefore be defined as traveling whilst holding a big flag with one companion as a minimum (see Luo （罗振玉）, 1983). But, why were these ancient travelers required to carry a large flag with them?

The answer to this question lies in the original belief, referred to above, that travel was the privilege of gods, angels and other immortals, a group that naturally had the infinite freedom to travel. At the same time, however, in an early Chinese society comprising mainly gatherers and hunters, each tribe was believed to be guarded and supervised by a particular god. Thus, as travel was the privilege of those guardian gods, when hunters and gatherers travelled together, they carried with them their tribe's guardian god's flag in order to demonstrate that their travel has been godly approved and justified (see Baichuan, 1983).

The ancient Chinese believed that gods, angles and other immortals could fly, walk and travel wherever and whenever they wanted to whereas ordinary people were unable to. This can be demonstrated by Chuang Tse's previously cited assertion that:

> In the northern ocean there is a fish, called the Leviathan, many thou-sand li in size. This Leviathan changes into a bird, called the Rukh, whose back is many li in breadth. With a mighty effort it rises and its wings obscure the sky like clouds... (translated by H. Giles, 1898, cited in Fung, 1922:241)

The mighty fish referred to by Chuang Tse is actually an imagined immortal. From this quoted text, it can be seen that the immortal had been assumed to be able to fly and swim very easily and so enjoys the infinite freedom to travel.

In addition, the lives of the gods and angels were, by definition, unlimited whereas human beings faced the inevitability and horror of death. Thus, a strong desire emerged amongst the ancient Chinese élites, aristocrats and kings to overcome all of the limitations in either their corporeal mobility or their life span. Specifically, unlike their Western peers who accepted Jesus' pre-destined sacrifice, the ancient Chinese élites primarily adopted three different approaches to overcoming these limitations in the search for eternal life. The first was to take special drug balls to physically

transform their bodies, though this in fact proved to be rather harmful. The second was to dream dreams to temporally and spiritually separate and release the 'self' from the physical body, whilst, the third approach was embark on a long voyage during which the traveller would corporeally transform himself into a god or immortal (see Gong, 2001). Of course, dreaming a dream was much less easy to control than taking a pilgrim-like voyage and, thus, the latter activity became highly valued and treasured by many pre-modern élites, aristocrats and kings in China.

Consequently, many tales and legends emerged from the early Chow Dynasty which narrated stories of voyage-takers' encounters with gods or immortals, either on the road or at the god's / immortal's residence in a mountain (the ancient Chinese believed that gods/immortals tended to reside in mountains which were difficult for ordinary people to reach). These sort of godly encounters enabled voyage-takers themselves to become a god/immortal and hence to travel freely and willfully. As a consequence, some high mountains were progressively glorified, such as Taishan Mountain, Penglai and Kunlun Mountain (Gong, 2001:155; see also Brook, 1998). In his book *Camera Lucida*, Roland Barthes (2000) introduces the Latin word *studium* to refer to someone's knowledge about and taste and enthusiasm for something, such as a photograph, which enhances his or her appreciation of it. Also, he employs another Latin word *punctum* to indicate something (hopefully details) of the scene that could impress or strike the viewer/gazer (Barthes, 2000: 26-27). Therefore, along with the divine desires mentioned above, these tales became a part and parcel of an increasing number of ancient Chinese élites' and aristocrats' *studium*, motivating them to either embark on their own extensive divine voyages or in particular to visit the increasingly glorified mountains. Quite evidently, this is in direct contrasts to the attitude of European early travellers, discussed in the preceding chapter, who saw mountains as the result of the Fall or the biblical Flood which reflected the evil in human nature (Ousby, 1990: 131; see also Nicolson, 1959; Corbin, 1994).

Qu Yuan's poem *The Far-off Journey (远游)* is an example that illustrates this sort of divine voyage. Inspired by the preceding legends and tales, Qu Yuan, an élite living in the pre-Qin society, imagined a legendary voyage with a divine encounter, which reveals his strong desire to transcend the human world. He writes:

*Hard pressed by the worlds' ways and woe, oh!*
*I'd become light and upwards go.*
*Weak within and helpless without, oh!*
*On what can I ride and float about?*

*Fallen in the mire far and wide, oh!*
*To whom can I my grief confide?*
*Sleepless throughout the endless night, oh!*
*My lonely soul roves till daylight.*

*Between the boundless earth and sky, oh!*
*Forever man must toil, I sigh.*
*Beyond my reach are bygone days, oh!*
*Can I hear what the future says?*

*I pace and ponder here and there, oh!*
*Frustrated, I'm lost in despair.*
*My mind is bewildered in cloud, oh!*
*My heart with grief is overflowed.*

*My spirit goes and won't return, oh!*
*My body withered must sojourn.*
*I look in to learn to do right, oh!*
*And seek to know from where comes light.*

*I'm glad my mind is abstinent, oh!*
*With inaction I feel content.*
*I've heard how Red Pine was carefree, oh!*
*I'd learn from what he had left me.*

*I know the Real Being ways, oh!*
*And immortals of bygone days.*
*They're deified and disappear, oh!*
*Their names will last from year to year.*
*I marvel how Fu to a star could run, oh!*
*And how Han with the Way (Tao) could become one.*
*Their bodies tranquil go afar, oh!*
*Their spirit leaves the world for the star.*

*Transformed in air, I upward rise, oh!*
*As swift as gods and spirits in surprise.*
*The world is hazy, viewed from far, oh!*
*Spirits come to and fro, bright as star.*

*Leaving the dust, carefree I stand, oh!*
*I won't go back to my native land.*
*I'm not troubled by the world's woe, oh!*
*Nobody knows where I will go.*

*...*

*I'd ride south wind to southern nest, oh!*
*Enjoy my fill and take a rest.*
*I'd greet the prince (Prince Qiao) in serenity, oh!*
*And ask him how to attain unity.*

*He says, "We may learn the Way (Tao), oh!*
*Which we can't to others convey.*
*Small, nothing within it is found, oh!*
*Great, there is no boundary around.*
*If to disorder not inclined, oh!*
*Naturally will work your mind.*
*If your spirit is unified, oh!*

*At midnight it's kept pure inside.*
*Empty-minded you may await, oh!*
*Do not strive to be first or great!*
*Let all things be formed as they may, oh!*
*Then you'll find the door to the Way (Tao)."*
*Having learned this secret, I part, oh!*
*In a twinkling I start.*
*I see at Red Hill the Spirits with wings, oh!*
*They stay in the land of eternal springs.*

*At dawn I wash my hair in Val Divine, oh!*
*At dusk I dry myself beneath suns nine.*
*I sip the foams of Flying Spring, oh!*
*My carefree soul flies upward high.*

...' (Translated by Xu, 2009: 196-215)

The first four verses of this classic poem reveal that Qu Yuan was highly dissatisfied with his current identity and his living situation in the human world. Therefore, he was seduced by the prospect of either residing in the enchanting gods' /immortals' world or

of his ancestors' becoming immortals, a prospect which was his *studium* (Barthes, 2000: 26), scripted in those preceding tales and legends (Red Pine, Fu, Han and Prince Qiao mentioned in the poem had been successfully immortalised and had changed their identities). Qu Yuan imagined that he himself took a voyage and met Prince Qiao who had already been transformed into an immortal. Prince Qiao imparted to him what the essence of Tao (Way in the translated poem) really was. After receiving it, Qu Yuan was eventually transformed into an immortal as well, and he travelled both extensively and transcendently without any intention of returning to the mortals' world.

Also, the well-known ancient Chinese poet Tsao Tsao's classical poem *Viewing the Ocean (观沧海)* and Du Fu's *Gazing at the Great Mount (望岳)* to a great extent, demonstrate the ancient Chinese sublime gaze of the sea and the mountain respectively. More specifically, Tsao Tsao (living in the Han Dynasty) viewed the sea near Rock Hill and wrote as follows:

*'East looking down from Chieh-shih,*
*I scan the endless ocean:*
*Waters restlessly seething,*
*Mountained islands jutting up,*
*Trees growing in clusters,*
*A hundred grasses, rich and lush.*
*Autumn wind shrills and sights,*
*Great waves churn and leap skyward.*
*Sun and moon in their journeying*
*Seem to rise from its midst,*
*Stars and Milky Way, brightly gleaming,*
*Seem to emerge from its depths.*
*How great is my delight!*
*I sing of it in this song.'*

(Translated by Watson, 1984; Cited in Xu, 2010: 80)

Not only was Tsao Tsao a poet but also a duke king at the end of the Han Dynasty. Facing constant wars and a divided Chinese society, he had the strong ambition to defeat his two rival duke kings and to unify the whole country. At the first glance, this poem shows that Tsao Tsao seemed to have been a precursor to an eighteenth-century Western traveller delighted by the endless and roaring sea (see Corbin,

1995:121-162). However, Tsao Tsao's gaze was essentially different from that of an eighteenth-century Western traveller, for the following three reasons:

1. The eighteenth-century Western travellers, such as Gilbert Burnet, John Dennis and William Diaper, potentially had mixed feelings of both horror and delight in response to a seascape. However, the great waves that leap skywards only gave Tsao Tsao delight.

2. Quite evidently, Tsao Tsao did not civilise and mediate the sublime view on the basis of pastoral and Gothic aesthetics. As considered in Chapter 2, this sort of civilisation and mediation was the fashion amongst Western travellers from the late eighteenth to the early nineteenth centuries (see also Corbin, 1995:121-162). More likely responding to the combined influences of *Yijing*, Taoist and Confucian doctrines, Tsao Tsao appreciated the waters, the land and the trees in their natural and wild states.

3. The picture in Tsao Tsao's eyes was much more grand. It was impossible for him to see the journeying sun and moon, the bright stars and the Milky Way at the same time. Therefore, it could assumed that that Tsao Tsao's mind was wandering, and that he employed some elements he had seen (such as the relentlessly seething waters, mountained islands, clustered trees, the sun and the lush, plentiful grass) and others that were invisible to him (such as the moon, stars and Milky Way) to imagine a rather dynamic and vibrant Universe. He was bathed in this envisaged Universe, and through it obtained infinite delight and energy and felt sufficiently confident that he could defeat any enemy and unify China.

Although Du Fu, a very well-known later poet in the Tang Dynasty, did not share the broad ambition of Tsao Tsao, his way of gazing on the Taishan Mountain could demonstrate how mountains were consumed in the Chinese traditional way. As his travel poem *Gazing at the Great Mount (望岳)* says:

*To what shall I compare*
*The Sacred Mountain that stands,*
*A balk of green that hath no end,*
*Betwixt two hands!*
*Nature did fuse and blend*
*All mystic beauty there,*
*Where Dark and Light*

*Do dusk and dawn unite.*

*Gazing, soul-cleansed, at Thee*

*From clouds upsprung, one may*

*Mark with wide eyes the homing light*

*Of birds. Some day*

*Must I thy topmost height*

*Mount, at one glance to see*

*Hills numberless*

*Dwindle to nothingness.*

(Translated by Turner, 1976; Cited in Xu, 2010: 182)

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the Taishan Mountain in Shandong Province was one of the mountains which had long been gloried and consequently attracted numerous pre-modern Chinese élite travellers. Du Fu was one of these travellers, having visited Taishan in around the year 736 B.C., or approximately one thousand years before the Romantic Movement in Europe. Again, the spectacular and sublime view of the mountain engendered no negative feelings in Du Fu. Instead, the longer the poet gazed upon the mountain, the more he felt his soul cleansed by the layers of clouds rising from it until he could mark with wide eyes the birds flying back to their nest at dusk (Xu, 2010:183). Nevertheless, Du Fu was not yet totally satisfied with his then visual experience. He wanted to be standing on the top of the great Taishan Mountain and looking out over the panorama beneath him, in which lower hill dwindled to nothingness. In effect, viewing and overlooking a panorama from a much higher position was a favourite way of visual consumption among pre-modern Chinese élite travellers and is discussed in more detail shortly.

Since their appreciation of sublime views and their lack of awareness of the regular, uniform and ordered 'Garden of Eden' beauty as understood by their Western peers, irregularity, wildness and diversity came into early Chinese travellers' canon of taste and the mainstream aesthetic doctrines. Interestingly, however, during the first seven decades of the eighteenth century, the Chinese aesthetic conception of irregularity, wildness and diversity were gradually accepted by persons of taste in Western society and subsequently tailored the Western gaze (see Lovejoy, 1933). As Sir William Temple articulated in the eighteenth century:

> But their greatest reach of imagination is employed in contriving figures, where the beauty shall be great, and strike the eye, but without any order or disposition of parts that shall be commonly or easily observed; and though we

have hardly any notion of this sort of beauty, yet they have a particular word to express it, and, where they find it hit their eye at first sight, they say the sharawadgi is fine or admirable, or any such expression of esteem. (Quoted in Lovejoy, 1933: 9)

To some extent, this kind of transcendent voyage is as paradoxical as the authenticity-seeking travels undertaken by Dean MacCannell's (1976, 1999) modern Western tourists. To illustrate, this sort of authenticity-seeking travel can be represented by the exotic, spiritual but melancholy journey to Algeria made by Porter Moresby and his wife – two alienated travellers in Paul Bowles' (1949) novel *The Sheltering Sky*. From the novel, it can be seen that Porter's quest for authenticity appears very paradoxical, because he knows there is no authenticity even as he continues to seek it out. The closer he gets to something pure, the more his own life dissipates. Oakes (2005) briefly introduces Porter's journey in his essay *Tourism and the modern subject*:

Arriving in Oran, on the Algerian coast, Port wants nothing more than to experience pure African, unsullied by the war and colonialism, and he pushes further and further beyond the coastal mountains and into the wilderness of the Sahara, growing interestingly weak from illness along the way. He lost his passport - his official identity – and does not wish to have it back. He puts all his effort into avoiding Turner, the novel's symbolic link with the superficial life of the metropolitan West. Port is a traveller with an 'infinite sadness' at the core of his consciousness, and he travels to be reconciled with it.

In Oran, Port hears a story that foreshadows his journey. It is the story of three girls from the mountains who, instead of seeking their fortunes in the coastal ports like most people, travel inland towards the desert, to drink tea in the Sahara'. They arrive in the M'Zab, where all the men are ugly. There they stay for a long time, dancing for the ugly men and dreaming of the desert and trying to save enough money to leave. One day, a handsome desert trader named Targui arrives from the south, sleeps with each of them, pays them in pure silver, and leaves. For months they dream of finding him, and finally realize they will never make enough money in the M'Zab. So they leave for the Sahara anyway – using the last of their silver to by a tea service – and follow a caravan into the desert, where they climb to the highest dune they can find in hopes of seeing Targui's city. But instead they die there, on the top of the highest dune, with their tea cups full of sand.

When Port and Kit reach the fabled city of El Ga'a, beyond the mountains and surrounded by the sands of the Sahara. Kit notes that:

Outside in the dust was the disorder of Africa, but for the first time without any visible signs of European influence, so that the scene had a purity which had been lacking in the other towns, an unexpected quality of being complete which dissipated the feeling of chaos. Even Port, as they helped him out [of the bus], noticed the unified aspect of the place. 't's wonderful here,' he said, 'what I can see of it, anyway.'(Bowles, 1949:194. Cited in Oakes, 2005: 37)

Yet they are impelled to continue even farther, towards Sba and 'the sharp edge of the earth', where Port will ultimately face what he knows is already there: just a teacup full of sand, complete emptiness. (Oakes, 2005: 36-37).

On the basis of the story, it could argued that the authenticity Port seeks is actually the freedom to unify the world ripped apart by the catastrophic mechanisms of modernity itself, accompanied by an awareness that such unity is forever out of reach. Port intuitively knows this paradox before he even arrives in Africa; it is a deeply reflexive consciousness that fills him with an 'infinite sadness'. His travels largely reconnect his fragmented being and the outside world, and authenticity, it turns out, is not to be found in a state of being (a teacup of full of sand), but in the process of becoming, of contingency and transience (the desire for tea in the Sahara) (see also Oakes, 2005:37).

Likewise, pre-modern Chinese travellers' journeys were also paradoxical. More precisely, although they collectively aspired to become a god or an immortal over the course of their journey, it was impossible for them to achieve this ambition. Indeed, even before they set out on the journey, they might have already been aware of this fact. As a consequence, when encountering a stupendous natural view, they tended to imagine that they were gods or immortals, adopting the special visual practice of *'guān'* （观）. That is, they would employ some elements of the view they had seen to mentally create a world or universe of fantasy in which they would at least semi-suspend their individual subject, though eventually realising that the transcendent experience was, in effect, ephemeral and they still had to face the real world which was full of constrictions, particularly in terms of corporeal mobility and life-span. This series of travel, visual and mental activities will be discussed in detail later in the chapter.

Nevertheless, the differences between pre-modern Chinese travellers and modern (pessimistic) Western authenticity-seekers are still significant, and can be elucidated from the following dichotomous perspectives. For one thing, although allegorisation, personification and abstraction are in evidence in those early Chinese travel writings, they overshadow the treatment of Nature much less than in their Western counterparts. In other words, pre-modern Chinese travellers valued the appreciation of natural views, in particular sublime views (see Gong, 2001). For another thing, pre-modern Chinese travellers were less satisfied with enjoying the process of reaching a specific status than per-modern Western travellers. Instead, they tended to imagine that they had already transformed their individual identity to being of a different status in general and to being god/an immortal in particular, and thereby experienced their journeys in natural landscapes in the manner in which gods or immortals did as described in tales and classical literature. More specifically, since it was assumed that immortals, who were either flying in the middle of the sky or walking and residing on the unreachable tops of mountains, tend to look over and enjoy the spectacles below them, a very special visual practice, *'guān'*（观）was invented, adopted and became a favoured form of gazing among pre-modern Chinese élite travellers

Although there was no precise and accurate translation for *'guān'*（观）in the English dictionary, this special visual practice, as stated in *the Discourses and Sayings of Confucius* (Translated by Ku, 1898), accentuates mental traveling, looking down from a high position over the totality, and grasping the grand and expansive panorama as a whole (see Sullivan, 1979:72; Gong, 2001). From the aforementioned poem by Du Fu, it is evident that the travel poet was not completely satisfied with his gazing up at the stupendous Taishan Mountain. Rather, he was looking forward to standing on the top of it and viewing and overlooking the extensive panorama beneath him. Compared to contemplating a specific object or a small part of picture (see Berger, 1972), the fusion of overlooking and grasping the bird's-eye view in an effective fashion inevitably necessitates the 'movement of eyes' in a specific order, such as moving the eyes from the scenes of the panorama in the far distance to those which are closest and then the scenes on the left hand side of the traveller to the counterparts on his right hand side (Going, 2001). In much pre-modern Chinese classic literature, it is referred to as the *'travelling of eyes' (游目)* (Gong, 2001: 214), as evidenced in the travel poems *On the Stork Tower (登鹳雀楼)* by Wang Zhihuan in Tang Dynasty:

*As daylight faded along the hill,*
*The Yellow River joins the sea.*
*To gaze unto infinity,*

*Go mount another storey still.*

<div align="right">(Translated by Turner, 1976; Cited in Xu, 2010:155)</div>

The poet traveller Wang Zhihuan visually enjoyed the panorama from the Stork Tower, which was situated 'seven kilometres to the west of the Central Mountains stretching as far as 160 kms and rising as high as two' (Xu, 2010: 155). From this poem, it can be seen that the whole picture the poet overlooked was definitely grand; the sun was behind the stupendous mountains situated to the east of the Tower while the Yellow River, coming from the north, was passing by the tower and abruptly turning to the east. To appreciate such a grand view of sky, land, mountain and river, it was unreasonable for Wang Zhihuan to gaze upon a fixed point in the scene. Rather, he was obliged to move his eyes in a specific order and grasp the view as a whole. At the same time, the poet seemed not have been entirely satisfied, and he imagined that, as long as he ascended to the upper floor, he would gaze unto infinity.

Lacan (2004) has pointed out that gazers' subject could be suspended in an essential vacillation of the phantasy generated in the gaze (p.83). To a great extent, this could explain the case of Chinese travellers' overlooking / 'traveling of eyes' (Gong, 2001: 214). More precisely, during the process of the eyes' traveling and comprehensively grasping a panorama, a Chinese gazer could easily fall into an illusion that there was an immense universe or world in front of him, where he was not himself any longer but an immortal who could sense and travel willfully and freely. To some degree, it could be illustrated by the influential pre-modern Chinese calligrapher Wang Xizhi's (303-361) *the Orchid Pavilion (兰亭集序)*, which records Wang's feelings and experience of his visiting the Orchid Pavilion. As Wang Xizhi wrote:

> It is such a wonderful day, with fresh air and mild breeze. Facing upwards to the blue sky, we behold the vast immensity of the universe; when bowing to our heads towards the ground, we again satisfy ourselves with the diversity species. Thereby we can refresh our views and let our souls, with luxuriant satisfaction done to both ears and eyes. How infinite the cheer is! (Translated by Yutang Lin; see http://www.hjenglish.com/new/p187983/)

From the text above, it is evident that, during his visit, Wang Xizhi and his companion did not pick out specific objects in the view. Rather, they took in the spectacular view in its entirety and stepped into an imagined universe, where they felt and appreciated infinite freedom and luxuriant sensual pleasures. Thus, their minds transcended from

their bodies, their gaze became rather transcendent, and their identities were eventually resituated.

However, as mentioned previously, élite Chinese travellers did not immerse themselves in such enchanting pleasures all the time. Sometimes, their subject might be just semi-suspended in the engendered phantasy and, in during their travels, they were able to realise that the transcendent experience was actually ephemeral and they still had to face the real world which was full of restrictions, particularly in terms of corporeal mobility and life-span. As a result, the pleasures they were experiencing were suddenly transformed into sadness and sense of loss. For example, when one of the most famous poets in the history of Chinese literature, Su Tungpo, travelled together with his companion in the *Red Cliff (赤壁)*, as well as the joy they experienced generated by the enchanted universe, he and his companion were also reminded of the limitations of everyday life which could not be overcome.

As Su recorded:

> Overcome by the music, Su asks his friend why the music is so sad. His friend tells him: 'Don't you remember what happened on this river below the Red Cliff?' A thousand years before, a historic naval battle had taken place here, deciding the fate of the Three Kingdoms. Could Su Tungpo not imagine the great fleet of Tsao Tsao, its masts resembling a forest, sailing down the river from Kiangling? He, too, was a poet. Did Su not remember the song that Tsao Tsao wrote on this occasion about the magpie flying south under a moonlit sky? 'But where are these great warriors of the past? Tonight you and I are sitting here in a tiny boat, just two carefree wandering vagabonds enjoying a short happy moment over a cup of wine. We are no bigger than a gnat in the universe or a grain of corn in the vast ocean. Our life is brief and evanescent, while I envy the eternity of time like the unending flow of this great river. I would like to fly up to heaven, my arms supported by two angels, and ascend to the moon, to live forever there. But I realise that this can never be, and therefore have I confided my sorrow to the song of the flute'. (Translated by Lin (1948: 202).

The narrative suggests that Su's companion had the desire to dwell permanently in heaven but it was impossible for his dream to come true. As a consequence, his travel experience became sad and sorrowful. Su employed several pairs of contrasting things to describe this sadness and sorrow: the death of the great warriors with an eternity of

natural views; a tiny boat with a great river; a gnat with the immense universe; and, a grain of corn with the vast ocean.

In addition, it should be asked whether Su Tungpo himself felt sorry and sad, as a short life-span would prevent him from have more pleasures on earth. He answer, however, is no; Su Tungpo was not a hedonist but an élite whose ideas were largely influenced by mainstream Chinese philosophic doctrines influenced by *Yijing*, Taoism and Confucianism. Thus, Su had the desire and commitment to transcend his finite life, to seek for tao, become a perfect man and to help his king to govern the country in a better way. These tasks are well documented in preceding Chinese philosophical doctrines and classics. As Su described his experience and expressed his feelings of the same journey in another of his well-known poems, *Memories of the Past at Red Cliff (念奴娇·赤壁怀古)*:

*The Great River eastward flows,*
*With its waves are gone all those*
*Gallant heroes of bygone years.*
*West of the ancient fortress appears*
*The Red Cliff. Here General Zhou won his early fame*
*When the Three Kingdoms were all in flame.*
*Jagged rocks tower in the air,*
*Swashing waves beast on the sore,*
*Rolling up a thousand heaps of snow.*
*To match the hills and the river so fair,*
*How many heroes brave of yore*
*Makes a great show!*
*I fancy General Zhou at the height*
*Of his success, with a plume fan in hand,*
*In a silk hood, so brave and bright,*
*Laugh and jesting with his bride so fair,*
*While enemy ships are destroyed as planned*
*Like shadowy castles in the air.*
*Should their souls revisit this land,*
*Sentimental, his wife would laugh to say,*
*Younger than they, I have my hair all turned gray,*
*Life is but like a passing dream,*
*I'd drink to the moon which once saw them on the stream.'*

(Translated by Xu, 2010:3 15)

This poem reveals that Su Tungpo felt sad at the fact that time passed by so swiftly, that he looked so old and that, by then, he had been unable to behave like General Zhou, who defended his territory from invasion thousands of years ago. This is his *punctum* (Barthes, 2000: 26-27) of the travel or the view he gazed upon.

In retrospect, the effect of these philosophical doctrines considered in this chapter of seeking for tao, becoming a perfect man and helping the king to govern the country in a better way has continued over the millennia through to the present day. Indeed, numerous books and travel diaries substantiate the influence of these ancient philosophies on the contemporary Chinese travellers' gaze. Dr Chiang Menglin's (1959: 257)'s vivid description demonstrates this point:

> In the scenic Western Hill of Peking, one summer afternoon, Professor John Dewey, Dr Hu Shih, and I watched a Sisyphus beetle pushing a tiny mud ball up the slope. It pushes first with forelegs, then with hind legs, and then with its side legs. The ball rolled up and up until some mishap occurred which set it rolling down to where it started with the diminutive Sisyphus riding on it. He repeated the process but met with the same failure. Again and again he tried. We admired his perseverance, said both Hu Shih and I. Yes, but his lack of intelligence is regrettable, said John Dewey.

Although both Dr Chiang and Dr Hu had studied Western philosophies in the USA for more than seven years, their gaze was evidently largely framed by traditional Chinese philosophy, since being perseverant (the conative meaning they attached to the observed behaviour of the beetle) is labelled as one of the good or desirable characteristics of a human being characters or an essential principle of moral law. Conversely, their supervisor Professor Dewey, who was genuinely a Western man, watched and considered the phenomenon in a scientific way. As Chiang (1974: 257) immediately commented in the book:

> The eminent philosopher is truly a loyal son of the West, while his disciples are truly loyal son of the East. The West pitied Mr. Sisyphus' lack of head, while the East admired his heart.

Furthermore, as discussed earlier, withn Chinese philosophy, either generating conative meanings from what is gazed upon in nature or applying those insights to the individual self requires the gazer to engage in contemplation, imagination and other mental processes. As a consequence, both applying such mental processes to

sightseeing and cognitively inter-acting with what was observed became the fashion amongst pre-modern Chinese travellers. This visual and mental performance was explicitly distinct from the recorded counterpart perpetrated by American and European tourists in the nineteenth century, to whom the panoramic gaze purely 'underlined the observer's detachment from the landscape: looking in from an outside position' (Löfgren, 1999:4 5).

The case of Su Tungpo and his companion's travel account, discussed above, is also illustrative of this point. More specifically, unlike the Danish tourist place performers / sandcastle builders described in Baerenholdt *et al.*'s (2004: 3) research, who just use 'the sandcastle', 'the sea' and 'the radiant sun' as set-pieces and a backcloth to stage a moment of pleasure worth remembering, Su and his companion were not simply onlookers or spectators who were completely separated from the magnificent view. Rather, they interacted with and even became a part and parcel of what they saw, since the flowing big river, Red Cliff, tiny boat, and the two carefree wanders collectively formed a romantic gaze.

Nevertheless, being a part of the view being gazed upon was not the end of the story. Rather, many a traveller even imagined that a view was 'alive', and it employed some strategies to be seen and focused upon. To a large extent, this imagined act of taking measures to be seen was in analogy to the fact that some young girls flirted with fancied men, in order to call their attention. Therefore, the pre-modern Chinese élite travellers' gaze also bore reciprocal, expressive and masculine characteristics (see Rose, 1992: 8-18). This provocative and expressive mutual gaze can be revealed from the Tang-dynasty poet Li Bo's travel poem *Sitting Alone at Ching-Ting* Mountain *(独坐 敬亭山)* and the Song-dynasty poet Wang Anshi's *Writing on Mr Huyin's Wall*（书湖阴 先生壁）.

As Li Bo wrote:

*The flocks of birds up high have flown away,*
*One single cloud moves leisurely along.*
*For looking at each other without getting tired*
*There is only Ching-ting Mountain.'*

(Translated by Frankel, 1976; Cited in Xu, 2010:176)

Ching-ting Mountain is situated to the north of Xuancheng in present-day Anhui Province, where Li Bo paid as many as seven visits and wrote this quatrain in the

autumn of 753 B.C.(Xu, 2010: 176). From the last two lines of the poem, it can be seen that, in Bo's eyes, Ching-ting Mountain was equivalent to his lover or confidante, who was similarly gazing upon him with 'a completeness which no words and no embrace can match' (Berger, 2008: 8). Perhaps Ching-ting Mountain had expressed 'herself' in a particular way that seduced the poet, who was unambiguously amazed. But more than that, the departing birds and the single cloud described in the first two lines reveal that Li Bo also felt rather lonely, as he had been alienated from the Imperial Court. In order to express his feeling of solitude and loneliness, it seems that Li Bo imagined that he had transcended his corporeal body, transformed his identity and joined the mountain to become one, which was left alone by the flying birds and traveling cloud. As Frankel (1976; Cited in Xu, 2010:176 ) remarks:

> Li Bo prepares for the extraordinary conclusion by introducing two other natural phenomena, one representing togetherness and the other loneliness...The words 'single' and 'leisurely' in the second line apply the entire poem. By first presenting and the removing the birds and the cloud, the poet intensifies the atmosphere of solitude and clears the stage for the two lone figures.

Meanwhile, Wang Anshi vividly describes how the utmost greenness was delivered to him by the two mountains being gazed upon:

*The two mountains compete with each other;*
*To push the door open and give me their utmost fresh greenness.*

(Translated by the author of this thesis)

Evidently, the two mountains saw the poet in the room to gaze upon them. Perhaps in their eagerness to show their beauty and greenness, they could not wait to push the door and provide Mr Wang with a phenomenal visual sensation.

Following this discussion of the influence of ancient Chinese philosophies on the pre-modern (and contemporary) Chinese tourist gaze, it is also logical to ask to what extent the landscape in China was physically tailored and re-arranged by the élite's travels, paintings and aesthetics, particularly in comparison to the cultural shaping of landscape in Western societies. That is, in Chapter 2, it was explained how the work of French and Italian pioneer landscape artists in the eighteenth century culturally transformed the English landscape from a harsh and threatening place into a soft, hospitable and mellow one. In contrast, the ancient Chinese landscape was largely immune to such cultural influences, for three principal reasons:

First of all, there was no need to elevate Chinese 'raw' landscape to the artistic level, as used to be the case in England (see Andrews, 1989: 24), because the aforementioned 'wild', 'sublime' and 'irregular', which largely form the essential characteristics of uncivilised natural world, reflected the pre-modern Chinese pre-travellers' and artists' collective canon of taste and the then contemporary mainstream aesthetic doctrines more generally (see Lovejoy, 1933). That is, mountain ranges and wild areas could be straightforwardly appreciated without a need for them to be civilised, improved and framed.

Second, owing to the enlightening influence of traditional Chinese philosophies, the majority of élite travellers and artists actually focused on the expression of their personal feelings and relations with the nature, rather than objectively studying and describing the details of landscape. This expression of feelings and relations, manifested in poems and paintings, elevated the status of some mountains (for example, Taishan Mountain) and places, such as the aforementioned Red Cliff, as cultural shrines and inspired more Chinese travellers and painters to do likewise. However, they did not geographically or aesthetically transform the landscape. More precisely, the travel poems and narratives quoted earlier in this chapter have demonstrated that, in part, pre-modern Chinese élite travellers employed the views they had gazed upon as a basis for imagining an infinite universe in which they immersed themselves and expressed either their individual feelings or their relationship with nature. In their opinion, the imagined universe was more valuable and seductive than the actual scene. Indeed, Chinese artists were also guided by this form of expression. As Sullivan (1979: 17) comments:

> It could be said that Western landscape painting, almost to the end of nineteenth century, moved towards an ever-greater truth to nature as observed by the eye of the artist. In China, by contrast, the painter's purpose shifted many centuries ago from representation to expression, or to the creative reworking of the tradition itself.

As a consequence, pre-modern Chinese artists seldom set up a easel on the top of a mountain or along bank of a river to portray the beautiful view, as di Impressionist artists of the nineteenth century. Rather, they stood beside a table in a room and used their brush to convey their individual personality, to transmit a kind of excitement or to articulate their relationship with nature. Some artists occasionally painted in an extremely unusual way. As Sullivan (1979: 55) states in her book, 'Tang tells of Ink Wang (in the Tang Dynasty), who would get drunk and then, laughing and singing,

spatter ink onto the silk and stamp it with his feet and smear it with his hands'. The views in their paintings were highly imagined and rarely presented any actual scene from nature. Hence, these Chinese artists could not civilise, frame and aesthetically tailor the Chinese landscape.

Finally, these paintings, poems and travel writings were appreciated and read only by the privileged few - aristocrats and the élite. There were no widely-circulated guidebooks and railway available for the growing number of travellers and painters who wanted to explore the landscape. This simple fact further limited the opportunity for the landscape in pre-modern China to be civilised and transformed on a large scale.

## 3.5 Chapter Summary

Given the detailed discussions in this chapter, the key points are summarised here. Different schools of philosophy in pre-modern China treated the relationship between human beings and nature in distinctive ways. Nevertheless, collectively they hold Tao as the power that underlines the existence of the whole universe. Therefore, it was of utmost necessity for pre-modern Chinese élites to adopt the search for Tao as their life-long ambition. With this ambition, the pre-modern Chinese élites' travels commenced in the pre-Qin era, when social mobility was facilitated by a number of factors, including unsecured social stability, extremely low agricultural productivity, unexpected natural disasters, the dominant social economy, governmental policies, influential philosophies and the loose relationship between people and the small sates / countries that comprised China at that time. Initially, the élites' travels and voyages were characterised by traveling for discourse and subsequently transcending or overcoming all of the limitations in mortal beings' everyday lives, as 'travel' originally was regarded as a privileged activity chiefly practiced by gods, angels and immortals.

Gods, angels and immortals could travel freely and fly between heaven and earth to view the panorama beneath them, but human beings were not able to do so. Thus, not only did the Chinese élites hope that they could have a divine encounter, thereby potentially transforming them into immortals, but also were in favour of appreciating extensive panoramas from a high position, such as from the top of a mountain. Meanwhile, the 'wild', 'sublime' and 'irregular' entered the pre-modern Chinese pre-travellers' and artists' collective canon of taste and the mainstream aesthetic doctrines.. Also, in order to effectively grasp a panorama as whole, a visual practice  of *'guān'* （观） was universally adopted, accentuating the fusion of mental travelling, the travelling of the eyes', looking down from a high position (see Sullivan, 1979: 72; Gong, 2001). While appreciating the landscape, travellers tended to transcend what they were

looking at by imagining a universe and touring in it, inter-acting with spectacles and expressing either their individual feelings or their relationship with nature. As a consequence, their gaze turned out to be transcendent, inter-active, masculine and expressive.

With the establishment of the Republic of China at the beginning of the Twentieth Century (in 1912), China entered modern times. However, the fusion of turmoil, war, civil war and Cultural Revolution largely prevented the development of tourism in China for almost the first eighty years of the century, though a few private travels agencies were established in a handful of big cities, such as Beijing and Shanghai (see Arlt, 2006: 25). As it will be discussed in Chapter 5, since 1978, tourism has benefited from dramatic but progressive development from a series of policies enacted and implemented by the post-socialist state in the People's Republic of China, which was founded in 1949. Simultaneously, the modern Chinese tourist gaze has formed, travelled and increasingly globalised.

Despite the massive changes that have occurred in China during the modern era, especially in terms of the social order and ideology, a collection of sites and spectacles, such as mountains, lakes and rivers, which were frequently visited and enshrined by pre-modern Chinese élite travellers, have provided a valuable foundation for the post-socialist state to develop domestic heritage tourism and construct a sense of an idealised nation.  Moreover, there are a few clues in the existing literature  that point to the fact that that that this long-established collective habit of visually interacting with views in a transcendent and expressive fashion may have been passed down to modern Chinese tourists. Therefore, the pre-modern Chinese élites' travels and gaze, systematically explored in this chapter, can serve as a knowledge basis for the subsequent fieldwork and construction of the Chinese modern tourist gaze in the following chapters of this thesis. Furthermore, although the root and nature of the modern Chinese  tourist gaze differ to a large extent from those of the tourist gaze in modern (or post-modern) Western societies, as has been mentioned at the end of Chapter 1, these two different kinds of tourist gaze might be becoming progressively de-exoticised or de-differentiated from their respective everyday gazes. In effect, apart from the tourist gaze, tourist travels and tourist photography are also encapsulated in this trend. Therefore, the next chapter will focus on investigation of this universal trend of becoming de-exoticised in the realm of tourism.

# Chapter 4

# De-exoticised Tourist Travel, the Tourist Gaze and Tourist Photography

## 4.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapters, this thesis has introduced and considered a number of themes, including the history of travel, visuality and the development of the tourist gaze in Western societies and the practice of travel in pre-modern Chinese society. From these discussions, it is evident that that tourists' travels, the nature of the tourist gaze and, in particular relevance to this thesis, tourists' photographic practices have been progressively evolving over time although most recently, rapid advances in technology have accelerated and extended that process of change. Specifically, as a result of the dramatic speeding-up of transportation and communication (Osbourne, 2000; Robinson and Picard, 2009), an increasing number of people today are 'dwelling' in a network society in which both they and a proliferation of objects, sound, images and symbols are more likely to be 'on the move' (Urry, 2007: 1; Elliot and Urry, 2010: 8). At the same time, not only is their everyday social life becoming progressively touristified, but also they are tending to photographically 'elevate otherwise ordinary objects and events in their daily lives to photo-worthy occurances' (Okabe and Ito, 2003:26).

To an extent, therefore, it is reasonable to argue that collectively, tourist travels, the tourist gaze and tourist photography has been becoming de-exoticised. That is, the practice of tourism in general, and tourist photography in particular, has become embedded and 'normalised' within and across contemporary societies. In order to establish a firm theoretical foundation for a critical assessment of the extent to which travel, the tourist gaze and tourist photography has indeed been becoming de-exoticised, this chapter commences with a brief consideration of the characteristics of the network society before going on to explore the resultant mobility systems, the interconnections among economies and mobility systems, and the new emerging patterns of leisure, tourism, the tourist gaze and tourist photography (Urry and Larsen, 2011).

**4.2 The Characteristics of the Network Society and Mobility Systems**

*4.2.1 Introduction: dwelling in mobilities*

As noted in the introductory chapter to this thesis, 'lumpy, fragile, aged, gendered and racialised' (Veijola and Jokinen, 1994; cited in Urry, 2001:3) human bodies are dwelling in, sensing and ascribing meaning to the world (see also Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Ingold, 2000). In particular, the term 'dwelling', a Heideggerian metaphor, suggests that human bodies are in practice 'being-in-the-world', a status that could be defined as an everyday skilful, embodied coping or engagement with the environment (Dreyfus, 1993) rather than merely representing the world (see Heidegger, 1993; Ingold, 1995; Pons, 2003). Contrasting with Cartesianism, which gives emphasis to the spiritual components of the lives of human beings, the metaphor of dwelling combines the four elements of the earth, the sky, divinity and mortals together within the arena of human activity (Heidegger, 1993) and, to an extent, indicates that 'the world is disclosed without resorting to deliberate consciousness' (Pons, 2003).

Yet, it could be argued that the concept of dwelling in contemporary society could to an extent differ from either the authentic mode of 'dwelling' as proposed by Heidegger – that is, a pattern of life rooted in a particular earth and world (Dreyfus, 1993) – or Ingold's (1995, 2000) notion of dwelling based upon implicitly closed societies of hunters and gatherers which are apparently unaffected by the postmodern shrinking (or time and space-based compression) of the planet, the accelerating diffusion of western culture around the world and increasingly global flows and mobilities (Pons, 2003). In other words, in today's society, which is partly characterised by networks, constant change and organisational fluidity (Castells, 2010), people tend to dwell in various mobilities (Urry, 2000, 2005) and the concept of dwelling, therefore, is intrinsically defined by a mobile and erratic nature (see de Certeau, 1984, 1998, 2000). So what does this so-called network society look like? Are there any other characteristics of this society?

*4.2.2 The characteristics of the network society*

Answers to these two questions should logically  begin with an introduction of the formation of this network society. To date, the combination of the revolution in information technology (arguably the third significant revolution after the Agricultural and Industrial Revolutions of the 17th to 19th Centuries) and the corresponding emergence of new technologies has introduced a series of social, cultural and economic transformations which have, in turn, given rise to a new form of society: the network society. The network society 'is made of networks in all the key dimensions of

social organizations and social practices' (Castells, 2010: xviii) and its characteristics are revealed through the information technology paradigm which is conceptualised by Castells (2010) in his influential book *The Rise of the Network Society*. Specifically, the information technology paradigm as proposed by Castells (2010) displays five principal features which may be summarised briefly as follows (see Castells, 2010: pp.70-76):

First, information is the raw material. Compared to previous technological revolutions, technologies act upon information instead of merely being acted upon by information.

Second, since information is a part and parcel of all human activity and all processes of people's individual and collective existence are directly shaped (although certainly not determined) by the new technological media, the effects of new technologies could be pervasive.

The third feature refers to the networking logic of any system or set of relationships utilising the new information technologies. More precisely, the network can be implemented in all kinds of processes and organisations by newly available information technologies. At the same time, networks can diffuse and extend exponentially, with the consequence that the penalty for being outside the network increases along with the expansion of the network because of the declining number of opportunities in reaching other elements outside the network.

Furthermore, organisational / institutional flexibility is the basis of the information technology paradigm. To be more specific, organisations and institutions can be modified, and even fundamentally altered, by rearranging their components or reprogramming / re-rooting the material basis. Therefore, it is likely for the rules to be turned upside down, without destroying the organisation.

Last but not least, there is a growing convergence of specific technologies into a highly integrated system within which old, separate technological trajectories become literally indistinguishable. Hence, micro-electronics, telecommunication, opto-electronics and computers are all now integrated into information systems.

According to the information technology paradigm, it can be seen that the communication and information structures of global society have been irreversibly transformed. This, in turn, has resulted in networked flows – flows of capital, flows of information, flows of technology, flows of organisational interaction and flows of images,

sounds and symbols (Castells, 2010: 442) – and accelerated accumulations of information, which contribute to forming the basis of individuals' mobile life and cognitive reflexivity (Lash and Urry, 1994). It is also significant that, since the penalty for being outside the expanding network is correspondingly increasing, 'network capital' is becoming highly significant and it is of necessity for both organisations and individuals (especially the élite: see Castells (2010: 46-448; Elliot and Urry, 2010: 68-83) to extend their formal and informal networks.

### 4.2.3 Mobility systems

Following on from the above, in order to extend their formal and informal networks and to sustain their existing person-to-person relationships, many individuals (especially the élite primarily in Western countries who have money, time and opportunities to travel frequently and extensively) are currently dwelling in an intersection of space of place and space of flow and regularly travel beyond the given boundaries of the nation-state territory corporeally, virtually, imaginatively and communicatively (Urry, 2000, 2007: 47; Elliot and Urry, 2010). At the same time, a vast array of objects, sounds, images and symbols are on the move which may be produced and consumed by individuals (Lury, 1997). As a consequence, contemporary mobility systems are revealed to be unprecedentedly complex (see Featherstone *et al.*, 2005).

By referring to Simmel (1997)'s original mobilities paradigm, which not only initially distinguishes between various socio-spatial patterns of mobility but also articulates the interconnections between bodily / corporeal travel and the other forms of travel, Urry (2007) has proposed a new paradigm which encapsulates the complex combination of the numerous new and emergent mobilities 'that may make and contingently maintain social connections across varied and multiple distances' (Urry, 2005). According to Urry (2007: 47), there are chiefly five interdependent forms of mobility existing in the network society:

ⅰ. The corporeal travel of people for work, leisure, family life, pleasure, migration and escape, organised in terms of contrasting time-space modalities (from daily commuting to once-in-a-lifetime exile).

ⅱ. The physical movement of objects to producers, consumers and retailers, as well as the sending and receiving of presents and souvenirs.

ⅲ. Imaginative travel effected through the images of places and people appearing on and moving across multiple print and visual media.

ⅳ. Virtual travel, often in real time, thus transcending geographical and social distance.

ⅴ. Communicative travel through person-to-person messages via messages, texts, letters, telegraphs, telephone, fax and mobile.

More often than not, these interdependent mobilities are collectively able to form a hybrid system(s) which can afford people both autonomous movement and additional opportunities to dwell in the intersection of space of places and space of flows. The current system of automobility could be a typical example. In theory, automobility can be deemed as a 'self-organising autopoetic, non-linear system' which links together cars, car-drivers, roads, petroleum suppliers and other 'novel objects, technologies and signs', in an expanding relatively stable system which generates unintended consequences, including life-threatening traffic accidents and environmental problems (Featherstone, 2005; Urry, 2005).

Compared to the public transport systems that afford timetabling of mobility, automobility could be also treated, in Urry's (2005: 26) words, as 'a source of freedom', as it enables car drivers to travel flexibly 'at any time in any direction along the complex road systems'. Yet at the same time, it coerces people to live in spatially stretched and time-compressed ways, since the urban environment has 'unbundled' territorialities of home, work, business and leisure that historically were closely integrated, and fragmented social practices in shared public spaces (SceneSue Tech, 1998). Indeed, the system of automobility *per se* is neither given nor stationary. Rather, it has been constantly expanding and evolving since the last decade of the 19th Century (see Urry, 2005: 31-36).

To date, this system has experienced enormous transformations, and vehicles have become a communications platform for multi-tasking. More specifically, cars are increasingly hybridized with the technologies of the mobile, personal entertainment system and laptop computer and with the development of 'smart-card' technology (Urry, 2005). Consequently, in addition to travelling independently and freely from one place to another, car drivers are able to listen to music, engage in business strategic thinking, check voice-activated email and communicate with others (see Elliot and Urry, 2010: 26). Thus, a car can nowadays be regarded as an intersection of space of places and space of flows, or a moving home / office where more and more people habitually dwell.

Overall, the social life of multitudes of people (especially in Western societies) is organised around the 'continual process of shifting between being present with others (at work, home, leisure and so on) and being distant from others' (Urry, 2007: 47), in that it is necessary for them to travel to have face-to-face meetings and to fulfil different legal, economic, social and familial obligations (see also Urry, 2003). This mode of existence is widely referred to as intermittent presence whilst the mode of absence occurs, other mobilities, more specifically,  communicative, imaginative and virtual mobilities, become essential in terms of sustaining connections with the distanced other (see Elliot and Urry, 2010). To some extent, the relationship between the modes of intermittent presence and absence hinge upon the technologies of travel and communication which move objects, people, ideas, sound and images across varying distances (Urry, 2007). Since the modes of both intermittent presence and absence, as well as the diffusion of objects, ideas, sound and images, are integral elements of people's everyday life, it is reasonable to argue that the combination of tourist travels and the tourist gaze, which are conventionally regarded as 'extra-ordinary', could be partially de-exoticised in the network society.

## 4.3 Economies, Leisure and Tourism

### 4.3.1 Introduction

As discussed earlier, the information technology revolution and the new technologies that have concomitantly emerged have contributed to the re-structuring of society, of social mobility systems and of people's everyday life. But more than that, these new technologies have in turn also have directly facilitated the development of capitalist political economies and indirectly have contributed to new patterns of leisure, which includes the consumption tourist places. More precisely, the various objects (money, productive capital and commodities) and subjects (labour) of capitalist political economies are increasingly circulated by the transformed mobility, information and communication systems, 'not only along routes of greater and greater distance, but also – especially with the rise and increasing capacities of electronic network - at ever greater velocity' (Lash and Urry, 1994: 2). As a result, what were once organised capitalist economies have become disorganised. At the same time, as the importance of symbolic value and peoples' experience is gradually rising, not only are disorganised capitalist economies becoming progressively culture-and-experience oriented, but also the role of the cultural and service industries in these economies has become progressively central as they circulate people, images and sounds ever more extensively.

Moreover, reflecting the emergence of the disorganised economy, the development of social mobility systems and, of particular relevance to this thesis, advances in photography-related technologies, the old clear boundaries between work leisure have become fractured and some leisure pursuits, which used to be very occasional and, therefore, out of the ordinary, have now become so common as to break down the everyday / out-of-the-ordinary distinction (see Roberts, 2006). This process can, perhaps, be epitomised by the evolving patterns of tourism, the tourist gaze and tourist photography. In effect, the combination of tourist travels, the tourist gaze and tourist photography has been progressively globalised and de-exoticised and, nowadays, people are able to consume miscellaneous spectacular images, sounds and objects either in their own homes or elsewhere.  In this section, therefore, attention is primarily focused on an exploration of the interactions between economies, social mobility systems, leisure and tourism, before the extent to which the combination of tourist travels, the 'tourist gaze' and tourist photography has been de-exoticised is specifically evaluated in the following section.

### 4.3.2 Economies

Since the latter years of the twentieth century, the circulation of commodities, productive capital and money, which used to occur on a national scale within organised capitalist economies, has become international in terms of 'increases in global trade, foreign direct investment and global movements of finance' (Lash and Urry, 1994: 2). In their widely influential writings, Lash and Urry (1987, 1994) treat this social phenomenon as a symptom of the 'disorganisation' of capitalism, which is largely interconnected with economic transformations. Specifically, the resultant disorganised economies are characterised as 'post-fordist', since production has become more flexible and the emphasis in the market has shifted from production to consumption, a process typically accompanied by greater volatility in consumer preferences, the commoditisation of many aspects of social life and the growth of a consumer movement (Urry and Larsen, 2011: 52; see also Baudrillard, 1998). At the same time, as the importance of sign-value and branding (particularly in the service sector) has been continually growing, the role of cultural industries has become central to the economy. Indeed, Gottiener (2001) claims that the production of signs is fundamental to entrepreneurial success because symbolic value has become more important to economic success than commodity value. This type of economy can be named as the economy of signs, which is partially characterised by cultural inflection and the production of signs. As Lash and Urry (1994: 64) state, 'Economic and symbolic processes are more than ever interlaced and interarticulated…The economy is increasingly culturally inflected and…culture is more and more inflected'. To some

extent, the transformation of information and communication structures discussed earlier in this chapter can be considered to be the structural basis of the economy of signs, whilst accumulations of information and signs in the economy have, to varying degrees, encouraged both the cultural sector and consumers to become ever more cognitively and aesthetically reflexive. As a consequence, the life of many products has been shortened as people are continuously stimulated to seek different, novel and memorable experiences.

In order to encapsulate the experience-oriented tendency of post-Fordist consumption, Pine and Gilmore (1999, 2011) have coined the concept of experience economy, whilst Bryman (2004) proposes the concept of 'Disneyisation'. According to Pine and Gilmore, the service economy has been transformed into a sort of experience economy, with the staging, enacting and co-creation of memorable, exciting and engaging experiences proving to be more commercially successful and profitable than the more traditional approach of offering services on demand and as cheaply as possible (see Binkhorst and Dekker, 2009). Admittedly, the production of satisfying experiences to make money is not new; it is something the Greeks and Romans in ancient Europe had always practiced (Mehmetoglu and Engen, 2011). But what is new about the 'experience economy' is the growing attention paid to the alleged significance of creating (and co-creating) experiences for consumers in various industries, such as the tourism industry (Mehmetoglu and Engen, 2011). Hence, it is necessity for (tourism) services in the experience economy to be convivial and memorable instead of being mere 'services'. More precisely, service business need to think of themselves as 'theatres' with their staff as performing artists in order to engage with consumers (Pine and Gilmore, 1999, 2011: 104). At the same time, it is also vital for the places where services are delivered to be staged as affective venues where memorable experiences come to be revealed over time. Equally,, some customers sometimes tend to take an active role, not merely in consuming but also creating values of services, either by serving themselves (Meuter *et al.*, 2000), cooperating with the service producers (Dong *et al.*, 2007) or adopting various roles in interaction with people and products (Gummeson, 2008). Therefore, effectively dealing with customer evolvement sometimes appears essential to service providers and designers.

The concept of the experience economy has been widely applied in political and commercial policy-making to revitalise decaying places and to commercialise cultural institutions (see Gibson and Kong, 2005). To an extent, it is epitomised by the 'Disneyisation' (Bryman, 2004) of places, social institutions and practices. In essence, 'Disneyisation' as a concept primarily refers to the ways in which the management

principles of Disney theme parks are diffused throughout the globe. More precisely, Disney theme parks do not produce but instead are the manifestation of 'Disneyisation', which embraces four key dimensions:

- 'theming': clothing institutions or objects in a narrative that is largely unrelated to the institution or object to which it is applied, such as a casino or restaurant with a Wild West narrative;

- 'hybrid consumption': a general trend whereby the forms of consumption associated with different institutional spheres become interlocked with each other and increasingly difficult to distinguish;

- 'merchandising': the promotion and sale of goods in the form of leaning copyright images and/or logos, including such products made under licence;

- 'performative labour': the growing tendency for frontline service work to be viewed as a performance, especially one in which the deliberate display of a certain mood is seen as part of the labour involved in service work.
(Bryman, 2004: 2)

Analogous to Disney theme parks, partly through theming, merchandising and employees' performances, a proliferation of suburb and urban spaces, such as post-industrial cities, restaurants, hotels and shopping malls (see Bryman, 2004), have been transformed and sold as spaces of leisure and pleasure (Bell *et al.*, 2007 see also the case study of Hamburg's city making, compiled by Bauriedl and Strüver (2011)), where consumers can not only engage in various forms of consumption, but also benefit from memorable, enjoyable and engaging experiences.

### *4.3.3 Leisure*

Although many places, such as urban spaces, have been re-constructed as places of or for leisure and pleasure, the concept of leisure itself has undergone transformations. Previously, leisure, which is universally associated with the concepts of 'freedom', 'choice' and 'self-satisfaction' (Rojek, 1995:1; see also Roberts, 2006: 215), became democraticised and, hence more widely enjoyed during the nineteenth century, in part owing to the introduction of clock time and the increase in people's living standards. Since then, social life has been typically divided into work and leisure, with leisure being deemed the opposite of regulated and organised work (Roberts, 2006; Urry and Larsen, 2011).

However, leisure is socially and culturally conditioned (Rojek, 1995) and it is clearly evident that the fusion of more recent social changes, new technologies and transformed mobility systems has led to the rapid transformation of the orthodox concept of leisure. Nowadays, work and leisure have become less demarcated; they have become de-differentiated as post-Fordist flexibility in people's work patterns has been stretched and some of the previously out-of-ordinary leisure pursuits have become more common in people's mundane daily life. More specifically, working time has been further destandardised and individualised (see Roberts, 2006: 70-71). In addition, the ever-increasing mobility of people and of a multitude of images, sounds and objects have largely de-exoticised leisure, and both work and leisure have ceased to be based on stable groups, time and places. Nowadays, it is common to see many people who are always 'on the move', who take both office and an entertainment centre along with them (a smart phone, and so on) and so are able to combine their work, checking emails and communicating with others regarding their business, whilst at the same times listening to music, seeking novel experience or keeping in touch with friends while travelling (see Elliot and Urry, 2010; Urry, 2011).

Moreover, the de-differentiation between work and leisure can be exemplified by a different group of young working tourists who undertake temporary and paid work as part of their travel and holiday experience (see Wearing, 2001; Bianchi, 2000; Duncan *et al.*, 2009). For these young working tourists/young migrant tourist-workers, work is central to the experience rather than merely utilised to facilitate onward travel (Bianchi, 2000). Sometimes, they aspire to a leisure-driven work culture (Adler and Adler, 1999: 394) or a balance of work and leisure (Duncan, 2007) and spend an extended amount of time in specific tourism destinations, where the combination of provided payment, work time and availability of leisure seems desirable. Thus, within the mobility of their travels, long periods of immobility occur and these young migrant tourist-workers become semi-permanent residents (see Allon *et al.*, 2008: 75), whose leisure is blurred with work and their combination of everyday travels and every gaze are intersected with the tourist counterpart respectively. In a parallel fashion, some other young individuals may choose to become volunteer tourists who, for various reasons, literarily 'volunteer in an organised way to undertake holidays that might involve aiding or alleviating the material poverty of some groups in society, the restoration of certain environments or research into aspects of society or environment' (Wearing, 2001: 1). With the commercialisation of this sort of volunteering travel (see Erdely, 2012), instead of receiving a salary, these volunteer tourists in most cases have to pay the organisations which provide such volunteering opportunities. Nevertheless, these travelling-while-working opportunities afford them not only greater interaction with local

people and communities but also deeper understanding of host cultures, arts and even their 'self' (see Wearing, 2001).

### *4.3.4 The existing defined characteristics of tourism*

Just as the concept and nature of leisure has been transformed by technological advances, increased mobility and social change, so too have pre-existing patterns of tourism and the tourist gaze (including photographically collecting visual images) been similarly transformed. In short, nowadays many people travel and encounter tourists, exotic images, objects and sounds in their home areas so frequently that many tourism pursuits and practices, including the tourist gaze, may be regarded as mundane rather than an escape from routine (see Rojek and Urry, 1997; Lai, 2004). Chapter 1 of this thesis has critically discussed, in detail, the dimensions of the tourist gaze, which rests on the dyad of the extraordinary and ordinary; in this section, the preceding defining characteristics of tourism are discussed, providing a foundation for the subsequent consideration of transformations in tourism.

Generally speaking, it is impossible to define tourism specifically, mainly as a result of the complications that are engendered in the multidisciplinary nature of tourism research and the ambiguity of what constitutes a tourist and tourism business (Smith, 1988; Holloway, 1994; Sharpley, 2009).  However, further to the discussion of tourism and tourists and the tourism system presented in Chapter 1, it can be stated that, minimally, tourism involves a circle of mobility. That is, tourists who have desire to corporeally travel to somewhere else, take a tour away from home / place of residence, travel to and temporarily stay in (for no longer than one year) places outside of their usual environment, and return home to their place of residence if they want to (see also Leiper, 1979: 403-404; WTO, 1993: 12; Shaffer, 2001: 11; Sharpley, 2002: 22; Urry and Larsen, 2011). Indeed, the occurrence of this circular journey requires tourists' desire/demand for going to some other places in person, the means of transport, (e.g. cars, railway and airline) to carry them there, and the supply of facilities, goods, food, attractions, accommodation and services by tourist industry and (sometimes) host communities in a destination, which could satisfy, at least, some of their needs (Leiper, 1979: 403-404; see also Sharpley, 2008). If any of these three components were lacking, this circular tour could not happen. Nevertheless, as mentioned above, it is of great significance that nowadays, people employ mobile devices in order to sustain their connections with distanced friends, families and business partners, especially when they are 'on the move' (see Elliot and Urry, 2010; Molz, 2012). Therefore, tourism is neither concerned solely with tourists' corporeal movement nor, as Hall (2005: 21) has claimed, a dimension of *a* mobility . Rather, it is a combined effort of

multiple mobilities which chiefly involve: tourists' corporeal travel; the transport of essential goods, service staff and facilities to tourist places and destinations; the imaginative mobility of images of tourists and tourist places in photographs and visual media; and, virtual mobility that is manifested in tourists logging onto personal wifi/internet in real time and connecting virtually with the distant Other.

However, the definition of tourism, as social mobilities is less relevant to the management of either tourists or tourism destinations. Therefore, restrictions are applied to this basic definition, specifically minimum length of stay at a destination and the prime purpose for travel. To demonstrate, the WTO (1980: 89) defines tourists as travellers who stay at least one night at a place other than their usual place of residence.. From this perspective, both day trips and locals' travels within their home area have typically been excluded from the realm of tourism although these are now increasingly being seen as part of what is described as the 'visitor economy'. At the same time, tourism has been also treated as 'a leisure activity which presupposes its opposite, namely regulated and organised work' (Urry and Larsen, 2011:4). In the touristic journey, everyday obligations are suspended and there is license for permissive and non-serious behaviours (Urry, 1990). Accordingly, mundane tours made either for 'the primary purpose of earning remuneration from points en route or particularly to fulfil everyday obligations (Leiper, 1979: 403-404) are exempted. However, the leisure-focused definition has become problematic as the growth in leisure travel has progressively altered people's everyday life. That is, the boundary between leisure and work, the mundane and extraordinary and everyday life and touristic life has become increasingly blurred. The rest of this chapter, therefore, addresses these issues by evaluating the extent to which tourist travels, the tourist gaze and tourist photography respectively have become de-differentiated from their corresponding everyday practices.

**4.4 De-exoticised Tourist Travels, the Tourist Gaze and Tourist Photography**

As mentioned earlier in this thesis, some commentators, including Haldrup and Larsen (2010), claim that tourist travels and the tourist gaze have been de-exoticised. However, their critique is limited in as much as they that tend to focus primarily upon the influence of everyday media cultures and simply analyse how many tourist practices are habitual and involve ordinary objects, places and practices (see Haldrup and Larsen, 2010). However, the combination of the characteristics of contemporary capitalist economies, along with increasing mobility and advances in information and communication systems, has enabled tourists to connect with families at home whilst it has also significantly 'touristifed' everyday life, partly through facilitating the occurrence

of numerous festivals and events in metropolitan cities and partly by bestowing everyday mobility (such as shopping or dining out) with some characteristics of tourist travels. At the same time, it is evident that advances in photographic technologyhave been overlooked as an additional catalyst of the de-exorticisation of both the tourist gaze and tourist photography. The purpose of this section, therefore, is to re-evaluate the extent to which contemporary mobility systems and developments in information and photographic technologies have resulted in the de-exoticisation of tourist travels, the tourist gaze and tourist photography in people's social life.

To re-emphasise the point made above, tourism is conventionally believed to be distinctive from everyday life which is characterised by routine, repetition and obligation (see Edensor, 2001, Urry and Larsen, 2011). That is, as Urry and Larsen (2011: 15) put it, 'tourism results from a basic binary division between the ordinary / everyday and the extraordinary'. Thus, during their travels, tourists are presumed to primarily gaze upon and photographically frame something extraordinary (Urry and Larsen, 2011). As a consequence, it could be argued that 'extraordinariness' is a vital characteristic of either tourist travel, the tourist gaze or tourist photography.

However, although at first sight this argument appears logical, it should be noted that tourist travel, the tourist gaze and tourist photography have been becoming increasingly less extraordinary than everyday life, everyday gaze and everyday photographic practices in contemporary network society. This can be seen as a manifestation of the broader cultural de-differentiation of (postmodern) society which, as discussed earlier, may be attributed in part to evolving mobility systems and the developing information, communication and photographic technologies that move objects, people, ideas, sound and images across varying distance (Urry, 2007). More specifically, as suggested above,some researchers such as Haldrup and Larsen (2010) have evaluated the role of post-modern media culture which has not only saturated everyday life but also filled it with exotic signs and consumer goods (Haldrup and Larsen, 2010: 21). As a result, touristic gazing is practised more widely in everyday life and 'the post-tourist does not have to leave his or her house in order to see many of the typical objects of the gaze' (Urry, 2002: 9). On that basis, Urry (2002) claims that we are experiencing the 'end of tourism'; that is, everyday life has become touristified to such an extent that the distinction between tourism and everyday life has become significantly reduced or, indeed, non-existent (see Haldrup and Larsen, 2010).However, the assemblage of capitalist economies, the burgeoning physical mobilities of people and objects and the advancing digital photography technologies also take effects. And this point can be argued from the following three points of view:

Firstly, there has been an increasing intersection between tourist and everyday travels, as manifested in trips or tours that are made either for 'the primary purpose of earning remuneration from points en route' or particularly to fulfil everyday obligations (Leiper, 1979: 403-404), which has contributed to the de-exoticisation of tourist travels. In other words, everyday tours have been bestowed with some of the characteristics of tourist travels and vice versa and, hence, distinctions between the two kinds of travels have decreased.

More specifically, and as discussed earlier, many individuals' everyday life currently is featured by their frequently being 'on the move', as they often travel beyond the given boundaries of nation-state territories for different social, cultural and economic purposes. Moreover, contemporary postmodern, sign-laden experience economies, along with complex mobility systems, have directly and indirectly transformed global society into a 'society of the spectacle' (Debord, 2009). Innumerable ordinary places have been transformed into places of fascination in order to compete with other 'fascinating' places and to attract 'emotional, pleasure-seeking and novelty-acquiring' travellers (Urry, 2011: 214). Moreover, these are not only places of the 'Orient' which, through information and mobility systems have become de-exoticised, but also places of the 'west', such as post-industrial cities, restaurants, hotels and shopping malls (see Bryman, 2004) which have been transformed and have become consumable and fascinating. For example, business meetings often take place in such places of fascination, such as Dubai (see Elliott and Urry, 2010; Urry, 2011) and thus, when travelling and engaging in business affairs in these constructed places of fascination, it is highly likely that (business) tourists will gaze upon something 'extraordinary' as well as purchase / consume 'extraordinary' goods and services. At the same time, the aforementioned intersecting work and leisure patterns of young working tourists (often 'backpackers') who undertake temporary service work as part of their travel experience (see Bianchi, 2000) could also be an example of this phenomenon.

On this basis, it is reasonable to claim that the boundaries between tourist travels and everyday travel or tours are porous and blurred, since leisure has also become a integrated element of various forms of everyday travel and people are able to visually consume spectacular and fascinating spectacles/objects, even though they may be working / earning money at various places / points on their journey or fulfilling various everyday obligations on tour.

Indeed, it is claimed by some that tourist travels have become a particularly significant means by which people are able to fulfil everyday family obligations, as revealed by

research into popular family tourism (see, for example, Haldrup and Larsen, 2003; Larsen, 2005). The social background to the development of family tourism is dynamic inasmuch as, during the course of the twentieth century, societies were theoretically transformed from societies of discipline, where discipline was 'realised with specific sites of confinement' (Urry, 2011: 214), such as families and Focault's (1991) 'prisons' and 'schools', to societies of control (see Urry, 2000), in which power is fluid, de-centralised and less site specific (Urry, 2011: 215). Thus, with specific reference to the influence of societies of control upon families, the values and institutions of the preceding societies of discipline that once legitimized and bonded the family biologically and culturally have lost their power (Haldrup and Larsen, 2003). 'Families', thus, constantly need to perform acts and narratives that provide meaning, stability and love to the members of the family. Consequently, such bonding, it is argued, may be achieved through engaging in tourist travels and performing tourist photography, the outcome of which are image-induced memories of a blissful family with timeless and fixed love.

Significantly, from Haldrup and Larsen's (2003) research, it is evident that the 'family gaze' is essentially constitutive of 'home' and 'mundane' rather than 'extraordinary', 'picturesque' and 'authentic'. In Haldrup and Larsen's (2003: 26) own words:

> Much family tourism 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: going for hikes, playing games, barbecuing and so on.

Since everyday family obligations are not, as Urry (1990: 26) suggests, suspended when he defines tourism as extarordinary, and 'doing various mundane social activities together' is the priority for performing family tourism, it is reasonable therefore to argue that (family) tourist travels are de-exoticised.

Second, the fascination of places, in particular through the organisation and presentation of various festivals and events in metropolitan cities, has potentially touristified local residents' everyday life, everyday gaze and everyday photography, thus further de-exoricising their tourist counterparts. Earlier, it has been investigated how their stays of frequently being 'on the move' has contributed to de-differentiation of individuals' touristic and everyday travels. Nevertheless, it is still reasonable to ask the question: when people are not 'on the move' but staying in their places of residence, to what extent can their daily life and the everyday gaze be touristified? In order to

answer this question, it is first necessary to consider the evolving meaning of 'fascination'.

From the literature, it is evident that the word 'fascination' has an origin (*fascinare*) in Latin, which bore some association with 'witchcraft'. Bfore the Enlightenment, when there was a wide belief in magic, folklore and witchcraft in Europe, this association remained and people believed that some objects and individuals were able to fascinate others as they possessed 'superpower' (Connor, 1998). However, subsequent rejection of the irrationality of supernatural power and witchcraft, the meaning of fascination gradually shifted to 'a force that includes attraction, desire, and mystification, but also terror and fear, far beyond a materialism and conception of the rational subject' (Schmid *et al.*, 2011: 5). In other words, some objects, ideas or persons were deemed to be fascinating or attractive, possibly due to the fact that they had invisible pulling power that could enchant observers. Alternatively, it was because of a kind of pushing power which stimulatesobservers' desire to be attracted and enchanted (see Connor, 1998). In the same vein, with respect to places of fascination, not only could their power to attract and enchant people be generated from the spatial structure of the urban spaces (see Bauriedl and Strüver, 2011; Prossek, 2011), but also potentially produced by the collection of festivals, events and ceremonies that occur in those places.

To explain further, the previously mentioned fusion of structural changes, transformed economies, social mobility and globalisation processes have also indirectly promoted a proliferation of festivals or 'global parties' in a wide variety of cities / areas around the world, with the emphasis being placed upon conviviality and consumption (see De Bre & Davis, 2001; Quinn, 2003; MacLeod, 2009). Consequently, even when the local residents of those cities / places where such events occur are not 'on the move', it is more likely that their everyday life, everyday gaze and everyday photography will be touristified. More specifically, although many festivals and events were initially convened and facilitated with the purpose of re-asserting residents' identities in the face of a feeling of cultural dislocation brought about by rapid social change, social mobility and globalisation processes (see De Bre & Davis, 2001; Quinn, 2003), the globalisation and development of cultural tourism and a focus on city-making practice have resulted in many such events becoming either 'a prime tool for tourism development and destination promotion' (Hughes, 1999) or 'global parties' (Ravenscroft & Matteucci, 2003) in which participants (including both outside visitors and the local audience) primarily focus on international norms of conviviality rather than seeking an authentic experience of indigenous forms of celebration and meaning

(Rolfe, 1992; MacLeod, 2009). In addition, these kinds of convivial or carnivalesque festivals have been becoming increasingly common and popular in many urban spaces and, as a consequence, many cities have become or are becoming become stages for festivals that merge the cultural and everyday life of urban areas (see Richards, 2001).

Moreover, in order to attract large-scale audiences, the organisers of such events and festivals are increasingly seeking to utilise elements of spectacle mobilised from other parts of the world, typically embracing a wide variety of images, sounds, people and objects. More often than not, groups of guest performers and celebrities from other parts of the world are employed, invited or even attracted to perform in various large-scale festivals, such as Edinburgh's International Festival, Military Tattoo and Hogmanay celebrations for the 'absolute, unknown, anonymous' audience (Derrida, 2000:25). At the same time, streets ordinarily utilised as thoroughfares for public and vehicular access during the course of daily working hours are potentially cordoned off and reserved for festive performances (Picard and Robinson, 2009). Therefore, not only is it more likely that both outside visitors and local residents will be attracted to and visually consume the exotic visual images, objects and performances in these streets, but also that the distinctions between host and guest may therefore become porous and fluid.

The collection of the festivals in Edinburgh, a city which is in 'festival mode' for much of the time, could serve as a typical example. To be more specific, each year from the beginning of January through to September, twelve major festivals are convened in the city annually and, thus, it would appear that Edinburgh residents are dwelling in festivals. These twelve festivals include: Science Festival; Imaginate Children's Festival; Film Festival; Jazz & Blues Festival; Art Festival; Edinburgh Military Tattoo; Edinburgh Festival Fringe; International Festival; Book Festival; Mela Festival; Storytelling Festival; and, Edinburgh's Hogmanay (http://www.edinburghfestivals.co.uk/; see also Prentice and Andersen, 2003). Although some of these festivals, such as the Edinburgh Military Tattoo and Edinburgh's Hogmanay celebrations, were initially associated with rituals and celebrations of Edinburgh local communities, at the same time they possess characteristics of 'global parties' and they regularly some decontexualised elements and spectacles.

To demonstrate, according to MacLeod (2009: 233), the tradition of Hogmanay historically concerned sociality on New Year's Eve:

The tradition of Hogmanay (New Year's Eve) in Scotland historically evolves around the home, the houses of friends and family and a number of rituals such as 'first-footing' (visiting friends after mid-night) where visitors offer a piece of coal to ensure heat and light in the coming year.

However, as the festival has developed in recent years, it has introduced a number of decontextualised multi-cultural spectacles such as a torchlight procession, fun fairs, and a huge open-air street party featuring live music on the evening of 31 December (Hughes, 1999). As a particular example, during the 2003-04 Hogmanay Festival the torch-light procession, which now increasingly attracts local residents as participants, involved the burning of a Viking long ship and the presentation of the Taj Mahal in fireworks (MacLeod, 2009: 234). Hence, along with incoming visitors, Edinburgh's local participants could also gaze upon and photographically frame something novel, convivial and spectacular during the festival.

Last but not least, developments in digital photography technologies have potentially contributed to the de-exoticisation of the intertwined tourist gaze and tourist photography, the contemporary tourist gaze, as argued earlier in this thesis, almost inevitably involving the photographic collection of visual images. In other words, digital photography, in particular smart-phone cameras, has served to blur the boundaries between the tourist gaze / tourist photography and their mundane, everyday counterparts. Chapter 2 considered how nowadays digital cameras and smart phones have become universal in peoples' life. Indeed, owing to the availability and technology of digital cameras and smart phones, not only have photographic images nowadays become dematerialised, immediately consumable and deleteable, but also camera/phone screens could be deemed as converged spaces of picturing, posing and consuming. Consequently, experimentation is used to photographically stage tourists' 'self' or families. Equally, individuals' photography practices becomes playful, wilful and childlike, and they are able to capture the more fleeting and unexpected moments of surprise, beauty and adoration in their everyday life, rather than use photography to record only special excursions or noteworthy events and moments that are separated or bracketed off from the mundane (Goggin, 2006: 145). In Okabe and Ito's (2003:26) words, 'camera smartphone users tend to elevate otherwise ordinary objects and events to photo-worthy occurrences'. As the mundane is elevated to a photographic object, the everyday is now the site of potentially news and visual archiving'. In addition, with the emergence of MMS (Multimedia Messaging Service) and other various communication apps (including social networking mobile apps, such as Facebook, Wechat and Instagram), digital photographs (and experiences) are nowadays shared

with a 'now' audience, either via MMS or through being uploaded to the social networking apps. Thus, photographs are almost like postcards and the sociality evolving around photographic activities is promoted (see also Goggin, 2006).

In addition, just as performances are well-rehearsed and occur not for the first but the *nth* time (Schechner, 2006: 37), so too may be the touristic acts of gazing and photographing on tour. Therefore, it is reasonable to argue that people's everyday gaze and everyday photographic performances are, to some degree, intersected with their tourist counterparts, and it is unlikely that people only gaze upon and photographically frame something extraordinary rather than the emerged fleeting and unexpected moments of surprise, beauty and adoration during their tourist travels (Goggin, 2006:145).

**4.5 Chapter Summary**

To sum up, this chapter has discussed the de-exoticisation of tourist travels, the tourist gaze and tourist photography. In this so-called network society, individuals have ever more opportunities to travel either for business or leisure. Equally, it is becoming progressively more usual for them to appreciate and photographically frame eye-pleasing spectacles, remarkable performances or other beautiful but fleeting moments, both in their place of residence and in toured destinations. As a consequence, their tourist gaze and photographic practices are becoming increasingly de-exoticised/de-differentiated from their counterparts in everyday life. Moreover, as previously mentioned, this de-exoticisation is becoming increasingly global. Like those of their peers' in the West, the tourist gaze and photographic practices of an increasing number of people (at least the expanding middle-classes) in many non-Western countries, such as China, are following this trend.. Based upon this expanding trend of de-exoticisation, as well as the historical, social and cultural features reviewed in earlier chapters, the concept of the Chinese tourist gaze will be established in the next chapter

# Chapter 5

# Beyond 'the Spectacular'; Conceptualising the Chinese Tourist Gaze

## 5.1 Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 1, John Urry's concept of the 'tourist gaze' may be defined as the aggregate of the socially organised, reflexive and embodied practices of visually consuming what is extraordinary, highly prevalent and vastly powerful in contemporary society (Urry, 1990, 2002; Hollinshead, 1999; Urry and Larsen, 2011). From this perspective, therefore, it could argued that once a place, a view or an image becomes extraordinary and, hence, highly popular in this modern/post-modern society, it will inevitably be 'consumed' and gazed upon by tourists. As such, this in turn suggests that both the extraordinariness and the popularity of a particular place conspire to play a crucial role in attracting tourists to it. However, the principal limitation of Urry's concept is that both Urry himself and, indeed, successive researchers is that they have tended to focus primarily on how transformations in social mobility and canons of taste may define, alter and globalise the tourist gaze, whilst more limited (or insufficient) attention has been paid to the following two issues.

First, diverse visual acts may be produced or performed in different non-Western societies. For example, the a visual practice of *'guān'（观）* which, as discussed in detail in Chapter 3, originated in pre-modern Chinese society and is unambiguously different from the ways of seeing that prevail in Western societies.

Second, what non-Western tourists want or are motivated to see and, indeed, how they see may well be guided and tailored by the nation-state in their home countries. Currently, for example, some socialist or post-socialist countries, such as the People's Republic of China, cannot be categorised as societies of control (see Urry, 2000). Nevertheless, in such countries multiple institutes of state, such as the central government, other levels of governments and government business enterprises (Deutsch, 1986) still reserve the power and authority not only to discipline the citizens but also to utilise both tourism and tourism destinations as a means of constructing

national identity, promoting nationalism and tailoring tourists' (particularly domestic tourists') gaze (see Oakes, 1998; Shepherd, 2009).

The lack of attention that has been paid to these two issues has arguably resulted in the frequent and, perhaps, impetuous application of the Eurocentric conceptualisation of the tourist gaze to the study of the visual and travel performances of non-Western tourists, without serious analysis of its suitability (see Winter, 2009). Therefore, it has become increasingly pressing to appraise critically different (non-Western) manifestaions of visual touristic performances and to develop 'unconventional' models of the non-Western tourist gaze.

In particular, the Chinese tourist gaze may be considered the epitome of this kind of 'unconventional' non-Western gaze. As *Figure 5.1* illustrates, the Chinese tourist gaze (*Circle 4*) as a whole shares a number of characteristics with Foucault's (1994) 'clinical gaze' as much as it is authorised by an array of technologies (*Circle 3*), institutions (involving the post-socialist state) (*Circle 2*) and the dominant pre-modern travel patterns in China (*Circle 1*). More specifically, the construction of the Chinese tourist gaze may be conceptualised as follows.

On the one hand, the modern Chinese tourist gaze can be initially linked to the dominant patterns of élite travel in pre-modern China (*Circle 1* to *Circle 4*), which represented the outcome of the combination of people's desire for the freedom to overcome the restrictions of their mundane social life and traditional Chinese philosophies which influenced their world view. As considered in some detail in Chapter 3, the resultant tourist gaze in pre-modern China was distinctive from the traditional Western gaze; specifically the detached and conquering romantic gaze valued in the Western tradition of tourism contrasted with the reciprocal, transcendental, provocative and masculine pre-modern Chinese gaze which not gave primacy to sublime natural panoramas and experiences pre-determined by existing narratives about the toured places but which also emphasised looking down from above, the travelling of eyes, mental traveling and introspectively interacting with what is gazed upon. Moreover, despite the inevitable transformations that have occurred as a consequence of China's societal and ideological development over recent centuries, such travel patterns and ways of seeing have largely survived and adopted by institutes of Chinese post-socialist state. More precisely, in order to achieve cultural hegemony, and to construct modernity as well as national identity in China through tourism, the Chinese central government, in collaboration with multiple other levels of government institutions (including provincial administrations and tour operators), has

superficially appropriated the travel patterns of the pre-modern Chinese élites (see Nyíri, 2006: 7-11) (*Circle 2* to *Circle 1* and *Circle 1 to Circle 2*), transforming tourist destinations / attractions into theme parks, controlling various forms of social mobility in China (particularly the virtual mobility of ideas, sounds and images) and significantly disciplining the Chinese tourist gaze, particularly that of Chinese mass tourists (Nyíri, 2005, 2006, 2009), through the use of a variety of technologies and devices (*Circle 3* to *Circle 2*). As a consequence, the gaze of Chinese tourists has collectively been determined by the prescribed meanings of the visited scenic spots (*Circle 2* to *Circle 4*).

As Sofield *et al.* (1998: 367) state:

> When Western tourists look at the Yangtze, they see a river; the Chinese see a poem replete with philosophical ideas. Part of the 'common knowledge' of Chineseness is to recognise representations of the picturesque hills of Guilin, the sea of clouds of Wu-shan (Mount Wu), the Three Geoges of the Yangtze River, and the Yellow Crane Terrace pagoda. These images bring unity even if the people have never visited them; but when they do visit the importance of these images is reinforced.

On the other hand, however, the Chinese tourist gaze is not entirely pre-determined. That is, in spite of the rigid governmental controls referred to above, advances in communication and photographic technologies are still permitted to be mobilised in China (*Circle 2* to *Circle 3*), affording Chinese tourists additional opportunities to transcend state control by re-writing the pre-engineered state discourse, authoring the destination and self-fashioning their travels (see Scarles, 2009). Moreover, analogous to the Western gaze, the Chinese tourist gaze is potentially de-differentiated from the everyday gaze owing to the recent growth in and extensive use of digital cameras and camera phones (see Haldrup and Larsen, 2010) among Chinese people (*Circle 3* to *Circle 4*). Therefore, *Circle 4* is drawn without solid borders, as the author cannot precisely point out where its boundary actually is.

The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to conceptualise the Chinese tourist gaze as a framework for the subsequent empirical research in this thesis. To do so, the following sections consider in more detail the interconnections between the Chinese tourist gaze and the three key influences introduced above, namely: pre-modern travel patterns in Chains; the influence of state institutions; and, the role of advances in relevant (communication and photographic) technologies.
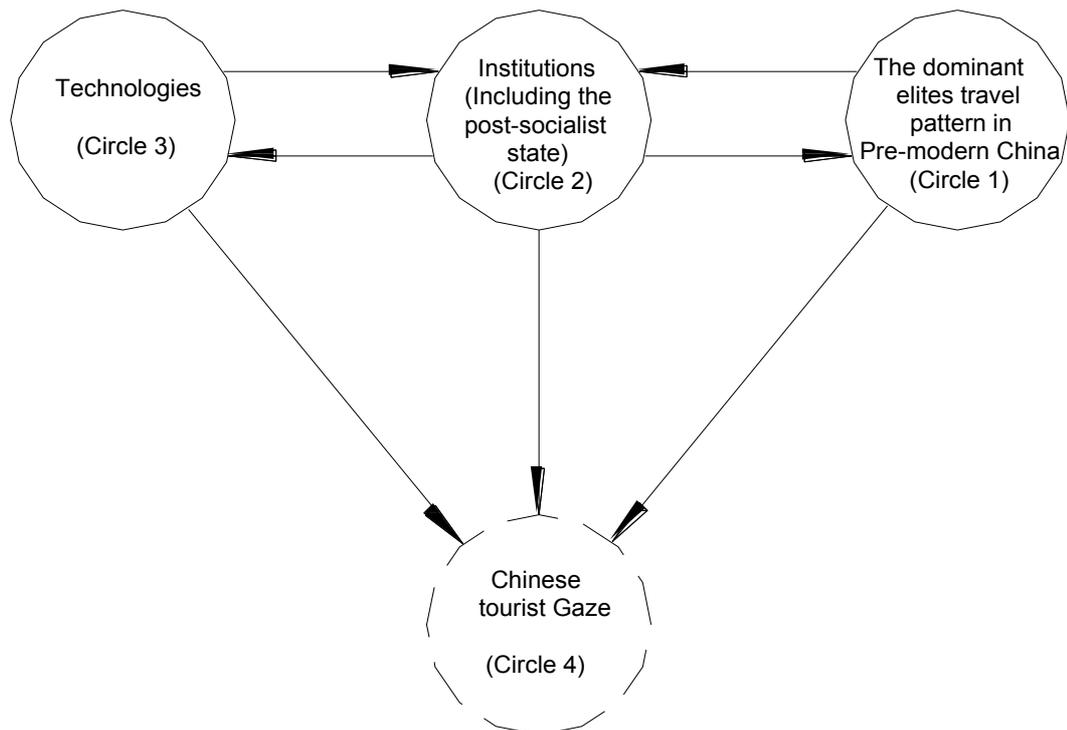
**Figure 5.1***: The framework of the Chinese tourist gaze*

## 5.2 The Dominant Élite's Travel Patterns in Pre-modern China

The travel patterns of the dominant élite in pre-modern China were considered in detail in Chapter 3. However, it is useful here to summarise again the points as they are fundamental to the construction of the contemporary Chinese tourist gaze.

As explained in Chapter 3, touristic activities in China can be traced back to the era of pre-Qin Dynasty, when travellers were not only inspired by their collective life-long objective of seeking for t*ao* but also characterised by travelling for discourse (see Gong, 2001). More specifically, the influential philosophies of early Chinese societies, such as *Yijing*, Taoism and Confucianism, not only deem *tao* to be the foundation of things in the universe (see Hu, 1995: 40) but also take *tao*'s seeking as the upmost priority for a human being. As a consequence, many élites and aristocrats were encouraged to approach and follow some of the then well-known philosophers / scholars, such as Mencius, Mo Tse, Sheun Tse and, of course, Confucius on their travels. These 'followers' of the philosophers aspired for tao; moreover, they were morally good, as to be so was regarded as a more effective way of seeking, learning and practicing tao. Collectively, they formed the class of travellers. This tradition of traveling for discourse prevailed in China until the Qin Dynasty was established in 221 BC during which the government enacted policies to limit and control the extensive migration and social mobility that existed at that time. From then on, such control remained in place, even though China society was subsequently ruled and governed by many emperors of

different dynasties. Also, owing to an absence of reflexivity and the doubt in pre-modern China that 'representations were reliable as conveyors of knowledge' (Oakes, 2005: 42) nor were there any defining transformations or developments in Chinese philosophies. Therefore, seeking for tao (particularly in nature) continued to serve as the underpinning motivation for the élite's travels and voyages in pre-modern China, although they were not necessarily undertaken for discourse.

However, despite this motivation for travel (seeking tao in nature), the élite travellers of Qin Dynasty and beyond rarely if ever gazed upon and appreciated natural landscapes in the detached manner of eighteenth-century Western travellers and scientists almost two millennia later, a manner in which everything came to be seen as 'standing-reserve', that is, as a 'stand by' resource or raw material, rationally ordered and ready to be exploited (see Heidegger, 1977; Sartre, 1956). This reflected the fact that the then mainstream philosophies in China collectively not only encouraged travellers to regard themselves as an integral part of nature and the objective world, but also to utilise the knowledge they had gained to cultivate their characters (Fung, 1922: 257; see also Chiang, 1959). Therefore, they tended to engage with what they were gazing upon in an introspective fashion in order to generate potential connotative meanings from it to guide their life and cultivate their character. Moreover, this habit of introspective engagement has remained relatively immune from the massive social changes that have occurred over 6te centuries in China and has, in a sense, been inherited by those living in contemporary modern / postmodern Chinese society, even though their ideas and, perhaps, values are becoming increasingly westernised.  The quoted narrative by Chiang (1959) earlier in Chapter 3 could demonstrate it (see page 88)

At the same time, traveling was originally considered to be a privileged activity, undertaken by gods, angels and immortals who were supposed to be able to travel totally freely and to appreciate from a higher position, such as the top of a mountain, the spectacular panoramas below them. There were also tales and legends dating back early Chow (Zhou) Dynasty (c.1045 BC – 256 BC) that narrated stories of travellers' encounters with gods and immortals, either on the road or at the god's / immortal's residence in a mountain. (The ancient Chinese people believed that gods / immortals tended to reside in mountains which were difficult for ordinary people to reach.). These sorts of godly encounters enabled travellers to become a god / immortal and travel freely and willfully. As a consequence, certain high mountains came to be progressively glorified, such as Taishan Mountain, Penglai and Kunlun Mountain (Gong, 2001: 155; see also Brook, 1998). In addition, not only did numerous members of the

social élite have the desire to travel to mountains, particularly those that had been glorified, potentially to become immortalised, but they also began to favour sublime views and panoramas, seeking the experience enjoyed by the privileged gods, angels and immortals. Consequently, in order to experience this sort of divine experience, a new way of seeing was extensively adopted. That is, they took on the practice of mental traveling, looking down from a high position and an angle of totality, and grasping the grand and expansive panorama as a whole (see Sullivan, 1979:72; Gong, 2001). While gazing upon a view, travellers tended to deny their real 'self', imaginatively creating an atmosphere/ picture of fantasy and (or) interaction with what was being gazed upon. Consequently, their gazes were reciprocal, transcendent, provocative, expressive and masculine.

It is notable that the travelling élite were also enthusiastic about poems, discourses and other pre-script meanings of the toured places or spectacles they were gazing upon whilst, to some extent, Chinese language characters also played a pivotal part in encouraging pre-modern Chinese élite travellers (as well as Chinese modern tourists) to associate with and consume the related narratives / written discourses. This is evident in the example of Su Tungpo described in Chapter 3, whereby his companion spontaneously linked Red Cliff with the historical figure Tsao Tsao, his poetry and the well-recorded war which took place there a century before Su's era. This function of Chinese language characters lies in their vast power and authority. More specifically, Chinese characters, as written language, are independent of any particular spoken language and can, thus, transfer meaning across different dialects, languages and centuries. In other words, they are syntactically mobile without any changes to their appearance and, as a consequence they possess greater power and 'authority' in comparison to western alphabetical letters (see Hansen, 1989).

At the same time, according to Hosfstede (2001), Chinese society is defined by a higher power-distance characteristic than people originating from Western countries. That is, the Chinese tend to expect or seek guidance from someone / something with high power or authority and, hence, they are more willing to imitate the behaviour of famous people (see also Arlt, 2006: 105). Consequently, preference is given to written rather than oral information. Of particular relevance to this thesis, the visual nature of tourism experiences is also, for the Chinese, connected to language as language is something to be seen rather than heard and it is believed that what is written down has to be clear, unambiguous and should come from a high authority, not from peer group members (Arlt, 2006: 107).

As noted earlier, despite the inevitable social and ideological transformations in China over history, such socially and culturally constructed travel patterns and ways of seeing have, to a greater or lesser extent, been passed down to present generations of Chinese travellers and tourists, in part as a result of Chinese state's appropriation of it since the year 1978. Thus, the following section now discusses discuss in greater detail how the Chinese government and its subordinate institutions have conspired to appropriate the pre-modern élite's travel patterns and guided and tailored Chinese tourists' gaze to the pre-projected discourses about the tourists sites they are visiting.

## 5.3 Institutions of Post-socialist State in China

### 5.3.1 Introduction

As considered earlier in this thesis, the issue of whether nationality and / or country of residence should be employed as either behaviour or marketing segmentation variables in tourism researchers' investigations has been long controversial. Indeed, some scholars, such as McCrone (1992), Urry (1992b) and Dann (1993), argue that because of the collective influence of globalisation and global information and communication structures, social life has become de-traditionalised and people's taste, values, norms and even the tourist gaze have become less determined by 'societal' (or national) institutions such as education, government and family (McCrone, 1992; Urry, 2011). However, it can be argued that this position is valid only up to a point; it would seem that appears that these scholars have focused primarily upon the changing societal landscapes in the Western countries, yet such flows and networks are not distributed evenly in the world.

Nevertheless, within these global flows and networks, most Western states, such as the UK, are nowadays playing the role of 'gamekeepers' (Bauman, 1987); that is, they fulfil the function of regulating mobilities, rather than being concerned with the detailed cultivation of the patterns, regularity and ordering of society (Urry, 2000: 188). Similarly, the, legislators in these 'gamekeeping' countries are much less concerned about using their position to determine what is and what is not productive of order than those in multiple non-Western 'gardening' countries, such as China (see Bauman, 1987). As a consequence, social mobilities are typically more explicitly facilitated and a proliferation of ideas, images, sounds from various sources, including TV, films, the internet, literature or magazines, are far more accessible to people residing in these 'gamekeeping' countries (Bauman, 1987; see also Urry, 2000). According to Urry and Larsen (2011: 3), the tourist gaze is constructed in tourists' everyday life and, more precisely, through 'a variety of non-tourist practices, such as films, TV, literature,

magazines, records and videos' Therefore, it is logical to maintain that the tourist gaze in Western countries is related to the influence of flows, networks and technologies than that of institutions, including the state.

In contrast, in many non-Western societies such as China with the characteristics of 'gardening' countries (Bauman, 1987), although significant social transformations may have occurred, particularly in terms of the economy and power relationship between central and local governments (see Huang *et al.*, 2013), the state still reserves its role in sustaining the pre-existing ideology, disciplining domestic residents and constraining social mobilities, especially the movement of ideas, images and sounds, through education, tourism and media (see Nyíri, 2005, 2006, 2009). As a result, the gaze of tourists coming from these countries is less related to globalisation and global information and communication structures, and more shaped by multiple institutions involving the state, both directly and indirectly.

Moreover, it is important to observe that, government bodies and institutes in many Western countries, such as . Britain, selectively preserve, design and exhibit nationally significant artifacts and sites (e.g. Chartwell House in Oxfordshire, England) to promote an idea of nation (Walsh, 1992; cited in Palmer, 2003:428). But the development of tourism there is overall, typically more intimately related to entrepreneurs and the private sector than the state (for example, the development of British mass tourism in the nineteenth century is attributed as much to the emergence of Thomas Cook and a nascent travel industry as to developments in transport technology) (see Urry and Larsen, 2011; see also Hall, 1994), the Chinese post-Socialist state has been playing a central role in both inbound and outbound tourism development (Nyíri, 2006), in spite of the fact that local governments in China since 1998, as a result of decentralisation of the central government, have been given much more power to trade some rights of managing tourist spots to entrepreneurs (see Huang *et al.*, 2013). To some extent, both tourism and tourists could be looked on as resources that been exploited by the state to achieve economic growth, obtain cultural hegemony and construct an alternative modernity (a concept of modernity different from the modernity that emerged in Western societies and that some scholars, such as Oakes (1998), even criticise as the false modernity) as well as the Chinese national identity. To a great extent, this state-led construction of modernity is grounded upon the superficial appropriation of the élite travel patterns that evolved in pre-modern China. More specifically, there are dichotomous means by which the 'alternative' modernity and national identity have been constructed in modern China:

1. Inventing an imagined / idealised landscape of nostalgia (see Kolas, 2004) upon which to build a sense of national identity and alternative modernity (Oakes, 1998: 50; see also Anagnost, 1997: 166); physically constructing the new scenic areas and rebuilding existing heritage, usually in the styles of theme parks and open air museum (see Oakes, 1998; Nyíri, 2006, 2009); associating these scenic areas with pre-engineered national narratives and selectively rewritten cultural and historical meanings (Shepherd, 2009; 2013); setting up tourism bureaus, directly or indirectly controlling travel agencies and disciplining both tourists and local residents in ethnic tourism destinations to enforce particular scenic spot travel patterns in the area – that is, travel is controlled / ordered as means of verifying one's knowledge of an accepted canon of scenic areas that has its root in pre-modern Chinese representations of élite travel (Nyíri, 2005); and reinforcing the hegemonic discourses/narratives though media and a plethora of publications.

2. Projecting the image of new Chinese migrants and that of the Western countries, mainly through media and films (soap operas and 'new migrant' reports) (Nyíri, 2005; Ong and du Cros, 2012).

As a result of governmental construction, 'indexing' and 'dragging' (the meaning of 'idexing' and 'dragging' will be considered later.) (Rojek, 1997: 52-56), the Chinese tourist gaze is heavily tailored and directed by the prescribed cultural and historical meanings or national narratives underpinning a scenic spot and its spectacles, rather than a means of visually appreciating the spectacles *per se* as well as seeking authenticity. This section commences with a critical assessment of why the alternative modernity that the Chinese post-Socialist state attempts to construct is a 'false' version of modernity. Subsequently, it discusses how the Chinese post-socialist state and its multiple subordinated institutions have appropriated the pre-modern élite's travel patterns (see Nyíri, 2006: 7-11), controlled a variety of social mobilities in China, in particular the virtual mobility of ideas, sounds and images, and 'disciplined' Chinese tourists' gaze (Nyíri, 2005, 2006, 2009) in order to achieve cultural hegemony and construct modernity as well as national identity in China through tourism. Here, the discussion will be conducted from the aspect of inventing an imagined landscape of nostalgia and projecting the image of new Chinese migrants and that of the West.

*5.3.2 The 'false' modernity and the 'authentic' modernity*

As mentioned above, some scholars, such as Oakes (1998), criticise the modernity which the Chinese state is carefully constructing as a 'false' modernity. According to Oakes (1998: 7), 'false' modernity could be described as 'the utopian, teleological

modernity of nineteenth-and twentieth-century historicism, of the nation-state, and of the institutions of rationalism and scientific objectivity'. It is this sense of modernity that the Chinese state and Chinese people believe they are pursuing and projecting, and the 'industrial' West remains the most significant model for that pursuit and projection. Essentially, Oakes' (1998) view is appropriate, since authentic modernity is not a specific static status which can be / has been reached or achieved. Rather, it is a rational and reflexive process of transformations and contradictions, in which people and organisations are continuously pursuing reason and knowledge whilst, at the same time, social practices are relentlessly scrutinised and reformed in the light of incoming information or knowledge about those very practices, thus constitutively altering their character (Giddens, 1990: 38).

More precisely, the beginning of Western modernity was intertwined with Enlightenment which can be traced back to around the seventeenth century. From that time, Europe became progressively secularised and disenchanted, since reason and laws of nature, rather than God and the divine laws, became central to society; that is, the Enlightenment marked a break with the 'finalism of the religious spirit' (Weber, 1904-5). In other words, nature came to radically replace the church as the origin and foundation of truths and both societies and people's social life in Europe began to be crafted on the basis of the light of reason and the laws of nature rather than being determined by 'the will of a supreme being to whom one had to submit, or who could be influenced through magic' (Touraine, 1995: 12). An increasing differentiation of the realms of social life was entailed in this process; thus, all activities and behaviours needed to be examined upon the internal absolutes of reason rather than according to their relations to other activities (Oakes, 1998). However, it is argued that the truths have yet to be found, for people and organisations are always left with questions where once there appeared to be answers (Giddens, 1990: 40). As a consequence, this rational process of pursuit and examination, which is full of changes and contradictions, has scarcely stopped.

Although modernity is intrinsically and authentically grounded upon the principles of reason and rational laws, even within the false conception of modernity problems emerge when 'rationality is marshalled in the pursuit of a modern society where reason becomes a set of laws governing the social body' (Oakes, 1998: 15; see also Touraine, 1995: 61). More specifically, the state usually takes on the mantle of the dominant purveyor of modernisation through its mobilisation of political power in support of social and economic progress within the nation. Within this 'demarcated container of space' (Oakes, 1998: 15), the process of rationalisation means that individuals, together with

their traditions and loyalties, must be subordinated to the state and society (see Touraine, 1995). At the same time, the 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1983) of the nation is provided with a fresh source of identity and stability to compensate for the disruptions of modernisation's relentless removal of the obstacles for reason (Touraine, 1995). These disruptions are achieved via the logic of capital accumulation as it seeks out ever more rational means of appropriating surplus labour power.

Government-influenced Chinese tourism and the Chinese tourist gaze may serve as a typical example of this transformed rationalisation and modernisation. As noted above, tourism in China is consistently promoted by the Chinese central government, mainly for the potential economic and cultural benefits it is presumed to introduce (see Airey and Chong, 2011; Arlt, 2006; Nyíri, 2006; Oakes, 1998; Zhang, 2003). More specifically, in the post-Mao era since 1978, tourism has been seen by the relevant officials in the central government as a cost-effective means of either achieving economic growth (Airey and Chong, 2011; Arlt, 2006; Zhang, 2003), of 'civilising'/'educating' people, especially the ethnic minority people (Nyíri, 2006, 2009; Oakes, 1998; Shepherd, 2009), or of projecting modernity and achieving cultural hegemony (Oakes, 1998; Shepherd, 2009). During this process, an 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1983) of the nation has been promised; that is, a community in which the imagined nation-state (emphasising essentialism, territoriality and fixity) exists in tension with imagined entrepreneurial capitalism (celebrating hybridity, de-territorialisation and fluidity) (Ong, 1997: 172). And it is required that all Chinese tourists, locals (especially ethnic minority communitis in folk villages), arts, diverse cultures, organisations and relevant institutions should be subjugated to the control of the central post-Socialist government (see Arlt, 2006; Sofield, *et al.*, 1998). To demonstrate, at the Thirteenth National Congress convened in the year 1990, the Director of Cultural Affairs, Li Rui-huan, stated that 'the purpose of developing ethnic cultures…is to better demonstrate the contemporary spirit of socialism', though there was a need to promote distinctive ethnic cultures (Li Rui-huan, 1990:109-110). At the same time, Li also stated that 'culture education must be started with the young' and it was of necessity to actively organise the younger generation and take them to visit heritage sites and watch cultural performances in ethnic festivals (Li Rui-huan, 1990: 111). Due to the joint effects of these policies and decisions, which are made by the Chinese central government, 'the contemporary spirit of socialism' (Li Rui-huan, 1990: 109-110), that rationalism loses its critical edge and rebellious spirit and becomes no more than the pursuit a corpus of 'ways of maximising profits' and constructing national identities (Touraine, 1995: 91; see also Oakes, 1998). As a result, the concept of modernity is no longer 'authentic' (Oakes, 1998:7), once it is based upon this transformed version of rationalism.

### 5.3.3 Inventing an imagined nostalgic past

As suggested above, two means of constructing 'alternative' modernity and national identity in China via tourism have been proposed. These are (i) inventing an imaged landscape of nostalgia upon which to build a sense of nation and alternative modernity (Oakes, 1998:50; see also Anagnost, 1997:166) and (ii) projecting the image of new Chinese migrants and that of foreign countries, mainly through media and films (soap operas and 'new migrant' reports) (Nyíri, 2005; Ong and du Cros, 2012). Essentially, the former (inventing an imagined landscape) has been mainly employed through the development and control of inbound tourism to China to project 'alternative' modernity and national identity, whilst the latter one has been utilised to achieve this task through Chinese outbound tourism. Overall, there are four steps which have been taken to invent and sustain a nostalgic past in China:

1. Constructing the new scenic places and attractions and physically rebuilding existing heritage (usually in the style of theme parks and open air museum) (Nyíri, 2005)) (see Oake, 1998; Nyíri, 2006, 2009; Shepherd, 2013);

2. Indexing and dragging (Rojek, 1997: 52-56); to be more specific, associating these scenic places and attractions with pre-engineered narratives and selectively rewritten cultural and historical meanings (Shepherd, 2009);

3. Reinforcing the hegemonic discourses/narratives though the internet, media and a plethora of publications (for example, brochures);

4. Setting up tourism bureaus, directly or indirectly controlling travel agencies and disciplining both tourists and local residents in tourism destinations (especially in ethnic tourism destinations) to facilitate the delivery of the aforementioned scenic spot travel patterns.

Through these four steps or processes, it is evident that the Chinese state and its relevant institutions primarily utilise the pre-modern élite travel patterns, as discussed in the preceding section, and a series of technologies, especially communicative technologies, to sustain a created landscape of nostalgia and to direct Chinese tourists' gaze towards the pre-scripted national narratives of tourist sites. This section provides more details as to how these steps have been taken and discusses the extent to which Chinese tourists' gaze has consequently been directed.

As previously argued, the imagined modern China is currently a community with fixed boundaries, within which the imagined nation-state, emphasising essentialism, territoriality and fixity, lies in tension with an imagined entrepreneurial capitalism that celebrates hybridity, deterritorialisation and fluidity (Ong, 1997: 172). In effect, the booming economic development and the mobilisation of fluid capitals, objects and technologies into China from the outside world which was originally induced by the progressive implementation of the *Economic Reform and Open-door Policy* (Airey and Chong, 2011: 154) first proposed by Deng Xiaoping, has caused increasing governmental concern given their potential contribution to the de-territorialisation and de-stabilisation of Chinese societies (see Shepherd, 2013: 20). Such concern has stimulated the post-Socialist state to construct a new national identity characterised by modernity, appropriating a contested past as 'a source of allegorical allusions to the present' (Shepherd, 2013: 48), and to fix culture within territorial borders (Yang, 1997: 297). Therefore, a proliferation of theme parks has been invested in by the state, both directly and indirectly, since the end of 1980s in an attempt to fix the boundaries of a unique, time-honoured, modern and essential China. According to Zhang (1989:107), by the year 1989, there were roughly 3000 provincial-level heritage sites (mainly in the style of theme parks) and more than 10,000 country-and-city-level counterparts. Meanwhile, the number of nature reserves in China was also constantly rising, from 19 in 1965 to more than 1000 by the year 2000, along with 187 national parks (Weller, 2006:77).

Among these theme parks, arguably the most influential one, which also acted as a model for many other theme parks and folk villages that have subsequently been established in China, is the 'Splendid China' park in Shenzhen, considered to be the 'most modern, transient and temporal of all Chinese cities' (Oakes, 1998) at the time it was constructed. Angnost (1993) and Oakes (1998) have both studied the ambivalent and contradictory Chinese modernity conveyed by the miniaturised landscape icons of the Splendid China. Oakes (1998: 49) briefly reveals the layout of the Splendid China as follows:

> Within the park's 30 hectares of detailed scale replicas of all the Chinese tourist landscape's most essential sites, one can – as the park's advertisements make clear – take in all of Chinese within a couple of hours of comfortable strolling along pathways. Not only have the park's creators made it easier to see all the necessary monumental features of China's 'nationscape', but geographical inconveniences have been eradicated as well. The landmarks of Splendid China are much more efficiently arranged than their real counterparts. Thus, the

miniature Potala Palace (whose inclusion itself marks the geopolitics of nationalism subsumed in the park) sits on a small hill next to the undulating Great Wall; the diverse architectural style of Miao, Dong and Buyi minority villages are offered in one convenient 'nationality village site'.

In fact, the miniaturised landscape or created 'nationscape' (Oakes, 1998: 49) serves to an extent as the 'calming certainty' (Anagnost, 1993: 590) at the front of burgeoning economic development in China which has been seen by some as driving de-territorialisation, uncertainties and the dilution of socialist ideology. At the same time, the miniatures convey a transcendent meaning, and the park is reminiscent of the statement by the Director of Cultural Affairs Li Rui-huan (1990: 109-110) that 'the purpose of developing ethnic cultures…is to better demonstrate the contemporary spirit of socialism'. More specifically, it is conspicuous in this theme park that features and meanings of ethnic minority cultures have been purposefully selected, rewritten and reconstructed to fit 'the contemporary spirit of socialism' and the national culture of a modern and 'splendid' China.

In addition, it is also evident that the layout of Splendid China and the communicative technologies employed serve to direct Chinese tourists' gaze to pre-scripted national narratives. More specifically, it is first significant that the layout of the theme park is consistent with travel patterns at scenic areas, since the miniature structures jointly form a series of attractions that tourists are able to consume conveniently and comfortably, which is quite similar to the pattern of tourism at scenic attractions. Following the established pathways, tourists are guided to move from one spot/miniature to another and visually consume the superficial signs, instead of exploring the authentic diverse ethnic cultures. Potentially, the signs being gazed upon are not simply associated with the original and authentic cultures, but with a collective culture of a splendid, powerful and modern China, with an imagined glorious past and power of creating artistic miniatures (see Oakes, 1998). Meanwhile, it is noted that this kind of transcendent association should also be attributed to the government's promotion of Splendid China and its diffusion of pre-projected discourses about the theme park and its miniatures through a series of visual devices, including the media (Nyíri, 2006), as the tourist gaze is initially constructed in tourists' everyday life-especially through 'a variety of non-tourist practices, such as films, TV, literature, magazines, records and videos' (Urry and Larsen, 2011: 3).

In recent decades, following the template of Splendid China, a multitude of destinations and tourist sites have been developed in a similar theme park style to relentlessly

construct the unique, modern and essential China. These destinations and tourist sites involve the folk cultural villages in Shenzhen and ethnic Miao villages in Guizhou Province investigated by Oakes (1998), Tibet studied by Shepherd (2009), Ping'an in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region by Chio (2009) and the Mounts Emei and Jiuzhaigou in Sichuan Province by Nyíri (2006).

In addition to the media, which is functional in directly stimulating Chinese tourists' daydreaming in everyday life and indirectly affecting their gaze in travel, and the layout of theme parks which encourages them to adopt the unique travel behaviours similar to those at other scenic places, the combination of brochures, postcards, tour guides and relevant tourism and non-tourism institutions also has an imnfluence upon the gaze on site (see Markwell, 1997; Jenkins, 2003; Scarles, 2004). However, neither Angnost (1993) nor Oakes (1998) have devoted much, if any, attention to exploring how the gaze of Chinese tourists (particularly the gaze of mass tourists) is further directed in the Splendid China park to these pre-projected discourses. Nevertheless, a handful of clues for answering this question can be found in Nyíri's (2006) research undertaken in Jiuzhaigou Reserve in Sichuan Province, China, where the Minshan Mountains, snow-covered peaks, impressive waterfalls, colourful lakes, pristine forests Tibetan culture and many endangered species in the Reserve collectively attract a huge number of Chinese tourists annually, which include Giant Pandas, Red-headed Robins, Red Pandas, Golden Monkeys and White-lipped Dear (see CNTA, 2006).

According to Nyíri's research (2006: 28-41), it could be seen that, from the tour bus to Jiuzhaigou Reserve and even to the hotel, he and his colleague were actually travelling, performing and dwelling in a series of 'enclavic tourist spaces', which are 'carefully planned and managed to provide specific standards of cleanliness, service, decor and "ambience"' (Edensor, 2001: 63). Travelling, performing and dwelling in such spaces, they are shielded from offensive or unpleasant sights, smells and sounds, as well as being prevented from meeting Tibetan and Qiang locals and expereincing their authentic cultures. More than that, Nyíri and his colleague were also subject to an array of 'soft controls' (Ritzer and Liska, 1997: 106) emanating primarily from the fusion of the provincial tourism administration (a governmental tourism institution), their tour guide (who worked for the tour operator China Service Group which is indirectly subordinated to the provincial tourism administration) and vrious technologies, such asinvolving billboards, brochures and videos, which not merely constrained their physical movements but also directed their gaze to the superficial signs and pre-existing cultural meanings engineered by the government.

More specifically, 'Jiuzhaigou', as a geographic concept, previously did not exist; it was purposefully created by the post-Socialist state after the year 1978 for both economic and cultural reasons. Its creation was largely in accordance with the typical scenic spot travel pattern, since the sceneries in Jiuzhaigou Reserve were produced and listed as scenic spots; at the same time, they have been associated with governmentally manufactured historical and cultural meanings to construct a unique and splendid 'Greater China'. When Nyíri and his colleague decided to travel in Jiuzhaigou, they found that travelling in the natural reserve by themselves, like backpackers, was difficult, particularly because there was insufficient information, such as 'a copy of the Rough Guide or Lonely Planet China or a visit to a backpacker Website-offering "inside information"' (Nyíri, 2006: 32) available at the provincial tourism administration in Chengdu (the capital of Sichuan Province) to support tourists wishing to travel on their own. Hence, they were obliged to join a package tour.

This package tour was made upon scenic-spot-to-scenic-spot basis, in which the gaze of Nyíri, his colleague and their fellow tourists on the tour' was heavily and intentionally entrapped into a variety of superficial signs and pre-scripted meanings of the whole Jiuzhaigou reserve and its specific attractions and scenic spots. Indeed, they, they were afforded few if any opportunities to consume the authentic Tibetan culture in person. More precisely, on the tour bus, the tour guide perpetually distributed the state-inspired pre-projected ambiguous discourses, tailored the tourists' gaze, constrained their mobility and carefully managed the 'tourist bubble' (MacCannell, 2001: 26), like a school teacher. In Nyíri's (2006: 32) words, 'Our tour guide…began a rapid, schoolteacher-like staccato narrative in a formal register that was to continue through much of the ride, with frequent repetitions' To illustrate, in order to provide an image of a unique and romantic Jiuzhaigou as an integral part of the Greater China and rich in ethnic arts and cultures, the tour guide, on the one hand, provided information about dresses, architecture, legends and wedding customs of local people; she vividly introduced and described the scenic spots(including waterfalls, lakes and terraces, as the tour passed by: 'She explained their names, referring often to their similarity to some animal or mythical figure and linking them thus to a legend or to classical poetry' (Nyíri, 2006: 36); and she addressed the allegedly good relations between Chinese Han people and Tibetans (There had long been conflict between Tibetans and the Chinese Communist government, and Tibetan culture was originally incompatible with the dominant Han culture (see Shepherd, 2009)). At times, various technologies, such as brochures and videos, were employed to further create a romantic ambience, lulling Nyíri, his colleague and the rest Chinese tourists into a trap of songs and idealised pictures of 'sorrowful maidens, highland wind, snowcapped mountains, and dressed-up

Tibetans, who were raising their arms and waving white *hada*, the silk scarves that are the most common symbols of "traditional Tibetan culture" in Chinese popular media' (Upton, 2002: 108 cited in Nyíri, 2006: 34).

Iroically, on the other hand, in order to prevent tour participants from going out of the carefully staged 'tourist bubble' and entering the authentic zone of nearby local villages, the tour guide also made an ambivalent and contradictory statement and frequently reminded them of the rudeness and unfriendliness of Tibetans as well as the fact that it was unsafe to encounter and stay with the 'primitive' locals (see Nyíri, 2006: 33-34). In In fact, even on the tourist site and in the accommodation area, it was found that their movement was largely limited within those 'enclavic tourist spaces' (Edensor, 2001: 63) and their gaze was not exploratory, just confirming what had been informed of on the tour bus.

### 5.3.4 Projecting the image of new Chinese migrants and that of Western countries

It has already been identified that many Chinese tourists, when travelling in a 'destination/disorganised tourism space' (Chan, 2009: 70) beyond the borders of mainland China, whether regionally, such as in Hong Kong, Macau or Vietnam, or further afield the Western countries (see Arlt, 2006; Chan, 2009; Nyíri, 2005), tend to seek a series of signs of modernity and their tourist gaze is heavily influenced and mediated by the fusion of media, films and soap operas (see Nyíri, 2005; Ong and du Cros 2012). To some extent, this phenomenon can be attributed to the control exerted by Chinese post-Socialist state in terms of virtual mobility (see Urry, 2007). That is, since the flows of ideas, images and sounds in this global and networked world have the potential to 'roam' in and across the borders of China, it is deemed necessity for the Chinese central government to restrain the mobility of these flows in order to avoid the destruction of a carefully cultivated 'imagined community'. As a result, not only a multitude of Western films and television programmes (such as BBC in the UK and CNN and Travel Chanel in the USA) but also a significant number of web sites (especially social networking web sites, including Facebook and Twitter) remain out of reach in mainland China.

Additionally, the touristic creation of a 'national culture' may, according to Rojek and Urry (1997: 7), involve sites across national borders, and is necessarily the case for diasporic (or transnational) populations. Broadly speaking, these sites may also include a plethora of films, television dramas and fictions. The population of China has, of course, become increasingly mobile and, as a consequence, the number of Chinese

migrants who live, study or work in an overseas country is gradually growing. At the same time, the images of the expanding population of Chinese migrants that are projected and circulated in mainstream European and Asian (and partly American) media are regarded as incompatible with the 'imagined community' (see Nyíri, 2001, 2005). Therefore, it is necessary for the post-Socialist state to re-project the image of these new Chinese migrants and that of Western countries, to connect the diasporic population with mainland Chinese and to sustain the 'imagined community' and national culture by employing media, film and television drama forms which present a multitude of diverse citizens and engender a common sense of national belonging (Anderson, 1983; Edensor, 1998).

Understanding the new portrayal of Chinese migrants or diaspora in Mainland China should be based upon the recognition of the Chinese government's changing attitude towards mobility. More specifically, during Mao Zedong's era (1949-1976), large-scale mobility was deemed as unhealthy and migration was portrayed by the government as treachery. In contrast, since 1978 and, in particular, following the implementation of Deng Xiaoping's *Economic Reform and Open-door Policy* (Airey and Chong, 2011:154), the large-scale mobility and migration of Chinese people has been progressively encouraged, not only from rural areas to cities but also from China to some developed countries, such as Japan, USA and Australia. Indeed, Chinese governments still firmly believe that, like Jews, the overseas Chinese have a strong sense of origin and maintain relationships to their ancestral homelands through a network of business and cultural ties (Kotkin, 1993), even though they probably have gained citizenship in another country. Therefore, images of migration and migrants have also been thoroughly transformed, primarily for these economic and cultural reasons (see Arlt, 2006; Chan, 2009; Nyíri, 2001, 2005, 2006, 2009; Oakes, 1998). To be more specific, being mobile has been deemed to be the equivalent of being modern (Liu, 1997). Equally, in stark contrast to the crude and aggressive 'neo-Yellow Peril' images portrayed by mainstream European and Asian (and partly American) media, migrants in mainstream Chinese media, films, and television dramas have been associated with the patriots who 'would contribute not only to their own modernisation and glory but also to that of that Fatherland' (Nyíri, 2001), since they are mobile and connected to those more developed countries (see Nyíri, 2005).

As discussed earlier, Western countries, to some degree, collectively serve both as a model and backdrop for China's 'imagined community'. Thus, they have been re-portrayed as, and usually associated with being 'modern', 'developed' and 'civilised', rather than 'romantic'. To demonstrate, in recent books and films written and produced

in China since 1990, such as *A Peking Man in New York*, *Into Europe* and *Goodbye Moscow*, Moscow, Paris and New York are above all portrayed as sites of an unfolding global Chinese modernity. This function, as Sun (2002: 77) states, shapes the visual presentation of the cities through 'fetishistic uses of clichéd icons of speed, such as cars gliding noiselessly (and seemingly pollution-free) along the surface of highways; power-imposing bottom-up shots of city skylines; and energy, suggested by sweeping shots of multilevel highways'.

As a consequence, the gaze of not only Chinese migrants residing overseas but also that of Chinese tourists and citizens living within China has been more or less tailored (see Arlt, 2006; Chan, 2009; Nyíri, 2005). Indeed, some preceding studies (e.g. Nyíri, 2005; Ong and du Cros, 2012) have unpacked the fact that many Chinese tourists and migrants have the desire to seek for a series of signs of modernity in their outbound travels. To illustrate, Nyíri (2005) has undertaken a research in Hungury to investigate immigration of Chinese residents to this European country. In his empirical research, multiple respondents, such as Sun, Yang, Wang and Luo who were temporarily dwelling and travelling in the Europe, imparted to him that they preferred some modern aspects of European countries, involving Iron Tower and Disneyland in Paris, the undergrounds in Budapest and Moscow respectively and Red Square in Moscow.

## 5.4 Technologies

### *5.4.1 Introduction*

It has already been noted how, in China, visual devices and stimuli, such as media, videos, films, television dramas, billboards and brochures, have been employed by the post-Socialist state and relevant institutions to tailor Chinese (inbound and outbound) tourists' gaze and to invent and sustain an idealised splendid, unique and territorially fixed China. However, the implications of the availability of and advances in technology upon the Chinese tourist gaze go well beyond that. That is, despite rigid governmental and institutional controls, opportunities still exist for reflexive Chinese tourists to transcend the government's pre-scripted meanings and messages, even when they are still gazing upon and photographically acquiring these artificial signs *en tour*. Two principal reasons for this can be identified.

First, since most scenic spots / tourist sights visited by Chinese tourists are normally distant from their ordinary locale, speculation and fantasy about what they may find are spontaneously invoked when they corporeally move to these remote and extraordinary places. At the same time, the individual performance of gazing is not completely pre-

determined. Rather, it is characterised as 'expressive', 'active', 'embodied' and 'poetic' (Couch, 2005) and also subject to the effects of alternative references to the actual or other tourist sight (for example, the verbalised travel experience shared by other Chinese tourists who have previously been there). Therefore, while a Chinese tourist is gazing upon a particular scenic spot or tourist sight, it is likely that he or she will engage in a variety of cognitive processes of interpreting, evaluating, drawing comparisons and making mental connections between signs and their referents (Urry and Larsen, 2011:17). Such mental processes enable and facilitate the Chinese tourist re-write pre-figured state discourses, particularly when their expectation could not be fulfilled (Crang, 1997; Scarles, 2009).

Indeed, it has been found that many amongst the recently emergent Chinese backpacker market are able, to a greater or lesser extent, to rewrite the pre-existing state-scripted script discourses, to self-fashion their travel, to author the destination and to share these rewritten narratives, and their feelings and travel experiences, with other travellers on cyberspace. And this is despite the fact that they still prefer to dwell on the superficial images of a destination rather than seek authenticity in the way that modern Western backpackers are considered to do (Ong and du Cros, 2012; Shepherd, 2009). More specifically, as Ong and du Cros (2012) have identified in their research in Macao, many Chinese backpackers are able to both exoticise and eroticise the destination by creating romantic ambiences. For example, one of the respondents, who is named Country Pumpkin, not only romanticises Penha Church in Macau by linking it with sunsets and a bride, but also exoticises ordinary ruined houses by associating them with the evening night, thereby producing a 'melancholic atmosphere (Ong and du Cros, 2012: 745). In a similar vein, Shepherd (2009: 260-2) has found that Chinese backpackers travelling in Tibet tend to create a mysterious, spiritual, magical and exotic Tibet in their imaginations or everyday daydreams; what they are actually touring is their imagined or dreamed destination rather than the real one.

Second, it was observed in the introduction to this thesis that, with respect to the ways in which people in general exist in and make sense of their world, many scholars maintain that 'lumpy, fragile, aged, gendered and racialised' (Veijola and Jokinen, 1994) human beings dwell in, sense and ascribe meanings to the world (see Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Ingold, 2000), a process during which their 'lay knowledge' (Crouch, 2002: 210), memories and capabilities are acquired. At the same time, their performances of sensing and ascribing meanings to the world are well-rehearsed and influenced by numerous non-human factors, in particular various forms of technology (see Latour, 1993). In the specific context of this thesis, continual and rapid developments in

photography technology have, thus, been playing a central and fundamental role in shaping and tailoring the tourist gaze for almost two centuries (see Crawshaw and Urry, 1997: 180; Urry and Larsen, 2011: 162-163). As Urry and Larsen (2011) contend, acquiring images photographically has long been and remains not only a ritual in travel but also part and parcel of tourist gaze, thereby bestowing the nature of performativity on it.

Moreover, we now live in an era in which cameras have not only become digitalised but have also become universally 'married' to mobile phones and other e devices (see Gogin, 2006). As discussed in Chapter One, the wide utilisation of mobile phone cameras in people's everyday lives may have brought about the situation where result the tourist gaze has been de-exorticised and become more approximate to the 'everyday gaze'. Not only do people gaze upon and photographically frame something extraordinary during their tourist travels; they now gaze upon and capture photographically fleeting and unexpected moments in their everyday lives (Goggin, 2006:145).

On this basis, it could be argued that both Shepherd (2009) and Ong and du Cros (2012) have indeed identified the transcendence of the Chinese tourist gaze beyond the 'hermeneutic circle' (Urry, 2002:129). However, they do not address the two important questions below:

1. To what extent is such transcendence afforded by photographic practices and advances in photography technology?

2. Are there any other implications resulting from photography technologies on the Chinese tourist gaze, besides transcendence? For example, exoticisation?

Thus, the remainder of this section will, from a theoretical perspective, attempt to answer these two questions.

### 5.4.2 Tourist photographic practices and transcendence of the Chinese tourist gaze

According to previous studies (for example, Haldrup and Larsen, 2003, 2010; Larsen, 2005; Markwell, 1997; Scarles, 2009), it is maintained that photography can provide contemporary Chinese tourists with the opportunity to concretise, personalise, selectively express and even play with their experiential encounters, rather than just mechanically translating and recording the pre-engineered narratives about the toured

destinations, tourists sites and spectacles. To be more specific, tourist photography could in theory be, as Foucault (1982/1997: 225) has suggested, a 'technology of self', an argument supported by Garlick (2002), who regards the practice of photography as 'a way of relating to and producing a self according to what is allowed, and what is denied, by a specific mode of action'. Based on this, it could be contended that what is concealed is as significant as what is revealed in this visual process (Markwell, 1997). More often than not, that concealing and revealing process is closely related to the multiplicity of the tourist's motivations to photograph, typified by 'to stage / construct memories' (see, Crang, 1997; Markwell, 1997; Scarles, 2009; Yeh, 2009). For example, in his empirical work in Malaysia, Markwell (1997) identified that, in order to project the optimum or 'best' memory, participants declined to photograph disturbing sights, therefore denying part of the reality of rural Malaysia to those who viewed the photographs. Similarly, interviewees in Scarles's (2009) research also performed a certain degree of selectivity when taking a photograph of something desirable. Moreover, on occasion tourists are not only engaged in framing and capturing other images but also are themselves framed and actively posing in front of the camera (see Haldrup and Larsen, 2010: 145). Thus, through the acts of selectively framing and bodily posing, tourists' experiences are concretised, expressed, individualised and beautified.

Beyond this, digitalisation has to an extent transformed the camera from simply means of constructing memories, a tool to capture an image, into a 'toy' which enables tourists to play with tourism encounters and to experiment. More precisely, owing to the widespread availability and use of digital cameras and camera smart phones, not only have photographic images nowadays become dematerialised, immediately consumable and deleteable, but also camera/phone screens can be thought of as converged spaces of picturing, posing and consuming. Consequently, flexibility, experimentation and play can be applied to the staging of the tourist's 'self' or family and friends. Equally, visual engagement itself becomes playful, wilful and childlike (see Haldrup and Larsen, 2010:134-153). In addition, this kind of visual engagement has the potential to disrupt mental rationality (de Certeau, 1984; Thrift, 1997) and should not be exclusively established upon extraordinary objects or aspects of life. It can be illustrated by the details of the experience and feelings a Danish respondent shared with Haldrup and Larsen (2010: 141) during their research interviews in Istanbul:

> We would never have taken 700 photos, if we had an ordinary (analogue) camera. And this, I think is the cool thing about it (the digital camera), that you can play with in. There is probably only a few left, but at one time in a hotel I

took all sorts of crazy photos of myself in a mirror and it was really good fun. You can experiment much more…and this is partly because most of them will not be developed (printed). Most of it is rubbish-you are not very critical of the motifs. Of course you try to do a good job and make interesting compositions, otherwise you won't get good photos, but you experiment much more…It is a great joy.

From the above narrative, it can be seen that digitalisation of camera immaterialises photo images and saves the respondent money for developing photographs but, perhaps more importantly, endows the practice of photography with greater flexibility and wilfulness, since bad photographs can be deleted and retaken without any extra cost. Therefore, the respondent is able to play with the digital camera and take some 'crazy' and 'irrational' photos, and it is such playful and experimental attempts that provide him with enormous pleasure.

### 5.4.3 De-exoticisation of the Chinese tourist gaze

Similar to transformations to the nature of the Western gaze, it can be argued that the Chinese tourist gaze has also been de-exoticised and mobilised as the result of wide utilisation of digital cameras and camera phones both in people's everyday life and their tourist travels. As previously noted, camera phones enable people to capture the more fleeting and unexpected moments in their everyday lives, rather than (or in addition to) taking photographs during organised, non-ordinary events that are bracketed off from the mundane' (Goggin, 2006: 145). As Okabe and Ito (2003: 206) put it 'camera smartphone users tend to elevate otherwise ordinary objects and events to photo-worthy occurrences…As the mundane is elevated to a photographic object, the everyday is now the site of potentially news and visual archiving'. As discussed at the end of Chapter 4, this everyday photographic act might become a habit and perhaps 'accompany' (Chinese) tourists on holiday, and it is unlikely for (Chinese) people to only gaze upon and photographically frame something extraordinary in their tourist travels without paying attention to the emerged fleeting and unexpected moments of surprise, beauty and adoration (Goggin, 2006:145). Thus, the (Chinese) tourist gaze and (Chinese) tourist photography might become de-differentiated from their respective everyday counterpart.

### 5.5 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, a framework based on existing theory and the published research of a number of scholars, including Oakes (1998), Nyíri (2001, 2005, 2006, 2009) Arlt, (2006), Shepherd (2009) and Ong and du Cros (2012) was developed (see Figure 5.1)

that conceptualises the constituent elements of or influences on the construction of the Chinese tourist gaze. Returning to this framework, it can be seen that the Chinese tourist gaze is conceptualised as being shaped and authorised by three factors, namely, the dominant travel patterns in pre-modern China, institutions of the Chinese post-socialist state and technologies (in particular, advancing communication and photography technologies). As a result of the combined influence of these three elements, Chinese tourists not only treasure the consumption of pre-scripted meanings of the destinations being visited, but also embrace significant opportunities to transcend, play with and rewrite these consumed discourses. At the same time, it is argued or assumed that, similar to the evolving nature of the tourist gaze in Western societies, the Chinese tourist gaze might be also becoming de-differentiated from its everyday counterpart.

Given the conceptual basis of this framework, there is a need to evaluate or 'test' it in order to explore the extent to which it could encapsulate the gaze of contemporary Chinese tourists, especially when they are traveling overseas. After all, there can be no doubt that characteristics and behaviour of Chinese tourists are changing in this so-called post-Mao era (see Shepherd, 2009; Ong and du Cros, 2012) and, hence, their social tastes, gazes, acts of gazing and, indeed, their photographic performances may potentially differ from those explored and described in the preceding studies referred to above and in the previous chapter. Moreover, limited research to date has been devoted to identifying how Chinese tourists actually see, particularly when they are touring in overseas destinations where controls and restrictions emanating from the Chinese post-Socialist state are in all likelihood reduced to an absolute minimum. At the same time, and as discussed in Chapter 4, the increasingly extensive use of digital cameras and smart phones may also be influencing and changing the nature of their gaze. However there is a lack of empirical studies that investigate this issue. Therefore, the potential exists for the data and theories that underpin and underline the conceptual framework of the Chinese tourists gaze to be outdated and, perhaps, inaccurate. Thus, new data is required, especially in terms of the performative aspect of the Chinese tourist gaze.

# Section Two

# Methodology

# Chapter 6

# Research Methodology, Methods and Fieldwork

## 6.1 Introduction

Responding to the aforementioned insufficiencies of the concept of the Chinese tourist gaze established earlier in Chapter 5, two empirical investigations have been undertaken into how Chinese tourists gaze upon, perform and undertake their photographic practices at various destinations in the UK. In order to investigate and identify new realities and to access deeper, nuanced insights into the embodied performances, practices and processes of the (Chinese) tourists' experience (Scarles, 2010), this study employs the paradigm of Constructivism and the qualitative research method of visual autoethnography. In addition, when analysing the data generated from the fieldwork, supporting materials and data produced or collected during the fieldwork including field notes, visual images taken by and collected from the informants and also taken by the researcher himself were drawn upon. In so doing, more opportunities were realised to relive the tour(s) and interview settings, to further critically review and evaluate the subjectivity performed by both the researcher and respondents (see Lacan, 2004) and to access additional valid insights into their photographic performances. The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to introduce and consider in detail the research paradigm, the methodology and specific research methods employed, the fieldwork itself and the subsequent data analysis, and the relevant issues of the quality of data, ethical considerations and the limitations of this study.

## 6.2 Research Paradigm

Generally speaking, although there continues to be a lack of an unambiguous definition of the concept as originally proposed by Thomas Kuhn (1962) in his work *Structure of Scientific Revolution*, 'paradigm' could be defined as 'the basic belief system or world view that guides the investigation, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways' (Guba and Lincoln, 1998: 105). To a great extent, the selection of the research paradigm should precede that of the research method, as the latter is determined by the former (see Guba and Lincoln, 1998). As mentioned above, the research paradigm adopted in this study is Constructivism, which differs fundamentally from the three other mainstream paradigms of Positivism, Post-positivism and Critical Theory. Guba (1990) claims that despite the intricacies and

interconnections between them, these paradigms could be characterised by the way their proponents respond to three basic issues, these being questions of *ontology, epistemology* and *methodology*. These questions can be summarises as follows:

- *Ontology:* What is the nature of the 'knowable'? Or, what is the nature of 'reality'?

- *Epistemology*: What is the nature of the relationship between the knower (the inquirer) and the known (or knowable)?

- *Methodology:* How should the inquirer go about finding out knowledge?
  (Guba, 1990: 18; see also Hollinshead, 2004; Rakic, 2012)

Based primarily on Guba's (1990)'s work, this section introduces the characteristics of Constructivism and distinguishes it from the other three paradigms.

Fundamentally, Constructivists are ontological relativists and epistemological subjectivists. That is to say, constructivists ontologically tend to believe that social reality is multiple or plural rather than singular, and is universally created in individuals' minds. Epistemologically, they choose to take a subjectivist position. For Constructivists, subjectivity is not only imposed upon on individuals by the human condition but is also the only means of unlocking the construction held by individuals. In other words, since realities exist solely in respondents' minds, subjective interactions between the researcher and respondents that lead to co-created findings are the only process through which knowledge can be created (Guba, 1990; Guba and Lincoln, 2005; Rakic, 2012). With the aim of producing an as informed and sophisticated a construction (or more likely, constructions) as possible, Constructivist methodology comprises the two processes of hermeneutics and dialectics. According to Guba (1990), hermeneutics consists of depicting individual constructions as accurately as possible, whilst dialectics involves the comparing and contrasting of existing individuals' (including the inquirer's) constructions so that each respondent must confront the constructions of others and come to terms with them. *Table 6.1* (on Page 139) summarises the key distinctions between Constructivism and the other three traditional paradigms.

In this research, the photographs taken by respondents in a particular context of time and space during the course of their tour and discussed during subsequent interviews are not considered to be the representation of a singular reality on the part of the respondents. Rather, as discussed later, there are multiple realities on the part of both

the researcher and researched. These visual images introduced and discussed in the interviews thus became 'active agents'; that is, they represented 'gateways for merging reflexive subjectivities; the bridge that connects the researcher's and respondent's experiences as they emerge within the space of the interview' (Scarles, 2010: 8; see also Scarles, 2012). In short, through talking about the images during the interviews, knowledge could be co-constructed by both the researcher and respondents.

**Table 6.1:** Key paradigms for social research.

| Postivism | Postpositivism | Critical Theory | Constructivism |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Ontology** *(the nature of reality)* Naïve realism: reality is driven by unchanging natural laws; it can be discovered | Critical realism: reality is driven by unchanging natural laws, can only be partly perceived/discovered | Critical/historical/value/laden realism: reality is virtual, can only be perceived through prism of values | Relativism: realities are multiple, individually and collectively constructed, local and specific |
| **Epistemology** *(relationship of the knower and the known)* Objectivist: researcher is an objective observer, bias excluded, findings considered true | Modified objectivist: researchers strive towards a 'regulatory ideal' of objectivity, findings probably true | Subjectivist/transactional: value mediated and influence the findings | Subjectivist/transactional : findings co-created through interaction |
| **Methodology** *(theory and principles of inquiry)* Hypotheses/research questions, created and tested in controlled environment | Modified experimentation, more grounded theory, triangulation, significantly wider range of data | Dialogic/transformative/interactive, seeks to challenge and raise consciousness | Hermeneutical/dialectical, reconstruction of realities, aimed at generating one or more constructions through consensus |
| **Methods** *(tools within inquairy)* In the main qualitative | Along with quantitative, introduces more qualitative | Mostly qualitative/interpretation | Mostly qualitative/interpretation |

***Source:*** adapted from Guba (1990) and Rakic ( 2012)

Additionally, critical Constructivist social science generally emphasises both reflexivity and the possibilities of re-construction, as it is universally believed that the 'problem' of reflexivity (usually in the form of social movements) can lead to the development of

new forms of social relations (Botterill, 2001: 210). Influenced by this common belief, many theoretical models in the area of tourism have been reflexive and indeterminate, embracing subsequent transformations of studied tourism phenomena, caused by social movements or some other societal changes. For example, according to Botterill (2001: 210), when studying the relationship between tourism as a form of economic development and the environment, particularly touristic landscapes of mid-Wales, a PhD researcher at the University of Wales formulated a model that attempted to capture 'the reflexivity and indeterminacy inherent in the environment-economic development relationship'. In a similar vein, this research also focuses upon the reflexive and indeterminate nature of the Chinese tourist gaze that has the potential to be transformed by future societal and technological changes.

## 6.3 Methodology

As can be seen in Table 6.1 above, Constructivists tend to adopt qualitative methods to collect primary data. Similarly, this study also adopts qualitative research methods. Simply stated, qualitative research is defined as 'a type of research that produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification' (Strauss and Corbin, 1996: 10). Thus, although some of the data might be quantified, the bulk of the analysis is interpretative (Strauss and Corbin, 1996: 11). Denzin and Lincoln (2008: 14) propose that 'the word 'qualitative' implies an emphasis on the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured, in terms of quantity, amount, intensity or frequency', whereas quantitative research does focus, by definition, on quantity or other numerically measurable characeristics

These distinctions between qualitative and quantitative studies can be attributed to researchers' distinctive outlooks or worldviews. According to the 'five moments of qualitative research' proposed by Denzin and Lincoln (1998), early empirical research in the social sciences was almost exclusively informed by a positivistic natural science approach in which the social world being studied was considered to be a raw data source which remained static or fixed in time. Equally, the researcher was viewed as an independent, objective expert whose judgement determined the validity of findings (see also Phillimore and Goodson, 2004; Black, 1993). Thus, although there was evidence of initial developments in qualitative research, objective and value-free quantitative research remained dominant in social sciences, with researchers often seeking to separate the phenomenon being studied from the rest of the social world and, thus, to establish its meaning within what might be described as a contextual vacuum. At the same time, the generalisation of findings to the entire social world was

considered to be the principal objective, the intention being to extrapolate results to include entire social groups if, for instance, there was statistical evidence to suggest that, on the balance of probability, this was possible (Guba and Lincoln, 1998; Phillimore and Goodson, 2004). However, in the face of increasing criticism with respect to the nature and validity of the resultant knowledge (see Denzin and Lincoln, 1998), qualitative research methods have become progressively more popular, with researchers stressing the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, the value-laden nature of inquiry, and the situational constraints that potentially shape inquiry.

Nevertheless, the validity of qualitative research and its methods has equally been criticised by the proponents of quantitative procedures. Specifically, it is suggested that qualitative methods should only be described as constructive as exploratory studies requiring further validation by quantitative methods (Leininger, 1994). This point is supported by Bailey (1996: 21), who observes that 'qualitative, especially interpretivist approaches to human inquiry are so rife with threats to validity that they are of no scientific value. In the debate over legitimacy, the validity of qualitative research findings has become the most controversial issue'. However, it should be noted that criticisms with respect to the validity of qualitative research are primarily founded on the application of validity criteria that are typically used to evaluate the validity of quantitative studies. More specifically, the validity of quantitative research relies on the 'rigorous adherence to methodological rules and standards' (Angen, 2000: 379). Consequently, when these same rules are applied to qualitative research, problems arise. That is, when judged by the validity criteria of experimental procedures, interpretive work is considered to be too subjective, lacking in rigor, and / or unscientific and, as a result, is denied legitimacy (Mishler, 1990). In an attempt to address such issues, qualitative researchers have adopted a variety of responses from, at one extreme, applying quantitative criteria for validity to the other extreme of disregarding validity as an issue in qualitative approaches to research (Silverman, 1993).

Nevertheless, employing qualitative approaches to research offers a number of advantages, the most significant being that, according to Dann (1996: 42), it extends 'the full dynamics or richness' inherent in investigations in the social sciences. This argument is particularly pertinent for this thesis inasmuch as respondents' visual experiences manifested in their photographs cannot be easily classified into mutually exclusive categories that could be quantitatively analysed. Indeed, even if they could be, it is likely that much damage would be done to understanding their complexity and subtlety (Darlington and Scott, 2002: 7). Baloglu and Mangoluglu (2001) also have

pointed out this advantage of qualitative approaches by arguing that the use of only quantitative methods fails to capture the necessary richness of data. Thus, in order to capture the yet to be 'uncovered' ideas and to better answer the research questions, it is more appropriate to adopt the qualitative approach in this research.

## 6.4 The Research Methods

### 6.4.1 Introduction

As indicated above, this study employs visual autoethnography as the principal research method of data collection while the subsequent data analysis is undertaken within the framework of semiotics. The latter, semiotics, is a long established and well-rehearsed method of analysis; however, the former, post-modern approach of visual autoethnography, which is in effect an intersection of visual elicitation interviews and autoethnography, has enjoyed more limited use in tourism research. Thus, this section begins with an introduction to the qualitative research interview in general before going on to discuss visual elicitation, autoethnography and visual autoethnography respectively, with the emphasis being placed on evaluating the extent to which the visual stimuli and researcher's autoethnographic experience that are simultaneously introduced in the interview setting could enhance the dynamics of interaction between interviewer and interviewee, improve the asymmetry of power in the interview (Kvale, 1996: 20), and 'access and mobilise deeper, nuanced insights into the embodied performances, practices and processes of the tourist experience' (Scarles, 2010).

### 6.4.2 Interview as a qualitative research method

The alternative "traveller metaphor" understands the interviewer as a traveller on a journey that leads to the tale to be told upon returning home. The interviewer-traveller wanders through the landscape and enters into conversations with the people encountered. The traveller explores the many domains of the country, as unknown territory or with maps, roaming freely around the territory. The traveller may also deliberately seek specific sites or topics by following a "method", with the original Greek meaning of "a route that leads to the goal." The interviewer wanders along with the local inhabitants, ask questions that lead the subjects to tell their own stories of their lived world, and converses with them in the original Latin meaning of "conversation" as "wandering together with."

What the travelling reporter hears and sees is described qualitatively and is reconstructed as stories to be told to the people of the interviewer's own country, and possibly also to those with whom the interviewer wandered. The potentialities of meanings in the original stories are differentiated and unfolded through the researcher's interpretations; the tales are remolded into new narratives, which are convincing in their aesthetic form and are validated through their impact upon the listeners.

The journey may not only lead to new knowledge; the traveller might change as well. The journey might instigate a process of reflection that leads the interviewer to new ways of self-understanding as well as uncovering previously taken-for-granted values and customs in the traveller's home country...Through conversations, the traveller can also lead others to new understanding and insight as they, though their own story-telling, may come to reflect on previously natural-seeming matters of course in their culture...'
(Kvale, 1996: 4)

The above quotation sketches vividly what the qualitative research interview looks like from a postmodern constructivist's perspective. In sharp contrast to the 'miner metaphor', which treats knowledge as an independent entity that is out there and waiting to be uncovered (or 'mined') and by the 'miner' – that is, the positivist researcher – in an objective and 'uncontaminated' fashion (see Kvale, 1996: 3), the 'traveller metaphor' deems it to be a sort of social justification of belief which heavily relies on the interaction and conversation between the researcher as a traveller and the respondent as a local/inhabitant (see also Rorty, 1979).

Of course, generating knowledge from conversation enjoys a long tradition which can be traced back to Socratic dialogues in ancient Greece. Nevertheless, the contemporary qualitative research interview differs fundamentally from such philosophical discourse in a number of ways. More precisely, it can be seen from *Early Socratic Dialogues (*Plato, 2005) that in almost every dialogue, Socrates and his debater/partner are on an equal level and there is a reciprocal questioning of the logic of each other's questions and answers, as well as of the true nature of the knowledge being debated. Thus, each dialogue rests on a joint commitment of the participants to seek truth, which is largely defined in prescribed rules of argument (see Gadamer, 1975). In contrast, although the qualitative research interview equally involves a specific approach to and technique of questioning, it is relatively less structured and characterised by an asymmetry of power. That is, the researcher is in charge of the

one-sided questioning of a more or less voluntary and naïve subject. The conversation in the interview is, therefore, much less reciprocal than philosophical discourses (Kvale, 1996, see also Saunders *et al.*, 2009. As a consequence, the qualitative researcher/interviewer needs not only to pay attention to what the interviewee says but also to the interview context and the dynamics of interaction with the interviewee (see also Peterson and Langellier, 1997).

In his influential book *InterViews: an introduction to qualitative research interviewing*, Kvale (1996) identifies and discusses in details twelve aspects of qualitative research interviews, the purpose of which is 'to obtain descriptions of the lived world of the interviewees with respect to interpretations of the meaning of the described phenomena (see also Flick, 2009). These aspects can be summarised as follows:

*Life World*: The topic of qualitative interviews is the everyday lived world of the interviewee and his or her relation to it.

*Meaning*: The interview seeks to interpret the meaning of central themes in the life world of the subject. The interviewer registers and interprets the meaning of what is said as well as how it is said.

*Qualitative*: The interview seeks qualitative knowledge expressed in normal language. It does not aim at quantification.

*Descriptive*: The interview attempts to obtain open nuanced descriptions of different aspects of the subjects' life worlds.

*Specificity*: Descriptions of specific situations and action sequences are elicited, not general opinions.

*Deliberate Naiveté*:  The interviewer exhibits an open-ness to new and unexpected phenomena, rather than having ready-made categories and schemes of interpretation.

*Focused*: The interview is focused on particular themes, it is neither strictly structured with standardised questions, nor entirely non-directive.

*Ambiguity*: Interviewee statements can sometimes be ambiguous, reflecting contradictions in the world the subject lives in.

*Change*: The process of being interviewed may produce new insights and awareness, and the subject may in the course of the interview come to change his or her descriptions and meanings about a theme.

*Sensitivity*: Different interviewers can produce different statements on the same themes, depending on their sensitivity to and knowledge of the interview topic.

*Interpersonal Situation*: The knowledge obtained is produced through the interpersonal interaction in the interview.

*Positive Experience*: A well carried out research interview can be a rare and enriching experience for the interviewee, who may obtain new insights into his or her life situation. (Kvale, 1996:30-1)

Although they tend not to be completely open but to a greater or lesser extent structured, qualitative research interviews can be categorised broadly as either semi-structured or unstructured in-depth interviews, depending on whether there is a pre-determined list of questions to work through over the course of the interview – though the questions may vary from one interview to another, based upon the flow of the conversation (Saunders *et al.*, 2009: 321). Within in-depth interviews, where pre-set questions are normally absent, respondents may talk more easily talk freely about their experiences and opinions (Saunders *et al.*, 2009: 321; see also Taylor and Bogdan, 1984: 77). Indeed, semi-structured interviews may be a less effective way to 'find out what is happening and to seek new insights' (Robson, 2002: 59). Nevertheless, the fact that no prepared questions are used in unstructured interviews requires researchers to be formally trained and have more experience in communicating and counselling. If not, the interviewer may lose control of the interview.

Therefore, in order to maintain control of the interviews in the pursuit of the research objectives, semi-structured interviews are utilised in the two pieces of fieldwork in this study. At the same time, however, both the photographs taken and shared by the interviewees and the researcher's autoethnographic experiences are introduced into the interviews not least in order to both improve the dynamics within the interpersonal conversations and to respond to the asymmetry of power between the researcher and his respondents in the fieldwork. Thus, the characteristics and dimensions of interviewing with photos, or photo-elicitation, are now considered before the necessity of creating and employing visual autoethnography, whereby the researcher and his

first-hand experiences are introduced in the fieldwork and interview settings, is discussed.

### 6.4.3 Photo-elicitation

Photo elicitation, which may also be referred to as photo interviewing (Hurworth, 2003) or photofeedback (Sampson-Cordle, 2001), first formally appeared in a research report by Collier (1957), who employed this method as a solution to a practical problem in research. Specifically, the research teams were having difficulty in agreeing on categories of the quality of housing in the research area. When he inserted photographs into the interview setting as visual stimuli, Collier (1957) realised that the use of photographs sharpened the informants' memory and reduced the potential for misunderstanding. However, this visual approach did not immediately become popular following the publications of Collier's paper. Indeed, as Harper (2002) reveals, despite its long and widespread use in the areas of health, anthropology (Hockings, 1975; Collier and Collier, 1986) and sociology (Wagner, 1978), photo elicitation had not attracted much academic attention by the end of 1980s (see Harper, 1987, 1988, 1993, 1998, 2000, 2002).

This visual method may take two forms. On the one hand, photo elicitation may be researcher-led. That is, the photographs appearing in the interview are pre-selected (and preferably also taken by) the researcher (see Harper, 2002; Cederholm, 2012) according to established criteria relating to, for example, the number of photographs, their content and size, the style of their presentation and so on. On the other hand, respondent-led photo elicitation or volunteer/visitor-employed photography refers to the fact that the photographs used in the interviews have been taken by the respondents prior to the   interview, typically having received specific instructions from the researcher related to the purpose of the research project, such as the number of photographs, images of specific scenes or contexts, or photographing within a particular timeframe (Scarles, 2012; see also Markwell, 1997; Pink, 2001; Oliffe and Bottorff, 2007; Garrod, 2008; Scarles, 2009, 2010). Compared to the former, such a technique affords the respondents more authority (Cederholm, 2012), power and freedom of 'selectivity of content inclusion and exclusion, composition and framing enabling them to convey their subjective interpretations and experience of place' (Scarles, 2012: 73). In addition, with the increasingly wide use of digital cameras and multi-functional smart phones among respondents in their everyday life, travels or holidays (see Chapter 1 of this thesis), this elicitation method takes advantage of respondents' familiarity, comfort and confidence in photographing their individual experiences and encounters for research purposes. In other words, for tourists in

particular, both taking photographs during travel and sharing them with friends and families afterwards (though not necessarily on their return) are well-rehearsed rituals. Therefore, tourist respondents may feel more natural, comfortable and confident in taking these kinds of required photographs for the research and, in so doing, their attention is potentially diverted from the presence of the researcher and the research agenda (Scarles, 2010).

So, what role do photographs play over the course of an interview, particularly in the context of research into tourist photography? From the preceding discussions in Chapter 1 of this thesis, it is evident that tourist photography is not limited to being a disembodied practice encapsulated by Urry's (1990, 2002) 'hermeneutic circle', which suggests that what is sought by tourists is a set of pre-existing visual images that they encountered prior to their travel (see also Garlick 2002; Lanfant 2009). Rather, it is a highly reflexive and embodied activity which enables tourists to selectively record/reveal, or even play with what they have seen, smelt, tasted, touched and felt; they are able to rewrite prescribed discourses, and even to refigure their individual identities. Thus, photographs, as visual images, are arguably no longer 'static, distanced, and disembodied encounters with the world' (Scarles, 2012: 72; see also Pink, 2001); they can be used as active agents, as a focus for talking through their subjective meaning and the practices behind their creation of images. That is, these meanings and practices can be elicited through a discussion of the images (Crang, 2003; Scarles, 2012; Celerholm, 2012). Therefore, during the interview the researcher should put more emphasis on *how* and *why* the photographs are taken, rather than on *what* is depicted in them.

Indeed, talking about photographs which have been taken and selected by the tourist-interviewee encourages a more comfortable, reflexive, dynamic and vibrant discussion than would occur in an interview without the use of such photographs. More specifically, being allowed to select which photographs and what content to talk about, the interviewee is empowered and a basis of trust and confidence is established (Oliffe and Bottorff, 2007; see also Radley and Taylor, 2003; Cederholm, 2012) which may, in turn, encourage openness and self-disclosure on the part of the interviewee (Scarles, 2012). Moreover, while selecting and conversing through the photographs, not only is the interviewee encouraged to reflect actively upon their photographic practices, emotional feelings and related subjective meanings, but also to review their everyday situation and past experiences (Cederholm, 2012; see also Garrod, 2007). As a consequence, more comprehensive, deeper and richer responses may be generated than without the use of photographs (Garrod, 2008; see also Harper, 2002) whilst, given that inevitable

differences between the interviewer's and interviewee's interpretations of image-content will emerge, further discussions and reflections may also be stimulated (Scarles, 2012; Mackay and Couldwell, 2004).

Nevertheless, despite this enhanced authority of the interviewee, the fundamental role of the researcher in the process should not be ignored; the researcher should be regarded as an integral participant in the interview because, through his conversations with the interviewee, social reality/knowledge is collaboratively constructed (see Celerholm, 2012). Indeed, it is not appropriate for the researcher to bring a 'pure' mind (Veijola and Jokinen, 1994) to the fieldwork, and to simply listen and respond in a distanced way to the interviewee's narratives elicited from the photographs. Rather, as many have suggested (Veijola and Jokinen, 1994; Krieger, 1996; Adkins, 2002; Pink, 2007; Coffey, 2002; Crang, 2003), the researcher should not only take his 'lumpy, aged, gendered and racialised' body (Veijola and Jokinen, 1994) with him but also embrace his multi-sensory experience and subjectivity in the research setting.  In response to this call, Scarles (2010, 2012) has proposed visual autoethnography as an appropriate research method, representing not a conventional form of autoethnography but an intersection of visual elicitation and autoethnography. Therefore, in order to better explain this creative alternative visual method,   conventional autoethnography is introduced in the following section.

### 6.4.4 Autoethnography

> "Autoethnography" refers to writing about the personal and its relationship to culture. It is an autobiographic genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness…Back and forth autoethnographers gaze: First they look through an ethnographic wide angle lens, focusing outward on social and cultural aspects of their personal experience; then, they look forward, exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and may move through, refract, and resist cultural interpretations. As they zoom backward and forward, inward and outward, distinctions between the personal and cultural become blurred, sometimes beyond distinct recognition.' (Ellis, 2004:38)

Significantly there is no consensus over the definition of autoethnography. Indeed, it is fair to say that if a roomful of autoethnographers were asked to define this research method, it is likely that a roomful of, more or less, diferent responses would be recieved. Nevertheless, its essence and characteristics are neatly encapsulated in Carolyn Ellis' succinct description quoted above from her book *The Ethnographic I* (2004). It

suggests that not only does autoethnography mobilise the boundary between the *personal* and the *social* by blending the researcher's biographic *self* with the ethnographic *culture* being studied (see also Denzin, 1989; Ellis and Bochner, 2006), but also that it opens significant opportunities for the culture, a community, or a group of people's private lives and social world which otherwise are 'left out of social inquiry' (Ellis, 2004: 30) to be 'authentically' studied by 'insiders' (Reed-Danahay, 1997; Hayano, 1979). Nevertheless, it should also be recognised that other research methods, such as autobiography, also focus upon the author's *self* and personal *life*, However, in essence this genre employs them primarily for the purposes of self-representation and/or self-understanding rather than as 'a starting point or vantage point from which to explore broader socio-cultural elements, issures or constructs' (Cole & Knowles, 2001:16; see also Denzin, 1989:11), and this arguably distiguishes it from autoethnography being discussed here.

This combination of *personal/social* and *outsider/insider* dualism  primarily results from the crisis of authenticity and authority in traditional realist ethnographic studies in indigenous cultures. More specifically, numerous scholars during 1930s and 1980s, such as Hayano (1979), Strathern (1987) and Lejeune (1989), questioned the rigour of the authenticity of conventional realist ethnographic studies in indigenous cultures where the ethnographer, as an outsider, generated the data from the studied culture in a detached way (see also Deck, 1990). In response, they encouraged the development of a means of empowering the indigenous/native ethnographer, the native expert, whose first-hand knowledge of the culture arguably sufficed to lend both authority and authenticiy to the studies (Reed-Danahay, 1997). However, some others, such as Buzard (2003), doubt the authority and authenticity established by the native ethnograpger's voice and centrality in the research. They argue that, rather than being confined to one particular place, both people and cutures nowadays are constantly 'on the move' or, in James Clifford's (1992:96) words 'travelling'. Therefore, no ethnographer is believed to have 'the authority of speaking from an undisputed throne of insiderhood' (Buzard, 2003: 71), as he/she does not have access to all aspects of a culture and community (see also Clifford, 1992). Clifford (1992:96) has suggested that ethnography needs to be disassociated from the problematic preoretype of ethnographic traveller/immobile culture, and that it should become the study of individuals' trajectories through the world that is evolving as a result of various historical, political and economic pressures. Neverthelss, autoethnography, as one of sub-genres of ethnography, still remains based on that problematic dyad.

More precisely, although being 'native' is no longer considered to be a necessity

(Strathern, 1987), the autoethnographic researcher is still, first and foremost, required to become a 'complete member researcher' (CMR) (Anderson, 2006: 379-82; see also Ellis, 2004) or an 'insider' in the social world under study. Adler and Adler (1987: 67-84) usefully divide CMRs into two types: 'opportunistic' and 'convert'. Opportunistic CMRs may be born into a group, thrown into a group by chance (for example, through illness), or have acquired intimate familiarity through occupational, recreational or lifestyle participation. Whatever the case, group membership precedes the decision to conduct research on the group. Carolyn Ellis' (1995) *Final negotiations: a story of love, loss and chronic illness,* which documents her stressful and emotional experience of her younger brother's air crash and her lover's illness and death, represents a classic example of opportunistic CMR. In contrast, convert CMRs begin with a purely data-oriented research interest in the setting but become converted to complete immersion and membership during the course of the research. Benetta Jules-Rosette's *African Apostles* (1975) could well exemplify this.

Although being a CMR represents a valuable opportunity to get very close to the researched (Adler and Adler, 1987), it nevertheless endows the ethnographer with at least two roles to fulfill, as a researcher and a group member, thereby differentiating him from his peers in the research setting (see Strathern, 1987). In other words, unlike most members who are concerned solely with participation in setting activities, the autoethnographer must also, observe, record and analyse ongoing events and conversations (Anderson, 2006). Sometimes, the fieldwork may render the researcher 'near[ly] schizophrenic in its frenzied multiple focus' (Adler and Adler 1987, 70). Not only may this status of fulfilling dual roles cause tension for the autoethnographer, but it may also divert his attention from the embodied phenomenological experience. To illustrate, Hayano (1982: 150) experienced conflict between the demands of the fieldwork, such as his desire to 'keep on friendly terms with most of the players' in the card rooms, and his need to be an effective poker player so as to push his relationships with other players to the limit in fast, aggressive poker games (see also Anderson, 2006). In a similar vein, Wall (2008) experienced the tension between being an adoptive mother and a researcher in her autoethnographic study of adoptive parents' daily lives.

In addition to observing, documenting and analysing events and conversations, activities usually found on the traditional ethnographer's agenda (see Anderson, 2006), it is also necessary for the autoethnographer to be vulnerable enough to expose his own first-hand multi-sensory experience in the research setting to reflection and analysis, his being an integral element of the primary data source. As Atkinson *et al.*

(2003: 62) state:

> [Auto]ethnographers-as-authors frame their accounts with personal reflexive of the self. Their ethnographic data are situated within their personal experience and sense making. They themselves form part of the representational processes in which they are engaging and are part of the story they are telling.

In contrast, some other genres of social research, such as reflexive ethnography, also require realist ethnographers in the research to reflect introspectively upon their personal history, the sensory fieldwork experience, their relationship with informants in field, and the disciplinary and broader socio-cultural circumtances under which they work (Davies, 2008: 5). However, the purpose of this sort of self-examination is no more than to 'better represent, legitimise, or call into question their data' (Pillow, 2003:179; see also Tribe, 2004; Davies, 2008). Indeed, in Powdermaker's (1966: 115) opinion these realist ethnographers are afraid of becoming a CMR or 'going native'. More precisely, on the one hand, they collectively admit that conducting ethnographic fieldwork includes 'engagement in the lives of those being studied over an extended period of time' (Davies, 2008:5). On the other hand, it is deemed that being overly close to or too familiar with the researched people, culture and/or society is dangerous self-indulgence,  not only potentially confining their automony of researching in the field (see Miler, 1952; Delamont, 2009) but also perhaps leading to biased data (see Becker, 1970).

As a consequence, the personal impacts and emotions of fieldwork experiences are recognised while, at the same time, the realist ethnographer remains poised upon an interface between engagement and detachment, between familiarity and strangeness (Atkinson *et al.*, 2003:50). Moreover, nowadays they are encouraged to draft confessional tales in order to keep a record of personal fieldwork stories as well as of self-discovery in the research. However, these confessional tales are normally completely descriptive and  non-analytic, since such realist ethnographers are still very cautious when the subject of self is approached. Certainly, it is fair to claim that, on the surface, confessional tales may enhance the authenticity of research findings. Yet, in reality, those accounts may serve to isolate, rather than integrate, the self into the field (Atkinson *et al.*, 2003: 61).

Being a CMR, however, does not mean that the autoethnographer should not have interactions with other informants and reach beyond his 'self'. Otherwise, as many ethnographers (e.g. Rosaldo, 1993; Atkinson *et al.*, 2003) have warned, there is a

danger that the researcher falls into a trap of self-absorption, in which the self-absorbed 'self' loses sight of the ethnographic imperative that 'they are seeking to understand and make sense of complex social worlds of which they are only part (but a part nevertheless)' (Atkinson, Coffey and Delamount, 2003: 57). Hence, in many autoethnographic studies, not only does the researcher have conversations with other people but also carries out interviews with a certain number of informants. To demonstrate, David Karp (1996: 204) states that while each line of analysis in his *Speaking of Sadness* is initially guided by personal introspections, it is 'always disciplined by the data collected' in in-depth interviews. Similarly, in *Understanding Dogs*, Clinton Sanders (1999) not only incorporates rich autoethnographic observations on his interactions with his own canine companions, but also interviews nearly thirty other dog owners as well as veterinarians and guide dog trainers, and spends time in a veterinary hospital and in two dog training programs.

It should be noted here that autoethnographic interviews differ from conventional question-and-answer interviews in three principal ways. First and foremost, full membership of the group helps the autoethnographer to establish at least a basis of trusting, but also reciprocally sharing his own analysed life stories and experience with the informant during the course of the interview is essential, as it not only builds a more common grounds between the two sides but also encourages the interviewee to share personal life stories and experiences (see Ellis, 2004). To a great extent, obtaining 'accurate' responses and objectively recording them are far less important than actively co-constructing realities through conversations and stories' sharing.

Despite these established common grounds, however, there are inevitably some differences in the experiences and worldviews of the interviewer and interviewee. Therefore, second, apart from interactional and emotional dynamics within the interview context, the researcher should also reflect upon and analyse these differences that could contribute to an understand enhancedding of both his stories and the interviewe's (Ellis *et al.*, 1997). And third, compared with the conventional interviews, autoethnographic interviews are usually more complex, lengthy and time-consuming. Indeed some, such as the interactive interview, not only involves multiple interview sessions, each of which usually lengthy, but also requires an intimate context, which is more challenging to achieve (Ellis *et al.*, 1997). In order to effectively undertake this type of interview, therefore, the researcher must be flexible and aware of 'possible dynamics and open to improvisation and changing strategies along the way to better match the constraints and needs of the project' (Ellis, 2004: 68).

Since his 'self' and analysed experience is included in the autoethnographic story being told, it is logical that the autoethnographer's presence should be conspicuously visible in the research report, unlike the case in other forms of ethnographic text (see Clifford and Marcus, 1986), where the 'traditional ethnographer is largely invisible – a hidden and yet seemingly omniscient presence' (Anderson, 2006: 383). At the same time, this enhanced textual visibility not only demonstrates the researcher's extended engagement in the social world under study but also, in turn, demands that the researcher illustrates his analytic insights through recounting his own experiences and thoughts as well as those of others. Also, the researcher should discuss openly transformations in his beliefs and relationships that occur over the course of fieldwork, thus revealing himself as a person grappling with issues relevant to membership and participation in fluid rather than static social worlds (Anderson, 2006).

The form of autoethnographic texts may vary from one to another, depending upon the pupose and aims of a research. As Ellis and Bouchner (2006: 38) summarise:

> Usually written in first-person voice, autoethnographic texts appear in a variety of forms-short stories, poetry, fiction, novels, photographic essays, scripts, personal essays, journals, fragmented and layered writing, and social science prose. They showcase concrete action, dialogue, emotion, embodiment, spirituality, and self-consciousness. These features appear as relational and institutional stories affected by history and social structure, which themselves are dielectrically revealed through actions, feelings, thoughts, and language.'

Thus far, then it is suggested that, for the researcher, autoethnography requires complete/full membership of the group being studied, sustained reflexive attention to his position in the web of field discourse and relations, interactions with the informants and textual visibility of the self in ethnographic narratives. Since the 1990s, consensus has been achieved amongst autoethnographers with respect to these dimensions of this research method. However, one issue that has remained contested is whether an autoethnographic researcher should put the generation and generalisation of theories on his agenda. Consequently, autoethnography has been classified into two categories: evocative autoethnography and analytic autoethnography (Anderson, 2006; see also Ellis and Bochner, 2006). Anderson (2006) was the first to propose such a classification and it could be regarded as attempt to expand the dimensions of autoethnography and to introduce this alternative ethnographic method to the wider audience of realist ethnographers (Ellis and Bochner, 2006: 432).

More specifically, according to Anderson (2006: 387), in order to keep in line with traditional social research, analytic autoethnographic studies should also fulfil the data-transcending goal by utilising 'empirical data to gain insight into some broader set of social phenomena than those provided by the data themselves'. In contrast, evocative autoethnographers have no such commitment to an analytical agenda. Rather, they primarily employ data to document personal experience, to provide an 'insider's perspective', or to evoke emotional resonance with the reader. In the same year that Anderson's article was published, other autoethnographers, such as Ellis and Bochner (2006), responded by questioning his classification and, particularly, the data-transcending goal in the format of interactional and reflexive conversations. From the quoted fragments of their conversations below, the difference between these two types of autoethnography as perceived by Ellis and Bochner is revealed:

> "Well, I realize it's not fair to compare an article written for an ethnography journal to reports of looming disaster and loss, but debates about definitions and categories of autoethnography sure pale in comparison to lives being lost and the palpable suffering I can feel circulating through my body. The fact is that when I read Leon's article, I become a detached spectator. I become only a head, cut off from my body and emotions. There's no personal story to engage me. Knowledge and theory become disembodied words on the page and I lose connection. I want to linger in the world of experience, you know, feel it, taste it, sense it, live in it; but Leon wants to use the world of experience primarily as a *vehicle for exercising his head.*"

> "I know what you mean," Art acknowledges. "It's clear to me that the work we've been doing has a different aim than the work of the analytical ethnographers. We think of ethnography as a journey; they think of it as a destination. They want to master, explain, grasp. Those may be interesting word games, but we don't think they're necessarily important. Caring and empathizing is for us what abstracting and controlling is for them. As you just said, we want to dwell in the flux of lived experience; they want to appropriate lived experience for the purpose of abstracting something they call knowledge or theory." (Ellis and Bochner, 2006: 431)

Indeed, evocative autoethnography may be considered a post-modern method which not only questions the authority and possible generalisability of theories generated from the investigated and 'tamed' social phenomena, but also treats both the researcher and readers as human beings who also have not only intelligent *minds* but *bodies*. Hence, the collective goal of evocative autoethnographic research is to invite

the reader to tour, sense and to understand the studied experience or social worlds which still largely remain in an authentic status. Such understanding, in Ellis and Bochner's view, should be another form of analysis in social science. As their informative conversation continues:

"No wonder I have trouble explaining traditional analysis to my students," I say, shaking my head. "But I have just as much trouble explaining theorizing with a story to some of my realist colleagues. You and I agree that many successful autoethnographic texts are analytical. But we don't concur with Leon's restrictive use of the term 'analysis.' Leon's paradigm of 'analytical autoethnography' ignores or overlooks how stories work. He presumes there is only one main form of sociological analysis and implies that an analysis produces some sort of propositional or explicit statement or explanation of what things mean or how they should be interpreted, akin to the Discussion section of traditional research reports."

"I think the simplest way to state the differences between us is to refer back to Hannah Arendt's conception of storytelling as an activity which 'reveals meaning without committing the error of defining it'" (Arendt 1973: 107).

"I guess for some sociologists, theory always will be this categorical ideal that assumes one must always go beyond particular and immediate experience, you know, reach some conclusion about the human condition or something that holds true for all people at all time," I say.

Art nods. "It's just that impulse that Lyotard (1984) debunked in his critique of the 'master narrative.' The ideal was to get over this assumption that we could somehow reach a God's-eye view of nature and instead merely see what we do in the social sciences as continuing a conversation and thus to encourage multiple perspectives, unsettled meanings, and plural voices." (Ellis and Bochner, 2006: 438)

From the diologue quoted above as well as some other related works, it can be seen that the emergence of this divergence could be broadly attributed to the discourses of natural science which, as previously noted, have long influenced the research tradition of ethnography in the social sciences, especially in terms of its paradigm and research approaches (see page 140-141). Indeed, as a result of this tradition, many anthropologers and ethnographers still engage in mastering and theorising the social and cultural phenomena under investigation (see Buzard, 2003). Moreover, not only do

they consider story-telling to be insufficiently analytical but also, as mentioned above, they are reluctant to 'go native' (Powdermaker, 1966); the native ethnographer's voice is not necessarily regarded as fundamentally authentic but also it is suggsted that prejudice will arise from being overly familiar with and empathetic for respondents, thus resulting in biased data. In addition to these two criticisms, other objections have been raised to this innovative method. Specifically, autoethnographers are criticised for being 'lazy' narcissists or naval-gazers who concentrate primarily on their personal experience rather than spending sufficient time on observing social and cultural members (see Buzard, 2003; Fine, 2003; Delamont, 2007). Moreover, even though they are evocative, emotional and therapeutic, autoethnographic texts are still regarded as insufficiently aesthetic and artful. Consequently, some opponents, such as Moro (2006) and Delamont (2007), doubt whether autoethnographic stories have the capability of stimulating much interest on the part of the reader.

Despite these objections, autoethnography has been used increasingly widely in various disciplines in the social sciences and also employed by different scholars, with their emphasis varying on *auto*- (self), -*ethno*- (sociocultural connection), and –*graphy* (the application of the research process) (Reed-Danahay, 1997). To demonstrate, within tourism studies it is becoming more popular, particularly in terms of studying the embodied, emotional and poetic aspects of tourist experience (Noy, 2008) and investigating dimensions of subsistence markets (e.g. Spence, 2010). Noy's (2008) emphasis is on *auto*- (self), whereas Spence (2010) accentuates his connection with the tourism context in his study of MASAZI in Accra, Ghana. Moreover, and as noted earlier, in order to gain deeper and richer insights into tourist behavior and experiences, some tourism researchers, such as Scarles (2009, 2010, 2012) have even combined some elements of autoethnography – primarily the researcher's ethnographic 'self' and her combined observation and first-hand experience in the research setting (Scarles, 2009: 467) – with a visual method (the photo elicitation interview), thus creating an independent and innovative visual method: *visual autoethnography.* Following Scarles' work, the following section introduces and discusses this novel research method.

### 6.4.5 Visual autoethnography

As already observed, visual autoethnography is a 'young' method, not only because it was first proposed by Scarles' as recently as 2009 but also due to the fact that, since then, it has not yet been extensively employed in tourism research, although it is included in the tourism methodology book: *An introduction to visual research methods in tourism* (2012). Nevertheless, it is, arguably, a useful and effective means of unpacking and investigating the embodied, reflexive and emotional elements of

complex tourist behaviour and experience.

In her two papers and book chapter on the topic, Scarles (2009, 2010, 2012) does not provide a clear definition of this qualitative method. Rather, following clues in her explanations and discussions, it becomes evident that, resting on the intersection of visual elicitation and autoethnography, visual autoethnography can be regarded as Scarles' attempt to transcend the controversial textual representation of the autoethnographer's memory and first-hand experience, largely by subjugating them to discussion and reconstruction with respondents in photo-elicitation interviews. Putting it in another way, unlike conventional autoethnography (see above), visual autoethnography does not take the authenticity established by the researcher's positionality of being an insider for granted. Thus, it does not require the researcher to write reflexively and evocatively of his/her personal travel stories, alongside which the behaviour or experiences of respondents in the study can be described. Rather, it emphasises the requirement that the researcher's situated knowledge or first-hand testimony should be vocally shared, discussed and reconstructed with the respondent/interviewee during the course of the interview, preferably in response to visual stimuli, such as the photographs that have been taken by the respondent and introduced in the interview for elicitation purposes.

More specifically, as mentioned above, some scholars claim that the representation of the insider's voice appears problematic (see Pillow, 2003). Moreover, being a genuine insider throughout the fieldwork appears difficult to achieve, not least because the researcher sometimes has to be an outsider who also observes, records and analyses ongoing events and conversations (Crang, 2002; Anderson, 2006). Thus, visual autoethnography has the potential to successfully transcend the confining positionality of insiderhood, although the generated data might continue to be biased as the researcher is still very close to the culture and respondents in the field. To be more precise, although it does not demand 'extended, detailed immersion' or 'full membership' (Anderson, 2006) in order to 'facilitate an understanding of grounded ways of life and worldviews via observation' (Scarles, 2010: 909), visual autoethnography nevertheless requires the researcher to corporeally engage in the field/community together with the respondents, and to become a 'researcher-as-insider' (or 'researcher-as-tourist in the context of tourism studies (see Scarles, 2010:911)).

Indeed, being engaged in the field only makes the researcher's voice *par excellence a* part of the (rather than the exclusive)  data source. Accordingly, it does not preserve the power to single-handedly represent the social life under investigation. Hence, the

researcher is not only responsible for reflecting upon and analysing his/her first-hand experiences as the other (see Atkinson *et al.*, 2003; Pillow, 2003) but must also collect data from the respondents in the field. Here, it should be noted that reflexivity not only acts as a strategy for situating knowledge; that is, as a means of 'avoiding the false neutrality and universality of so much academic knowledge' (Rose, 1997:306). It is also instrumental in initially analysing the researcher's autoethnographic experience through linking it to literature and the socio-cultural context. Due to its embracing multiplicity and shifting identities, the authenticity established by 'insiderhood', which has been taken for granted for several decades by many autoethnographers (see Reed-Danahay, 1997), is de-constructed.

Furthermore, as an outcome of this duel positionality, the researcher is, on the one hand, able to use his/her testimony to heighten understanding of respondents' experiences; while, on the other hand, his/her autoethnographic experience is also an integral part of the data source, its understanding, analysis and even reconstruction, in turn, benefiting from respondents' stories. Christine Kiesinger (1998)'s autoethnographic research serves as an example. In her research, she reveals how the difficulties of describing the 'lived, emotional experiences' of a woman struggling with bulimia reflects on her own life history as a bulimic woman, directing her to 'reflexively connect our experiences in ways that use Abbie's life story to challenge and deepen my understanding of my own life, and my own experiences to heighten my comprehension of hers' (Kieinger, 1998: 72).

Within the specific context of tourism studies, significant opportunities are open to the researcher to not only observe and perform but also to experience the destinations sensually, socially and culturally and, usually, in a reflexive fashion. At the same time, the researcher may also undertake other supplementary activities in order to document the travel experience and to 'further engage with and understand the research environment and how it feels like to be a tourist' (Scarles, 2012: 79). Such activities typically include taking photographs, writing field-diaries, constructing video extracts, drawing, painting and collecting souvenirs, such as postcards. Scarles' (2012: 79) story of her research serves as a good example:

> During my own research, I spent weeks following the "tourist trail" around Peru: visiting the key tourist sites, eating the cuisine the tourists would be eating alongside other tourists in restaurant, talking with the local people from tour guides to villeges we met along the way. Likewise, I also took photographs (like other tourists) in order to document my travels.

As revealed and discussed later in this chapter, the author of this thesis also recast his 'self' and became an 'active agent' (Spry, 2001) or the object of research. Throughout the two fieldstudies he travelled, stayed, played, dined and engaged in photographic activities with his respondents, the purpose being that through such active doing, 'situated' knowledge (Hall, 2004: 137) and first-hand experience could be acquired. At the same time, in the field the researcher is equally responsible for analysing and reflecting upon his testimony. As he 'zooms backward and forward, inward and outward' (Ellis, 2004:38), the boundary between the *personal* and the *social*, between the *self* and the *other*, is mobilised (Ellis and Bouchner, 2006; see also Ellis and Bouchner, 2000; Scarles, 2010) and the author is, therefore, able to link what he is studying and who he is, two issues cannot be inherently separated from each other (see Krieger, 1996).

The interview in visual autoethnography inherits many of the characteristics from those in conventional authoethnography, as discussed above. To be more specific, during the interview, the researcher is no longer a realist listener, who passively 'seeks to mimic or attempt to replicate respondents' experiences' (Scarles, 2010:909), which reflect and even represent the assumed singular truth (see Davies, 2008). Rather, the multiplicity of truths is embraced and the interview 'space' is imbued with reflexivity and interaction, as both the researcher's and respondent's autoethnographic experiences are shared, relived and reconstructed through conversations grounded on the visual images presented during the course of interview. Instead of merely serving as vehicles either for generation of visual data (Ownby, 2013) or the researcher's own autoethnographic reflection (Smith-shank and Keifer-boyd, 2007; see also Eldridge, 2012), these visual images, to a great extent, 'offer gateways for merging reflexive subjectivities; the bridge that connects the researcher's and respondent's experiences as they emerge within the space of the interview' (Scarles, 2010: 8; see also Scarles, 2012). Consequently, insights into the performative, experiential and emotional world of tourists may be mobilised, rather than pure representations of the tourist experience (see also Noy, 2007), since both the researcher and respondent are able to articulate the intensities of individual's emotional feelings, memories and embodied performance through the visual images being discussed (Scarles and Sanderson, 2007). Nevertheless, it should be noted that as there are, perhaps inevitably, differences between the researcher's and respondent's worldviews and belief systems, the images may also evoke disagreements between subjectivities. However, such differences should not be of concern as they have the potential to further reveal the multiplicity of touristic performances that challenge discursive productions of the tourist gaze and imagination, thus 'further enriching research and respondent understanding of the

spectrum of encounters, emotions and feelings through which tourist experiences arise' (Scarles, 2010: 912; see also Ellis *et al.*, 1997).

Moreover, although the asymmetric power relationship between the two participants in the interview is further meshed (see Ellis, 2006), it is still usually the researcher who identifies a series of thematic priorities to be addressed and who guides the conversation to ensure that such issues are addressed (Scarles, 2010). Indeed, for the researcher, the ability to be flexible during the interview is crucial, as 'conversations engage both the researcher and respondent in a mutual process of non-linear improvisation, each offering or withholding remembrances, 'selectively sharing experiences as deemed appropriate' (Scarles, 2010: 910), and / or denying the other's viewpoint. Thus, interviews become fluid, dynamic and mutually responsive performances within which the unpredictable and the unexpected fuse with more apparent pathways of discussion.

Similar to conventional autoethnography, visual autoethnography also necessitates the unambiguous evidence of the researcher's presence – typically in the form of a first-person narrative (see Scarles, 2009) – in the final published research report, reflecting the fact that the researcher's body, experience and subjectivity is embraced by the research setting. In addition, as with analytical autoethnography, visual autoethnographic researchers also have the commitment to transcend collected data and generate theories (see Anderson, 2006). For example, going beyond the realities that she co-constructed with her respondents in her visual autoethnographic research fieldwork in Peru, Scarles (2009) proposes that her 'framework of visuality' comprises key visual 'moments' and 'devices' which, to some extent, reflect the fact that 'visuals and visual practice are not mere aides in the tourist experience, but emerge through fluid interplays that light up the process of becoming by instilling life and mobilising deeper affiliations between self and other' (Scarles, 2009: 466). Therefore, the final research report is usually written in a traditional academic format rather than one of the alternative, evocative styles referred to above, such as 'short stories, poetry, fiction, novels, photographic essays, scripts, personal essays, journals, fragmented and layered writing, and social science prose' (Ellis, 2004: 38).

This new qualitative method (visual autoethography) has yet been widely employed and, therefore, has attracted few, if any, well-grounded criticisms,from other members of the social scientific community. Nevertheless, some of its dimensions and characteristcs are likely to generate debate in future. Particularly, some researchers comfortable with conventional autoethnography may feel somewhat perplexed by the

significant emphasis placed on the ethnographic element of autoethnography, the rejection of the texual representation of researcher's first-hand experience, the requirement of sharing both the researcher's and respondents' testimonies at interview, and advocacy of a traditional academic writing format. More specifically, some may doubt the legitimacy of visual autoethnography, perhaps wondering what distinguishes this method from the interview in reflexive ethnography, since the latter also encourages the researcher to insert his/her personal experience and possibly visual stimuli into the interview setting, not only in order to develop empathy but also to 'challenge and contrast as another means of developing understanding' (Davies, 2008: 113).

Indeed, on the surface, the boundaries between visual autoethnography and reflexive ethnography are unclear inasmuch as, with interviewer's personal experience being shared over the course of interview, the two methods share some common characteristics and functions, such as enhacing the dynamics of interview conversation, stimulating a mesh of power relations and embracing the multiplicity of self and other in the interview process (see Spry, 2001; Atkinson *et al.*, 2003; Davies, 2008).

Nevertheless, it is worth noting  that visual autoethnography can still be considered an (alternative) autoethnographic method. Not only is the essence of this method the extending of sociological understanding by drawing in part upon the experience of the author/researcher (Sparkes, 2000: 21) but also it transcends representations and the realist agenda of decontexualising subjects and searching for singular truths, while the interviews in reflexive ethnography still adhere them (Spry, 2001), no matter how 'interactive' they may seem (see Davies, 2008: 110-9). As mentioned earlier, during the interview in visual autoethnography, the researcher is no longer is an 'information grabber' who strives to elicit and 'grab' those responses which reflect and even represent the assumed singular truth. Rather, a multiplicity of truths rests on the input of both participants in the interview, as not only the respondent but also the researcher possesses a wealth of rich insights into how the world is seen and lived (Cloke *et al.*, 2003). Through sharing and discussing, their life stories and first-hand experiences in the field are relived and analysed. Thus, the personal and the social are intersected, and the situated knowledge about the researched cuture, society and behaviours can be co-constructed.

Furthermore, some realist ethnographers who are more interested in either reflexive ethnography or conventional photo-elicitation interview may feel uncomfortable with the visual autoethnographer's inword-looking and over familarilty with the researched

culture, behavior and respondents. They might suspect that, as a consqunece, the data being collected in the field becomes biased (see Becker, 1970; Delamont, 2009). Nevertheless, the advantages of this innovative method, especially in terms of investigating the nuanced details of tourist behaviour, arguably outweigh these assumed limitations. As a consequence,  the author decided to adopt this method and to situate himself as a 'researcher-as-tourist' in the field.

## 6.5 The Fieldwork

### 6.5.1 Introduction

Since visual autoethnography as a research method requires the researcher's unambiguous appearance, usually in the form of first-person narrative, in the final report, henceforth the researcher will now use the authorial *'I'* and, on occasion, the existential *'we'* in this thesis  (Spry, 2001). As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, I carried out two separate fieldwork studies to investigate how Chinese tourists see, perform and undertake photographic practice in multiple destinations in the UK. The first study was based upon a seven-day package tour that I took part in along with eighteen other Chinese tourists. The tour was organised by a UK-based Chinese tour operator (the name of which is anonymised as agreed with the company) and visited a number of destinations around the UK, including Manchester, the Lake District, Gretna Green, Edinburgh, Loch Lomond, Loch Ness, Alnwick Castle, York, Birmingham, Cambridge, Stonehenge, Bath, London, Oxford, Stratford, Warwick Castle. Two months prior to departure, the tour operator had helped me by distributing research invitation letters to its potential adult customers (aged above 18) who intended to join this scheduled tour. Eighteen Chinese tourists (aged between 22 and 65) not only accepted my invitation but also subsequently participated as volunteers in the research.

From the responses generated in this first study, it was identified that the younger generations of Chinese tourists, specifically those who had been born in the 1980s or later, preferred a more relaxed travel schedule than offered by the tour. That is, most of them told me that they would have preferred to have had more time in each destination on the tour and, in particular, the opportunity to explore by themselves. To a great extent, their collective preference was different from that of the elder generations, who were found to more happy and comfortable the tight, organised travel schedule. Therefore, apart from 'surface level' distinctions that were revealed between the different generations of tourists, a question emerged that deserved further and deeper contemplation. That is, if the younger Chinese tourists shared some characteristics of

post-modern tourists, what would the landscape of their photographic practices look like?

In order to seek cogent answers to this question, I conducted the second study, in which I accompanied six Chinese friends (aged between 21 to 29) on a seven day holiday on the Isle of Wight in the south of the UK. Not only were these friends studying at University of Central Lancashire but also they were willing to act as volunteers in my fieldwork.

In both field studies, I was deeply situated in the research and, thus, became a 'researcher-as-tourist' (Scarles, 2009, 2010, 2012) who travelled with the respondents, stayed in the same accommodation, joined in their activities and took photographs with them. Below I explain in detail how these two field studies were undertaken. First, however, let me briefly introduce myself as the researcher, in particular, who I when the two field studies were carried out and how I had prepared for the studies beforehand, as these two factors might influence the results for the fieldworks.

### 6.5.2 Personal statement

At the time of the research, I was a male, twenty-nine-year-old, Chinese PhD research student in tourism, and also a solo travel and photography enthusiast who, by then, had lived in the UK for more than four and a half years. Looking back, it was my tremendous passion for both travel and photography that had led me to undertake this PhD study. That is, I was little aware of the meanings of the tourist gaze and tourist photography, at least, not until I had commenced the research for my Master's thesis at the University of Surrey, the topic of which was 'Understanding the tourist photography'. Certainly, that choice of subject was underlined by my interest and passion in travel and photography. Having been awarded my MSc, I decided to continue my journey of studying travel and photography, a decision that took me to University of Central Lancashire to undertake this study.

In turn, I also found that studying travel and photography was to a lesser or greater extent transforming my own travel patterns and behaviours. More specifically, I came to realise that that the more literature I reviewed on these interlinking areas, the more came to enjoy solo travel, which I found allowed me more flexibility and additional time to take a stroll, linger in a pub, explore the possibly authentic 'back regions' (Goffman, 1959) and *play* with my (conventional digital/smart phone) camera. Indeed, frequently I found myself immensely enjoying spending much time at a specific tourist place before sunset, looking at a beautiful view, raising my camera and composing a desirable

photograph partly by trying different angles. Sometimes, not only did the view (especially a sublime view) that I was gazing upon emotionally touch me, but it also inspired me to reflect on my own life and think about who I was as a person. This can be illustrated by the following quoted fragments from a diary entry that I wrote after a short break in Grasmere, in the English Lake District, which reveals that I was reminded of the mobile and ephemeral nature of my life which contrasted starkly with the eternal existence of the mountains and Lake Grasmere and with William Wordsworth's and an anonymous gentleman's death. As I recorded below:

It happened on the 27th January, when I travelled in Grasmere, the Lake District. As I recall, in that morning, I dropped in at St Oswald's Church, where William Wordsworth was buried. As soon as I entered into the churchyard, I heard that there was a service in the church building. I felt immensely curious about what the service was, so I attempted to get in. However, as I pushed the entrance door, a minister appeared. He informed of me that I was not allowed in, since it was a private funeral service for a gentleman.

With a hint of disappointment, I popped into a nearby cafe, ordered a pot of tea, took a seat by the window and gazed upon the mountain and the lake in the far distance. As the tea was brewing and the sound of church-clock chiming, my mind was also wandering between the church, the death, the ephemeral, and the mountain, the lake, the eternal. Suddenly, I realised that, from William Wordsworth's death to this gentleman's funeral, 163 years had already passed. During such a long period, not only had numerous influential events taken place but also myriad births and deaths on earth. Nevertheless, the mountain and the lake still remained there, without disappearing. At the same time, I suspected my own life was mobile and ephemeral as well, and I was no more than a drop of water in the ocean…'

Perhaps, here we are reminded of the fact, as discussed in detail earlier in Chapter 3 that the élite travellers in pre-modern China collectively tended to lament for this universal ephemeral nature of the human being's life. Therefore, they had a strong desire to immortalise their lives. But if the views they encountered made them realise that the occurrence of such immortalisation was infeasible, these sentimental Chinese were overcome with sad, negative feelings. It might seem interesting that, despite the significant transformations in mainstream ideology, as it is currently no longer featured by pre-modern Chinese philosophies, this type of sentiment and desire had passed down to me. This particular issue will be discussed in the next chapter.

At the same time, not only had I personally witnessed but also felt how the increasing accessibility to smart phones had transformed our photographic activities. As I recalled, roughly four years ago when I was still studying in Guildford, almost every individual (including myself) carried a digital camera when engaging in tourism, for then most mobile phones were not sufficiently technologically advanced to allow us to take photographs of a high quality. To illustrate, *Figure 6.1* below is a photograph taken by me four years ago in Guildford High Street, utilising my Blackberry Curve 9360. From this illustration, it is evident that the image of the beautiful black dog is not clear or sharp. To some extent, it parallels a photograph automatically shot by a surveillance camera. Thus, at that time mobile phones then were chiefly employed to capture fleeting or unexpected moments or objects that we encountered in our everyday lives, not to create high quality images. Hence, it was unreasonable for us to document our travels by using this insufficient photographic tool (see also Chapter 2).

In contrast, although conventional digital cameras continue to play a role both in shaping the landscapes of photography and the practice of tourism photography itself, I observed the blunt fact that there were an increasing number of tourists (and especially Chinese tourists) who preferred to use a multi-functional smart phone / tablet computer to take, edit and share photographs rather than using more conventional digital cameras, particularly as they were progressively cultivating the habit of viewing photographs on the screens of these mobile devices. Indeed, personally I have already become accustomed to carrying only my iPhone with me when I travel; I take photographs, which I subsequently improve or enhance simply by utilising filters



**Figure 6.1**: A photograph taken by employing
Blackberry Curve 9360 (Photo: the author)

provided by easily-available mobile social-networking apps, such as Wechat or

Instagram, and then sharing/posting them directly via these multi-functional platforms. Therefore, it was normal practice for me to use only my iPhone to satisfy my photographic needs during a personal trip to North Wales (see next section) as well as for the subsequent two field studies.

### 6.5.3 The trip to North Wales

Although I had much personal experiences in taking photographs whilst travelling / as a tourist, I nevertheless decided that it was necessary for me to take a short tour prior to commencing the first field study. Specifically, I felt it was important not only to test the feasibility and logistics of the field study design as well as the interview questions, but also to sharpen my skills of undertaking visual autoethnography, to initially explore what and how Chinese tourists gaze upon and take photographs of whilst travelling, and to consider what external and internal factors may potentially shape their photographic practices. Therefore, with two friends (one who was in his forties, the other in her twenties), I undertook a four-day trip to North Wales, a place where none of us had previously visited. We planned the trip together, primarily based on information from Tripadvisor and a Lonely Planet guidebook of Wales which I had bought three years previously on a trip to Cardiff and Swansea, South Wales. But, unlike that last tour to South Wales, this time I left my Canon digital camera at home and only took my iPhone 4 with me. And coincidentally, my two friends did the same. Yes! Smart phones began to take over, allowing us to take, edit and share photographs more conveniently.

**Table 6.2:** Schedule of the trip to North Wales

|  | Schedule of the Trip to North Wales |
|---|---|
| Day 1 | *Preston-Llandudno* |
| Day 2 | *Llandudno-Colwyn Bay* |
| Day 3 | *Colwyn Bay-Beaumaris* |
| Day 4 | *Beaumaris-Preston* |

As *Table 6.2* shows above, on the first day we travelled from Preston to Llandudno and toured this seaside town. For me, it was hardly the best time to visit the seafront, as the day was misty and windy. Moreover, Llandudno Pier seemed to have been highly commercialized, so we quickly tired of it. Thus, after a short stay at the mist-covered Pier, we walked to Great Orme. Walking along Great Orme Tramway gave us enormous pleasure, not only because the view along the tramway was delicate and picturesque, but also because of the fact that, as we walked, we were thinking, chatting, taking photographs, telling each other stories and occasionally joking with each other.

Personally, while I was walking, my mind sometimes also wandered, and I found myself thinking about some past travel experiences, about the British cottage culture that I had learned from Orvar Löfgren's (2002) *On Holiday*, and of the forthcoming empirical fieldwork. That evening, when we returned to the hotel where we were staying, I interviewed two of my friends. The interviews were based upon the collection of the pre-designed interview questions, our collective travel experience and a few photographs taken by them. Both before and after the two interviews I took field notes in order to record what happened, how I felt and what we chatted about on our first day's trip and photographic activities. For example, I wrote as follows:

> From the top of the hill, I took numerous memorable pictures [see *Figure 6.2*] of the unknown hill, locals' houses, the tram station, etc, especially when the dawn was approaching and the sunlight became much smoother than several hours before. I found that, for me, the moment of creating a beautiful picture was much more satisfactory and exciting than purely gazing upon the photogenic views. Those photos were my work, not a kind of visual device of recording/refreshing memories. Therefore, as these desirable works finalised, my disappointment largely disappeared.
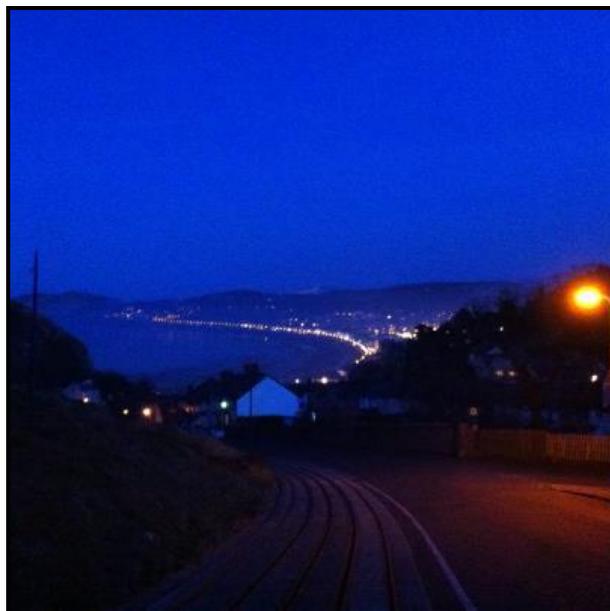


**Figure 6.2** Great Orme Tramway and Llandudno
Bay (Photo: the author)

On the second day we toured Colwyn Bay, and we then stayed in the elegant Beaumaris for another two days before returning to Preston. Overall, our travels on the last three days remained slow-paced and consistent with that on the first day. That is,

**Figure 6.3**: I felt I was a part of the sublime

sea view in Beaumaris (Photo: the author)

we didn't rush from one tourist attraction to another. Rather, as we found everything in the two destinations to be elegant and picturesque, our main activities became taking a stroll in town and playing on the beach. As I recall, when I was gazing upon the spectacular and sublime sea view from Beaumaris Pier (see *Figure 6.3* above), I gradually felt that I was connected to or even became a part of the eternal view. At that time, I thought that the most incredible gifts that God had rewarded humanity with were actually these breath-takingly beautiful views. Hence, in comparison to these views, the success I had achieved / would achieve and failure I had suffered / would suffer in my life were / would be too small to mention.

Also, in the course of walking and playing we sometimes raised our individual smart phones to capture the desirable (but not necessarily extraordinary) images of a castle, bird, ship, street, houses and beautiful views. In addition, from my personal experience and observations, we did not have to wait until returning home to share the photographs we had taken Rather, given the affordable availability of wifi / internet at the destinations, we all preferred to select and share our favouraite photographs with the remote intimate other, on site, via multi functional social networking mobile apps (see *Figure 6.4* on Page 169). Nevertheless, as I did not create a virtual space of group chat on Wechat (a social networking mobile apps prevailing among Chinese people), the circle of photo-taking and photo-sharing did not emerge in this trip (but, see Chapter 7).
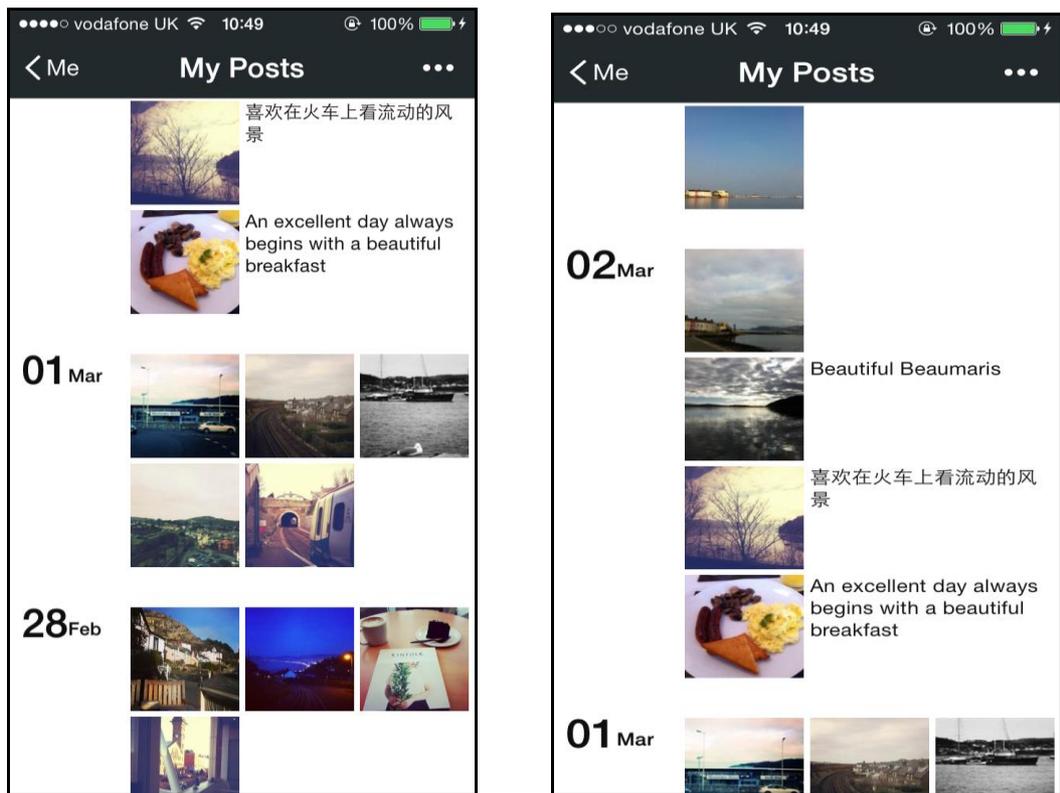
**Figure 6.4:** Some of the photographs I selectively shared
on my Wechat timeline during the trip to North Wales (Photos: the author)

Similar to the first evening, I interviewed my two friends at the end of each of the other three days whilst, at the same time, field notes were also kept. Following this trip, not only had I analysed what I had collected and recorded but also revised the interview questions and made further preparation for the following field studies.

### 6.5.4 The first field study

Although mass / organized tourism is not my preferred mode of travel, I decided to join a package tour, which would allow me access to a number of Chinese tourists of different ages on holiday in the UK. As I noted earlier, the seven-day package tour that I took part in for my first field study covered a total thirteen tourist destinations all over the UK (see *Table 6.3* (on Page 171) for more detailed travel schedule). One week before departure, the tour operator emailed each person participating in the tour a very brief travel schedule leaflet, which included a short introduction to each destination we were supposed to visit. There were virtually no photographs of the destinations on the leaflet, which consequently did little to visually excite us (or at least, me).

On the first day, armed with my iPhone 4 and a small suitcase, I joined the tour along with my fellow tourists at Manchester Coach Station. After a brief greeting from the travel guide, we headed for our first destination: the Lake District. The journey took us

approximately two hours and, on the road, whether in order either to entertain us or to compensate for the limitations of the leaflets, the tour guide recommended to us some visitor attractions/scenic spots, including Bowness Pier and Dove Cottage. She also provided the relevant historical and cultural background to the area, though mainly by reading prepared materials. On arrival at the destination, I realised that the guide was not obliged to direct us to all of the recommended scenic spots in person. Instead, she allowed us to explore the destination on our own, on the pre-condition that we agreed to regroup at a particular place and time. Over the following six days, it emerged that the tour guide would adopt the same strategy as on the first day. That is, over the course of long bus ride to a specific destination, she would provide introductory information and make recommendations of at least two visitor attractions / tourist spots in the destination, without the necessity of corporeally guiding us on arrival. Therefore, to some extent, there was much less control over our movements than the researcher Nyíri and his companions experienced on their package tour to Jiuzhaigou Reserve in China (see Nyíri, 2006). Nevertheless, the travel schedule was still extremely tight, as normally we were only allowed approximately thirty minutes to explore each smaller destination, such as Stonehenge. Conversely, at larger destinations, such as Cambridge or Edinburgh, the tour guide gave us more time, but still around an hour and forty minutes. As a result, the opportunities to stroll freely in the destinations were extremely limited.

Owing to the fact that I was used to (and preferred) slow-paced, leisurely solo travel, during this field study I felt both mentally stressed and corporeally tired in the face of such an excessively tight travel schedule. Sometimes, after a two or three hours' ride, I was truly reluctant to descend from the tour bus. Nevertheless, for most of the time, either because of my commitment to the research or my personal interests, I was quite delighted to see, feel, sense and take (at least) a photograph of the visited destinations and sights we encountered, along with the other tour goers. In particular, when I gazed quietly upon Loch Lomond, took a cruise on Loch Ness and strolled along a street in Edinburgh, I felt quite calm and spiritually refreshed and all of my accumulated fatigue and stress suddenly, though temporally, disappeared, though it was a shame that the visits were so brief. At the same time, since I was a 'tourist-as-researcher' (Scarles, 2010), I had to strike a balance between enjoying and researching the tour *per se*, critically reflecting upon my own first-hand touristic and photographic experiences, observing some of the research participants' photographic behaviours, and looking for opportunities to chat with them apart from the interviews. These deliberate attempts at reflection, observation and chatting certainly influenced to some extent my own enjoyment and travel and photographic activities, as I had to shift my focus frequently

between touring the destinations and analysing respondents' and my experiences of travelling and taking photographs. At times, I even suspected that my engagement with this tour was, on the whole, shallower than that of the rest of my fellow tourists.

Each evening, once we had checked into a hotel, I conducted semi-structured photo-elicitation interviews with two to three participants with whom I had previously made an appointment. Each interview was recorded by using my Sony digital audio recorder. And it lasted between forty minutes and one hour, during which the interviewee selected some photographs that he/she had taken (the number of the shared photographs was usually 3 to 5); we discussed and exchanged our autoethnographic experience based upon these presented visual images. Immediately as an interview was completed, I not only kept notes of what happened in the interview, but also began to transcribe the recorded conversations, in order to avoid 'a build-up of audio-recordings and associated transcription work' (Saunders *et al.*, 2009:485). Although all interviews were undertaken in the hotels that we were staying in, the place of the interview varied from one interview to another, from hotel lobbies and bars to the interviewee's or my hotel room. The selection of the interview sites were made primarily on the principles of flexibility and the interviewee's willingness and agreement.

**Table 6.3:** The travel schedule for the first field study

| No. Of the Day | Schedule of the Packaged Tour |
| --- | --- |
| Day 1 | *Manchester-The Lake District-Gretna Green-Edinburgh* |
| Day 2 | *Loch Lomond-Loch Ness* |
| Day 3 | *Edinburgh-Alnwick Castle-York* |
| Day 4 | *Birmingham-Cambridge* |
| Day 5 | *Stonehenge-Bath* |
| Day 6 | *London* |
| Day 7 | *Oxford-Stratford-Warwick Castle-Manchester* |

Over the course of these interviews, I identified the fact that both my first-hand experience and the interviewees' photographs undoubtedly increased the dynamics and reflexivity of the conversations between interviewees and myself, in three specific ways. First of all, potentially as it was their habit to talk to someone else about their personal travel photographs (see Scarles, 2009, 2010, 2012; Cederholm, 2012), almost all the interviewees appeared to feel very comfortable and confident with revealing to me the feelings, experiences and stories behind the photographs they showed to me. Indeed, during the interviews many of them naturally associated the experience they were telling me about with a similar one they had experienced during a previous tour. To illustrate, immediately after the interviewee JP50 had described to me

how, at the British Museum, she had witnessed an effective way of organising and teaching children (see Chapter 8 for more detail), she immediately then told me about a tour that she and her daughter and had made to a famous cathedral in Vienna. She told me that not only were many eminent Austrians buried in churchyard, but also the graves of many ordinary Viennese citizens' were to be found there, a fact that had I contributed a sense of equality and liberty felt by her and her daughter. In addition, she revealed to me that she was very fond of visiting churches and cathedrals, as she found the decoration of churches or cathedral buildings to be highly elegant and beautiful, conveying a sense of solitude and purity. This honest and willing revealing of past experiences and emotions seemed to be strikingly different from Ong and du Cros' (2012: 742) concern that Chinese are so careful and nervous about being researched that they tend to alter and tailor their responses. Indeed, because of these concerns, rather than vocally communicating with Chinese tourists on their travels in Macau, the two researchers preferred to employ a virtual ethnographic method, analysing the tourists' travel blogs 'from a [virtual] distance'. However, Ong and du Cros' (2012) concerns were based upon the responses of some Chinese citizens' when, in his research, Rosen (2004, 2009) asked them for their opinions on some sensitive political issues. Telling travel storiesis, perhaps, naturally more relaxing and easy than revealing political opinions and so Ong and du Cros' concerns were rather unfounded.

Second, during the process of telling me their touristic and photographic experiences, it was evident that the interviewees increasingly conveyed more confident 'photo voice' (Warren, 2005), as the photographs they shared in the interviews not only repositioned them in places and moments that the photographs were taken but also encouraged them to reflect upon their corresponding experiences, senses and feelings. Actually when they were describing their feelings, a few interviewees, such as VP45 and MP26, occasionally even closed their eyes and spoke with a happy and sometimes peaceful expression on their faces. It was as if they that they had're-entered' into the photographs again. In the same vein, while the interviewees were talking, I also looked at their photographs and reflected upon how I felt and what I was doing then.

Certainly, my reflected feelings and first-hand experiences were not necessarily the same as the interviewees', most likely owing to the inevitable differences in our worldviews and belief systems (Scarles, 2010: 911). Indeed, the third point is that when I shared my personal feelings and experiences with them, the vast majority of the interviewees did not remain silent. Rather, I found that differences we discussed encouraged them to reflect further upon their personal experiences and then further

discuss the gap(s) with me. Consequently, through our conversations and exchange of ideas, I found myself accessing the nuanced multiplicity of Chinese tourists' gazes and photographic performances.

Nevertheless, the openness of the respondents remained more or less related to the environment of trust and intimacy established for the interview. That is, although I had successfully gained cognitive access to the respondents, all of whom were more than willing to share with me both their photographs and experiences/stories, their degree of openness during the interview varied from one respondent to another. Of course, the extent to which an interviewee opens up to the interviewer partly depends on the interviewee's personality and the way he/she is asked questions (see Kvale, 1996). However, over the course of the interviews, I found that the trust and intimacy built up between interviewee and myself as interviewer still played a significant role. Specifically, during the first field study, I found that the respondents who were most open with me during the interviews were those with whom who I had had frequent conversations and hence, who had come to trust me.

From the responses I received during the interviews, I also found that there was a distinction between different generations of my respondents. More specifically, like me, those respondents in their twenties revealed that, had they had the opportunity, they would have preferred to have undertaken 'slow' travel in some of destinations, such as Loch Ness village, Edinburgh and Cambridge. Particularly, respondent *YS26* in the first interview told me that he would have preferred to have stayed in these three places for a few days. Thus, in order to identify and investigate his travel and photography experiences when the pace of travel was slower and he had more time to explore a specific destination, on the fifth day, rather than complying with the rigid travel schedule established by the travel agency, I deliberately made a change and explored Bath with interviewee *YS26* for a whole afternoon. More precisely, rather than being hurried to those scenic spots recommended by the tour guide on the bus (*YS26* did not want to visit them either), *YS26* and I spent a long time at a restaurant which was just opposite the Roman Baths. We had a slow meal, drank good wine, enjoyed the sunshine and listened to the beautiful English music. All of these activities, so familiar to me in my more usual mode of travel, contributed a deep sense of happiness and contentment. Equally, YS26 also felt tremendously excited, and he kept telling me that he felt refreshed and 'alive' again. In the evening, we went back to the hotel (in London) to join our fellow tourists and, on the following day, I interviewed YS26 again following this enjoyable slow-paced travel experience.

### 6.5.5 The second field study

In order to address the aforementioned question regarding the nature of younger Chinese tourists' photography practices, with six Chinese friends I planned a seven days' holiday to the Isle of Wright. All of the six had been born in the second half of 1980s (and, hence, were between 25 and 30 years of age) and, at the time, were studying at the University of Central Lancashire. Despite there being many other signature destinations in the UK to choose from, such as Scottish Highlands, the Isle of Wight was eventually chosen as our destination, for three main reasons:

*1. A common wish to travel there*: When I was planning the second field study, I initiated an informal survey or 'opinion poll' within the circle of my Chinese friends who were then studying in the UK, in order to find out which British destination most appealed to them. Surprisingly, perhaps, the Isle of Wight was the top selected destination in the UK. Many friends informed me that, over the years of their studying in the UK they had been to most of the signature destinations in the UK, apart from Northern Ireland and Isle of Wight. As North Ireland was felt to be insecure, they preferred to make a tour to the Isle of Wight. Indeed, at the end of the interview, respondent CS22 in particular voiced her appreciation of being able to have a short holiday there with the group. Equally, it was also my personal desire to travel to the seaside for a few days in the middle of summer.

*2. Suitability for undertaking the research*: The Isle of Wight is rich in cultural and natural heritage Consequently both the respondents and I would have plenty of opportunities to undertake many diverse travel and visual activities, including playing on the beach, enjoying stunning natural views, taking a stroll in the old village, taking photographs in various elegant gardens, tasting wine and cider, and visiting the culture-rich Osborne House and Carisbrooke Castle. I considered that studying these activities would generate many insights into the gaze and photographic practices of the younger generation of Chinese tourists.

*3. Travel expenses and safety*: Checking on websites, such as the official *Visit Isle of Wight* site, I found that the total travel costs were reasonable – and all six frienfs were happy with the cost. In addition, I consulted two friends who originated from Isle of Wight, and they informed of me that the Isle was very safe.

This time, compared with the first field study, I intentionally organised a much more relaxing and flexible travel schedule, with visits to Osborne House, Rosemary Vineyard, Sharon Orchard, the Needles, Light House, Shanklin Old Village and Carisbrooke

Castle arranged for the second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth days respectively (see *Table 6.4* on Page 176). For the rest of the time, we could have relaxing meals, convene evening parties, and play on the seashore. The tourist attractions were selected primarily on the basis of information provided on the *Visit Isle of Wight* official website. Also, the selection was made because I believed those attractions would not only stimulate my respondents' interests but would also be easy to reach by public transport from Sandown where our hotel was located, thus guaranteeing that sufficient time would be spent at each tourist site.

Before departure, I had never expected that this holiday would be bonded by smart phones so heavily, not only because all of us coincidently solely employed our personal smart phones to take photographs, but also due to the fact that we spent hours and hours chatting and sharing photographs via the mobile 'screen'. Even today, I still remember on the train from Preston to Sandown, when I was passing through a swaying succession of carriages, I saw all of my friends staring at the screens of their smart phones, without having face-to-face conversations with each other. At that time, I feared that I would have been excluded had I not taken my smart phone along with me. Also, later on when we were on the Isle of Wight, we played a smart-phone-based game of photo-taking and photo-sharing (see Chapter 7 for more details), which was thought to have given us even more pleasure than the diverse visitor attractions did. Nevertheless, at least to me, the natural and cultural heritage could not have been substituted as it was that that which attracted me and my friends to travel there. Moreover, as discussed in the next chapter, Sandown beach, which was near to where we were staying, came to serve as a gigantic playground for many of us to play and run wildly. Therefore, parallel to the Victorian tourists who originally became interested in the seaside as a tourist destination (Löfgren, 1999; see also Chapter 2 of this thesis), we still sensed the destination in an multi-sensory fashion, in spite of our frequent gazing on and, sometimes, playing with the destinations, through our mobile 'screens'.

Every evening, based on my reflections of my first-hand travel, photography and observing experiences, fieldwork notes were written. Moreover, during and after the trip I carried out a semi-structured photo-elicitation interview with each of the informants (see Collier Jr & Collier 1986; Banks 2001; Harper 2002), in which the interviewee and I spent about one and a half hours talking about our individual experiences as well as discussing about six photographs taken and presented by the interviewee. From the outset of this field study I had some concerns that my friends might be influenced by what they thought I would want to hear in interview (see Scarles, 2012: 84) – that is, they would say what they felt they should say, rather than being open and honest.

Alternatively, I was concerned that they might deliberately take photographs which they thought would be instrumental to my research rather taking photographs as they normally would. However, the environment of trust and intimacy that we had established long before the field study proved to have deepened our interview conversations about our communal travel and photographic performances. Moreover, perhaps not surprisingly, these friends were, overall, much more open and willing to reveal their personal sentiments than any of the respondents in the first field study.

**Table 6.4:** The travel schedule for the second field study

|  | **Schedule of the Tour** |
|---|---|
| Day 1 | *Preston-Sandown* |
| Day 2 | *Osborne House* |
| Day 3 | *Rosemary Vineyard & Sharon Orchard* |
| Day 4 | *The Needles & Light House* |
| Day 5 | *Shanklin Old Village* |
| Day 6 | *Carisbrooke Castle* |
| Day 7 | *Sandown-Preston (dropping at Guildford for a wonderful lunch)* |

Having introduced the two field studies, I think it remains necessary for me to devote a brief section to introducing the younger generations of Chinese tourists. Not only will they comprise tomorrow's mainstream Chinese tourists but also they are the generations that are most influenced by the opening-up policies and economic reforms initiated by the post-socialist Chinese government since 1978. Indeed, during the two field studies I realised I was not by any means the only younger generation Chinese tourist who was touring but, at the same time, suffering the pressures and anxiety of work and an uncertain future. That is, many of my peers revealed in conversations with me that they share these concerns. Thus, who are the younger Chinese generations?

### 6.5.6 Understanding the younger generations of the Chinese

The younger Chinese generations referred to here primarily comprise those who were either born in the 1980s or 1990s. In the mainstream Chinese media, they are named respectively as 'Ba Linghou' (八零后) – that is, people were born in the 1980s – and 'Jiu Linghou' (九零后) – those born in the 1990s. These two generations are those that have followed the enforcement of China's one-child-policy. Therefore, in last two decades they have been under the attack from Chinese media and academia, being characterised as a 'me-culture' (Rosen, 2009; Sima & Pugsley, 2010; Zimmerman, 2010) and criticised for being dependent, rebellious, cynical, pragmatic, self-centred and equality-obsessed (Rosen, 2009; Sabet, 2010; Sima & Pugsley, 2010). Moreover,

these younger Chinese are said to have fuelled widespread middle-class aspirations and consumption practices (Wang, 2005) or given China its first generation of sedentary couch potatoes addicted to internet-surfing, online gaming, American fast-food and Hollywood movies (Rosen, 2009).

However, as people these generations are growing up, they are progressively suffering huge pressures from both Chinese society at large and from their families, particularly in terms of the conflicts in fulfilling the role of breadwinner for their families, attempting to advance in their careers and achieving social goals (see Zimmerman, 2010). Compared to their parents and grandparents, they are more willing to adopt a more independent mode of travel and to try something new (for example, backpacking) whiklst, according to some studies (Shepherd, 2009; Lim, 2009; Ong and du Cros, 2012), cyberspace plays a significant role in the younger generations' travel organization and decision-making, their travel experiences and their sharing of photographs. Moreover, owing to the extensive usage of smart phones discussed earlier, the significance of such technology is rapidly growing.

## 6.6 Data Analysis

Typically, the task of data analysis in qualitative research commences at the data collection stage, when the researcher not only selectively observes what is going on in the fieldwork but also listens and responds analytically to the spoken and written narratives of the informants. This is certainly the case with this research. Following *The Six Steps of Analysis* (see *Figure 6.5* on Page 179) as suggested by Kvale (1996), over the course of the two field studies I had already commenced the analysis of both the respondents' and my own visual experiences and photographic practices. This is not to suggest that my experience-reflection, field notes' writing and conversations with the respondents were just analytical in nature. Rather, unlike some other qualitative researchers who 'put primary energy into data collection for weeks, months, or even years and then retire from the field to "work over their notes" ' (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 50), I also transcribed the interviews I had recorded and undertook initial interpretation and analysis of the transcripts and my field notes while the field studies were evolving. Besides avoiding a build-up of audio-recordings and associated transcription work to be undertaken later (Saunders *et al.*, 2009), another advantage of such action is the fact that there may be additional opportunities for the researcher to identify gaps and to develop new ideas during the fieldwork. Hence, the research can be redirected in order to address such (see also Saunders *et al.*, 2009). Indeed, as noted above, in the course of the first field study I identified differences between younger and older generations of Chinese tourists with respect to their travel

preferences and photography practices. Accordingly, I decided to develop a second, alternative field study to investigate further this touristic phenomenon.

The transcription of taped interviews is also, to some extent, an analytical process, inasmuch as the transcriber must select a suitable means or strategy of transcription in order to carry out this activity effectively and to fully answer the research question. Transcripts, in essence, are not an original presentation of realities. Rather, they are 'artificial constructions from an oral to written mode of communication' (Kvale (1996: 163) for given purposes. This constructive nature reflects the fact that transcription may vary from one context to another, following a series of judgements and decisions.

In order to reveal deeper, richer and nuanced insights into the embodied and emotional photographic performances of Chinese tourists, I intentionally retained repetitions, silences, pauses and emotional aspects of the conversations, such as 'tense voice', 'laughter', 'giggling', and 'sighing', in the transcripts. At the same time, I condensed and summarised some of the parts that were of limited relevance to the research. In addition, as all of the interviews were conducted in Chinese, the transcripts were also written in that language. Each recording of an interview was listened to at least three times during transcription in order to minimise inaccuracies arising from mishearing and the noise in the interview environment (see Saunders *et al.*, 2009). Once the transcripts were completed I translated them into English, maintaining all the emotional aspects.

Referred to above for subsequent analysis. I then emailed a full electronic copy of each transcript (both in English and Chinese) to the relevant respondents for final checking, in order to enhance the factual accuracy and reliability of these written texts (see Kvale, 1996; Miles and Huberman, 1994). Some respondents did in fact respond, asking that I further clarify and explain some elements of their narratives, whereas others did not respond at all. After checking with the respondents, I progressed to Step Four of the analysis (see Figure 6.5) by de-contexualising and re-contexualising the transcripts.

Although computer software programmes, such as Nvivo, are of course available for qualitative data analysis, I decided not to employ one for fear that I would be, to some degree, detached from the data. Rather, analysing the qualitative data manually, employing colour-coded post-it notes and a pen, enabled me to not only tour, sense, taste and feel the transcripts, but also to reflect on the interview situations as well as my own travel and photography experiences. Accordingly, I chose to manually conduct the analysis.

The first step is when **subjects describe** their lived world during the interview. They spontaneously tell what they experience, feel and do in relation to a topic. There is little interpretation or explanation from either the interviewees or the interviewer.

A second step is where the **subjects themselves discover new relationships** during the interview, see new meanings in what they experience and do. For example, a pupil, describing the effects of grading, comes to think of how the grades further a destructive competition among pupils. The interviewees themselves start to see new connections in their life worlds on the basis of their spontaneous descriptions, free of interpretation by the interviewer.

At the third step, the **interviewer, during the interview, condenses and interprets** the meaning of what the interviewee describes, and 'sends' the meaning back. The interviewee then has the opportunity to reply, for example, "I did not mean that" or "That was precisely what I was trying to say" or "No,that was not quite what I felt. It was more like…" This dialogue ideally continues till there is only one possible interpretation left, or it is established that the subject has multiple, and possibly contradictory understanding of a theme. This form of interviewing implies an ongoing 'on-the-line interpretation' with the possibility of an 'on-the-spot' confirmation or disconfirmation of the interviewers' interpretations. The result can then be a 'self-correcting' interview

For the fourth step, the **transcribed interview is interpreted by the interviewer**, either alone or with other researchers. Three parts of this analysis may be discerned; first, **structuring** the often large and complex interview material for analysis. This is usually done today by transcription and by programs for computer analysis of qualitative material. The next part consists of a **clarification** of the material, making it amenable to analysis; for example, by eliminating superfluous material such as digressions and repetitions, distinguishing between the essential and the non-essential. What is essential and non-essential again depends on the purpose of the study and its theoretical presuppositions. The **analysis proper** involves developing the meanings of the interviews, bringing the subjects' own understanding into the light as well as providing new perspectives from the researcher on phenomena. Five main approaches to the analysis of meaning are condensation, categorisation, narrative structuring, interpretation, and ad hoc methods.

A fifth step would be **a re-interview**. When the researcher has analysed and interpreted the completed interviews, he or she may give the interpretations back to the subjects. In a continuation of a 'self-correcting' interview, the subjects get an opportunity to comment on the interviewer's interpretations as well as to elaborate on their own original statement.

A possible sixth step would be to extend the continuum of description and interpretation to include **action**, in that subjects begin to act from new insights they have gained during their interview. The research interview may in such case approximate a therapeutic interview. The changes can also be brought about by actions in a larger social setting such as action research, where the researcher and the subjects together act on the basis of the knowledge produced in the interviews.

**Figure 6.5:** Six Steps of Analysis

More precisely, for the convenience of subsequent deeper analysis, first of all I de-contexualised and further condensed each transcript by taking the following five steps:

  i. First, I read through the interview again to get the sense of the whole;

ⅱ. Second, I determined the natural 'meaning units' as expressed by the respondent in the interview (Kvale, 1996: 194);

ⅲ. Third, I identified the theme that dominated a natural meaning unite, and I kept it as simple as possible;

ⅳ. Then, I interrogated the meaning units in terms of the specific purposes for the study;

ⅴ. Finally, the essential themes of the whole interview were combined together into a descriptive statement. By so doing, the entire interview story was transformed into a more condensed and coherent form.

The field notes were also condensed through a similar process. Once I finalised reading and re-reading all of the transcripts, I organised them in a hierarchical system, with similar themes categorised/grouped together to form higher-order general themes.

In his influential book, *Research Interviewing: context and narrative*, Mishler (1986, 1991) argues that interviews can be treated as narratives with temporal, social and meaning structures. Indeed, every transcript in my research could, in a sense, be thought of as a collection of the interviewee's and my own travel/photography stories which narrates what we did, what we saw and how we felt at specific times and in specific places. In order to gain deeper insights and to enhance the reliability of findings, it was also necessary to re-contexualise these stories, by associating them with numerous other materials collected during course of the field studies, such as my field notes, leaflets, souvenirs and photographs that I had taken and received. In addition, however, apart from the descriptive statement of each interview (see step five above), I also developed a succinct, coherent but rich story of the field studies as a whole, which opened up more opportunities for me to study, at a longitudinal level, how each individuals' travel and visual experience (including mine) unfolded over the course of the tour. At the same time, therefore, I was also able to compare different individuals' experiences at a specific place on the horizontal level. These longitudinal and horizontal studies not only enabled me to understand more comprehensively both the respondents' and my own gazes, visual experiences and photographic practices, but also further identified a handful of new themes as well as inter-connections among the stratified existing themes. Subsequently, by referring to both the reviewed literature and the aforementioned supportive materials, such as photographs, produced and collected over the course of the fieldwork, I was able to go beyond what I had observed,

experienced and been told and to interpret / analyse thematically the constructed stories and condensed narratives by theme.

These then are the procedures that I followed to analyse the interviews from each field study fieldwork. Once I had completed the analysis of all the interviews, I then conducted a cross-fieldwork study, comparing the results and identifying the inter-links between the data from each of the two field studies. During the course of the whole analysis process, fundamental frameworks were developed which paved the way for the subsequent conceptualisation of the Chinese tourist gaze (see Chapter 8).

## 6.7 Quality of Data: Transferability, Dependability, Credibility, Confirmability and Authenticity

### 6.7.1 Introduction

Despite the fact that I conducted the data analysis in a systematic way, the quality of qualitative data, or the 'truth about tourism' (Tribe, 2006), should be scrutinised. Qualitative analysis can be evocative, illuminating and masterful, but sometimes it might be wrong, especially when the researcher's judgement plays an unquestionably dominant role in the whole process. Indeed, there is a long-standing research tradition (Goldberg, 1970; Meehl, 1954) demonstrating that human judgements are consistently less accurate than statistical/actuarial ones. In order to respond to this limitation, positivists have proposed the fusion of generalisability, reliability, validity and objectivity to assess the extent to which qualitatively generated knowledge and conclusions could gain readers' or other researchers' confidence and trust. However, these long-standing conventional criteria have been criticised by many other researchers for their potency in hampering 'a creative and emancipatory qualitative research' (Kvale, 1996:231; see also Braddbury-Jones, 2007). Moreover, since Constructivists deny the existence of a single truth in the world as well as the one-to-one correspondence between knowledge and a pre-existing truth, they see no reason to use positivism-rooted criteria to judge the quality/goodness of their work.

As a consequence, Lincoln and Guba (1989) have developed several alternative or parallel criteria, such as trustworthiness and authenticity, to fulfil this purpose of judgement/evaluation. More specifically, rather than the positivistic criteria of generalisability, reliability, validity and objectivity, they suggest trustworthiness criteria that emphasise the transferability, dependability, credibility and confirmability of qualitative data (see also Holloway and Wheeler, 2010). To some extent, to guarantee the trustworthiness of qualitative research is to ensure its methodological soundness

and adequacy. However, according to Guba and Lincoln (1989: 245), this alone is not sufficient, arguing that methodological soundness and adequacy do not ensure that 'stakeholder constructions have been collected and faithfully represented'. Thus, they add the criteria of authenticity in order to guarantee that the intent of the inquiry effort can be achieved (see also Holloway and Wheeler, 2010). In this study, I will employ these four criteria to evaluate what I have collected, analysed and found.

### 6.7.2 Transferability

George Herbert Mead (1913, 1925) famously articulated the phrase 'taking the perspective of the other', which has since been widely cited in academic circles. Despite the fact that Mead himself never specified the meaning of this phrase, some, such as Gillespie (2006: 253), interpret it to mean that 'Self generalizes Self's own experience into the perspective of Other'. Certainly, If Self and Other are usually embedded in the same social structure, and if Self and Other exchange positions within that social structure, both Self and Other accumulate equivalent experiences and are thus able to take each others' perspectives to some degree (Gillespie, 2006).

More generally, 'taking the perspective of the other' has become a common habit in our daily lives although in many cases, our perspectives and others' are not actually in congruence (see Lundgren 2004; Shrauger and Schoeneman 1979). This long established habit is also widely rehearsed in science and the social sciences, where researchers frequently question the extent to which the knowledge and rational laws they have generated could be generalised (see Saunders *et al.*, 2009). However, many qualitative researchers in the social sciences are concerned that, if one of the aims of a study were to generalise findings, then the theories generated would turn out to be time- and context-free. At the same time, Lincoln and Guba (1985) have claimed that this type of universal generalisation to all people, classes and social worlds as advocated by positivists is generally infeasible, given that it very much depends upon the researcher's imagination (see Ford, 1975), hypotheses and assumptions of determinism (see Wolfe, 1982). Therefore, rather than focusing upon statistical generalisation, transferability encourages researchers to check the similarity between the social context that they are about to investigate and that where the study that they refer to has been undertaken or, in Guba and Lincoln's (1989: 241) words, 'the similarity between sending and receiving contexts'. In this study, by specifying the research context and supporting evidence and making the argument explicit, I enable readers, to an extent, readers to evaluate this kind of similarity (see also Yin, 1994; Kvale, 1996).

### 6.7.3 Dependability

As a parallel to reliability, dependability refers to the consistency of research findings (Kvale, 1996), or the extent to which other researchers would reveal or generate similar information if they were carrying out identical research (Saunders *et al.*, 2009; see also Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2008). Although the inclusion of the researcher's own experience potentially reduces the dependability of a visual autoethnography study, this could be compensated for by making sure that the processes of interviewing, transcribing and analysing are all reliable or dependable. To be more specific, according to Kvale (1996: 144), a reliable interview requires that the meaning of what is said is interpreted, verified and communicated by the time the tape/digital audio recorder is turned off. In order to achieve this, the interviewer should know what he is interviewing about, as well as why and how.

In my research, by introducing the combination of visual images, myself and my first-hand experiences into the research setting, my understand of my 'self' as well as the interviewees' responses was greatly enhanced (see Krieger, 1996). At the same time, the multisensory experiences that I shared with them in individual interviews encouraged my respondents to reflect critically upon their own experiences. Thus, the stories and narratives they shared with me became much richer and more reliable. Moreover, not only was I able to adjust the tone and the flow of our conversations in response to changes in the subjects' linguistic styles, emotion and facial expressions, but I also carefully worded the interview questions in a causal way to encourage respondents to related= their travel and photography stories confidently and naturally.

With regard to the transcription of interviews, although I neither engaged a fellow researcher to independently transcribe my recorded interviews, nor checked their dependability via a computer programme (see Saunders *et al.*, 2009), when all interviews had been transcribed, as noted earlier I sent the transcripts to the respondents for a dependability check.

Of course, in contrast to statistics, narratives are much 'fatter' and can display multiple, ambiguous and obscure meanings. Hence, in principle, sound and reliable analysis / interpretation would require a number of independent interpreters to encode and interpret the same transcribed statement. Then, the results of their interpretation and coding could be compared and tested and, in so doing, 'a certain control of haphazard or biased subjectivity in analysis is possible' (Kvale, 1996:208). In practice, however, such a process is usually infeasible and, thus, I have outlined explicitly here the process of analysis.

### 6.7.4 Credibility

Credibility represents to the positivistic criterion of validity, which is concerned with the truth of the findings. Normally, a valid argument should be sound, well grounded, justifiable, strong and convincing (Kvale, 1996), its validity typically being judged against one or more of the following criteria

1. *Correspondence criterion*: does a knowledge statement correspond to the objective world?

2. *Coherence criterion*: to what extent is the statement consistent and internally logical?

3. *Pragmatic criterion*: what are the practical consequences of the knowledge statement? (Kvale, 1990: 238)

However, the Constructivist's rejection of one-to-one correspondence as a basis for confirming the validity of the research findings points to alternative approaches to the validation of qualitative research, as follows:

First of all, attention shifts from verification to falsification. That is, the quest for 'absolute, certain knowledge' is replaced by a 'conception of defensible knowledge claims'. Validation becomes the process of selecting from competing and falsifiable interpretations, of testing and proffering arguments for the relative credibility of alternative knowledge claims (Polkingborne, 1983). Hence, here validation comes to rest on the quality of *craftsmanship in research* (Kvale, 1996: 240)

Second, coherent and pragmatic criteria of truth come to the foreground. Method as a guarantee of truth dissolves whilst, with the social construction of reality, the emphasis is instead placed on the discourse of the academic community. *Communication of knowledge* thereby becomes important, with aesthetics and rhetoric entering into scientific discourse (Kvale, 1996: 240).

Third, according to Kvale (1996) the contemporary mania for legitimation is receding and in its place there is an emerging focus on *pragmatic proof* through action. 'The legitimation of knowledge through external justification by appeals to some grand systems, and the modern fundamentalism of securing knowledge on some undoubtable, stable fundament, lose interest' (Kvale, 1996: 240-1), Justification of knowledge is substituted by application in influencing social and human's *actions*.

As a researcher who adopted Constructivism in this study, I unambiguously concentrated upon the quality of my *craftsmanship* and *credibility* – that is, 'the match between the constructed realities of respondents (or stakeholders) and those realities as represented by the evaluator and attributed to various stakeholders' (Guba and Lincoln, 1989: 237) – during investigation, continually checking, questioning and theoretically interpreting the findings. Despite having had previous experience of conducting photo-elicitation research, as i noted earlier, I sought to improve my skills in visual autoethnography and to enhance my credibility prior to the start of the first field study, by traveling in North Wales, introspectively analysing my own travel and photography experiences and sharing them with my two Chinese companions. Also, over the course of data analysis for my two field studies, I consistently checked and questioned the findings as well as the generated theories in order to guarantee the soundness of this study. In particular, I weighed up the evidence and evaluated the potential influences I had imposed on the research through the supplementary materials. After the completion of my analysis, I discussed the findings, knowledge and conclusions with my supervisory team and also presented them on a scheduled school seminar. Although sometimes my supervisors / fellow researchers and I had conflicting views towards a specific issue, credible and trustworthy knowledge was constructed in our argument (see Guba and Lincoln, 1989: 238-9).

### 6.7.5 Confirmability

Confirmability might be regarded as a parallel to the conventional criterion of objectivity (Guba and Lincoln, 1989: 242). As an analogy to objectivity, confirmability refers to 'assuring that data, interpretations, and outcomes of inquiries are rooted in contexts and persons apart from the evaluator and are not simply figments of the evaluators' imagination' (Guba and Lincoln, 1989: 243). In my thesis, the details of the research and my background as well as personal feelings are open to public scrutiny. It means that the reader can follow my path and the ways in which I have arrived at interpretations of what my respondents told me and my constructions of knowledge and theories (see Holloway and Wheeler, 2010:303). Thus, confirmability in this study is not an issue.

### 6.7.6 Authenticity Criteria

As previously mentioned, a study can be considered authentic when the respondents' ideas are truly and fairly reported (Holloway and Wheeler, 2010:304). In my two field studies, I employed the following instrumental strategies to strenthen the authenticity of this study:

*Fairness*: I was fair to my respondents by gaining their full acceptance and consent throughout the whole of the research.

*Ontological authenticity*: This means that 'those involved, readers and participants, will have been helped to understand their social world and their human condition through the research' (Holloway and Wheeler, 2010: 304). Over the course of the fieldwork, I realised that many respondents were curious either about the topic of tourist photography or their photographic performances, as they frequently asked me related questions. In addition to patiently answering their questions, I recommended to them a few relevant books, which were not only easy to follow but also could provide them with some insights into tourist photography and tourists' photographic behaviours.

*Tactical authenticity*: As noted earlier, respondent-led photo-elicitation and the exchange of first-hand experiences over the course of the interviews in this study empowered the respondents. Therefore, tactical authenticity can be guaranteed.

*Educative authenticity* and *catalytic authenticity*: Educative authenticity refers to the fact that, 'through understanding, participants improve the way in which they understand other people', whereas catalytic authenticity indicates that 'decision making by participants should be enhanced by the research' (Holloway and Wheeler, 2010: 304). Although I was unable to investigate this issue, I would hope that the two field studies fieldworks might enhance respondents' respect other people, particularly by asking their permission to take a photographs of them, as not everybody is willing to be photographed by strangers.

## 6.8 Ethical Considerations

Full ethical approval was applied for and granted by UCLan's Research Ethics Committee. It is also worth noting that, although the issues of consent, anonymity and confidentiality that were taken into account during the design of the research (see Wang and Redwood-Jones, 2001; Saunders *et al.*, 2009), four critical ethical concerns were addressed in this study, particularly in terms of photo-taking, photo-sharing and photo-dissemination

First, although they never stated it, the informants' visual experiences and photographic activities were potentially influenced by the invitation to participate in the research. This is also one of the intrinsic limitations of doing visual autoethnography, as discussed below. More precisely, respondents might become particularly conscious when photographing and making sense of some images in which they had little interest

but suspected might be useful for the research. As a result, their engagement in the journey, to some extent, might be restrained. Indeed, some researchers, such as Brandin (1999) indeed have encountered with this phenomenon. Finding that that one of the respondents photographed a particular image because he believed it was important for the research. To minimise this type of influence, I frequently informed the informants before and during the fieldwork that they could withdraw from the research freely whenever they felt that their participation made them feel unnatural or constrained their enjoyment of the trip.

Second, although that I had informed the respondents prior to scheduling interviews with them that the research and interviews would explore their personal experiences and, hence, would address issues beyond simply discussing aesthetically pleasing photographs (see Scarles, 2012). However, it was evident that many were still concerned about their photographic skills and the quality of the photographs which they had taken. Sometimes, while sharing their photographs during the interview, they looked at me with a rather perplexed facial expression and admitted to feeling unskilled in photography. At this point, not only did I normally compliment them on their photographs but also emphasised the insignificance of the aesthetic quality of the images. In so doing, I identified that they became more confident and comfortable in their photo-sharing. In a similar vein, they might also have been concerned about their ability to 'properly' express their individual experiences, feelings and emotions. Therefore, during the interviews I offered them more time to structure their expression, and sometimes I helped them with looking for a 'proper' word when they seemed to have troubles in finding it.

Furthermore, as the shared photographs (particularly those with images of the participants) might be published with the thesis, it was necessary for me to gain copyright for the use of images, by signing an image consent form with them (Scarles, 2012). Thus, I was required to impart to them the various implications of disseminating those visual images in ways which they could fully comprehend (see Wile *et al.* 2008), including the fact that the images might be commented upon and interpreted in unexpected ways. Nevertheless, when including some photographs in the thesis, I adjusted the size of them so that the individual in the photographs would be less identifiable.

Last but not least, it was possible that some respondents might have captured images of children, without the knowledge of their custodians (see Markwell, 1997; Scarles, 2009). Therefore, as the research was conducted in the UK, it was necessary for me to

disclose to the respondents in advance that it is illegal to photograph children in a public place without their guardians' permissions, as specified in *The UK Photographers' Rights Guide* (Macpherson, 2009).

## 6.9 Limitations

### 6.9.1 Introduction

The limitations of this research fall primarily into two categories: limitations of the paradigm and limitations of visual autoethnography fieldwork, the latter intersecting with ethical issues discussed above.

### 6.9.2 Limitations of the paradigm

A paradigm, in essence, represents a distillation of what we think about the world. Our research strategy and action are heavily built upon this foundation. However, while paradigms are thus enabling, at the same time they are also constraining. As Patton (1978: 203) observes:

> A paradigm is a world view, a general perspective, a way of breaking down the complexity of the real world. As such, paradigms are deeply embedded in the socialisation of adherents and practitioners: paradigms tell them what is important, legitimate, and reasonable. Paradigms are also normative, telling the practitioner what to do without the necessity of long existential or epistemological consideration. But it is this aspect of paradigms that constitutes both their strength and their weakness – their strength in that it makes action possible, their weakness in that the very reason for action is hidden in the unquestioned assumption of the paradigm.

### 6.9.3 Limitations of visual autoethnograpic fieldworks

Apart from the advantages of visual autoetnography as discussed earlier in this chapter, there are also several limitations of this visual approach, as discussed by Scarles (2012: 90) and summarised as follows:

1. Respondent-led photographs introduced to interviews are inevitably context-specific, illustrating particular practices and experiences in moments that are both spatially and temporally abstract.

2. Although respondent-led photographs and the researcher's first-hand experience to some extent enhance the dynamics, criticalness and vibrancy of the interview

setting, the respondents' artificial voice and false memories may still emerge, since research participation raises their consciousness about their environment and activities. 'Respondents can therefore perform and share experiences according to selective memories as they revisit memories and experiences to suit their current identity' (Scarles, 2012: 84; see also Rosen, 2009). In the first field study, I found a number of respondents who occasionally signified the photograph they were communicating about. To demonstrate, HP45, who was an enthusiast in arts and literature, described to me in the interview how the view in the photograph was so tranquil, mellow and picturesque that it reminded her some poems that she had learned in secondary school. Her response appeared suspicious and false, as the view she was describing was actually of a field near the car park where we were chatting and waiting to get on the tour bus. The noisy environment was unlikely to have provided her with a sense of tranquillity.

3. As mentioned earlier, responses might be particularly tailored to meet the assumed researcher's expectation, or respondents are likely to alter responses in order to 'present themselves in their best light' (Scarles, 2012:.84).

4. Besides their concerns about limited photographic skills, some respondents, when asked to describe their personal feelings and emotions, might feel unsure about their ability to convey verbally conveying what they have experienced. For example, when one respondent attempted to described his feelings and emotions about dining in a square in Bath, he seemed slightly frustrated when trying to find the appropriate words.

It should also be noted that the necessary involvement of the researcher's personal experience might undermine the reliability of a study. It also prevents the employment of this method in research which demands a certain distance between the researcher and researched (see also Anderson, 2006). Therefore, when considering using visual autoethnography, a researcher should not only evaluate whether he/she possesses the appropriate skills to use this research method, but also recognise its limitations and assess the extent to which the research question(s) will be answered accordingly.

### 6.10 Chapter Summary

To sum up, informed by the paradigm of Constructivism, which emphasises the multiplicity and socially constructed nature of realities, I have employed the qualitative method of visual autoethnography as the principal research method in this research. My personal experiences of the two empirical field studies revealed that visual

autoethnography, as the fusion of visual elicitation and autoethnography, not only enhanced the dynamics of the interview conversations, but also significantly blurred the boundary of 'insider' and 'outsider' (Scarles, 2010: 911) and meshed the asymmetric power relationship between my informants and I.  Indeed, in the course of sharing my first-hand experiences with my informants, realities were constructed and I eventually accessed 'deeper, nuanced insights into the embodied performances, practices and processes of the tourist experience' (Scarles, 2010).

At the same time, by following Kvale's (1996) *The Six Steps of Analysis* in the process of data analysis, I was able to ensure the soundness and adequacy of the findings as well as of the theories that were consequently generated. Also, in order to guarantee the authenticity and integrity of this study, all possible ethical issues were addressed and considered from the design of the study, through the fieldwork to the data analysis. But what do these findings and theories tell us? In the following two chapters (Chapters 7 and 8), I discuss Chinese tourists' use of smart phones to take photographs, the mutual interactions between photo-taking and photo-sharing, the imagined authenticity and, finally, the Chinese tourist gaze.

# Section Three
# Findings and Analysis

# Chapter 7

# Smart Phone Cameras: the post-modern 'toys' of the younger generation of Chinese tourists

## 7.1 Introduction

In the Turkish Airlines' promotional film *Kobe vs Messi: The Selfie Shootout* (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jhFqSlvbKAM), the NBA basketball superstar Kobe Bryant and the Argentine football celebrity Lionel Messi become two extremely efficient solo travellers. They are competing with each other to travel around the world, to take a snapshot of themselves at various tourist spots using a smart phone, and to send the absent *other* the photo immediately after it is taken, to show 'Messi is at the Red Square', 'Kobe is on the Great Wall', 'Messi is diving', 'Kobe is skydiving', and so on. At the end of this film, both of their images are framed together in the same photograph in front of Aya Sofia Cathedral in Istanbul.

What this film suggests is that today, smart phones are used everywhere, not only in our everyday lives but also in our tourist travels, and they are gradually substituting digital cameras, especially smaller compact cameras (Larsen, 2014: 35). Indeed, such is the ubiquity of the smart phone that, if any of us forget to take it while meeting some friends at a cafe or other social meeting place, we would perhaps feel rather embarrassed and even perhaps excluded, as everyone else might well be totally engrossed in playing with their smart phones or taking photographs. In fact, this story is played out in another film *I Forgot My Phone* which, at the time of the wring of this thesis, had gone 'viral' on *Youtube.*
(see: is http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OINa46HeWg8)

In addition to their other uses, multi-functional smart phones have, to a lesser or greater extent, transformed tourists' collective habits of taking and sharing photos. As discussed earlier in Chapter 4 and also Chapter 5, it is clearly evident that we, the smart-phone users, have become accustomed to using them to capture photographs of those 'magic' and unpredictable moments while we are travelling and to subsequently share those photographs with the potentially absent, unknown, 'anonymous' or familiar other (Derrida, 2000: 25), through the use of one or more of the social media apps installed on our handsets. In particular, this practice of photo-taking and photo-sharing

is highly significant to those of us who have the intention of using their shared photographs as 'tele-machine' or as a means of connecting visually and in real time with remote intimate others and sustaining the relationships with them (Villi, 2010: 133). To some extent, these transmitted photographs mediate their presence. At the same time, that mediated presence might, in a sense, result in remote others feeling either sadness of joy, a phenomenon that Villi (2004) puts down to the fact that absence and spatial distance combine to serve as a source of *punctum* (Barthes, 2000: 26-27) to both the photographer and their friends/families (ibid, 47-62). As a consequence, these smart phone photographers are motivated to take and send more photos, which are likely to provide their distant friends and families with more emotional feelings and pleasures (see Villi, 2014).

Although her focus is upon distance as the new *punctum*, Villi (2014) unintentionally has, to a lesser or greater extent, revealed an important aspect of the interaction between photo-taking and photo-sharing which has been long neglected in academia. That is, many people take photos not specifically for their own subsequent consumption but in order to share them with other people. This is consistent with what I found in my first field study – the significant distance from home motivated some young Chinese tourist respondents, who were also studying in the UK, to take some photos during the package tour specifically to send for their friends and families back in China. To demonstrate, as informant HS25 revealed to me:

> Particularly as my parents have not travelled to the UK before, I wanted to take photos to show my parents when I am back to China - to tell them my travel experiences based around those photos. (Harry, student, aged 25)

Nevertheless, the complete picture of the interaction between photo-taking and photo-sharing is actually much broader and more complex than Villi (2014) has identified. More precisely, for social reasons, traveling with friends or families plays a vital role in our everyday life (Haldrup and Larsen, 2003; see also Chapter 4 of this thesis). At the same time, and as discussed in Chapter Two, the numbers of smart phone users in the USA, China and five major countries of European Union (France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the UK) are substantial. For example, by the end of 2013, smart phone sales accounted for 73.2% of all mobile phones sold in China, with 74% of male and 54% mobile users owning a smart phone. Moreover, it is generally accepted that the increasingly high usage of smart mobile devices has been accompanied by, or indeed has driven, the equally massive growth in the utilisation of social media mobile apps (see also Chapter 1). Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that numerous tourists,

particularly Chinese tourists, are nowadays likely to possess at least a smart mobile device, with a (multiple) social networking app(s). This, in turn, suggests that, if affordable mobile internet or Wi-Fi is available at the destination, these tourists are able to easily share their photos, via these apps, either with distant and absent friends/families or with those whom they are travelling, immediately/shortly after they have taken them. Sometimes, this sort of photo-sharing could contribute to the pleasure / happiness of these tourists, and may even potentially encourage them to take more photographs, especially when the photographs they share record or represent the magical moments in their collective travels or when they capture the improvised performances of their fellow travellers. Based upon the data I generated during the second field study conducted with six Chinese tourist informants (aged between 21 and 29) in the Isle of Wight, this chapter will investigate and substantiate this assumption. Particularly, it will consider critically how the photo-sharing of a group of younger Chinese tourists stimulated and gave shape to their practices of photo-taking.

## 7.2 The Results of the Research Fieldwork

### 7.2.1 Becoming Post-modern Tourists

The results of the empirical research revealed that the younger Chinese respondents / tourists possess some of the features of the so-called post-modern tourist. The concept of the 'post-modern tourist' was originally proposed and developed by Maxine Feifer (1985), who suggested that this type of tourist can be defined by three principal characteristics. Firstly, it is no longer necessary for the post-tourist to leave his or her home in order to see many of the typical objects of the tourist gaze; that is, whether watching TV or videos, or surfing the Internet, an infinite variety of places and sites can be gazed upon, compared, contextualised and gazed upon again. Since the places or sites can be experienced repeatedly, there is 'much less the sense of the authentic, the once-in-a-lifetime gaze, and much more of the endless availability of gaze through a frame at the flick of a switch or a click' (Urry and Larsen, 2011: 113). Secondly, the post-tourist is aware of the changes that have occurred in tourism, recognises the enormous choice of potential experiences open to them, and delights in that multitude of choices. Such choices range from the pursuit of what Boorstin (1964) famously describes as superficial 'pseudo-events' to the previously mentioned earnest quest for the authentic, which MacCannell (1999) has long claimed and defended as the aim of the contemporary tourist. Feifer (1985: 269) describes the choices facing the post-modern tourist as follows:

> Now he [sic] wants to behold something sacred; now something informative, to broaden him, now something beautiful, to lift him and make him finer; and now something just different, because he's bored.

Not only is the post-tourist freed from the constraints of 'high culture' but also from the untrammelled pursuit of the 'pleasure principle' (Urry and Larsen, 2011: 114).

Last but not least, the post-tourists knows that they are tourists and that tourism is no more than a series of games with multiple texts and no single, authentic tourist experience. As Feifer (1985: 217) states, 'above all...the post-tourist knows he is a tourist... [and that] ...he cannot evade his condition as an outsider'. In other words, the post-modern tourist fully understands that the goal of knowing and appreciating the world 'as it authentically is' is a fruitless one. However, rather than being exposed to despair and sense of loss potentially experienced or suffered by MacCannell's (1999) authenticity seeking tourist, the post-tourist tends to transform the world into a gigantic playground through mockery. Playing and pleasure-seeking are, to a great extent, the opposite to being sufficiently self-conscious to reflect on and obey the pre-constructed norms and rules of some touristic practices, such as the photography. Consequently, these norms and rules are likely to ignored or rejected by the post-tourist. This sort of norm / rule-breaking is exemplified by Tim Edensor's (1998: 133) research at the Taj Mahal in India, where he observed a group of American tourists who 'enacted the following ironic performance as they stood upon the platform inside the grounds, posing before the Taj for a member of their party wielding a video camera::

> Tourist 1: Ok guys, line up and look astonished
> Tourist 2: Yeah, but...it's great-but what does it do?
> Tourist 3: Bob had the best line-'The Taj is amazing, but boring
> Tourist 1: Come on. Let's do the photo so we can get outta here.

Moreover, as Urry and Larsen (2011) maintain, the cotemporary media have ushered in a 'three-minute' culture; thus, people are likely to be encouraged to switch from one pleasure-seeking activity to another (and perehaps also from one site to another for seeking additional pleasure). Putting it another way, it is almost certain that people will achieve relatively less satisfaction from continuing to do what they, or more particularly, their family have always done. Accordingly, holidays have become less to do with the reinforcement of collective memories and experiences, especially around family and friends, and more to do with immediate pleasure. As a consequence, people are constantly demanding new out-of-the-ordinary experience (Urry and Larsen, 2011:

115).

To return to the outcomes of the fieldwork, specifically the second field study, firstly it could be seen that the younger generation of Chinese tourists not only placed significant emphasis on playing and pleasure-seeking, but also they were delighted to switch from one form of play – or from one game – to another when they collectively assumed that the pleasure generated from the first form could no longer satisfy their needs. Also, as will be demonstrated later in this chapter, their photographic practices were becoming increasingly different from the conventional and orthodox practices that have been long studied by numerous researchers (see Chapter 1 of this thesis).

More specifically, prior to departing for the Isle of Wight, I had presumed that touring Queen Victoria and Prince Albert's summer palace – Osborne House – would be the highlight of the trip. That is, I had assumed the visiting the house would be both informative and fascinating as it would offer some clues or insight into the private lives of the royal family, unlike some other royal residences, such as the Windsor Castle. For example, the billiard table used by Prince Albert, a photograph of Queen Victoria taking afternoon tea with her grandchildren and great grandchildren, and many other 'small things' displayed in the rooms could potentially contribute an additional authenticity and richness to our experience of the royal family's' private life. However, on the contrary, all of my respondents / fellow travellers surprised me by saying that preferred much more to play on Sandown Beach, viewing it as a huge playground, rather than exploring Osborne House. Indeed, this unexpected response reminded me of the fact that, while I was still wandering from one room to another, in the house, they were already heading down towards the beach at the front of the House. For them, the beach, along with the rise and fall of tide, gave them the immediate opportunity to play either individually or collectively. At the same time, of course, and in sharp contrast to the cultural heritage of Osborne House, Sandown Beach was not seen to be so rich in either culture or history and, therefore, there was no need for them to learn much. CS22, the most active and passionate respondent in the group on the beach, narrated how she was excited when she indulged herself by playing on the beach as well as in the sea water:

> (I) became quite excited and wanted to play as soon as my feet touched the sea water…You can imagine, when the tide was flowing and the wave was approaching the beach, I could not help jumping on the wave. Meanwhile, as long as the water was quite clean and clear, I really want to splash the water. I would like to feel the movement of water.' (Carol, student, age 22)

Evidently, the beach and the running sea water provided CS22 with a multi-sensational experience as well as the immediate pleasure of seeing the wide sea view, smelling the seaweed, tasting the bitter and salty water and splashing in the constantly moving waves. Every wave was different from last one and, therefore, every single time CS22 splashed in the approaching water, her pleasure was renewed (see *Figure 7.1*).
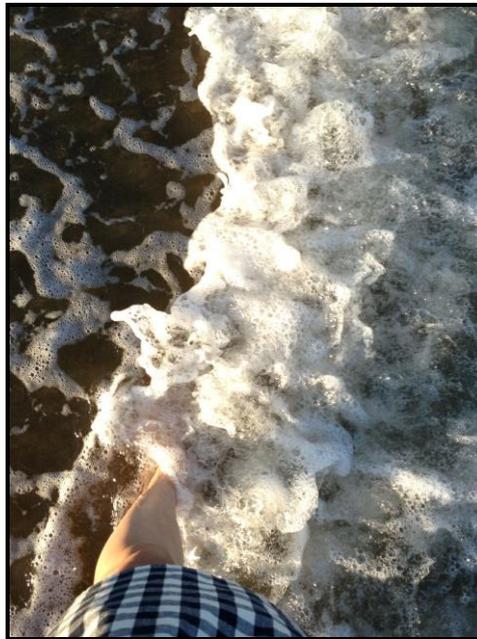


**Figure 7.1:** CS22 was splashing in the
approaching crystalised sea wave
(Photo: provided by CS22)

CS22 even felt that the sea was not *lifeless* (or *'dead'* in her own words) but instead *alive*; she was not only playing in but also interacting with the water and with nature. As she continued to tell me:

Absolutely, the movement of water gave me the feeling that I was interacting with nature. From my perspective, dead water is no more than being dead; while, sea water is very different – it is living...I mean, because of the rise and fall of tide, I could feel the movement of sea water. It was strikingly different from dead, still and ordinary water. (Carol, student, age 22)

To a great extent, not only was this sort of play activity both joyful and recreational, but it was also functional in refreshing and restoring the 'players' or 'performers' that we were (see Cohen, 1979:181). After all, as discussed in Chapter 6, in our everyday lives we – the younger generations of Chinese – are potentially exposed to a variety of pressures and tensions, some generated from studying in the University, others related

to the potential future role of becoming the breadwinner for our families combined with attempting to advance our personal careers and achieving some social goals (see Zimmerman, 2010). Thus, by indulging in the carefree play in front of a sublime sea view undoubtedly helped us to partly relieve at least some of these pressures and tensions (Cohen, 1979:181). To illustrate, respondent NS29 told me of how playing on the beach had relieved the pressures and even depression that she suffered in her daily life:

I: Which of the places we have been to is your favourite?

NS29: It must be beach. When I saw the extensive and borderless sea, the pressures that I have been suffering recently almost disappeared. I was playing freely and cheerfully on the beach…You see this photo…

I: Your pressures disappeared?

NS29: Yes…When I was in the University, I had to cope with my studies and my dissertation. More often than not, I felt rather stressed, even depressed. You are a 'busy' student as well. You can imagine. But while I was in front of the sea and playing on the beach, along with my good friends, I found me myself very tiny. That's it.

I: Yes, it was definitely the same case with me. You know, when I have worked on my thesis for a few days, I hve to go to somewhere else to 'touch myself'. And a seaside city is such a good place…So you found yourself very tiny when you arrived at the seaside?

NS29: That's it! Compared to the vast and extensive sea, I was so tiny and trivial that nobody would care about what I was doing or would do. So I was crazily playing, running and taking photos on the beach… a lot of stuff, you see?

I: Then what about Osborne House?

NS29: That is a very different thing. A Victorian house, Albert and some historical stuff. You can learn a lot. You can think about the history. The house. But here, you see…er…I mean on the beach, you don't need to care about too much. You just try to be yourself. Don't care whatever you want to do. It is quite different.' (Nicole, Student, aged 29)

Indeed, the sublimity and vastness of the sea view was functional in driving NS29 into an illusion that she was so tiny and trivial that she did not have to self-consciously care about what she was doing (see Chapter 2 for more detail). In this way, her identity was re-figured and the pressures and depression she had been exposed to, in her words, 'went away'. In turn, with the rejection of her self-consciousness, she was more *'crazily'* engaged in playing, as she described it. Equally, though at that time I did not play as 'crazily' as she did, the combination of running, laughter and sublime view automatically made me feel comfortably 'small' and offered me at least a temporary escape from the pressures of my everyday-life.

Interestingly, when I asked NS29 how she found the tour of the Osborne House, her tone changed slightly. It seemed that she barely enjoying looking around that visitor attraction imbued with culture and historical values, certainly much less than I did as someone who has a deep interest in British culture and society. Indeed, to these respondents who evidently did not share these interests with me, learning and developing their knowledge of British history and culture was not their natural preference, and perhaps was seen as a way of undermining the happy mood and hedonism of being on holiday. This was revealed in a conversation with another respondent, ES26 who, from my observations, was perhaps the least active member of our group on the beach but still preferred playing on the beach

I: What has been your favourite part of this trip?

ES26: Playing on the beach…

I: Why playing on the beach and not the visit to Osborne House? You know, Osborne House is so splendid…

ES26: Because…(hesitating)…I liked the beach in front of Osborne House. I didn't learn much about the artistic works on exhibition in the House, but I liked the natural views very much.

I: So you like natural views?

ES26: Yes. I seldom take an interest in cultures and histories.

I: Is it fair that you more enjoy the natural views, but hardly bother with learning

about some history?

ES26: Yes, I dislike [it]. Because learning is slightly at odds with having a holiday. Instead, playing on the beach was far more relaxing (She looks much happier and excited now.). And we could play together. That is the (most important) point. It was too quiet in Osborne House and we only could see rooms and arts there…much less relaxed and cheerful than playing on the beach. (Elieen, student, aged 26)

Nevertheless, playing on Sandown Beach could alone not provide infinite pleasures. Certainly, we had been quite exited and well satisfied by playing on the beach on both the first and second day of the trip. By the third day, however, we became bored and therefore turned to two alternative activities that the great majority of us thought would be additionally enjoyable – one was organising dancing and drinking parties and the other was *'purposeful'* smart phone photo-taking and photo-sharing. On the one hand, the parties, at which we shared music, dance and alcohol, were mainly hosted by NS29 in a hotel room every evening from the third day onwards and, unsurprisingly perhaps, were highly pleasurable. On the other hand, the 'purposeful' smart phone photo-taking and photo-sharing were practiced almost everywhere and all the time – on the train, in a bistro, on the beach, at a party, and so forth. As will be specifically discussed later in this chapter, unlike conventional tourist-photographers who have been previously studied in a number of contexts (see the Chapter 2 for more detail), our purposeful practices of photo-taking and photo-sharing were essentially hedonism-centred, though 'experience recording' still played a crucial part in shaping these photographic activities. On most occasions, the practice of photo-taking was driven and inspired by the subsequent practice of photo-sharing, as the latter provided us with enormous pleasure. Before discussing these practices in detail, however, in the next section I introduce the photographic tools we employed during the trip to the Isle of Wight as well as discussing my respondents' attitudes, from a Chinese cultural perspective, towards the relationship between photo-taking and photography.

### 7.2.2 Photo-taking (拍照) "<" Photography (摄影)
In the collective view of contemporary Chinese tourists, and in the Chinese language, photo-taking (拍照) and photography (摄影) are not considered to be the same thing or, more precisely, to be on the same level. That is, photo-taking is considered to be an amateur photographic activity which emphasises experience-recording, socialising and sharing; conversely, photography describes a practice undertaken by professional photographers and photography enthusiasts in the creation of artistic images. Indeed,

throughout the research interviews in both field studies I intentionally tried to avoid using the Chinese word for 'photography' when asking my respondents questions about their photographic activities, as it was evident that the vast majority of the them, when hearing the term, automatically thought of 'photography' as an art form. Had I done so, they would not have wanted to share with me either their experiences or the photographs they had taken, as they would not have considered their pictures to be good as artistic pieces of work.

As suggested in Chapter 1, as long as we are neither professional photographers nor photography enthusiasts, then the smaller light-weight smart phones that are available today are effective, as the equivalent to compact digital cameras, in simultaneously meeting our ordinary photographic, communication and some other social needs. Moreover, carrying a relatively heavy and cumbersome piece of camera equipment around our necks might not only prove to inconvenient to our mobility as tourists but also might represent 'commercialism, superficiality and a distinct lack of coolness' (Larsen, 2014: 36, see also Picard and Robinson, 2009). Nevertheless, digital cameras, in particular more sophisticated devices such as single lens reflex cameras, remain popular amongst those who have a keen interest in photography, who do not own a smart phone, or alternatively require a camera that is able to record images not easily captured by employing a smart phone.

Therefore, although prior to departure for the Isle of Wight I neither required nor expected the six informants to take (or not to take) a specific type of photographic equipment with them, apart from myself only two informants – MS21 and CS22 – brought their single reflex cameras along with them. MS21 and I both were photography enthusiasts who regarded it as a form of artistic creation, whilst CS22 had the intention to take pictures of the starry night sky above Sandown Beach. In the end, however, CS22 unfortunately left her camera battery and charger at home and, as a consequence, not only she was obliged to resort to the use of her iPhone 5 but also a picture of the night sky above the beach was not captured. Nevertheless, in stark contrast to the reactions of Kevin Markwell's (1997) informants during his research in Malaysia, CS22 did not appear worried or embarrassed, since her iPhone 5, with its high pixel rating and high-speed shutter, was of sufficient technological quality to satisfy most of her photographic demands. In particular, it enabled her to capture a series of ephemeral performances perpetrated either by her friends or by her. As CS22 remarked:

> The biggest advantage of this mobile phone in my view was the speed of the
> shutter button. In effect, by using this smart phone, I can very easily capture a

series of ephemeral performances perpetrated by my friends. With rapid technological development, the pixel rating of the camera built into in a smart phone is becoming increasingly higher. I am personally fond of a camera with high pixel level. But it is totally unnecessary to buy a digital camera now, as a smart phone camera can completely meet my needs.... So…my digital camera, which I took along with me to this isle, in order to take pictures of the starry sky, was out of power this time. It is fine, as long as I just record our activities. To use the smart phone is totally sufficient.' (Carol, student, aged 22)

With regards to rest of us, employing a multi-functional smart phone was completely sufficient. For example, VS22 revealed to me in detail the reasons why she took only a smart phone along with her:

In fact, before departure I had considered whether I should also take my digital camera. There are two reasons for my eventually not taking it:

For one thing, I thought it would be much better if I kept my baggage as light as possible. It would be much easier for me on the road.

For the other, I am not a professional photographer and not good at using complicated cameras. After all, photo-taking to me is no more than a means of recording my travel experience. My photos are to be chiefly looked at by myself. I really don't like to edit the photos after a trip and show to them off on the social media. So I do not care about the tool too much. A smart phone is enough.

...In my opinion, a smart phone camera, to some extent, is equivalent to a compact camera with relatively fewer photographic functions. If you used a single lens reflex camera, you could either interchange the lens or select a mode to satisfy your need. As I mentioned earlier, I am an amateur photographer, and I seldom used the additional functions. Thus, the single lens reflex camera is useless to me.(Vivian, age 22, student)

From the response above, it is evident that even if VS22 carried a single lens reflex with her, she would still use it like she would a technologically simpler smart phone. Indeed, owing to her lack of enthusiasm for photography, it is unlikely that a tourist such as VS22 would learn how to use the other functions, even if they appeared intriguing. Respondent NS29 expressed a similar attitude:

Yes, exactly, because I am not a professional photographer. Even if you gave me a professional camera, I wouldn't know how to use it... But I just want to use my phone to record the moments, to remember this. For me, it's just like this.' (Nicole, aged 29, student)

Overall, as represented in *Figure 7.2* below, there are four factors that collectively determine the fact that many Chinese tourists only employ a smart phone to take photos while on holiday / travelling.

**Figure 7.2:** Factors influencing the utilisation of a smart phone
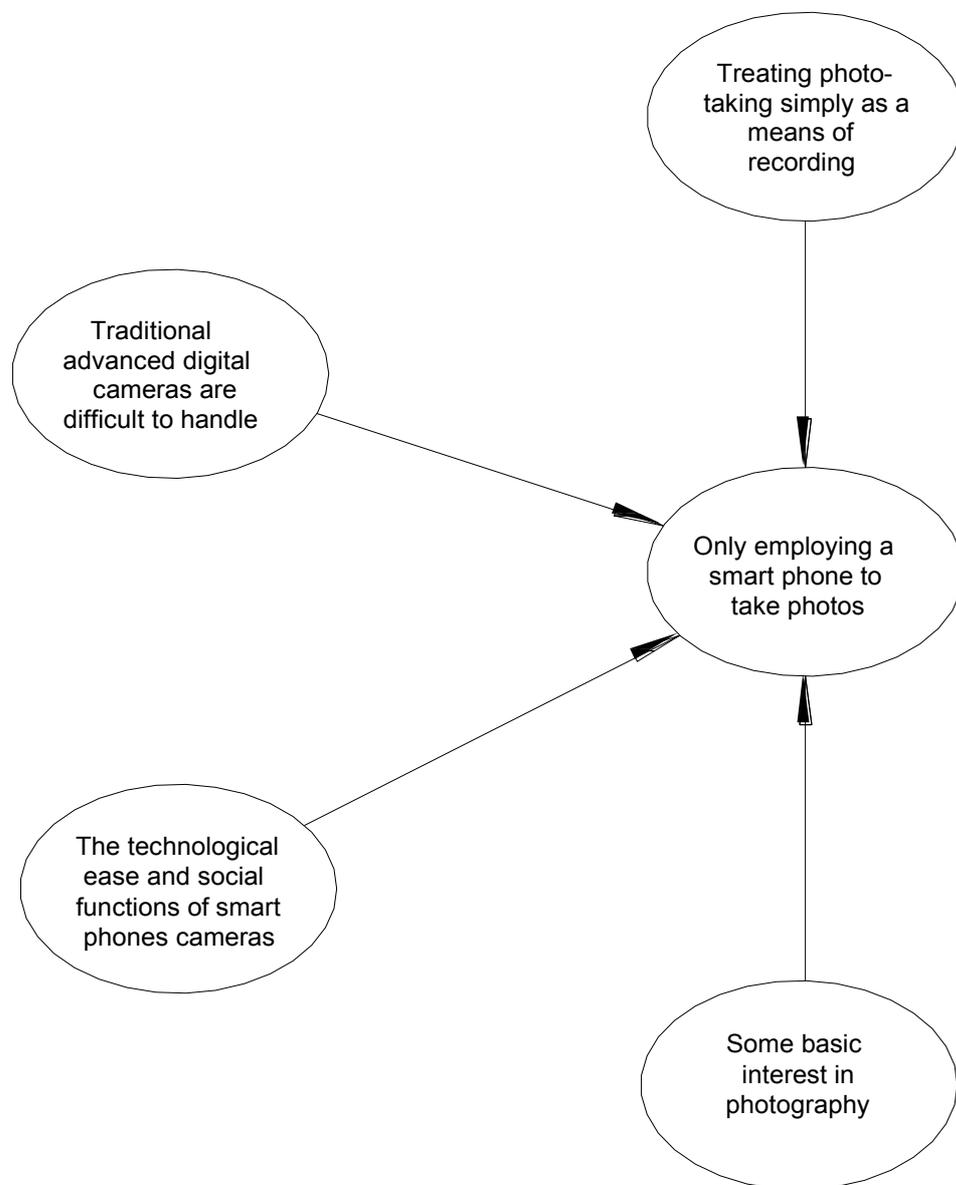
### 7.2.3 The Interaction between Photo-taking and Photo-sharing

> M: What is your PhD all about?

> I: To study why tourists take photos and how they do that.

> M: Why they take photos? For memories, of course!

The above is a fragment of conversation between me and a manager at Vision Express store when I went to collect a pair of my glasses that had been repaired there. It demonstrates that 'for memories' has become an involuntary and timeless answer to the question of why tourists take photographs. Even though he was not on holiday, the manager provided an answer immediately and without any hesitation. Nevertheless, there is a question that researchers of tourist photography such as myself should consider; that is, 'to refresh the memory' really the 'grand' or essential motivation underpinning tourists' photo-taking? I assume that many other researchers have rarely, if ever, encountered any hesitation on the part of their respondents when they have asked 'why did you took this; why did you took that', questions that might be asked on numerous occasions during an interview. Clearly, 'to refresh the memory' has become the usual answer but, at the same time, this does not mean it is necessarily a 'pre-programmed' or socially constructed motivation for tourists' photo-taking.

In my second field study, it became evident that despite the fact that, during interviews, my respondents collectively claimed that they took photographs in order to 'record their experience / memory', in reality this did not appear to be the genuine motivation. To illustrate, at the beginning of our visit to the beach the majority of us did not engage in taking photographs, as we were so busy with running and playing on the sand. Rather we handed our smart phones to the 'less active' informant ES26, referred to previously, and asked her to capture our acts of playing on ours smart phone cameras, thereby fulfilling the task for us. Even so, most of the time, we were not particularly concerned about posing for photographs, and nor did we particularly care whether photographs were actually taken of us or not (see *Figure 7.8* and *Figure 7.9* on Page 219). As VS22 articulated:

> As a matter of fact, most of my photos on the beach were (those) my travel companions had taken for and sent me, rather than ones I had taken myself. My focus was very much on playing, a soon as I arrived at the beach... (chuckling)... Just occasionally I posed for a photograph. But most of the time, I was lost in the

playing. And I did not care really whether they took photos of me (Vivian, student, aged 22).

VS22's *'did not care'* largely undermines the motivating power of taking photographs 'to refresh memory', which has been taken for granted for a very long time (see Crang 1997; Markwell, 1997; Garick, 2002; Haldrup and Larsen 2003). Owing to this *'did not care'* attitude, ES26 took many photographs of both the 'natural' and improvised performances of her fellow travellers, without intentionally staging their experience (see Markwell, 1997; Haldrup and Larsen, 2003; Larsen, 2005; Scarles, 2009). To illustrate, *Figure 7.3* below is a photo that ES26 took of another respondent. In this photograph, it seems that this respondent was devoting all her heart and all her strength to playing and jumping on the seashore (or in her own words, in *'splashing the water'*), without paying any attention to the photographer.



**Figure 7.3**
(**Photo:** respondent ES26)

But if not for memory, what did we really take photographs for? The answer simply is 'for pleasure'. Latour (2002) has even proposed the notion of *detour* to refer the way that people's use of technology often frustrates the relationship between means to ends, despite their universal refusal to think of technology in anything other than instrumental terms. In Latour's view, technologies are not purely tools but also actors in their own rights. Applying this argument to explaining tourists' photographic activities, it is reasonable to claim that non-human agents/actors, which involve photographic devices and social-networking-apps, collectively play a central role in shaping their practices of taking photographs. Indeed, in Chapter 2 of this thesis, I explored how digital photography devices, especially smart phones, provide pleasure to tourists by enabling them to experiment in their taking of photographs both playfully and creatively (see also Haldrup and Larsen, 2010).

Moreover, an increasing number of social networking smart phone apps, such as WeChat, Instagram and Pinterest, may provide a source of additional pleasure in playing with, editing and sharing photographs as soon as they are taken. As a consequence, taking a photograph is increasingly becoming more a quest for the pleasures afforded by miscellaneous 'smart' photographic devices. Particularly for us – the young Chinese post-tourists – the power of pleasures seemed much more intense. Indeed, during this holiday tour we frequently took a photograph and then edited and played with it directly on site: cropping the photograph, altering its colour tone, beautifying individuals' facial images in the photograph or sometimes adding a cartoon sticker to the picture. Even during the course of interviews, some of my informants became quite excited and described the interesting functions of a specific new photography app, particularly when they heard that I was eager to know how to use it. For example, CS22, who had a passion for editing her many photographs by employing 'Line Camera', introduced to me some intriguing functions of this app:

> CS22: A few mobile apps, such as Line Camera, provide a wide selection of cartoon image stickers. To attach a sticker to the photo certainly not only makes an interesting photo even more interesting but also shows the feelings we had when we took the photo. Also, if an intruding image appears in your photo, you could use a sticker to cover it. For instance, yesterday, you took a very good photo of me. Yes, this one. I like it very much, but unfortunately your fingertip is also in the photo a little bit...

> I: Why not use Instagram to crop the part we want and cut the rest?

CS22: But in that case, my feet (in the picture) would be 'cut off' as well. So what shall I do? Then I added a sticker to cover it, like this. So that's the interesting part…I add the sticker there and the date there. It is interesting, right?' (Carol, student, aged 22)

Equally I was particularly happy that I learned about an app that had been new to me. At the same time, CS22, along with the rest of us, was not only extremely passionate about taking photographs, but also about uploading and sharing them (or at least some of them) on smart phone social-networking apps. Indeed, prior to departure on the trip I had established a group chat on WeChat – a social networking app which is widely used in China – for the purpose of discussing with and giving notices to the respondents. Importantly, the members of this group chat were restricted to only my respondents and myself, all of whom were already friends. This meant that nobody else was technically able to either access or to post anything on this virtual space on WeChat. During our trip, this virtual space unexpectedly but automatically became an extremely effective and dynamic platform for our immediate photo-sharing. This photo-sharing not only undoubtedly contributed much to our enjoyment of the trip but also and, perhaps, more importantly, transformed our practices of photo-taking by enticing us to capture each other's interesting and improvised behaviours. To be more precise, and as was discussed earlier in this chapter, the great majority of us, on the one hand, unquestionably regarded photo-taking as no more than a means of recording travel experiences while, on the other hand, each and every individual amongst our group cared little about how many photographs had been taken of them and how our individual personal image had been presented in a photograph. This paradoxical attitude towards photo-taking resulted primarily in a unique form of photographic behaviour. That is, while taking photographs of each other, we individually preferred to photographically capture either the 'natural' or spontaneous performances of our friend, the previously mentioned case of ES26 being a typical example. These photographs of 'natural' or spontaneous performances were undoubtedly the source of much pleasure and surprise for the members of our group, especially when they were shared on WeChat and commented on by those whose image was in the photographs. As ES26 explained:

As we are a group and travelling together this time, each of us took photos of our fellow travellers from different perspectives. It will be very interesting to share these with each other…I still remember how one photo surprised the person whose image appeared in the picture. She laughed: 'Oh, I did not realise what I

was doing at that moment'… I quite enjoyed the comments, the reaction and, of course, the surprise.' (Elieen, student, aged 26)

Also, NS29, who 'secretly' took many 'surprising' photographs, such as the notorious one of me opening my big mouth to take a bite of a piece of cake (see Figure 7.10), described to me her similar photographic behaviour:

NS29: Yes, of course. You know, later I can show you guys the photo – I want to share these photos with you. And maybe you'll be very happy, seeing these photos you didn't know about before, won't you?

I: Absolutely. You know, when I saw the photo you took of me, I was pretty surprised and laughed for quite a while...By the way, did you think that taking such kinds of of 'natural photos' was very meaningful?

NS29:...Yes, sure. Generally speaking, I like to take photos for other people, when they don't realise I'm doing it. I just take them secretly and later I show them. They are usually very surprised: 'Oh, my god. What was I doing then?'

I: When somebody else shows you these kinds of photos of yourself, do you also feel very surprised?

NS29:Yes, I usually react (to them) as you did…(chuckling)…

I: So you thought they would feel similarly surprised too?

NS29: Yeah, definitely. I assumed they would be very surprised and pretty happy too (Nicole, student, age 29)

From NS29's responses, it is clear that in the past she had often experienced the mixed feelings of joy and surprise resulting from seeing a photograph / photographs of her own improvised performances, taken without her knowledge by others. This time, her previous pleasures and sense of surprise certainly stimulated her motivation or desire to do the same for other people / her friends (see Cohen, 2005: 896), especially because she anticipated that they would react in tea me way and experience the same feelings as she had. Yet, NS29 was not an exception, since it was identified from the research that most of us had the same experiences and motivation. Moreover, such motivation or desire was found to have been further stimulated by the process or

practice of photo-sharing. For the rest this chapter, therefore, I shall further explore this point.

Essentially, our immediate sharing of photographs on the group chat space on WeChat while we were on out tour was identified as having transformed those shared photographs into socialising agents. These socialising agents produced a sort of immediate reciprocal pleasure for the group, since the people who had been photographed were extremely surprised when they saw their own spontaneous and interesting behaviour depicted in the shared photographs. The photographs stimulated comments, laughter and even active face-to-face idea exchanges amongst us all, generating a kind of immediate collective pleasure that, in all likelihood, would not result from sharing the photographs with distant family or friends (see Vilili, 2014). In other words, the immediacy and presence of everyone sharing the photographs was fundamental to our enjoyment of the practice. Even now, I still remember clearly those vivid moments when we were sitting around, at a guesthouse, restaurant, railway station, and so on, gazing upon our phone screen, laughing, typing, chatting and joking with each other. VS22 also commented on these moments passionately, as follows:

VS22: Exactly! It is enjoyable. One of the advantages of travelling as a group is the opportunity to develop friendships with our travel companions. Not only did such kinds of photo-sharing help to develop friendship and communication amongst us, but also it was an extra source of pleasure, particularly when we exchanged our thoughts about photographs with each other….Someone always joked about these photos ...(smiling)...

I: Are you saying that these shared photos could serve as a communal source for chatting, joking and playing?

VS22: Yes, yes. And they (also) could be a record of our travels.

I: I also treasure those pleasant moments (when) we were 'playing' the photographs…But sometimes I wonder whether it would be better if we had more conventional face-to-face communications. What do you think?

VS22: I must say it would become less enjoyable and playful if we primarily concentrated upon our WeChat and Facebook profile. Fortunately, we never did it. Our way of photo-sharing had stimulated face-to-face communication. Didn't you see? What's more, we often got other people's immediate opinions about a photo

as soon as we shared it. We would not have had this had we just emailed the photos to our friends once we were back home (Vivian, student, aged 22)

Thus, as VS22 explained, the photographs we shared over the pre-created virtual space on WeChat did not substitute for but actually stimulated more immediate and pleasant face-to-face interactions amongst our group. This is unlikely to occur as a result of simply the photographs with physically remote others.

Yet our story does not terminate here. During the fieldwork I noticed that one individual's sharing usually inspired others to do likewise, thus leading to further interactions, comments and laugher. Perhaps this is why my post-modern companions and I, with our focus very much on pleasure seeking, were so excited about this activity. It is true, of course, that a conventional photographer and his or her subject might together examine a photograph on a digital camera or computer screen, resulting in face-to-face discussions and even laugher (see Haldrup and Larsen, 2010). Importantly, however, the democratised ownership of a smart phone and universal usage of the same social networking mobile app enables numerous tourists to view, comment, download or upload at the same. It is the combination of this multiplicity, togetherness, simultaneity and flexibility that makes the sharing (of photographs) over the virtual space of a mobile social networking app so unique, vibrant and dynamic.

The researcher Kris Cohen (2005) has identified that the photoblog, in a sense, could encourage other photobloggers to take and upload photographs. Similarly, during the field study it became evident that, to a great extent, the chat group on WeChat encouraged my respondents to capture photographically their friends' behaviours and performances. Thus, it is important to theorise and critically explore the interaction between the photo-taking and photo-sharing of these Chinese post-tourists as a fundamental aspect of their touristic photographic practice. First however, it is useful to review briefly introduce Cohen's (2005) arguments.

In his paper entitled '*What does the photoblog want?*', Cohen (2005) states that the photoblog partly creates a structure for the photoblogger's photographic activities, which can be divided into two temporalities. On the one hand, the work is simply carried out and experienced in the present, without any thought of the future, of what will be accomplished through those actions, or of what has been accomplished cumulatively over the longer term. Take Cohen's informant Geraldine as an example. Geraldine takes a photograph everyday, in the present, without much thought about what might result from this activity. Simply stated, she just likes taking photographs. On

the other hand, complementing the 'present' temporality, one has yet to do X completely, but creates a framework for action in which one experiences it (in the present) as though it had already been done. To exemplify, another of Cohen's informants, Jenni, creates a photoblog which both exists and is yet to exist in the moment of taking the photograph; that is, the photograph that she is taking is not yet on the blog, but it is experienced as though it were already there (see Cohen, 2005: 895). In other words, photo-taking is completed with the blog partially in mind. Cohen (2005: 895) further comments as follows:

> Most bloggers have a sense of how they will post a photo as or before they make it. But the blog is not thought to be the singular outcome of the photo-making, which would become, thereby, merely a means, merely an instrumentality. Rather, the blog comes to exist within, and enrich, the moment of photography. It makes the picturemaking more enjoyable. Almost all photobloggers describe this effect, the presence and role of the blog in their photo-making, the way it infects their actions without subsuming them. The blog exists in the moment of photography, but it is not why they take the photo.

This division can also be used to theorise our – the Chinese post-modern tourists – practices of photo-taking and photo-sharing. As *Figure, 7.4* (on Page 212) shows, the Chinese post-tourists' acts of photographing their fellow travellers' improvised performances potentially interact in a circular process with the activities of photo-sharing over the communal virtual space, such as WeChat.

First, as identified in the earlier discussion of NS29's photo-taking activities, many Chinese individuals might have ever been 'secretly' photographed by their friends/families either in their previous travel or everyday lives, who hopefully have happened to capture their improvising performances. When their friends show these 'secret' photographs to them, these individuals might feel rather surprised, happy and joyful. This kind of accumulated joy and pleasure might combine to motivate them to do the same to their close travel companions in travel (In the diagram, this process is *Circle 1* to *Circle 2*). While they are taking these kinds of surprising photographs which they presume will be pleasurable to the 'photographed', at the same time, the Chinese post-tourist photographers also find pleasure in the activity, thereby serving to inspire their similar photographic activities in future (*Circle 2* to *Circle 1*). The photographers then share these photographs with their photographed travel companions in their communal virtual space, such as on WeChat in this research (*Circle 2* to *Circle 3*). Immediately, a combination of the viewers' surprise, joy and verbal

comments/feedbacks is triggered (*Circle 3* to *Circle 4*), which may not only result in the collective sharing of more 'surprising' photographs (*Circle 4* to *Circle 3*) but may also contribute additional pleasure (*Circle 4* to *Circle 1*) as well as providing opportunities of face-to-face communications (*Circle 4* to *Circle 5*). As a consequence, the friendship among these tourists might develop (*Circle 5* to *Circle 6*), which, along with the engendered joy and pleasure, is likely to inspire them to automatically take and share more photographs of each other's performances (*Circle 6* to *Circle 2 and Circle 1 to Circle 2*).
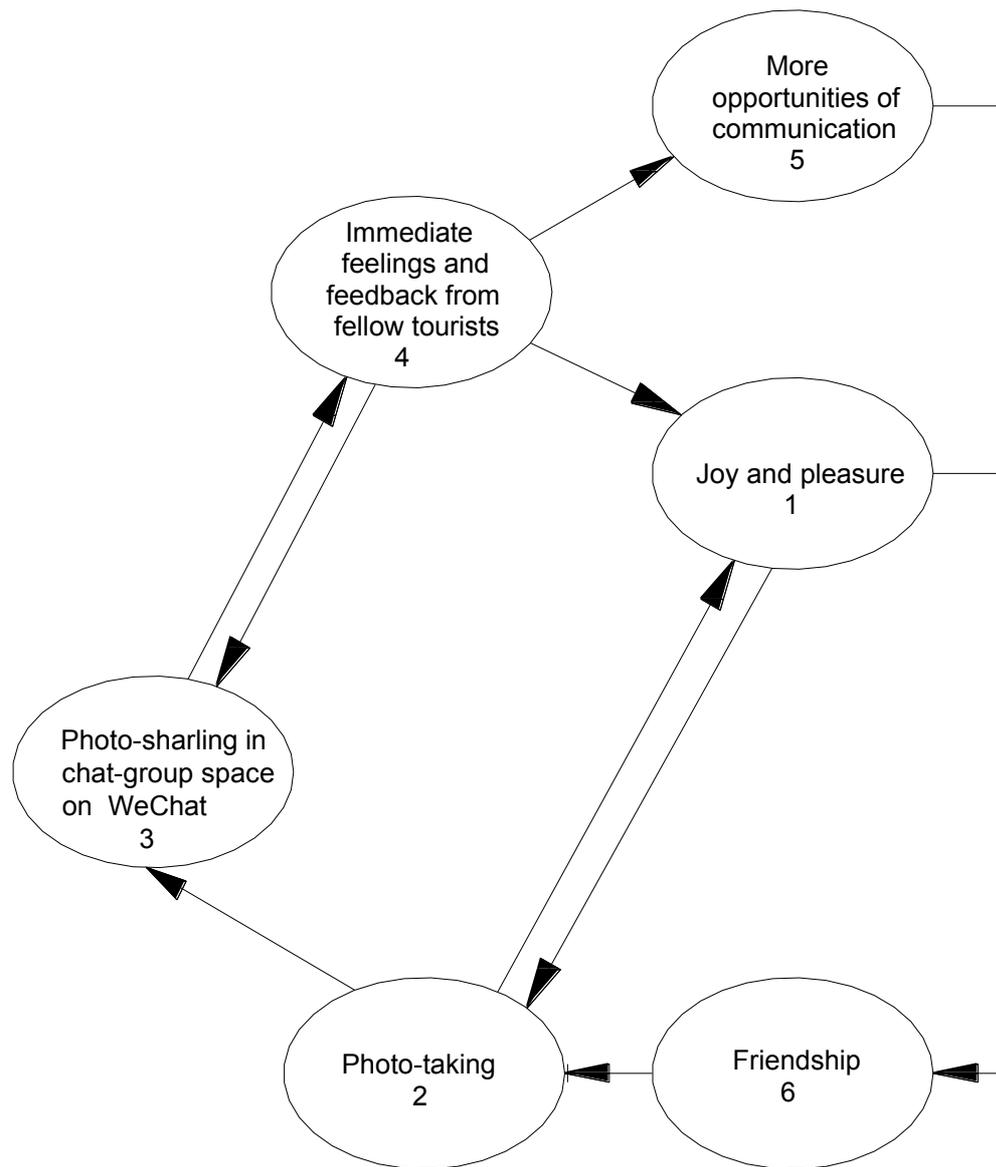


**Figure 7.4:** The interaction between the post-modern Chinese tourists' photo-taking and photo-sharing

Significantly, although essentially *asymmetrical*, this circular process is at the same time also *reciprocal*. As such, it competes with the typical claims that tourist

photography is *exploitive*, *predatory* and *hostile* and, hence conveys colonial overtones (see Chapter 2 for more detail). Indeed, both the photographer and photographed are potentially rewarded gratification and satisfaction.

Moreover, as a consequence, the tourist places conspire to become the 'pleasure periphery' (Turner and Ash, 1975: 11),. The concept of the the 'pleasure periphery' originates from Turner and Ash's work *The Golden Hordes* (1975), which defines it as a collection of the areas and places located out of the developed tourism belt, perhaps due to a lack of transportation means and tourism facilities there (Turner and Ash, 1975:11). In spite of their inconvenient locations and poor infrastructure, some tourists are still willing to explore those areas and places, since they are un/under-explored. Of course, their exploration in turn might pffer those 'boldacious' tourists enormous pleasure, as or even beyond that they have expected. Recently, some, such as Molz (2012), have re-defined this concept to grasp the intersection of various mobilities (e.g. corporeal travel and inmaginative and virtual mobilities (see Chapter 4)). In their view, the 'pleasure periphery' becomes the intersection of the physical places and virtual spaces being established and explored by mobile technologies and tourists respectively (see Molz, 2012: 45). Indeed, as mobile technologies are used increasingly extensively, it is progressively easier for tourists to create and explore this sort of new 'pleasure of the pheriphery' in a destination. In this context, as we were playing this sort of circular game of photo-taking and photo-sharing, the physical tourist places and the virtual space on Wechat were gradually integrated into a whole – a 'pleasure of the pheriphery' for us to tour and to explore.

Nevertheless, nothing lasts forever. There is no exception to this circular process which is likely to come to and end shortly after the Chinese post-tourists arrive home and their *togetherness,* in the context of the tour, dissolves. Indeed, it is likely that, after their return home, almost no photographs will be shared between them as there might be no further photograph worthy of sharing. What we are left with are pleasant memories and the photographs that have already been shared. They are like *sandcastles* and very fragile (see Urry, 1995; Baerenhold *et al.*, 2004), yet these memories and photographs may well inspire the tourists to remember, dream, anticipate and perform similarly again in the future.

To reflect on our own experience, we indeed followed this complete circular process, providing much pleasure for the whole group. Notably, of course this circular interactive process depended heavily upon the availability of affordable/complementary internet or Wi-Fi in the toured destination. On this tour to the Isle of Wight, not only was free Wi-Fi

available at the hotel where we stayed, but also the costs of accessible mobile networks were affordable. Moreover, respondent CS22 even took a Mobile Wi-Fi along with her, which enabled all our smart phones to be connected to the internet at the same time. Otherwise, the high charges might have deterred us from uploading and sharing photos freely (see also Larsen, 2014: 16-17).

Also, besides the engendered satisfaction and the opportunities provided by social net-working apps and *'smart'* photography and communication devices, the *intimacy / friendship* between the photographer and his or her fellow tourists, as well as their *togetherness* during the trip, played an essential role in shaping this type of interaction. Indeed, the whole process of taking and sharing photographs would probably not have happened if (quite evidently) we had not travelled together and particularly if the relationship between us had not been so close. For one thing, this intimacy and togetherness may encourage a Chinese post-tourist to feel in some way obliged to amuse their fellow tourists and to record photographically their travel experience. As ES26, who took a multitude of photographs of us, explained:

> ...So, as long as I found their performances funny, interesting and photo-worthy, I wanted to help them to make a record, as they could not (do it) by themselves. Surely, (this time) we travelled as a group, so we should take the commitment to help each other to take a photographs and to record the trip. This kind of recording is meaningful and interesting, by the way. (Elieen, student, aged 26).

For another thing, this intimacy and togetherness might be thought of as combining to transform the communal virtual space into a collective *'back region'* (Goffman, 1959:114-115; see also MacCannell, 1999) for the Chinese post-tourists, a back-region in which they feel sufficiently secure and relaxed to upload spontaneous or surprising photographs, to make comments and to joke with each other. Otherwise, these *'private'* photographs are unlikely to be disseminated within the communal space and would merely be sent /emailed only to the person whose images appeared in the photographs. To demonstrate, the informant VS22 told me her opinion about this sort of sharing:

> Ah, I hardly ever share. I only share with friends when I travel with them, like this time. If they would like to download the photos I shared, they can go ahead. That is no problem for me at all...But I really do not want to share (them) on their social media personal accounts, as I am not willingly to cause problems or show off. (Vivian, student, aged 22)

As already discussed, many Chinese people, particularly the younger generations, nowadays possess at least one social networking account. In comparison to the membership of the chat group established for the field study to the Isle of Wight, the group of user-friends on each account might well be more complicated and diverse, perhaps including the account owner's family members, intimate friends, ordinary friends, less familiar acquaintances and even some complete strangers. As a consequence, this complex user group may take on the characteristics of a *'front region'*, where an individual's *'manners'* and *'appearance'* are maintained and where more general social standards determine interaction on the account. On occasion, putting on a 'mask' at this *'region'* may be necessary (see Goffman, 1959: 109-111). As VS22 suggested above, she was concerned that sharing her photographs on the timeline of her individual social networking site might either cause her unnecessary trouble or make some others think that she was *'showing off'*. In order to explain the reason why sharing photos on her timeline(s) was equivalent to 'showing off', VS22 continued:

> Sharing photos in public is, to an extent, a kind of so-called 'Shai' (晒）- it is way of showing off. You know, when some people, with whom you are not so familiar, view your photos; they may feel either uncomfortable or jealous? I think it is unnecessary to show off. (Vivian, student, aged 22)

VS22's comments suggest that she perhaps imagined she would attract negative opinions and feelings from other users' Perhaps, it was the absent sense of security at the *'front region'* that drove VS22 to concern that the mask-wearing user friends would neither reveal their real opinions nor express what they actually felt when they made comments on her personal account. This concern and imagination might have deterred her from sharing her photographs. Moreover, VS22 was not the only one who revealed opposing attitudes towards these two different kinds of virtual space (the 'closed' WeChat space used during the field study and the 'open' space of a more regular social media account). In reality, it was the same for the rest of us, preferring not to share on the personal account. In particular, some respondents revealed to me that, in order to maintain connections with the distant absent others, they usually selectively shared a small number of typical holiday snapshots – that is, images that are carefully composed, usually including a beautiful view and / or the individual smiling and posing to the photographer. Similarly, with my accumulating knowledge about tourist photography, I was becoming increasingly reluctant to share photographs either of my friends or myself in public. More specifically, I became concerned about possible negative reactions to and even unexpected use of my photographs by other people

who I might not even know. At the same time, however, wanting to keep my friends, especially those who I had not seen for a long time, informed of my travels and other events in my life, I got used to selecting a few potentially interesting photographs of views or meals and uploading them to a few social networking accounts, such as Facebook, Instagram and WeChat. And I did so following the trip to the Isle of Wight.

*Figures 7.5, 7.6* and *7.7* (on next page) exhibit some of the photographs shared by some of my respondents on their Instagram and WeChat personal timelines, and collectively illustrate the 'message' they conveyed. In particular from *Figure 7.6* and *7.7*, it is evident that the respondents shared a number of photographs at a time, all of which were carefully composed holiday snapshots. By employing certain mobile camera apps, such as the Line Camera (by Line Corporation) and Camera 360 (by PinGuo Inc), those respondents were able to specify on a photograph where and when they had been. Equally, they tended to write a few lines of words below, above or alongside these uploaded 'classic' holiday snapshots to express how they felt when they had been there. For example, In *Figure 7.5*, the respondent is wearing a new dress that she purchased on the very day that this photograph was taken. Since she was very pleased with this colourful dress, which she had never worn before, she utilised a colourful word *'Surprise!'* to express her personal feeling of happiness. As a result, not only could the absent audience 'here' and 'now' see 'there' and 'then' (Barthes, 2000), but they had the opportunity of learning about and commenting on the respondent's' feelings and emotions. Nevertheless, such comments were rarely uploaded as instantly as those on our WeChat group chat space, whilst the shared photographs were unable of course to trigger instant face-to-face conversations between the audience and the photographer.

As *Figure 7.5* shows, even when a close friend of the respondent tried to have an interaction with her by asking *'where are you?'* and *'what are you wearing?'* , she attempted to postpone it, by answering *'Isle of Wight...But let me tell you in detail on Tuesday, when I arrive home'.*  (translated by me)

In sharp contrast to these photos uploaded onto the individual respondent's social networking sites, those shared over the WeChat space used for the field study appear less carefully composed, rather different and very unconventional, as illustrated by Figures *7.8*, *7.9*, *7.10*, *7.11* and *7.12* (on Page 218-9).

**Figure 7.5**
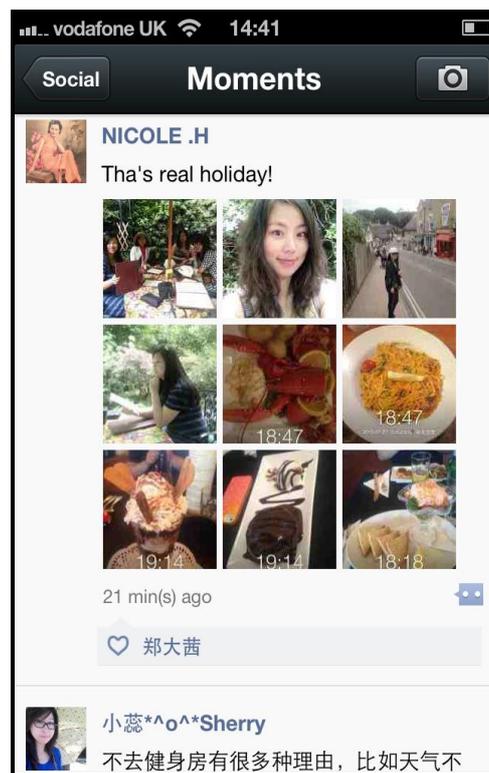


**Figure 7.6**



**Figure 7.7**

**Figure 7.5-7.7**   Photos shared on individuals' social networking timeline
(Provided by the respondents)
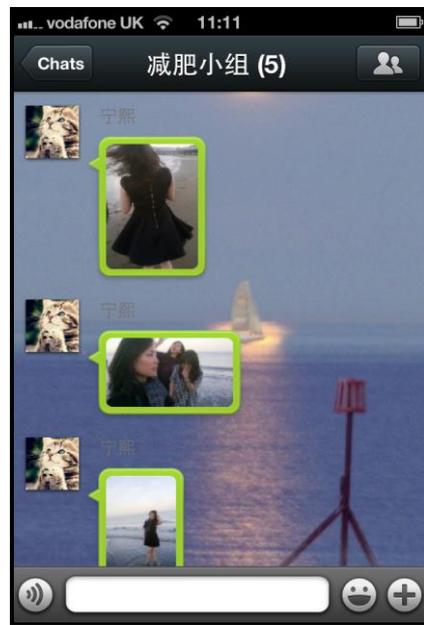
**Figure 7.8**            **Figure 7.9**
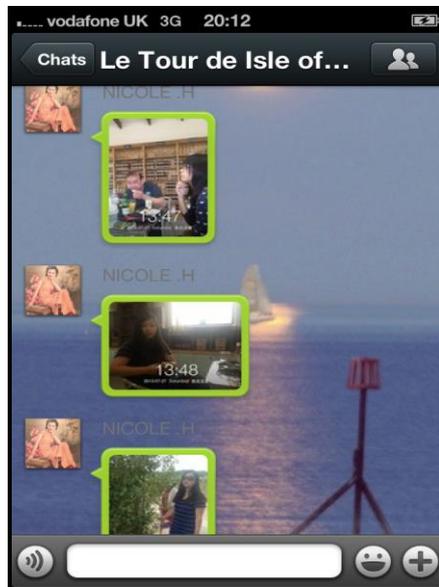


**Figure 7.10**
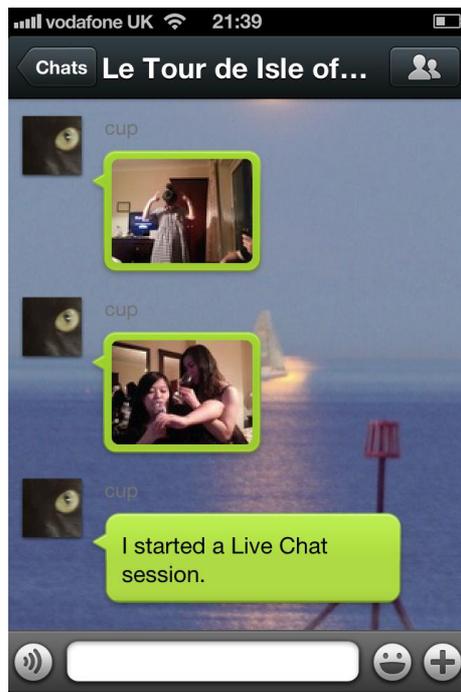
**Figure 7.11**                          **Figure 7.12**

**Figure 7.8-7.12** Photos shared on the virtual space of the
group chat on WeChat
(Provided by the respondents)

The informants, who were posing and smiling in this group of illustrations, seemed to have suddenly transformed themselves into strikingly distinctive individuals in these shared photographs. Equally, it appears that potential viewer of these images has been taken from their *front region* to *back region* (see Goffman, 1959); the behaviours and performances on display (playing, drinking, eating) are most likely to occur in this relatively more intimate, private and secure *region.* In addition, compared with the images shared on individuals' social networking timelines, the composition of this group of photographs, overall, is not so good. Indeed, it is remains challenging to capture unpredictable behaviours and to simultaneously compose them neatly and effectively, even though smart phone cameras enable users to frame a series of performances.

Nevertheless, the warm intimacy and security at this *back region* cannot fully reveal our personal privacy, manner and appearance. In other words, our photo-taking and photo-sharing could not be undertaken completely freely and at will; we still could not photograph and share whatever we wanted during the trip. Although the images in the *Figures 7.8 – 7.12* above appear interesting and funny, the performances and

appearances in this group of photographs remain appropriate. That is, they do not challenge given social standards. Actually, for us, both photo-taking and photo-sharing should be in line with the mode of 'being on a gracious holiday'. If anyone among us had taken a photograph of some other fellows' unpleasant and inappropriate behaviours, he/she might undermine the mode. As ES26 articulate:

Well, I care about my appearance and the impression I give to other people. So I don't want somebody to capture any unattractive appearance or behaviour on my part. For instance, I don't want to be photographed sleeping in bed. (Elieen, student, aged 26).

## 7.3 Chapter Summary

To sum up, this chapter has revealed the fact that the younger generations of Chinese tourists, that is, those who were born during the 1980s or 1990s, are becoming post-modern tourists. For them, pleasure-seeking, rather than wanting to broaden their horizons and to consume the 'authentic' (MacCannell, 1976, 1999), becomes of utmost significance in travel. It is, perhaps, for this reason that the researcher Robert Shepherd (2009: 262) found that young Chinese backpackers were reluctant to enter 'a backstage (or back region), into a more authentic zone of cultural reality' in Tibet. At the same time, reflecting the emergence of a 'three-minute' culture (Urry and Larsen, 2011), Chinese post-tourists are inspired to switch constantly the forms and sites of their pleasure, as evidence in this research by switching from playing on Sandown Beach to holding evening parties in the hotel ,and photo-taking and photo-sharing at multiple sites in this fieldwork.

In addition, as a consequence of the precedence given to pleasure-seeking, the photographic practices of the Chinese post-tourists are motivated more by hedonism and less by memory-construction. More specifically, photo-taking, is to an extent, assumed to be different from photography, inasmuch as Chinese post-tourists regard the former as a less serious but more enjoyable touristic practice whilst the latter is considered to be the preserve of artists and professional photographers. Therefore, they are less willing or anxious to carry an additional digital camera with them whilst travelling since their smart phones are usually sufficient as instruments of photo-taking. The research has shown that, by employing a smart phone, individuals are able to capture their friends' interesting / entertaining and spontaneous / improvised performances when travelling collectively as a group. Once these interesting or even 'surprising' photographs are shared with the rest of the group over a communal social-networking-app platform, such as the group chat on the WeChat in this field study, the combination of additional collective pleasure, laugher and vibrant face-to-face

interactions is produced and stimulated instantly within the travel group. To a great extent, these supplementary pleasures and social activities will both further develop the relationship between the Chinese post-tourists and also motivate them to take and share more these kinds of photographs in the future. This circular and reciprocal process has been theorised and encapsulated in *Figure 7.4*.

Moreover, in this chapter I have explored in detail how and why it is that, in addition to the shared experiences and opportunities afforded by contemporary digital, information and communication technologies, the togetherness and intimate relationships amongst individuals whilst travelling combine to take on a substantially important role in the occurrence and preservation of this circular and reciprocal process. At the same time, such a process depends heavily on the availability of affordable or complementary internet (Wi-Fi) in the toured destination. Therefore, the individuals might cease to take and share photos if the costs of using WiFi or connecting to the internet were too high (see Larsen, 2014).

The process revealed in this chapter, based upon the second field study on the Isle of Wight, did not exist in the first study, not only because there was an evident (and inevitable) lack of intimacy in the relationship between the tourists participating in the package tour but also owing to the fact that the older generations of Chinese tourists on the tour were identified as being less hedonistic. Hence, they were unlikely to take and share photographs purely for pleasure of doing so. Nevertheless, most of them were still in favour of using and playing with their personal smart phones in order to undertake photographic activities. In next chapter, therefore, I critically appraise the characteristics of visual and photographic acts of my respondents on the first field study before subsequently re-constructing, on the basis of the research findings, the framework of the Chinese tourist gaze originally proposed in Chapter 5.

# Chapter 8

# Imagined Authenticity and the Chinese Tourist Gaze

## 8.1 Introduction

As noted at the end of the preceding chapter, the respondents participating in the research during the first field study, the seven-day package tour of the UK, comprised both older and younger generations of Chinese tourists. Moreover, rather than engaging in the circular and reciprocal game of photo-taking and photo-sharing which prevailed amongst the respondents during in the second field study, it has been identified that most of those in the first study resorted to the act of imagining authenticity, even during the relatively short time allowed at each destination. In this chapter, which commences with a critical discussion of the outcomes of the first field study, I focus in particular on this mental and visual act. Subsequently, based on the data collected during the both field studies that together comprised the empirical research in this thesis, the framework of the Chinese tourist gaze proposed in Chapter 5 (see *Figure 5.1* on Page 115) is reconstructed.

## 8.2 Analysis of Results for the First Fieldwork

### 8.2.1 Introduction

The description of the itinerary of the first field study in Chapter 6 revealed that there were few if any opportunities for spontaneous or independent activities, for having 'fun', during the tightly-scheduled package tour. Nevertheless, many of us still were able to engage visually with and imagine the authenticity of the destinations we visited. At the same time, the gazes of many of the tourists on our tour appeared to be 'age-fashioned', as the older generations, particularly those who were born in Mao's era, from 1949 to 1976, typically were more interested in studying the more 'advanced' aspects of the destinations. In addition, some of them occasionally visualised time from the spectacles which were gazed upon. Neither of these two behaviours could, however, be identified with us, the the younger generations of Chinese tourists on the tour – the 'Ba Linghou' (八零后), or those born in 1980s, and 'Jiu Linghou' (九零后), or those born in the 1990s. In this section, I discuss the use of digital cameras and smart phones and the influence of age on this activity before going on to develop the concept 'imaged authenticity'.

*8.2.2 The use of digital cameras and smart phones*

The use of digital cameras and smart phones by the eighteen Chinese informants during the first field study was found to be very similar to that in the second one. More specifically, with the exception of respondent HS25, whose mobile phone was mono-functional and, hence, not 'smart', all of the remaining Chinese respondents employed their smart phones to undertake their touristic photographic practices. Moreover, some, such as BP69 and his wife, used a number of different cameras during the course of our tour. As BP69 told me during the interview:

> We used our two digital cameras, one is simple to use and the other more complicated, two iPhones and two iPads to take photos. We used all of them.' (Bill, Professional, aged 69)

However, although they made use of a sophisticated digital camera, both BP69 and his wife were similar to the rest of the respondents inasmuch as they showed only a basic interest in photography; they were not enthusiastic photographers. In other words, both for them, and the other respondents, photo-taking (拍照) and photography (摄影) were not considered to be identical, the former activity being deemed limited to the acts of recording and sharing an individual's travel experience with the 'remote other', whilst the latter was regarded as the preserve of artists and professional photographers. Indeed, for BP69 and his wife, the use of multi-functional iPhones and iPads more than adequately met the majority of their photographic needs. Nevertheless, by also using digital cameras, particularly a sophisticated one, they were able to appear more 'serious' and conventional, whilst the photographs they took were more suitable / of better quality for subsequent printing and insertion into their traditional family alliums.

However, not all respondents had the intention of creating a conventional photo album of their holiday. Moreover, not only were digital cameras in general found more difficult to handle than smart phones, but also many respondents thought that they made it more difficult to share photographs over a long distance through the Internet. As a consequence, the majority of the Chinese informants admitted to me in interviews that me that they did not want to carry an 'inconvenient' digital camera along with them on this tour. Rather, taking a smart phone or tablet was more than sufficient. Equally, despite the fact that I, as a photography enthusiast, had my digital single lens reflex camera with me for the tour, I eventually took most of my photographs on my iPhone 4. Indeed, as it was unlikely that I would be able to produce an 'artistic' photograph during such brief stays at each destination, I found that the light-weight iPhone 4 was ideal for taking quick photographs which I would then share on my social networking account.

Thus far, therefore, it is apparent that the factors which inspired us to rely heavily on smart phones during the first field study are as the same as those identified in the second trip, as discussed in the preceding chapter. Specifically, smart phones were favoured because (i) traditional advanced digital cameras were difficult to handle; (ii) photo-taking was treated as no more than a means of recording the experience; (iii) smart phones were easy to and offered social functions; and (iv) most respondents had just some interest in rather than great enthusiasm for photographic practices' (see *Figure 7.2* on Page 203). Thus, since the smart phone was the principal photographic device used by the Chinese tourists in both field studies to record (and share) images of places and experiences, I will pay particular attention to the influences of and opportunities offered by smart phones when I refine the framework and dimensions of the Chinese tourist gaze later in this chapter. For now, however, it is necessary to turn to the potential influence of age on the photography practices of the Chinese tourists.

### 8.2.3 Age matters but does not determine practice

Despite the almost ubiquitous use of smart phones amongst the Chinese tourists on both study visits, it has nevertheless been identified that tourists in different age ranges had different gazes. In other words, the gaze of the younger generations of Chinese tourists was, on the whole, different from that of the older generations, particularly of those who had been born in Mao's era, between 1949 and 1976. The differences can be considered from two perspectives, as follows:

First, like the Chinese travellers of old (see Chapter 3), the older generations of respondents collectively had a sense of sadness at the fact that, as time passes, they were getting increasingly older. Thus, some of the spectacles and views they encountered during the tour served as a *punctum* (Barthes, 2000: 26-27), evoking this feeling of sadness and causing emotional 'highs' and 'lows'. More precisely, time can be regarded as an 'objectively given social category produced within societies and which therefore varies as between societies' (Urry, 1995: 4; see also Durkheim, 1968). Compared to that in the society of Nuer (a primitive African society) (see Evans-Pritchard, 1940), in pre-modern Chinese society time was viewed as something that passes, something that can be neither wasted nor saved. Although there was no clock in pre-modern China to indicate the passing of time, time was still marked and visualised by well-known and influential historical events, spectacles (for example, a view of flowing river) and natural phenomena, such as leaves falling. In addition, despite the fact that many of ancient China's élite had established the search for *Tao* as one of their most crucial life-long objectives, they were still aware of the facts that time passes swiftly, that their life-span was finite and, consequently, that it was

extremely difficult, if not impossible, to achieve eternal life. As a result, the combination of remembered historical events, observed spectacles and natural phenomena was a harsh reminder of the passing of time. For example, as discussed in Chapter 3, Su Tungpo's sense of sadness emerged during his cruise to the Red Cliff, a very well-known historical battlefield whose fame had been established several hundreds of years earlier. As another example, when Confucius once stood by a steam, the flowing water reminded him of how time flies. He remarked:

> How will things in nature are passing away even like this-ceasing neither day nor night. (Translated by Ku, 1898)

These 'ancient' practices of visualising time from observed spectacles and natural phenomena seem to have been passed down to modern Chinese tourists as an inheritance, despite the fact that their ideas and lifestyles have been progressively westernised. For example, not only did respondent BP69 hold strong Christian beliefs, endowing him with faith in God and a belief in eternal life after his death, but he had a scientific background having been a Professor of Pharmacy at an American university for many years. Nevertheless, when he was looking at a field of rapeseed, the yellow blossoms acted as a *punctum* (Barthes, 2000: 26-7) and reminded him that he was aging every single day. He told me during our interview that he suddenly became so sad that, at that very moment, he wrote down the following sentences in his diary (see also Figure 8.1):

> These yellow blossoms have effective strategies to preserve their stunning beauty. So they dare to face the indifferent and inhuman flowing time, with pride and dignity.' （黄花自有养颜术；敢笑无情不老天）(Bill, Professional, Age 69； Translated by the author)

BP69 had the desire to become a blossoming rapeseed, in which case he could confidently face the 'indifferent' and 'inhuman' flying time. But, in reality, of course, he was unable to do so. Accordingly, he lamented to me that:

> You know, I am almost seventy. The time left to me is not too much, as I am getting older and older. I try my best to indulge myself in enjoying every single trip, as each one is an incredible opportunity for me...The rest of your time is still long, so that you – a younger person – might not totally understand my feelings and my sense of sadness.'(Bill, Professional, aged 69)

Certainly I, as a member of the younger generation of Chinese tourists, might not be able to understand fully this sense of pessimism experienced by my respondent; on the contrary during the tour I felt anything but sad while observing many attractive views, such as that of the field of rapeseed pictured in *Figure 8.1* below. However, this does not mean that I would not do so in future, as this habitual 'ancient' act might already have been also passed down to me.



**Figure 8.1**: The blossoming rapeseed touched BP69 and reminded him of the fact that time passes and that life is finite

Second, the older Chinese tourists in the group sometimes focused on the prescribed meanings of the tourist destinations/attractions as well as appreciating some of the more 'advanced' parts / aspects of the UK as compared to those in China. On the surface, this seems to concur with the findings of many other researchers, such as Nyíri (2005) and Chan (2009). However, in sharp contrast to Nyíri (2005)'s informants Sun, Yang, Wang and Luo (see Chapter Five for more detail), many of the older Chinese tourists in this study were not particularly interested in encountering or seeking modern architecture or buildings in the destinations we visited. Rather, being aware of and concerned about some problems or limitations in some aspects of contemporary Chinese society, such as children's education or the conservation of the environment and heritage, during the tour they deliberately observed how the relevant British institutes performed with respect to these issues.

For example, during her interview with me, JP50, who had joined the package tour along with her daughter, was open and excited when describing to me in detail what

she considered to be an effective method of organising and teaching children that she had 'observed' at the British Museum in London:

I like so many photos…Although the quality of the photos I took in the British Museum is not very good, but I really liked what I had seen and it touched me a lot. Our Gugong Museum has hardly any educational functions yet, when I had been to British Museum a few times, I realised that it was really effective in teaching kids for free. From these three photos, you can see mothers who had taken their kids to the Museum. There were question sheets provided at the information desk, and the kids and their mums completed the sheet together. At the same time, I noticed that the questions asked by the British Museum vary and are open-ended, encouraging the children to think and explore. In contrast, the questions offered by our museums are closed multiple choice questions, which emphasize that kids should remember the answers and be able to recite the facts …At the British Museum, when the kids and their mother handed in the sheets, they were given jigsaw pictures to play with…You can see the activity on this photo. It shows that this jigsaw was completed by the kids and their mothers on 30th of May…I know…It moved me a lot, to be honest. Each piece of jigsaw was distinct from another. All of these pieces were very colourful, with images of different birds and animals displayed on each piece. The kids and their parents together finished the construction of a jigsaw picture (see *Figure 8.2*). When they had finished putting it together, I found the picture as whole beautiful and creative.

What actually impressed me was the collaboration and team spirit within a family. At the same time, it was fabulous to see the kids being encouraged to work out or build something, instead of simply learning facts. This is very different from the situation in China, where kids just have the opportunity to view facts on a computer screen… Also, I saw how a teacher was delivering a history class to the kids. The teacher was dressed in the clothes from specific period in history, and sometimes acted as some political figure…The class was pretty dynamic... In contrast, the museums in our country are no more than stores for antiques. It is a shame. They fail to attract the kids back to the museum for another visit... whereas the British Museum gives all these opportunities to the kids to play and actively make something. I will send this photo to my circle of friends on WeChat to show them how the British Museum teaches kids. They (British fathers and mothers) don't seem to make their kids stay at home and study. Instead, they prefer to take their kids to museums to see something and to play…' (Jamyn, Professional, aged 50)

**Figure 8.2:** The jigsaw collectively completed by children and their parents at the British Museum (Photo was provided by JP50)

Moreover, during our tour the tour, it rapidly became evident that this kind of observing was not only undertaken at specific tourist attractions but also from the tour bus as it travelled, with the older tourists in particular gazing at the fleeting views out of window. On the tour bus, I frequently overheard conversations between a few older tourists during which they compared the fleeting views of the wide green spaces and old houses which they were looking at through the window of the tour bus with the depressing fact that China is densely populated, with many green spaces and older, traditional-style buildings in our country having been destroyed. As BP69 said to his wife:

> If we compare these two countries, we can see that the English make good use of their land. The landscape is much better. Everywhere, especially the countryside, was beautiful, clean, organised and fantastic. Everywhere, what we see is a great picture (Bill, Professional, aged 69)

*Figure 8.3* (on Page 229) conceptualises this kind of deliberate observation. As articulated in Chapter 5, from 1978, China transferred from the era of Mao Zedong's to that of Deng Xiaoping. Rather than promoting numerous ideological campaigns as during the Mao era, the government of China has, since Deng Xiaoping's time (also named as the Chinese post-socialist state) shifted its focus to 'concrete economic construction as a way to make the country more successful, prosperous and powerful' (Zhang, 2003: 23-4). More specifically, on the one hand the Chinese post-socialist

state, along with its subordinate governmental institutions, encouraged and supported many industries, including tourism, as instruments to boost domestic economic development (see Oakes, 1998; Airey and Chong, 2010). Accompanied as it was with economic reform

**Figure 8.3**: The older generations of Chinese tourists' desire for the deliberate observation in travel
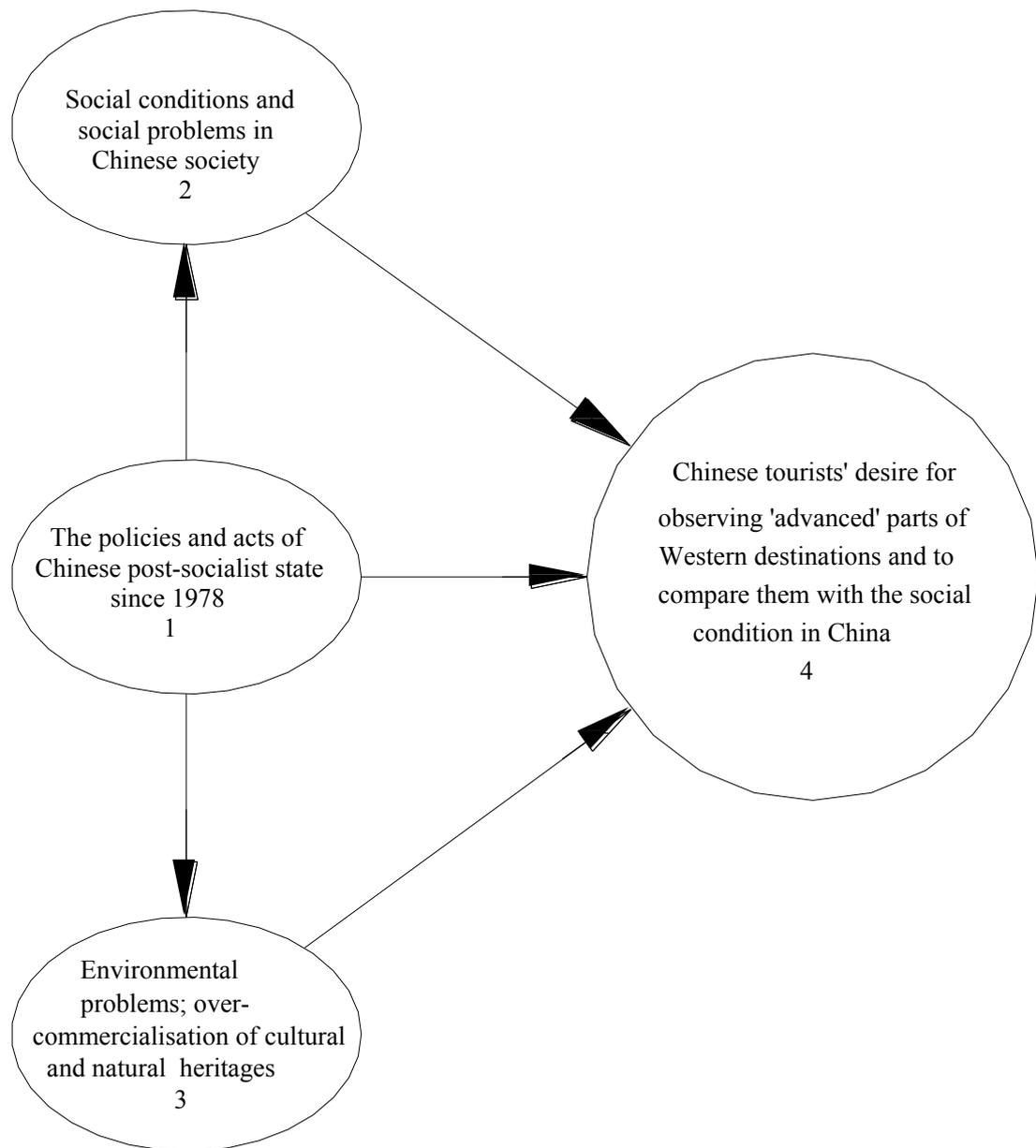


and development, this policy in turn encouraged wide-scale mobility on the part of the Chinese population. At the same time, the image of migration and migrants was, in a sense, 're-branded'; whereas migration had been seen as 'unhealthy' and 'treachery' during Mao's era, it was re-projected as something positive and to be encouraged, with Western countries being promoted as 'modern', 'developed' and 'civilised', rather than

'romantic' (see Nyíri, 2005). Therefore, in contemporary China to be mobile is to be modern (Liu, 1997). Moreover, since the 1990s, when travelling to the West, Chinese citizens have been encouraged to seek or gaze upon the more contemporary or modern aspects of the country they are visiting (*Circle 1* to *Circle 4*).

On the other hand, however, the Chinese government's dominant emphasis on economic development and the subsequent rapid economic growth the country has achieved has resulted, has, directly or indirectly, in a variety of social and environmental problems, such as more limited progress in other aspects of social life (including the teaching methods described above) the over-commercialisation of natural and cultural heritage (see Oakes, 1998; Nyíri, 2001, 2005, 2006, 2009) (*Circle 1* to *Circle 2* and *Circle 1* to *Circle 3*). As a consequence, many of the older Chinese tourist respondents on our tour were, in comparison to the younger tourists, more concerned about the changing social situation in China and, hence, deliberately paid attention to various aspects of modern social life in the UK and compared them with social life in China (*Circle 2* to *Circle 4* and *Circle 3* to *Circle 4*).

### 8.2.4 Imagined Authenticity

Nevertheless, neither the visualisation of time nor the deliberate observations discussed in the preceding subsection reduced the passion of the Chinese tourists for mentally immersing themselves into the attractive views and landscapes which they encountered during the journey. Both younger and older tourists alike gazed upon the views in a transcendent fashion, in so doing creating a personal, imagined authentic experience, even though what we toured most of the time was the 'front region' of destinations (MacCannell, 1999). To illustrate, respondent TLP48 told me during an interview that it seemed as though she had been transported back to the seventeenth century when she gazed down the Royal Mile in Edinburgh with murky clouds hovering overhead (see *Figure 8.4* on Page 231):

> TLP48: You see, dark clouds covered the sky. It looked like demons would come to this world...(smiling)...to this place. Yes, I like Edinburgh very much, especially when dark clouds covered it. How to say? I like this sort of tranquillity before the storm. This view took me (back) to the 17th Century.

> I: Did you know the history of Edinburgh before this visit?

> TLP48: No...But anyway, I felt the vicissitudes of its history. It is old and (was) covered by dark clouds. It seemed like even God was crying for this city.' (TL,

Professional, aged 48)



**Figure 8.4:** The view of dark clouds hovering over the Royal Mile in Edinburgh took TLP48 back to the 17th Century (Photo provided by TLP48)

As noted earlier in the thesis (see Chapter 6), during the tour we were permitted only up to an hour and forty minutes at each main destination on the pre-scheduled route. And Edinburgh was, of course, no exception. Indeed, TLP48 told me on the tour bus that she spent no more than a few minutes in the Royal Mile, since the tour guide then took her and some other tourists in the group to New Town (also in Edinburgh) in order to purchase some cashmere scarves. Nevertheless, this act of gazing briefly upon an historic yet now highly commercialised street provided her with a sense of tranquillity before the storm as well as the fantasy image of a disaster-struck Edinburgh in the seventeenth century, even though the combination of the bus, posters, souvenir shops lining the street and, indeed, the presence of other tourists (see *Figure 8.4*) might have reminded her of the fact that she was at a tourist site in the twenty-first century. Evidently, this fantasy and sense of tranquillity were not only triggered by the view being gazed upon but also created by the informant's body which was moving, sensing, dreaming and imagining in the street (see Lacan, 2004: 80-2). To a great extent, together these formed TLP48's authentic experience of touring Edinburgh, as she presumed that such a time-honoured city deserved a 'tough' history. Moreover, this imagined authenticity both excited and satisfied her.

At the same time, while imagining and experiencing the 'authentic' Edinburgh, TLP48 also used her iPhone 4S to take a photograph of the view that she was consuming. As

can be seen from *Figure 8.4*, she attempted to raise the phone to frame the historic buildings and the dark clouds whilst also trying to avoid capturing some signs of modern Edinburgh, such as tourists and souvenir shops. As a consequence, this act of photo-taking, which was characterised by concealing and revealing, to a great extent helped her to concretise this imagined sense of tranquillity, fantasy and authentic experience, even though she was slightly ashamed that the white bus parked on the left side of the street was not totally excluded from the photograph. As TLP48 lamented in the interview:

> If this bus disappeared, it (this photo) is really equivalent to a picture of Edinburgh in the 17th Century. This photo should have been much better. But this bus..(TL, Professional, aged 48)

The concept of *imagined authenticity* is, as I propose it in this thesis, to some extent a new perspective on the notion of authenticity in the context of tourism although it rests on the foundation of long-standing debates regarding the role and meaning of authenticity in tourism (see Wang, 1999). Before exploring imagined authenticity in more detail, I shall now review briefly the different perspectives on authenticity that have fuelled these debates.

As discussed in Chapter 3, in MacCannell's (1999) opinion, 'authenticity', which he deems to be largely equivalent to 'the original' or 'the genuine' (see also Sharpley, 1994: 130), is problematic in people's everyday lives in modern societies. That is, in traditional societies, 'there are no disputes about origins' (Hall, 2007: 1139) whereas, for the modern tourist – or tourists living in contemporary modern societies - the search for *the authentic* is, according to MacCannell (1999: 13), a reaction to the anxiety and discontinuity which has emerged in cultural modernisation and which has not only disassociated things from their original natural, historical and cultural contexts, but also broken up 'the solidarity of the groups in which they originally figured as cultural elements, and brought 'the people liberated from traditional attachments into the modern world'. In order to overcome this discontinuity and to reconstruct a social identity, alienated tourists, such as Porter Moresby in Paul Bowles (1949)'s novel *The Sheltering Sky*, embark on their journeys to seek authenticity, although the authenticity they eventually encounter is ordinarily one staged by the tourism industry. According to MacCannell (1999: 101), the notion of staged authenticity refers to the authenticity staged by the tourism industry at the touristic *front region*, as an attempt to satisfy tourists' desire for authentic experiences. In order to successfully complete the task of staging, a touristic front region is partially or entirely decorated like a *back region*.

MacCannell's alleged positivist perspective has been criticised by others, such as Cohen (1988), Bruner (1989) and Wood (1993), who adopt a constructivist approach and, thereby, claim that authenticity is not the unique and inherent nature of objects. Rather, it is actually a *symbolic authenticity* which is projected onto toured objects by tourists or tourism producers in terms of their own imagery, expectations, preferences, beliefs and powers (Wang, 1999: 352). More precisely, and as I have discussed in Chapter 6, constructivists generally believe that there is no single reality that is entirely independent of people's activities and symbolic language. Rather, there are multiple or plural realities which are best regarded as the outcome of people's interpretation or construction. Influenced by this perspective or paradigm, Cohen and others undoubtedly embrace the multiplicity and socially constructed natures of authenticity. Following Wang (1999: 355-6), we can see that they believe there is no fixed or pre-existing origin and meaning that tourism destinations, attractions, spectacles, objects and so forth can be unambiguously and permanently linked to, since origins and meaning are continually (re)constructed in different contexts or periods of time. Indeed, origin and meaning are frequently employed by the tourism industry in order to seduce or satisfy tourists who expect what they will tour and consume is authentic. For example, Scotland's tourism was ambitiously expected to grow by 50% by the year 2015. In order to meet this goal, 'authenticity' was identified as a future key consumer-driver and as a trend that matches Scotland's brand equity proposition of 'human, enduring and dramatic' (Yeoman *et al.*, 2007: 1128). Nevertheless, despite the commercial projection of and association with authenticity, tourists in general do not mechanistically decode whatever has been arranged for them (see Cohen, 1979; MacCannell, 2001). Rather, they see it in different ways as they 'have their own way of definition, experience, and interpretation of authenticity' (Wang, 1999: 355; see also Gottlieb, 1982). In turn, over a period of time these individuals' views, interpretations and experiences might be utilized and transformed by the tourism sector into part and parcel of the 'authentic' features of toured destinations.

However, although these proponents of constructivism embrace the free will and individual lifestyles of people / tourists when they consider the concept and dimensions of authenticity, it would appear that how tourists perform and feel when confronted with alleged 'authentic' views and attractions still remains under-explored in the literature. Thus, perhaps we should ask whether, on the one hand, tourists are performers who prefer to make a compromise, to enhance their individual experience and mentally create their own 'authentic' zone, even if they realise that the tourist place is not authentic as expected, or, on the other hand, whether they are no more than examiners who simply assess and judge the extent to which tourist places are

authentic or have been commercialized. Unfortunately, Wang's (1999) notion of *existential authenticity* does not answer these questions, for he is primarily concerned with the connections between tourists' desire for authenticity and their everyday state of existential living. As Wang (1999: 352) succinctly explains:

> Existential authenticity refers to a potential existential state of Being that is to be activated by tourist activities. Correspondingly, authentic experiences in tourism are to achieve this activated existential state of Being within the liminal process of tourism. Existential authenticity can have nothing to do with the authenticity of toured objects.

Certainly, as mentioned earlier, modern alienated tourists, to an extent, seek or desire an existential state of being which is at least different from that in their modern everyday life (see also Urry and Larsen, 2011). However, the principal problem with existential authenticity is its isolation from the staged authentic tourism setting. But, the staged authentic tourism setting of course matters, otherwise there was no reason for, for example, VisitScotland to have put the promotion of the authenticity of tourism destinations in Scotland on the marketing agenda (see also Hall, 2007). Otherwise, Tim Oakes' (1998) female American tourist would have not been mentally put over the edge,when she registered the author's appearance in the theme-park performance organized by Miao locals in Southwestern China. As Oakes records as follows:

> I recalled how the morning had unfolded. Shaman Chen, the village tourism director, had announced over breakfast that an American tour group was coming to the village…Word quickly spread throughout the village that the day's scheduled reception was to be for an American group, and soon there was a discernible buzz of excitement at the prospect of entertaining people from the same place as myself. This was a special occasion, deserving something more than the standard reception routine. Some of the older women in the village, Shaman Chen's wife among them, hit upon the idea of dressing me up in festival costume. Implicitly, the meant *women's* costume, since the most striking ornamentation was always dressed up as beautifully wrapped prizes in a festival tradition that primarily served as a social stage for courtship rituals between young men and women from different villages…I protested that the Americans wouldn't appreciate seeing me dressed up as a Miao woman. 'Nonsense,' sputtered Shaman Chen's wife with a dismissive waves of her tiny hand, 'you'll look *beautiful*!'…
>
> ...I was positioned with the last group of wine-bearing women, in front of the village gate. We offered not the small cup of wine encountered along the path below, but

whole bull horns full of the stuff, and it was perhaps this final intoxicating hurdle more than anything that put the Nikon-toting American over the edge when she suddenly registered my presence. It was perhaps, too much for her to take-a theme park style performance (when all she really wanted was to see the real village going about its daily tasks as if she wasn't there), enforced drinking of multiple cups of rice liquor (it wasn't even *noon* yet), and now this white man mocking her with his costume and annoying greeting, 'Welcome to this village!' (Oakes, 1998:1-4)

Actually, a staged authentic setting plays a rather crucial role in providing a place or 'route' (Crang, 1997) for tourists to experience, perform, dream, author and make sense of the toured destinations, and usually in an embodied fashion (see Baerenholdt *et al.*, 2004; Crouch, 2005; Scarles, 2009). For example, many of the Chinese tourists in the first field study, as previously noted, tended to stage/imagine their own authentic experience, even though it might have been very different from what the tourism industry in the host country wanted them to experience. Therefore, the concept of *imagined authenticity* refers to a type of authenticity which is generally achieved not by the industry but tourists themselves.

In other words, when many tourists are at a place which could serve as the touristic *front region* of a destination, where a certain degree of authenticity has been already staged by the local tourism sector (see MacCannell, 1999:101), even though they might be aware of the fact that this place is a touristic *front region* and, therefore, totally commercialised, they rarely enter the *back region* to see or search for the realities of authentic everyday life in the destination. The behaviour of Shepherd's (2009) Chinese backpackers in Tibet exemplifies this point well. Instead, they prefer to borrow some elements of the tourist place which are, to them, interesting, visually pleasing or authentic, to imagine an atmosphere in which they might fall into an illusion and persuade themselves that they already have had a glance of local people's real everyday life, and of the authenticity of the toured tourist place. Arguably, this sort of imaginative engagement with the toured tourist place appears non-serious but rather creative and poetic. Usually, the range of the elements they could potentially borrow is very wide, though it depends of course on what there is at the tourist place. Generally-speaking, it might include people (tourists or local), food, clouds, sunshine, architecture (see also Ong and du Cros, 2012), a town square, poems and other discourses they have received about the destination being visited (see Sofield and Li, 1998). At the same time, they are very likely to adopt the strategy of concealing and revealing (see also Markwell, 1997; Garlick, 2002) and take photographs of either the tourist place or

themselves in order to record or concretise the atmosphere and authentic experience they have imagined. As a consequence, they perhaps feel satisfied, although their experience has been criticised by some as superficial (for example, Shepherd, 2009; Ong and du Cros, 2012).

The performances of respondent TLP48, discussed above, are a good illustration this act of imagining authenticity, employing as she did the authentic architecture and inky clouds to imagine an Edinburgh of the seventeenth century. Besides imagining a fragment of history of a destination, some of the other Chinese tourists, such as respondents VP45 and YS26 even imagined the life style of local people. More precisely, when she took a punting tour along the River Cam, VP45 imagined an academic atmosphere of the University of Cambridge better than that of Oxford. As she told me in an interview:

VP45: The next photo was taken at a Cambridge University college. I took this photo, as Cambridge made an incredible impression on me…The academic atmosphere at Cambridge University was very enriching and dynamic…Hmm, a lot of photos of mine were taken there.

I: You just mentioned the enriching academic atmosphere. But how did you know that? Although I have been to Cambridge a few times, I have not have chance to get to know the academic atmosphere there. I remember that every time I was walking through a college in Cambridge, I got the strong feeling that I was touring a museum…Especially this time, I didn't even get the chance to into a college…So I am very curious.

VP45: …I knew the whole history of the Cambridge University was rather long, and I saw the style of the buildings in the University was very unique. Red bricks, aren't they? So I assumed that the students in this University studied very hard. Since I hadn't studied hard while I was at University, I felt much regret while I explored…Well, I felt the academic atmosphere was much better than that of Oxford University.

I: Could you possibly tell me what academic atmosphere Oxford was like?

VP45: I went to Oxford a few days ago. The buildings there were scattered around the city. The architecture in Cambridge was very classic and delicate….They were very different.

Author: Have you talked to the students in Cambridge?

VP45: No, I did not have a chance.' (Victoria, Professional, aged 45)

Reflecting on my own experience, I revealed to VP45 during the interview that, for me, walking in a Cambridge college was very much the equivalent to walking in an open-air museum. Although I had been to the city a few times, I had not of course had the opportunity to access classes, seminars or workshops convened by the university. Thus, it was unlikely that I could ever feel the academic atmosphere there. In contrast, even though she had neither attended a lecture and nor conversed with a student at Cambridge, VP45 used the classic and delicate buildings and architecture there to imagine an enriching and dynamic academic atmosphere in which students studied very hard (see *Figure 8.5*). Not only could this imagined academic atmosphere not be paralleled at Oxford University, but it rather seduced the respondent and even made her regret that she had not studied hard when she was a university student.



**Figure 8.5:** VP45 'judged' the academic atmosphere of Cambridge University from its architecture

It could be argued, of course, that the reason these Chinese respondents created an imagined authenticity rather than seeking out the back region of a toured destination might be the fact that the tour guide did not allow them sufficient time to take a stroll and to immerse themselves in the destination. In other words, this act of imagining authenticity might only be applicable to Chinese tourists on organised packaged tours. To some extent tis is undoubtedly the case since, as previously noted, we were indeed allowed only limited time to explore the destinations. However, it is not necessarily reasonable to claim that such behaviour is limited to Chinese mass tourists. Indeed, even when the Chinese tourists on our tour were allowed enough time to tour and

experience a destination, they were still satisfied with an imagined authenticity rather than immersing themselves, mingling with locals and exploring some of the realities of the destination.

To demonstrate, as mentioned in Chapter 6, on the fifth day of the tour I deliberately changed my behaviour. That is, rather than complying the rigid travel schedule established by the travel agency, I explored Bath Spa for a whole afternoon in the company of respondent YS26, who had never been to this tourism city. More specifically, rather than being hurried to the particular attractions suggested by the guide on the tour bus (which YS26 did not want to visit either), we sat for a long time outside a restaurant that was directly opposite the Roman Baths, a signature tourist attraction of the city. We enjoyed a slow meal, drank some good wine, enjoyed the sunshine, and listened to the music being played by street musicians. Subsequently, inspired by my own past travel experiences, I suggested to my companion that we should escape from the touristic *front region* and going to a pub to mingle with the locals and watch a live football match. However, YS26 was very reluctant to do so. Eventually, we went shopping in the streets around the restaurant before returning to our hotel to join our fellow tourists.

Significantly, although we had in fact experienced little if anything of local people's authentic daily life in Bath, YS26 imaginatively employed the elements of sunshine, wine, food, music, the cathedral, the square, and other tourists and diners to create a romantic, beautiful, vibrant and dynamic atmosphere and experience (see *Figures 8.6* to *8.9*). While listening to his vivid and passionate description, I equally reflected on how exciting and pleasant that afternoon had been. But more than that, YS26 surprisingly labelled this touristic experience as part and parcel of the everyday life of the residents of Bath, an everyday life which he believed to be more relaxing than that of Londoners. As he continued to narrate:

YS26: Have you ever thought why cities like Bath are so popular？ Of course, it is partly because of the Roman Baths. But I think there is another crucial reason; that is, living in Bath is very comfortable and relaxed. As life there is so comfortable and relaxed, you have to spend more time there to experience it yourself, instead of simply taking a few photos....

I: Did you experience life in Bath?

YS26: Yes, of course. Do you not remember we experienced it together in Bath? I

felt very happy and my life was very beautiful that day. Actually, the bright sunshine, the music, the authentic western dishes and the people around me conspired to make my world happy. In particular, the numerous people around me not merely made me feel that I was living in a dynamic and vibrant world, but also relieved me of the depression that I had been suffering from for a long time.

I: Do you think this kind of slow pace reflects the pace of life in Bath? We were no more than visitors. Perhaps this type of slow-paced life can only be experienced by privileged visitors, like us…

YS26: (What you say) seemed reasonable…But I still believe this sort of slow pace of life belongs to Bath. It is not like that in London. I think Londoners' pace of life is very different from that of people living in Bath. Londoners suffer from pressures in all aspects of their lives, especially in their work.' (Yan, Student, aged 26)

YS26 and I shared a room over the seven days of the tour. Therefore, I had the privilege to interview this respondent more than twice. In another interview, he informed me that he felt rather depressed and lonely, as his beloved girl friend had recently split up with him. Consequently, he had perhaps felt a need to try and escape from or forget these negative feelings. By imagining an ideal version of locals' everyday life in Bath (or in his words, *'a happy world'*), YS26 was not only able to author this destination (see also Scarles, 2009) but also satisfied his inner needs and found a solution to his problem. Therefore, although on the surface YS26 was consuming the tourist destination of Bath, the outside world, in reality, he was consuming his 'self'.



Figure 8.6                                    Figure 8.7

Figure 8.8                                    Figure 8.9

**Figures 8.6 – 8.9:** YS26 employed the elements of sunshine, wine, food, music, the cathedral, the square, and other tourists and diners to create a romantic, beautiful, vibrant and dynamic atmosphere and experience (Photographs provided by YS26)

It still may be asked if there is an underlying reason why, as suggested by this research at least, that Chinese tourists prefer to imagine authenticity rather than painstakingly seek for it, if indeed they truly have desire for the 'authentic'. An answer perhaps lies in the tourism culture of the Chinese. In his empirical study, Hofstede (2001) identified the fact that there is a low degree of individuality or a high degree of collectivism among Chinese people. A high degree of collectivism, generally-speaking, might shape many Chinese tourists' collective attitudes towards what constitutes a good travel experience. That is, for a Chinese tourist, a good travel experience is also a social experience; it is good because it is experienced with others (Shepherd, 2009: 259-60; see also Nyíri, 2006). As a consequence, estrangement which indicates either traveling totally alone or mingling with a lot of people whose language they do not understand or are not familiar with, is not encouraged. Therefore, Chinese tourists tend to imagine authenticity rather than mingling with strangers and exploring unknown or even 'insecure' zones in a tourist destination. Moreover, and as discussed in more detail later on, the fashion for transcendentally engaging with spectacles and toured places which once prevailed amongst the élite travellers in pre-modern China has arguably been 'secretly' passed on to contemporary Chinese tourists. Indeed, this is another factor that might explain why even though they enjoy only a very brief stay at tourist attractions, many Chinese tourists, such as those on the tour in this study, still are able to draw on multiple elements at the touristic *front region* (MacCannell, 1999) to imagine authenticity.

**8.3 The Chinese Tourist Gaze**

*8.3.1 Introduction*

Thus far, this and the preceding chapter have introduced the visual acts engaged in by all of the Chinese tourist-respondents in the two field studies. It has been revealed that these visual acts involve the photographic capturing of fellow tourists' improvised or spontaneous performances, the visualisation of time from the spectacles being gazed upon, the deliberate observation of some 'advanced' aspects of British destinations, and the imagination of authenticity. So, the question now to be addressed is: what do these findings tell us about the nature of the Chinese tourists' gaze in the UK as a whole?

Drawing on the outcomes of the two field studies and relevant theories, I have formulated an alternative framework of the Chinese tourist gaze (*Figure 8.10*), which seeks not to reveal *what* Chinese tourists prefer to see but also to suggest *why* and *how* they perform different visual acts in a Western destination country. Through a discussion of this refined framework, in the following section I explore the characteristics and dimensions of the Chinese tourist gaze. First, it is necessary to introduce several key ideas in sociology, specifically *alienation*, *anomie* and *blasé*, which have informed the development of the framework.

*8.3.2 Alienation, anomie and blasé*

From the literature reviewed earlier in this thesis, it can be seen that Urry and Larsen (2011: 4) argue that places are chosen to be gazed upon because there is 'anticipation, especially through daydreaming and fantasy, of intense pleasures, either on a different scale or involving different senses from those customarily encountered'. Also, they claim that 'such anticipation is constructed and sustained through a variety of non-tourist technologies, such as film, TV, literature, magazines, CDs, DVDs and videos, constructing and reinforcing the gaze' (ibid: 4). Admittedly, these non-tourist technologies in modern society provide tourists with a proliferation of images and discourses which could seduce them into seeking a specific tourist place (see Crang, 1997; Jenkins, 2003; Scarles, 2004). However, it should be noted that these images represent no more than the 'pulling' power of the destination (Dann, 1977). Moreover, Urry and Larsen (2011) do not further explore what 'pushes' (Dann, 1977) motivates tourists, or why tourists are seduced by these images and discourses and move their 'lumpy, fragile, aged, gendered, racialised bodies' (Veijola and Jokinen, 1994) to the suggested places. In order to address this question, other human and non-human factors should also be taken into consideration.

MacCannell's (1999) discourse about modern tourists' quest for authentic experiences offers a route to answering this question. That is, the desire of contemporary tourists to visit specific destinations is, according to MacCannell, significantly influenced by deficiencies and a sense of alienation that individuals experience in modern tourist-generating countries. More precisely, the tourist's quest for authenticity in travel is believed to be a reaction or response to the anxiety and discontinuity that emerged with the modernisation of society, issues that, prior to MacCannell's analysis, had already been recognised and addressed by Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim and Georg Simmel.

*Alienation:*

The inspiration for Marx's ideas emanated primarily from social changes in Western societies during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a period which was referred to the 'Age of Revolution'. Slattery (1991: 180) summarises these changes as follows:

1.Political revolutions in America, France and Europe.

2.The Industrial Revolution that swept Britain and west Europe.

3.The intellectual upheavals of the scientific revolution, of the age of enlightenment and of Darwinism.

4.The nationalist movement that included the unification of Marx's own homeland, Germany, in 1870.

According to Slattery (1991: 181-2), citing the work of Peter Hamilton, Marx's ideas can be transformed into three models of how capitalism works:

1. An economic model whereby capital is created and circulated.

2. A social model whereby one class, the bourgeoisie, exploits the other, the proletariat.

3. An ideological model whereby ideas and the apparatus of the state are used to maintain and justify such exploitation.

Importantly, the concept of *alienation* underlines all three models and is, in essence, a moral indictment of a socio-economic system that denies man his true nature, separates him from the products of his own labour and sets man against man in an economic 'jungle' (see Slattery, 1991). From Marx's perspective, the essence of human nature, which universally distinguishes man from animals, is his consciousness, his

imagination, and his ability to control his environment. This essence is most conspicuously expressed in the productive process where, by working together, men transform nature. However, whenever this form of self-expression and social co-operation is in any way limited or thwarted, *alienation* will occur. Marx himself has outlined four key forms of *alienation*:

1. When the worker has lost control of the end product. What he has produced is no longer his but owned by his employer.

2. When, through the extensive division of labour in modern factories, the worker no longer feels involved in the production process. He is merely 'a cog in the wheel', motivated not by the intrinsic satisfaction of work but by the extrinsic one of the wage at the end of the week.

3. When relationships between workers are not those of colleagues but of rivals, competitors for jobs, bonus and promotion; and those between employer and worker are not the relationships of equals but of master and slave as employers seek to maximise the profits from their workforce.

4. Whenever the individual is denied the true essence of his human nature-self expression through work, his work no longer feels part of him, nor represents his true talents. It is no longer a source of pride and achievement. (quoted in Slattery, 1991:182; also in Bottomore and Rubel, 1961)

Since tourism in particular has been long considered a reaction or manifestation of opposition to the condition of everyday life in modern or post-modern society (see Urry and Larsen, 2011), the alienation as theorised by Marx and others may certainly influence why and how people travel. According to Krippendorf (1986), for example, alienated people travel because they no longer feel at ease where they are, neither where they work nor where they live. In the same vein, some early sociological commentary on tourism, such as that by Boorstin (1961) and Dumazedier (1967), regards tourism as an expression of escapism and freedom (see also Slattery, 1991) whilst, more recently, Sharpley (2008) argues that it is the alienating condition of contemporary postmodern societies that creates the need for engagement in tourism.

*Anomie:*

In contrast to Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) adopted a structuralist perspective on the massive social change that occurred in the late eighteenth and early

nineteenth centuries and, in particular, on the effects of modernisation upon the individual. More precisely, Durkheim focused on a central issue in sociology, namely, 'social order' or 'social solidarity' as her termed it, to study 'the political turmoil and industrial/urban upheavals facing Europe and especially France at the turn of the century' (Slattery, 1991: 56). Consequently, in his influential book *The Division of Labour in Society*, Durkheim (1893) proposes two ideal types of social order – mechanical solidarity and organic solidarity – as the basis for analysing and comparing the straightforward social structures of pre-modern societies with the complex division of labour that defined modern societies (Slattery, 1991).

In pre-modern or, in Durkheim's words, *mechanical* societies, relationships were essentially face-to-face and, in the context of labour, most people were all involved together in the occupations of hunting or farming. Thus, labour was, in a sense, simply divided by task, not by the individual, whilst not only did all people share a similar lifestyle and a common set of beliefs, customs and rituals, but also their individual behaviours were controlled, shaped and guided by them. As Slattery (1991: 57) comments:

> There is little individuality, social differences are few and far between, private property is almost unknown and so conformity is both 'natural' and easily established through socialisation and such key social controls as the family and religion. Deviations are severely and publicly punished.

In modern societies, however, as the industrial economy grows, divisions of labour become increasingly complex with many people moving from the country to the city and a variety of occupations, lifestyles and sub-cultures progressively proliferating. In particular, labour itself becomes divided in the sense that workers are engaged in specific tasks in the production process whilst, more broadly, similarity gives way to differentiation, homogeneity to heterogeneity, collectivism to individualism, common ownership to private property, communal responsibility to individual rights, and commonality to class and status difference (see Slattery, 1991). At the same time, face-to-face relationships and informal social controls become no longer sufficient to bond society together. Consequently, a new basis is required to successfully combine social order and individual freedom, which Durkheim terms 'organic solidarity' (Slattery, 1991). In short, the mechanical solidarity of pre-modern societies has been replaced by 'organic solidarity', where social cohesion is dependent upon an individual's economic interdependence and a more formalised social order provided by the state (Giddens, 2001).

In Durkheim's view, the chance of a breakdown of social consensus and of social controls over the individual is more likely in societies held together by organic solidarity (Slattery, 1991). More specifically, he observed that the norms and solidarity of societies are most at risk during periods of social upheaval or transition, such as political revolutions and industrialisation, which ultimately lead to feelings of aimlessness or despair amongst tye members of society (see Holden, 2005). Conceptualising this as *anomie*, a Greek word meaning 'lawlessness', Durkheim attempts to explain individual behaviour in terms of the wider social structure. He suggests that *anomie* exists where there is an absence of clear standards and rules to guide behaviours in social life (McLeish, 1993) claiming that, in such a situation, 'individuals would feel threatened, anxious and disoriented' (Holden, 2005: 46). Dann (1977) was the first researcher to associate *anomie* with tourism, identifying the fact that the monotony, loneliness and lack of genuine social interaction in the anomic world may indeed have some impact on people's touristic behaviour.

*Blasé:*

By observing the lives of the rapidly increasing population of Berlin at the beginning of the twentieth century, Simmel (2000: 174-5), in his influential essay *The Metropolis and Mental Life*, contends that 'the deepest problems of modern life derive from the claim of the individual to preserve the autonomy of his existence in the face of overwhelming social forces'. From his interactionist perspective, because of modernisation in general and urbanisation in particular, ties between people become more formalised, replacing the more traditional affective ties typical of pre-modern societies (Lechte, 1994). An essential aspect of this formalisation is money, which acts as the medium of exchange for a wide variety of goods. However, Simmel's principal insight into the influence of urbanisation on the individual consciousness is to suggest that it brings about a new psychological disposition (Lechte, 1994; Holden, 2005). That is, in the face of an over-stimulation of the senses from the complexity and diversity of life in urban areas, it is necessary for the individual to develop attitudes of reserve and insensitivity, which Simmel termed the *blasé*. Without the development of the *blasé*, people would not be able to cope with the experiences resulting from high population densities (Holden, 2005). Holden (2005) suggests that one potential route to such autonomy is through participation in tourism which, occurring as it does away from the routines of work and home, may offer time that is free from the controls and pressures of daily life. Therefore, it is claimed that tourism is a response to the over-stimulation inherent in modern societies.

### 8.3.3 Revisiting the Chinese tourist gaze

Despite the fact that there are some distinctions between the gaze of the older and younger generations of Chinese tourists, as revealed in this and the preceding chapter, overall the Chinese tourist gaze is characterised as transcendent, imaginative, reflexive, comparative, expressive, interchanging and playful. At the same time, it is becoming increasingly less differentiated from its everyday counterpart – that is from the way in which Chinese people gaze upon (and photograph) places, people and things in their everyday lives. Nevertheless, from the research I have identified that Chinese tourists sometimes imagine authenticity, seek pleasure, visualise time from the spectacles they observe, shift the focus of their gaze to observe / capture their fellow tourists' surprising, pleasing and spontaneous behaviours, or compare what they are observing with what they are familiar with or used to their home country / society. Therefore, based upon these identified gazes and performances, I shall now refine the framework and dimensions of the Chinese tourist gaze, initially proposed in Chapter 5 (see *Figure 5.1* on Page 115) as follows:

As *Figure 8.10* (on Page 248) shows, the Chinese tourist gaze (*Circle 8*) is, generally, potentially shaped and authorised by nine factors. Firstly, it has been identified that old buildings, traditional villages, blue skies, green fields, a relaxed lifestyle and so on have collectively entered the Chinese tourists' cannon of taste (*Circle 7*). In addition to changes in their personal lives, their desire to see and experience these things evidently has much to do with relevant governmental policies (*Circle 4*) and the resultant living and environmental conditions in contemporary China (*Circle 5* and *Circle 6*). More specifically, under the combined influence of the policies and laws enacted by the Chinese post-Socialist state and the burgeoning development of the Chinese economy since 1978, many Chinese people, particularly the aforementioned younger generations of 'Ba Linghou' (八零后) and 'Jiu Linghou' (九零后) are likely to have become subject to the fusion of alienation, anomie and the blasé in their everyday lives, triggering a sense of sadness, loneliness and hollowness (*Circle 4* to *Circle 5* and *Circle 5* to *Circle 2*). Moreover, when there is a change in their personal circumstances, the effects of these adverse feelings may become more acute (*Circle 1* to *Circle 2*).

At the same time, the cultural and natural heritage of China has become excessively commercialised, accompanied by a widely recognised increase in environmental problems, such as severe water contamination and air pollution (see Fu *et al.*, 2007) (*Circle 4* to *Circle 6*). Combined with the negative senses and feelings stimulated by alienation, anomie and the blasé, this over-commercialisation and deterioration in the environment have been found to have stimulated the desire on the part of many

Chinese tourists to seek out pleasure (see Chapter 7), the slow-pace of local people's everyday life, historic buildings, traditional villages, blue skies and countryside, crystal clear waters, beaches, or the attractive social characteristics of the foreign destinations they are visiting that they consider to be 'advanced' (such as the educational methods employed in the British Museum discussed in Section 8.2.2 above) (*Circle 2* to *Circle 7* and *Circle 6* to *Circle 7*). Not only does this desire essentially underpin the Chinese tourists' gaze, but it also further shapes their acts of gazing, playing, photographing and imagining authenticity at the destination (*Circle 7* to *Circle 8*). In turn, by engaging in these acts and performances, this desire could be satisfied (*Circle 8* to *Circle 7*) with the result that they might be relieved – at least temporarily – from the negative feelings they experience in their everyday lives (*Circle 8* to *Circle 2*).

Second, being Chinese tourists, they seldom seek or encourage estrangement. As a consequence, they have a natural preference for collective travel which both contributes to a positive social experience and facilitates their satisfaction with an imagined authenticity at diverse tourist front regions (*Circle 3* to *Circle 8*). Furthermore, not only have they inherited the 'ancient' habits of gazing in a transcendent fashion but also, discussed previously, some older Chinese tourists visualise time through the observation of some places / spectacles, just as their ancestors did (*Circle 9* to *Circle 8*). Lastly, it has become less usual for Chinese tourists to see and appreciate destinations and attractions only through their eyes. Rather, it has been identified that they are keen to utilise (at least) a smart phone to frame and capture memorable places and moments. The prevailing *'smart'* tools not only enable them to concretise the touristic encounter but also to shift their focus of their gaze to other tourists' behaviours, rendering their visual acts more playful but de-exoticised from their everyday equivalent (*Circle 10* to *Circle 8*). For this reason, *Circle 8* is drawn without solid borders (see also Chapter 4).

It must be emphasised here that this conceptual framework of the Chinese tourist gaze is not determinate but socially and culturally fashioned, since any social and cultural change in China and other parts of the world might incur alteration of this concept in future. Also, it does not ignore the universal influence of the media and many other visual stimuli, such as brochures, postcards and photos taken by other tourists, that are widely circulated both in the destination and in tourist-generating countries. Indeed, as has been long been explored in the literature, a variety of visual stimuli not only pre-form the tourist's gaze at home (see Urry, 2002; Urry and Larsen, 2011) but also continue to inform and shape their visual practices at the destination (see Crang, 1997; Scarles, 2009). However, what this research in general and the conceptual framework

in *Figure 8.10* in particular emphasise is the 'Chineseness' of the Chinese tourist gaze or, more specifically, those defining characteristics which distinguish it from the well-established Western tourist gaze. Additionally, it is notable that the Chinese tourist gaze is, in essence, a Chinese tourists' collective as opposed to individual gaze. It means that a Chinese tourist individual's gaze does not have to be shaped and tailored by these nine factors at the same time. Rather, sometimes there might be merely some of the factors simultaneously take effects; whilst, the others conspire to perform at another time.
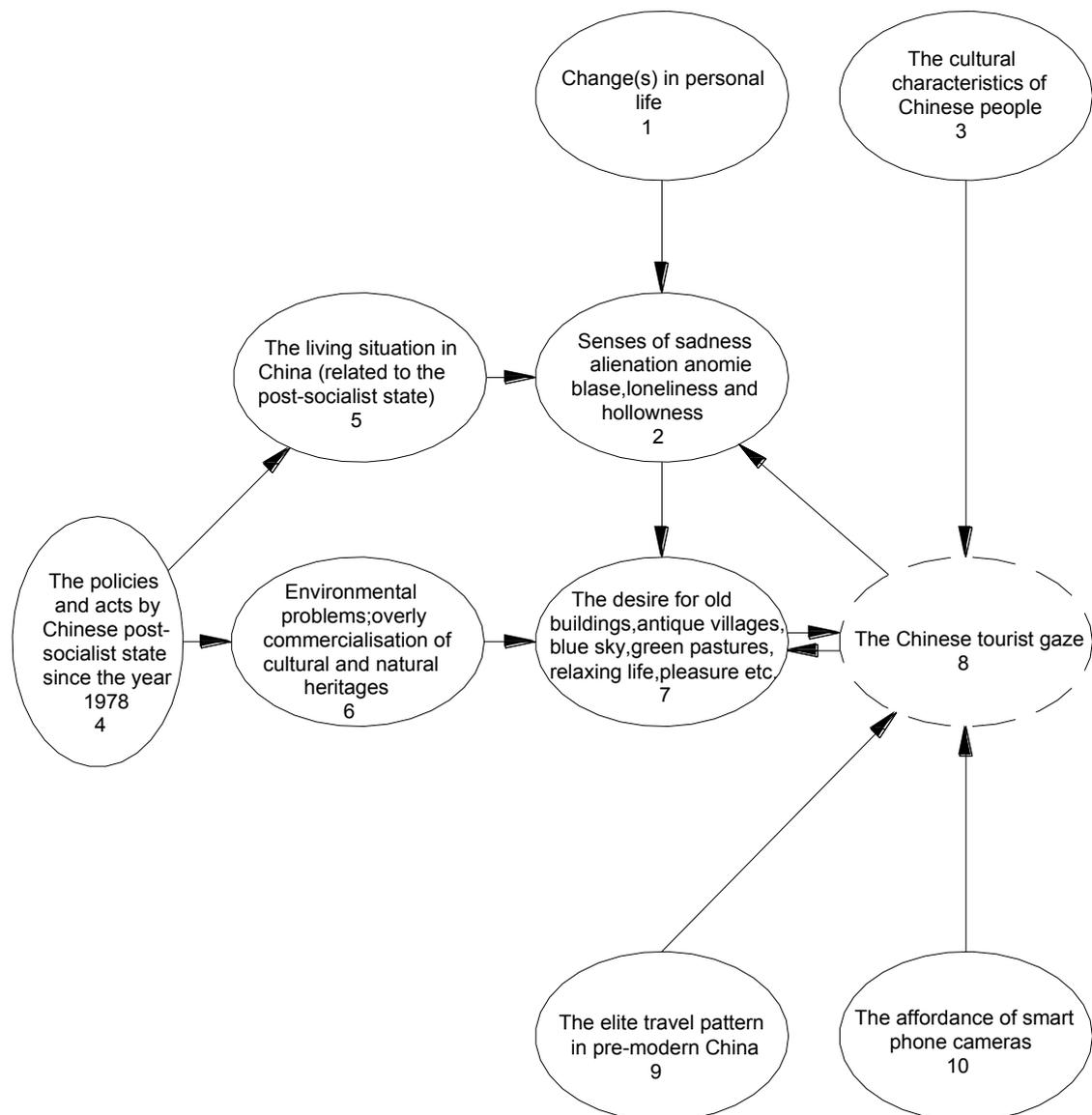


**Figure 8.10:** The Chinese tourist gaze (refined)

Having (re)conceptualised the Chinese tourist gaze, in the remainder of this chapter I now draw on my research to consider in detail not only the proposed characteristics of

the Chinese tourist gaze but also to evaluate the extent to which it is, in reality, shaped and authorised by a stimulated desire, by the cultural characteristics of the Chinese, by inherited travel behaviours and the opportunities offered by smart phone cameras.

### 8.3.3.1 The stimulated desire

> Sometimes, when I have gazed upon a cloud hovering over an extensive wild area, I have felt very lonely and isolated, particularly when there was nobody else but me there. This feeling of isolation occasionally even brought me a hint of sadness. I think we, modern people, are becoming increasingly hollow and lonely...I live in a metropolitan city, which is full of change. Everything is changing so swiftly, even my girlfriend who I had been with for many years. How fantastic it would have been if we had not split up and I had brought her here…I feel so hollow, so small, so lonely and so useless. Therefore, this trip has given me the strong desire to settle down and live a stable and more raditional life.

> Absolutely, the history of Shenzhen is so short. It [Shenzhen] used to be a small fishing village thirty years ago. But now, you see…It developed too fast and everything came too fast. I am sure you will have heard of a kind of speed, called 'Shenzhen Speed'. That is, the construction workers are able to complete the construction of each storey of a building within three days. (Yan, Student, aged 26)

These two paragraphs above record the feelings of one of my respondents, YS26, discussed in an interview during my first field study. From these quotations, it is evident that, besides the changes in his personal life resulting from splitting up with his girlfriend, the enormous and continuing transformation of his home town of Shenzhen have also induced in him the alienating, anomic and blasé feelings of isolation, loneliness, hollowness and even sadness which, as discussed earlier in this chapter, encouraged him to imaginatively construct a dynamic, vibrant, cosy and authentic atmosphere in Bath.

Certainly, it is surprising that, as a result of the *Economic Reform and Open Door Policy* that has been implemented since 1978, Shenzhen has been transformed in the space of just thirty years from a small, sleepy fishing village on China's border overlooking Hong Kong's New Territories into a metropolitan city which 'constantly reminds the communist Chinese of capitalistic power, prestige and wealth (thetrumpet.com). 'Shenzhen Speed', referred to by YS26, appears staggering; everything occurs too quickly. The city is modernised too quickly, ideology transforms too quickly and the residents' lifestyle changes too quickly. Marxist ideology, intensely

and extensively championed throughout Mao Zedong's era (see Airey and Chong, 2011), has lost its power in terms of shaping and disciplining the citizens' ways of thinking and behaving. Instead, these the radical ideas inherent in Marxism have been progressively replaced by a series of economic development-driven or GDP-centred policies and regulations established either by the Chinese post-Socialist state. At the same time, and as previously noted, the post-Socialist state has even attempted to re-invent national identity, chiefly by forging a nostalgic landscape and developing numerous 'patriotic' theme parks, such as the *Splendid China* established in Shenzhen (see Anagnost, 1996; Oakes, 1997). However, both Shenzhen – this frontier of economic development – and Chinese society more generally have been unable to remain immune from the significant influence of abundant fluid capitals, people, ideas, objects and technologies mobilised from the Western societies (see Oakes, 1998).

In particular, the rapid and arguably excessive economic development and corresponding state policies have conspired to result in 'risk regimes' or 'risk cultures' in Shenzhen (Keith, *et al.*, 2014: 223-46), which are mainly characterised by high risk, insecurity and uncertainty in terms of illness, old age, education and, perhaps, housing. As a consequence, a significant proportion of the city's large population (now 14 to 18 million, from just 100,000 in 1976) now faces fierce competition and stress in job-seeking and income-earning (thetrumpet.com; Keith, *et al.*, 2014). For members of the younger generations in particular, such as YS26 who is about to embark his own career, that stress might be all the more acute.  At the same time, materialism is becoming increasingly pervasive, and relationships between citizens are becoming more money-driven and less authentic. As a result, many people are exposed to effects of alienation, anomie and the blasé (see Slattery, 1991; Holden, 2005). In order to cope with consequential negative feelings, many people are now inspired to travel, to escape from their ordinary social lives and to see something or somewhere which looks extra-ordinary, seducing, primitive and authentic (see Boorstin,1961; Dumazedier, 1967; Urry and Larsen, 2011).  Interestingly, , in his investigation of heritage tourism in Wutaishan (North China) Shepherd (2013: 137) also attarcted similar responses. To illustrate, one of his Chinese respondents Mrs Qi, who was also from Shenzhen, imparted to him that the competition in her everyday life was so fierce that it could be described as 'people eat people'. In contrast, Wutaishan and the people there provided her with  a sense of peace, calm and confort.

In fact, since 1978, not only has Shenzhen but Chinese society more generally, though especially in massive cities and urban areas, been developing at the legendary *'Shenzhen Speed'*, though it should be noted that, in more recent years, this speed had

begun to reduce. The dramatic transformation of Chinese society is revealed in the following description of China in Mao Zedong's era (thetrumpet.com, 2007):

When U.S. President Richard Nixon made his historic 1972 visit to China, this great nation, teeming with hundreds of millions of people, was in the midst of the Cultural Revolution. Education was sidelined in many areas, intelligentsia were sent to labour camps, and China was stuck in a quagmire of its own making. By the time the madness ended in 1976, China was an economic backwater.

In contrast, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimates that China's gross domestic product grew at average rate of 9.9% per annum between 1978 and 2012. Moreover, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Economic Outlook has forecast that China will surpass the United States in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) adjusted for purchasing power parity by 2017 (Keith, *et al.*, 2014: 1). Therefore, the situation in many other large Chinese cities, such as Beijing, Shanghai, Hangzhou and Guangzhou, is the name as that in Shenzhen. To demonstrate, in their book *China: Constructing Capitalism*, Keith *et al.* (2014) reveal that social life for the residents of is similarly characterised by high risk, insecurity, fierce competition and massive pressure.

In this research, in addition to YS26, other respondents on both field studies who also came from larger Chinese cities, provided clues during the to their home lives and the negative feelings they experience on a day-to-day basis. To illustrate, besides respondent NS29 on the second field study to the Isle of Wight (see Chapter 7 for more detail), MP26, a respondent from the first field study, revealed to me her discomfort of living in the crowed and busy city of Shanghai, her desire for a tranquil atmosphere and her transcendent encounter with Loch Lomond in Scotland, even though the stay at this 'scenic spot' (Nyiri, 2006**)** lasted no more than twenty minutes:

As for this photograph of Loch Lomond, I really like it because the lake offered [me] a sense of isolation and tranquillity. When I looked at it, I felt like I had become the boat on the lake...All the stress and bad feeling went away. I don't have to think about anything. Just to be there....a fantasy world…Yes, I like to be quiet and living in a busy city sometimes makes me feel 'uncomfortable', 'shallow' and 'superficial'. By the way, I found that the village in the proximity of Loch Ness was very quiet. I assume residents there are living in a quite relaxing way.' (Min, Professional, aged 26)

**Figure 8.11:** While gazing upon the tranquil Loch Lomond, respondent MP26 felt that she had become a boat on the lake (Photo by MP26)

From the narration and *Figure 8.11* above, it can be seen that, just like YS26 and NS29, MP26 had the need and desire to consume something or somewhere that represented the counterpoint to her everyday life in order to compensate for the adverse feelings and discomfort she experiences. It was her complete denial of her 'self' and her imagining of becoming the boat that she was gazing upon that met this need and provided her with an extraordinary, tranquil and care-free experience. Indeed, on the one hand becoming the observed boat helped her to articulate her discomfort accumulated in everyday life, since the boat in the photograph is clearly alone and isolated. It is as though she wanted to shout out loudly: 'Leave me alone!' On the other hand, it potentially enabled her to escape temporarily from the real modern world and to fall into an illusion that she was an integral part of the complete tranquil and romantic picture. Therefore, she did not have to be concerned with or care about anything in this earthy world.

Referring to the discussion in Chapter 3, it is evident that MP26's gaze by and large shares the characteristics of 'transcendent' and 'interchanging' with the gaze of élite travellers in pre-modern Chinese society. This issue will be returned to later in this chapter. For now, however, it has become apparent from the research that for those Chinese people whose everyday performances are tailored and shaped by a myriad of social norms, social rules and regulations, denying the 'self' is a well-rehearsed strategy among. Indeed, as discussed in last chapter, we found that, faced of the vast

and extensive sea, NS29 felt that she had become tremendously tiny.  Moreover, this imagined smallness or tiny-ness had made her feel temporarily immune to 'earthy' influences. With her new identity of being tiny, NS29 was able to indulge herself totally in her desired activities of playing, running and photo-taking, without any 'wordly' concerns. Equally, although at that time I did not play as 'crazily' as she did, the combination of running, laughter and the sublime view automatically made me feel comfortably 'small' and offered me temporary escape from my everyday-life pressures.

Meanwhile, as considered previously, the Chinese central government and local states have, on the one hand, adopted tourism as a fundamental vehicle for the development of the economy (see Nyíri, 2006, 2009; Huang *et al.*, 2013). On the other hand, however, fearing the de-territorialisation and de-stablisation of Chinese society as a potential by-product of China's opening up to the world, national identity has been re-projected as 'Greater China' (Oakes, 1998), a nostalgic past has been invented, numerous theme parks have been developed and many traditional villages and other cultural and natural heritages sites all over the country have been transformed into theme park-style destinations. Visiting these places is largely equivalent to touring a huge museum, a 'tourist bubble' or 'enclavic tourist spaces' which are 'carefully planned and managed to provide specific standards of cleanliness, service, decor and 'ambience' (Edensor, 2001: 63; see also Oakes, 1998; Nyíri, 2006, 2009). As respondent TL48 laments:

> As a matter of fact, the tourist spots in our country have already been rather commercialised. I think there are many spectacular and stunning tourist destinations in my country, such as Huangshan Mountain, Jiuzhaigou, Huanglong. These places are unique...But maybe there are too many tourists in China...These tourist spots are very commercialised. You know, everything in the old villages should be very old…hundreds or even thousands of years' old…But it turns out to be very new. Authenticity has been undermined a lot, whereas many places in Scotland are conserved so well. There are fewer people there anyway.' (TL, Professional, aged 48)

This perceived over-commercialisation has to a great extent further contributed to the desire of many Chinese tourists to see the authentic and experiencing real locals' 'primitive' life style in many destinations in the UK. The observations of respondents TLP48, VP45 and YS26, quoted earlier, identifying their transcendent and imaginative experiences, serve as good examples of this.

In addition, the rapid but arguably unsustainable development of the tourism sector as well as many manufacturing industries in China has led to massive pollution and serious environmental problems, such as severe deforestation and water and air pollution (Fu *et al.*, 2007). According to an investigation by the Chinese Academy on Environment, approximately onr third of all Chinese citizens were exposed to harmful levels of air pollution, with the premature death of more than 400000 Chinese hopefully caused as a consequence in 2003. Sixteen out of the twenty most air-polluted cities of the world are located in China, and pollution levels are still rising due to higher energy consumption and automobile use (Alt, 2006:11). At the same time, overuse of water supplies results to regular drying-ups of the Huanghe River, and 70% of all rivers and lakes are too toxic to be used for drinking water, not to mention for sightseeing (Watts, 2005). Thus, it is unlikely that many Chinese people in their everyday lives are able to breathe fresh air, to appreciate the cleanness of crystal clear water and enjoy the beauty and freshness of wide-open natural spaces. This simple fact might motivate them to do so during their travel. Indeed, 'lung washing tours'/smog-escaping tours' (Waldmeir, 2014) have recently been promoted in China, especially in those majors cities which are afflicated by smog and haze mostfrequently. Individuals who take part in 'lung washing tours' usually either travel overseas or escape to some less polluted destinations in China, such as Sanya on Hainan Island, Lhasa in Tibet and Zhoushan archipelago in the East China Sea. This type of 'special' tour hasto some extent contributed to the revenue of many Chinese travel agencies., As Datong, a big mainland tour agency, reports, 'smog-escaping tourism' has boosted the number of total tours which they operate by 20 per cent year on year (Waldmeir, 2014).

During both field visits trips, I not only found myself appreciating the cleanliness of the natural environment, but also I frequently observed how excited my Chinese tourist respondents became as soon as they witnessed unpolluted water or well conserved forests and green space, either as they travelled or at specific destinations. While they were gazing, some respondents, such as VP45, took a photograph of it as a record (see *Figure 8.12* on next page). At the same time, comments were frequently made by my fellow tourists, especially some of the older ones, about the huge differences that they saw between the environment in the UK and that in China. The previously cited comment by respondent BP69 could serve as a demonstration.

**Figure 8.12:** The informant VP45 used her tablet camera to record the beauty and freshness of the green space she had seen from the moving tour bus. (Photo by VP45)

### 8.3.3.2 The cultural characteristics of Chinese people

The influence of the cultural characteristics of Chinese people has been discussed above in the context of 'imagined authenticity' (see Section 8.2.3 above). To summarise, however, in his empirical study, Hofstede (2001) identified the fact that there is a low level of individuality or high level of collectivism among Chinese people. A high level of collectivism could, to some extent,  shape many Chinese tourists' collective attitude towards a satisfying travel experience; a good travel experience is good because it is shared with others and, hence, is also a social experience (Shepherd, 2009: 259-60; see also Nyíri, 2006). As a consequence, Chinese tourists tend to 'stick together' and, therefore, despite having the desire for authentic experiences, many respondents in the first field study tended to imagine authenticity rather than mingling with strangers and exploring those unknown or 'insecure' zones in a tourist destination.

### 8.3.3.3 Élite travel patterns and gazes in pre-modern China

It has been identified that the highly organised, tightly scheduled tours to famous tourist attractions, commonly produced by the Chinese post-socialist state on the basis of the élite travel patterns in the pre-modern China, are gradually becoming undesirable to many Chinese tourists. That is, the Chinese tourist gaze in this modern/post-modern society still shares the characteristics of 'reciprocal' and 'transcendent' with the gaze of

élite travellers in pre-modern China. Nevertheless, it was not only the younger pleasure-seekers on our tour to the Isle of Wight who revealed a preference for slow, less organised travel; numerous Chinese tourists on the package tour in the first field study, even those of the older generations, began to lose patience with the excessively tight schedule of the tours. Over the course of the tour and, in particular, during the interviews, they frequently complained to me about the tight schedule of the tour, although it had been initially praised for being both convenient and cheap. As respondents TLP48 complained:

> Overall, I am not satisfied with this package tour. [It is] because the schedule is too...(sigh)...There is a saying in China: 'Appreciate the beauty of flowers on the side of road, while on the back of a galloping horse' (走马观花). I think our appreciation of the views and tourist spots are even more brief and shallower than this [saying]. Personally, I think the schedule of the tour should have been much looser and more flexible. In that case, we the older generations could have had more time to spare at each destination. After all, we can not walk as fast as you younger people. At the same time, we want to see, to study and to ask more. But this package tour doesn't allow us to do so...(TL, Professional, aged 48)

Owing to their physical condition, the old generations of Chinese tourists could perhaps have been allowed more time to explore each destination. From my observations, it was challenging and exhausting for them to move from one place to another every single day of the tour and sometimes even I, as a younger tourist, felt quite tired when the tour bus was carrying us hundreds of miles from the north to the south. Moreover, this sort of tiredness was enhanced when I felt that the travel experience was far more 'shallow' than I had ever expected before departure. Evidently, however, I was not alone in feeling this since many of my fellow tourists, such as respondent TLP48, also identified the superficiality of their own travel experiences. The Chinese saying that TLP48 quoted (see above) generally refers to the type of shallow travel experience associated with contemporary mass tourism; that is, to visit a place specifically in order to prove that one has been there. Even such superficial experience was thought to be better, however, than TLP48's experience on this tour. Apart her complaint, the superficiality of the tour and travel experience was also revealed by the attitudes and behaviours of many other respondents. On the tour bus, respondent VP45 was sitting on my right hand side. At the end of each day's journey, I found that she edited the name of every photograph that she had taken that day. During the interview, when I asked her about her editing, VP45 answered as follows:

'Yes, otherwise I would forget where the photo was taken. You know, we went to so many places in less than ten days. At the end of each day, I had to edit where I had been and where the photos were taken.' (Victoria, Professional, Aged 45)

VP45's experience was to a great extent a manifestation of the quoted Chinese saying. She had visited a total of thirteen destinations in just seven days and both the intensity of the tour and the brevity of each stay meant her tour experience was very much reduced to the practice of simply accumulating photographs (Urry, 1990:139), though she occasionally imagine authenticity while taking photographs. As a consequence, she would have to rely heavily on the combination of the photographs she had taken and the names and locations that had been added to them in order to refresh her memory once she arrived home. Conversely, rather than complaining and editing photographs, others chose to make a joke of this tight and inflexible travel pattern. To demonstrate, on the way to Loch Ness, I overheard a conversation amongst a few respondents:

A: I think it is much better if the tour guide could give me the opportunity to walk along the road to that valley over there…I really want to experience the wind, the soil and the smell in the air…'

B: I want to take a stroll as well.

C: It is impossible. But you both can dream it anyway...(Chuckle)...

A: Ok...So far, I am very pleased with our travel pattern. Our travel pattern is:

Sleeping on the bus;
While photographing off-board;
With so many photos I have taken,
Very little can I remember on returning.

This conversation is reminiscent of Nyíri (2006) and his colleague's packaged bus tour to Jiuzhaigou Reserve in Sichuan Province, China (see Chapter 4). Indeed, we spent most of the time sitting in the space of a moving tour bus, which prevented us from interacting with the destination through the other senses of touching, tasting, smelling and hearing. At the same time, the movement of our 'immobile' subjugated us to a spectacle of ephemeral landscape scenes that were only perceptible to the fleeting look of the glance (Larsen, 2001:87). Respondents A and B above were obviously less

satisfied with this sort of 'travel glance' (Larsen, 2001: 87) and spectatorial experience. Rather, both of them might be more in favour of Baudelaire's middle-class *flâneur*'s gazing-in-walking (see Benjamin, 1989:36-37), though the tightly-scheduled tour opened few opportunities fro such an experience.

Nevertheless, I have identified that the gaze of many Chinese tourists' still shares some of the characteristics of the gaze of their ancestors, despite the fact that they are not motivated by the ancient search for *Tao*. The earlier section (8.2.2), subtitled *Age matters but does not determine practice* discussed in detail how the older generations visualised (passing) time from the spectacles and natural phenomena they saw, a practice similar to that collectively engaged in by élite travellers in pre-modern China. In addition, from some other earlier examples (especially the quoted experiences of NS29 and MP26), it is evident that modern Chinese tourists have inherited the pre-modern travellers' habit of denying the real 'self' in the act of gazing, imaginatively creating an atmosphere/ picture of fantasy and interchanging with what was gazed upon (please refer to Chapter 2 for more detail), even though prevailing social order and national ideology has been totally transformed. This is, perhaps, another reason why, even though over they only enjoyed a brief stay each destination, many respondents in the first field study, such as TLP48, VP45, YS26 and MP26, were still able to imagine authenticity/fantasy and develop a transcendent and (or) interchanging gaze.

Nevertheless, it should still be noted here that, despite these similarities, there remains a defining difference between the visual and mental performances of pre-modern and modern tourists'. That is, reflecting the joint influence of traditional Chinese philosophies and the original collective attitude towards travel in early Chinese society, the travelling and gazing of pre-modern Chinese travellers were considered to be an attempt to overcome the restrictions and limitations of everyday life and to seek the experience of gods, angels and immortals (see Chapter 3). However, the evidence from numerous cited responses in this research, such as the narrative by MP26, suggests that, for modern Chinese, tourism can, to some extent, be regarded as a means of temporarily escaping from their modern life. After all, not only have the world views and attitudes towards travel of contemporary Chinese tourists been highly westernised, but also they largely remain immune from the influence of their ancestors.

### 8.3.3.4. *The opportunities offered by smart phone cameras*
In the visual practices that I have discussed, including pleasure-seeking, authenticity-imagining and the transcendent and interchanging gaze, it has become clearly evident

that the function of photography is not purely to concretise tourists' hedonistic and / or transcendent experience and gaze. Rather, the almost universal use of multi-functional smart phone cameras has, firstly, redirected the gaze of some Chinese tourists, especially the younger generations, from spectacles and signature visitor attractions to their travel companions' pleasing, surprising and spontaneous performances (for details, see Chapter 6).

Second, smart phone cameras have enabled Chinese tourists to play the visual encounter, particularly by experimenting with the composition of a photograph and then improving it afterwards (see also Larsen, 2014). Respondent TLP48 explained to me how she utilised her iPhone 4s to experimentally compose a photograph of the Horse Guards' Parade in London (see *Figure 8.13* on Page 260). As she stated:

> It is all about the composition of the whole picture...I had tried several times to compose it before I got this one. It is free, anyway...You see, the foreground, which chiefly includes people and yellow ground, is balanced with the background, which is primarily comprised of the architecture, blue sky and London Eye. After trying, I came to the conclusion that, if there was nobody but just yellow ground in the foreground, the whole picture seemed very boring. In addition, those people were walking against me and towards the palace. I think it is better than if they were walking towards me against the palace.' (TL, Professional, aged 48)

Indeed, compared with now out-of-date analogue cameras, the two big advantages of both digital cameras and smart phones are the complementary acts of photo-taking and photo-deleting. They allow us to experiment when taking photographs by trying different angles or including more/fewer images. If the photograph we take is not to our satisfaction, we do not have to be frustrated, as we instantly able to take another one (Haldrup and Larsen, 2010; Larsen, 2014). Moreover, shortly after taking a photograph, we are of course now able to take advantage of an installed mobile social-networking app, such as WeChat, Instagram and Line Camera, to display and edit it by cropping, changing its colour tone, beautifying the facial image of people in the photo or adding a cartoon sticker to the picture (see also Chapter 7). During both field studies, I found that, perhaps unsurprisingly, these acts of playing and editing are more prevalent amongst the younger generations of Chinese tourists.

Last but not least, smart phone serve to de-exoticise the Chinese tourist gaze and tourist photography; that is, the Chinese tourist gaze and tourist photography are becoming de-differentiated from their day-to-day equivalents. More precisely, as

addressed in Chapter 2, owing to the extensive use of smart phones in our everyday life, few if any 'magic moments' are missed and the everyday has become much more 'photographic' (Larsen, 2014:35). At the same time, according to the 'performance turn' (Haldrup and Larsen, 2010; Urry and Larsen, 2011; see also Chapter 3), many touristic behaviours, including photographic behaviours, are well rehearsed in our everyday lives. Therefore, it is reasonable to argue that the well-rehearsed act of photographically capturing 'magic moments' has become a habit of 'normal' life. When Chinese tourists go on holiday, we might also take this habit with us and continue to pursue the 'magic moments' encountered over the course of travel, especially when there are also some other factors inspiring us to do so.



**Figure 8.13**: The photo of Horse Guards' Parade taken by respondent TLP48

Indeed, the redirecting of the (Chinese) tourist gaze from spectacles and visitor attractions to the behaviour and performances of travel may well be an example, as both gazing on and photographing these sorts of performances of friends is also an everyday practice for younger Chinese people. Besides the 'magic moments', it has been shown that some of us are also used to gazing on and framing images of some ordinary objects in which we are interested, both in travel and everyday life. To demonstrate, respondent TLP48 told me in the first field study that she was fond of clouds, which had frequently provided her with some denotive meanings. As a result, no matter whether at home or on a journey, she often observed moving clouds and, in addition, preferred to include images of clouds when attempting to compose a photograph of a view (see *Figure 8.4* on Page 231). Similarly, respondent CS22

articulated during the second field study that, being a flower lover, she tended to see and photographically pursue images of beautiful flowers whenever and wherever she encountered them.

### 8.3.4 The trend of the Chinese tourist gaze

Thus far, it appears that *Figure 8.10* (on Page 248) is generally is congruent with *Figure 5.1 (On Page 115)*, the latter having been conceptualised on the basis of past studies and theories. In *Figure 5.1,* the Chinese tourist gaze is shaped and authorised by three interlinking elements, namely: the travel patterns of the dominant élite in pre-modern China; institutions involving the post-socialist state; and, an array of technologies, especially the advanced photography and communication technologies. To an extent, these factors remain influential in the revised conceptualisation of the Chinese tourist gaze. Certainly, the majority of the Chinese tourists on both field studies admitted that they had lost patience with tightly pre-scheduled package tours and the old-fashioned government-produced pattern of travel to scenic spots. However, the Chinese post-socialist state and its subordinate institutions still conspired to play a significant role in authorising the Chinese tourist gaze, since mounting environmental problems and negative feelings experienced by the Chinese tourists with respect to their day-to-day lives collectively stimulated their desire to seek specific sites and experiences in response to the outcomes of the policies and laws enacted and implemented by the Chinese post-socialist state since 1978. Moreover, the cultural characteristics of Chinese people, pre-modern Chinese travel behaviours and advances in photographic and communication technologies have all enable the Chinese tourist to become imaginative (imaging the 'authentic'), transcendent, interchanging, expressive, playful and de-exoticised.

Nevertheless, compared to *Figure 5.1*, the framework depicted in *Figure 8.10* proposes a much freer Chinese tourist gaze. That is, Chinese tourists have more power and control to determine *how* to see in the toured destinations, even though they are often on a tightly-scheduled package tour. At the same time, their gazes are no longer deciphers of existing social arrangements (MacCannell, 2001), as they used to be (see Oakes, 1998; Nyíri, 2006; Shepherd, 2009). Rather, Chinese tourists are able to re-construct and play the authentic settings staged by the tourist industry whilst, in particular for the younger generations who will become the driving force of outbound Chinese tourism in the future, the pleasure they can generate themselves from a visit is much more important than the staged authenticity and prescribed meanings they encounter. Moreover, the role of technology, such as multi-functional communication and photography devices in the form of smart phones and tablets, is becoming

increasingly significant in shaping Chinese tourists' travel and visual experiences. Therefore, I would argue that, with the growing use of the multi-functional communication and photography devices in Chinese tourists' travel and everyday lives, the Chinese tourist gaze of the near future will, on the one hand, be gradually transformed from being post-socialist state-driven to technology-and-pleasure-driven. On the other hand, the gaze will become further de-exoticised or de-differentiated from its everyday counterpart. However, as the habits of denying the real 'self' in observation, imaginatively creating an atmosphere / picture of fantasy, and interchanging with what is gazed upon have been evidently passed down to the younger generations of Chinese tourists, the Chinese tourist gaze will in the near future still retain the characteristics of being imaginative, transcendent, interchanging and expressive.

## 8.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter has primarily developed the concept of *imagined authenticity* and subsequently refined the framework and dimensions of the Chinese tourist gaze initially prposed in Chapter 5 of this thesis To summarise, in sharp contrast to Dean MacCannell's (1976,1999) *staged authenticity,* which emphasises the production of an 'authentic' setting by the tourism industry, the concept of *imagined authenticity* largely contests the Chinese tourist gaze as some other researchers (for example, Oakes, 1998; Nyíri, 2006; Shepherd, 2009) have portrayed it – that is, as a decipher of existing social arrangement (see MacCannell, 2001). Rather, it accentuates the fact that a staged authentic setting, presenting an array of images, sounds, smells and prescribed meanings, simply provides Chinese tourists with a place or space to perform, imagine and dream (see Crang, 1997; Scarles, 2009). Many of the Chinese tourist respondents in the first fieldwork, no matter how old they were, clearly employed some elements in of the staged authentic settings to imaginatively construct their own authenticity. The underlying reasons why they preferred to imagine casually rather than painstakingly seek for authenticity include the fact that estrangement is not encouraged in Chinese culture. Therefore, they did not positively seek to mingle with strangers and to exploring unknown or even 'insecure' zones in a tourist destination.

Apart from the act of imagining authenticity, some of the older generations of Chinese tourists (those born between the 1940s and 1970s) have been found to visualise time from the spectacles which they were gazing upon, just as the their ancestors used to do. Equally, others intentionally gazed on 'advanced' social or cultural aspects of the British destinations comparing them favourably against their lived experience of contemporary China. However, these two practices were rarely engaged in by the

younger generations of Ba Linghou' (八零后) – those born in 1980s – and 'Jiu Linghou' (九零后) – those born in 1990s.

Based upon all of visual acts identified in both field studies – imagining authenticity, deliberately observing the 'advanced' parts, visualising 'time' from the observed spectacles and shifting the focus of gaze onto fellow tourists' spontaneous behaviours in a hedonistic fashion – a new framework of Chinese tourist has been proposed. This attempts to not only identify *what* Chinese tourists prefer to see but also to sketch out *why* and *how* Chinese tourists engage in different visual acts in a Western destination country such as the UK. From *Figure 8.10*, it is clear that the tourist gaze in the modern/post-modern China, being transcendent, imaginative, reflexive, comparative, expressive, interchanging and playful, bears many direct connections to Chinese tourists' desire to see, the patterns / behaviour of pre-modern Chinese travellers, some contemporary cultural characteristics of the Chinese people and the use of smart phones. At the same time, the needs / desires of Chinese tourists have been influenced by both their everyday social situation and environmental problems in China, both of which are the outcome of strategies and policies developed and implemented by the Chinese Central and local governments.

More specifically, not only have massive urbanisation and excessive economic development in China led to severe environmental problems but they nahve also subjected many Chinese people to a combination of fierce competition, alienation, anomie and *blasé* in their everyday lives. As a consequence, when travelling in another country, especially a Western country, Chinese tourists have the desire to look for pleasure, to experience local everyday life in the destination, to gaze upon historic buildings, clean, open natural environments and to experience what they consider to be 'advanced' about the destination. However, in fear of being either lost or estranged in the real authentic zone, Chinese tourists tend to imagine authenticity or to create a fantasy in the front region of a destination; armed with the long-established habit of denying the real 'self' in the act of gazing, they imaginatively create an atmosphere/ picture of fantasy and interchange with what is gazed upon. Alternatively, for the older generations, not only has the observation of 'advanced' aspects of a destination been put on the gazing 'agenda', but also, reflecting the practice of their forebears, gazing on some sights, such as the blossoming rapeseed field, endows them a sense of sadness, since they are reminded of the fact that, as time flies, they are getting increasingly older.

Significantly, the majority of Chinese tourists gaze not with just their eyes, but rather tend to use a digital camera or/and smart phone to record their visual encounters. In effect, camera devices, especially multi-functional smart phones, have been shown to not only to afford Chinese tourists the ability to concretise and play the gaze but also to shift the gaze of many younger Chinese tourists from views and visitor attractions to the interesting and spontaneous performances of their travel companions, for using multi-functional smart phones enable tourists to not only capture such performances photographically but also to share them instantly with their travel companions. Moreover, given their ubiquity, smart phones enable Chinese people to take a photograph of what they are interested in either in their everyday life or whilst travelling. Therefore, both the Chinese tourist gaze and tourist photography are, to some extent, de-exoticised.

# Section Four

# Conclusions and Limitations

# Chapter 9

# Contributions, Limitations, Dangers and Futures

## 9.1 Introduction



**Figure 9.1**: Edward Hopper's Gas Station (Source: Image Permissions)

The journey that this thesis has been is about to come to an end. Before it does so, however, let me make a metaphorical stop at Edward Hopper's *Gas Station* (see *Figure 9.1* above) to reflect upon what I have explored, sensed and experienced and, in particular, upon how and the extent to which I have achieved the objectives of this research over the course of this long but purposeful journey. Then, I shall not only consider critically what lies ahead of us and whether there are any dangers we might face, but also suggest which directions we should take in the future.

## 9.2 A Conversation Reflecting on the Journey of this PhD Research

What have I achieved over the three years of this PhD study? What were my objectives? And to what extent have I successfully met them all? Not only did I frequently ask myself these three questions whilst I was writing the preceding chapters that comprise this thesis but also, some months ago, my girlfriend Freya surprised me with the same questions over a Sunday lunch of Spaghetti alla Bolognese, Risotto ai Funghi Porcini, pot of virgin olive oil and a bottle of Chianti Classico. This section will not present a lengthy review of my objectives and how I have achieved them. Rather, I shall answer

all of these three questions by reflecting on that conversation between Freya and myself. After all, her wise questions and gentle challenges and her active engagement in the conversation forced me to reflect on my personal research experience more deeply than might otherwise have been the case.

'How is your research going? You've nearly finished writing it, I suppose.' asked Freya (referred to as 'F' in the rest of this section) as she put her fork down on the wooden table covered by crispy white linen.

'Going very well. But I still have another couple of chapters to go.' I replied, as I moved my eyes back to her from gazing at Holy Trinity & St Marys Church, which stood diagonally opposite the Italian Restaurant – Olivo Ristorante Italiano – in Guildford, where we were enjoying a relaxed lunch.

'Almost three years so far, isn't it? Time passes so quickly', F countered. She seemed to be very curious about my study and continued by asking: 'Well, what is your project for? What are its objectives? You are taking such a long time to do it.'

On hearing this question, I took a sip of the red wine from my crystal glass and thought about the best way to explain my research objectives clearly and succinctly to F, whose academic interest and expertise was in a completely different area from mine. After a couple of minutes collecting my thoughts, I replied: 'Briefly, my research is all about a concept that I have come up with called the Chinese tourist gaze, and about Chinese tourists' photo-taking practices. The Chinese tourist gaze might be quite unfamiliar to you. It is all about…As I might have told you before, three years ago when I registered with the University, the topic I planned to research was very different from the one I have been doing. As I remember, at the outset I was particularly interested in investigating how individuals would experience and take photographs of international festivals and mega events, such as the Edinburgh International Festival. You know, such international festivals attract a multitude of both tourists and local residents who take part in them. Moreover, rather than simply just 'seeing' a festival, some tourists might like to dress up and perform for the audience. Inevitably, some local residents might be fascinated by these tourist performers and take photographs of them. Therefore, the tourists, to an extent, become the hosts of the festival whilst the locals become the guests…'

Seeing that F was listening to me very attentively, I continued: 'That original topic was really interesting to me. But as I expanded the scope of my reading during the early

stages of my PhD studies, I realised that it was too broad and that its contribution might not be as significant as I had originally thought. So, I discussed these issues a number of times with my supervisors and eventually we decided that, based upon gaps in the existing literature that we had identified  [see Chapter 1], I should focus on the factors that respectively determine the tourist gaze and practice of tourist photography. More specifically, I was advised to take Chinese tourists as a case study and to concentrate upon a more specific *research question*. That is, to what extent are the Chinese tourists' gazes and photographic performances influenced by social, cultural and technological factors, which involve the fusion of photography-related technologies, travel traditions and the continuously changing social and cultural patterns in China? [see page 19 in Chapter 1]. Furthermore, during our discussions we agreed principal objectives for my project:

*Objective One*: I would explore and theoretically establish the Chinese 'tourist gaze', its historical origins and connections with evolving Chinese socio-cultural structures.

*Objective Two*: I should undertake field studies to test and refine the concept of the Chinese 'tourist gaze' which I have established.

And *Objective Three*:  during the field studies I should also empirically investigate how Chinese tourists actually undertake their photographic practices and explore what factors determine the ways in which they perform tourist photography'… [see also Chapter 1]

'That sounds awesome! Have you met these goals?' I had wanted to explain more about my research objectives, about how, for example, the concept of the 'tourist gaze' was already well-known but that it was very much from a Western perspective. However, F interrupted me by asking this question, as she seemed eager to know what had happened next.

Without a hint of hesitation, I immediately replied: 'Yes, I have. During the first year and a half of my research, not only did I review the history of vision and visuality – of sight-seeing, if you like – of both Western cultures and in pre-modern China, but I also completed an analysis of the trend of what I referred to as the de-exoticisation of tourist travels, the tourist gaze and tourist photography. In particular, comparing the history of vision and visuality in Western countries with that of pre-modern China [see Chapters 2 and 3] certainly provided me with many insights into the fundamental differences between these two types of gazes. They mainly involve…Well, with the constant social

and ideological changes in contemporary China and the country's rapid modernisation, these fundamental differences might, I imagine, have been reduced to an absolute minimum. However, the Chinese post-socialist state has in many ways contributed to stopping that assumed momentum, that direction of change, primarily by re-constructing various tourism destinations and visitor attractions, promoting a kind of 'scenic spot travel pattern' and so disciplining the gaze of Chinese tourists and encouraging them to actively consume the prescribed meanings of the tourist places that they were visiting. Nevertheless, as more and more people from all over the world are becoming able to travel to and take photographs of wherever and whatever they want, the Western tourist gaze, the Chinese tourist gaze and tourist photography are becoming increasingly less distinctive and extraordinary. In other words, these visual practices share the same destiny of being de-exoticised' [see Chapter 4].

'Anyway, based upon the theories and historical and social trends that I explored in my literature review, I was able to fufill *Objective One*, by constructing a conceptual framework of the Chinese tourist gaze [see Chapter 5].

'Then, I carried out two visual-autoethnographic field studies, exploring Chinese tourists' gazes and photographic practices in the UK. By involving my 'self' in the research and through the subsequent 'reciprocal' conversations with my respondents during interviews [see Chapter 6] I was able to gain much richer insights helping me to answer some key questions, such as: 'What do Chinese tourists want to see?'; 'Why do they want to see those things?'; and, 'How do they actually practice the 'seeing' of them?'. Surprisingly, I identified some 'unique' ways of gazing practiced by Chinese tourists, such as their imagining of 'the authentic', their deliberate observation of what they assumed to be advanced aspects of a destination, and their visualising of time from some of the sights or spectacles they were gazing upon [see Chapter 8]. These insights enabled me to refine the framework of the Chinese tourist gaze, which I had previously proposed [Chapter 8]. As a consequence, *Objective Two* was met as well. At the same time, I also studied why and how Chinese tourists took photographs primarily through the use of their personal smart phones. To be honest, before conducting my field studies, I had never expected that my Chinese respondents would depend on their personal smart phones so much. In fact, only a small number of respondents had taken conventional digital cameras along with them on the tours, so this phenomenon was another surprise that came out of the field studies. Specifically, studying my respondents' doing smart-phone photography certainly revealed some new dimensions and characteristics of tourist photography'. [see Chapter 7]. And *Objective Three* was fulfilled accordingly.'

'Great! I am glad you have arrived there…' .As she said these words, F pushed her half-finished risotto aside, looked me in the eyes, raised her wine glass and continued: 'Cheers, my dear!…But what is your journey of research contributing?.....'

## 9.3 Results of this Study and its Corresponding Contributions

### 9.3.1 Introduction

Two primary outcomes of this journey represent contributions to the existing related knowledge, specifically, the conceptualisation of the tourist gaze in a non-Western country (China), and the new dimensions that the smart phone camera has introduced to (Chinese) tourists' photographic practices. Therefore, in this section I shall revisit, summarise and further clarify these two results but also discuss their corresponding theoretical contributions.

### 9.3.2 The dimensions and characteristics of the Chinese tourist gaze

From the results of the fieldwork research discussed in Chapters 7 and 8, an important question inevitably emerges. That is, as the Chinese tourist gaze proposed in this study appears to be an independent concept, what is, then, the relationship between it and John Urry's (1990, 2002) original concept of the tourist gaze? In clarifying this relationship, the section summarises the dimensions and characteristics of the Chinese tourist gaze prior to discussing in the following section how this concept will contribute to the existing knowledge .

To a great extent, the Chinese tourist gaze is a form of Urry's tourist gaze, which has been criticised by many for being too general and western centric (see Franklin, 2001), applied specifically to the gazes of Chinese tourists. That is to say, the former concept, the Chinese tourist gaze, shares some common characteristics with but, at the same time, differs from the latter, the western gaze. So what are the similarities between them? Parallel to Urry's (1990, 1992, 2002) tourist gaze, the Chinese tourist gaze is, in essence, a mixed set of ways of seeing and understanding the world that are normally favoured by Chinese tourists. Through this gaze, people, places, cultures and pasts are known, objectified, consumed, played with and made sense of. At the same time, and analogous to Urry's concept, the Chinese tourist gaze is socially and culturally fashioned. That is, as social discourse, societal structure and social tastes have developed and transformed in China's evolution from a pre-modern to a contemporary society in China, so too has the gaze of Chinese tourists and travellers evolved accordingly. More precisely, owing to the combined influence of the traditional philosophies and aesthetic doctrines prevailing in early Chinese societies, élite

travellers then collectively favoured journeys in search of *tao* and sublime birds'-eye views. Also, a unique way of seeing – *'guān'*（观）- engendered and, as a consequence became widely adopted by the élite, manifested in the combination of the travelling of eyes *(游目)*, mental travel and cognitively inter-acting with the view being gazed upon. Therefore, the gaze of pre-modern Chinese élite travellers was characterised as transcendent, interactive, masculine and expressive (see Chapter 3 for more details). Nevertheless, because of prevailing societal structures, poor transport infrastructure and relatively limited social mobility (certainly compared to mobility in contemporary China), the gaze in pre-modern Chinese society did not travel extensively. Rather, a small collection of mountains, rivers, temples and other places were identified, visited and enshrined by the élites and intellectuals who enjoyed the privilege of being able to travel whilst the great majority of people, especially large numbers of illiterate farmers and others who worked on the land, were excluded from opportunities to travel extensively for leisure.

In contrast, reflecting the rapid development of transportation and communication technologies, the tourist gaze in the contemporary China has become widely democraticised. More specifically, the country's dramatic economic development in general and reforms in the regulation and management leisure / holiday time in particular have conspired to bring more travel opportunities to an increasing number of Chinese citizens. To demonstrate, according to statistics published by China National Tourism Administration, during the seven-day National Day holiday (1st -7th October) in 2014, a total of 475 million Chinese citizens were travelling nationwide (www.cnta.com). Moreover, unlike their forebears, the collective gaze of these modern / postmodern Chinese tourists is certainly no longer normalised by traditional Chinese philosophies and classic aesthetic doctrines. Rather, it is subjugated to the power and governance of technologies, and of the post-Socialist state and relevant institutions in China. Therefore, being institutionalised and fashioned by technology are two other characteristics that the Chinese tourist gaze, as conceptualised in this thesis, shares with Urry's gaze.

Nevertheless, the two gazes are still different in four respects. First of all, the history of vision and visuality in China (see Chapter 3 for more detail) underpins the distinction between the Chinese tourist gaze and Urry's tourist gaze, the latter being rooted in a fundamentally different cultural foundation, namely, the history of vision and visuality in Western societies (see Chapter 2). In this study, I have identified the fact that the contemporary Chinese gaze still, to an extent, bears some connections with its pre-modern counterpart. That is, reflecting the combined influence of Chinese state policy

and the appropriation of pre-modern Chinese collective travel behaviours (see Chapter 5), many Chinese tourists favour mental travelling and engaging with the views which they have encountered in a transcendental and inter-active manner. Indeed, during the course of the first field study in this research I even identified the fact that, when confronted with the manipulated setting of a 'front region' (Goffman, 1959) in a destination, such as the Royal Mile in Edinburgh, many respondents used some elements of this setting to mentally construct or imagine an authentic atmosphere to tour and consume (see Chapter 8). Thus, the concept of 'imagined authenticity' is proposed, which identifies one way in which Chinese tourists, who seek to avoid estrangement and, hence are unwilling to mingle with strangers or explore the unknown and even 'insecure' 'back region' (Goffman, 1959), engage with the staged inauthentic 'front region' in a tourist destination. Moreover, in addition to this act of imagining authenticity, some of the older generations of my tourist respondents, particularly those born between the 1940s and the 1970s, were found, on occasion, to visualise time from the spectacles which they were gazing upon, just as their ancestors used to do (see Chapter 8). Indeed, these connections with the pre-modern travel behaviours undoubtedly add a hint of 'Chineseness' to the contemporary Chinese tourist gaze.

The second fundamental difference between the western and Chinese gazes is that Chinese tourist gaze as defined in this study rests on the nature of Chinese tourists' desire to just see rather than being influencd by the extraordinary/ordinary dyad. In other words, the places, views, people and objects chosen to be gazed upon reflect the desires of Chinese tourists which are usually formed in their everyday lives and which are subject to the influence and normalisation by the post-Socialist state and other institutions in China. More specifically, as discussed in detail in Chapter 5 of this thesis, the Chinese government and its relevant institutions employ tourism and the media as a means of achieving cultural hegemony, normalising Chinese tourists' gaze and manipulating their desire to see. Moreover, in Chapter 8 I identified the fact that the desire of Chinese tourists to gaze upon traditional architecture, old villages, blue skies, open green spaces and, generally, what is to be considered a more relaxing life in the UK is, to some extent stimulated by the combination of environmental problems, excessive commercialisation of natural and cultural heritage and contemporary life in China that is characterised by high pressure, materialism and fierce competition. As this combination of problems and challenges is arguably the outcome of economic and development-centred governmental policies, it is reasonable to claim that the Chinese post-Socialist state and its subordinate institutions remain responsible for shaping or influencing what and how Chinese tourists desire to see.

Nevertheless, it may still be argued that the Chinese tourist gaze is still based on the extraordinary/ordinary dyad, since what the Chinese tourist respondents in this research were delighted to gaze upon what might be considered to be extraordinary in China. Admittedly, these gazes may, to some extent, be regarded as extraordinary but as Urry himself addressed, the boundary between the extraordinary and the ordinary is not necessarily fixed, as 'what is extraordinary one moment in a subsequent moment can be ordinary and vice versa' (Franklin, 2001:123). To base our understanding of the tourist gaze (western or Chinese) on the extraordinary/ordinary dyad is, in a sense, equivalent to building a house on shifting sand. We actually are unable to identify if what a tourist gazes upon really is (to the tourist) ordinary or extraordinary. Therefore, it might be appropriate to replace the underlying extraordinary/ordinary dyad with an alternative explanation, such as the constructed 'desire' which, as discussed in this thesis, is perhaps clearer and easier to identify and analyse.

Third, the Chinese tourist gaze is to a lesser or greater extent, age-determined for, as I have observed here, the younger and older generations of tourists sometimes gaze upon different aspects of a destination. For example, arguably as the result of the of Chinese central government's propaganda and encouragement, some members of the older generations, on occasion, deliberately sought out and observed some 'advanced' elements of a destination. For example, in the first field study respondent JP50 was rather impressed with a more effective method of organising and educating children which she observed at the British Museum in London whereas, generally, the younger generations were more happy to see and take a photograph of something luxury, exciting, innovative and creative, such as beaches, sports cars and the architecture of Tate Modern. On the whole, however, the gazes of both younger and older generations are transcendent, reflexive, embodied, objectifying, institutional and technology-fashioned.

The last difference lies in the varied roles of technologies in shaping these two gazes. Specifically, it can be argued that Urry, in his concept of the tourist gaze, appears to have overestimated the collective role of technology and the mobilities that it inspires. In light of the increasingly crucial role of post-modern media culture in our everyday lives, he goes so far as to claim that we are experiencing 'the end of tourism' since, rather than having to be there coporeally, we can consume distant places on televison programmes and through images circulating on the internet (see Chapter 4; Urry, 2001). In contrast, the model of the Chinese tourist gaze reveals another picture. That is, the role of the nation-state in China is at least equal with, if not less than, that of transportation, communication and photography technologies (as can be seen from the

findings summarised earlier).

As noted at the beginning of Chapter 1, Urry's overestimation of the role of technology may be arributed to the dominant perspective that nationality and/or country of residence should not be employed in tourism studies as either behaviour or marketing segmentation variables. More specifically, numerous scholars, such as McCrone (1992), Urry (1992b) and Dann (1993), do not support the utilisation of this variable, one of the reasons being that, due to the effects of globalisation, the burgeoning mobility in its various forms, and global information and communication structures, contemporary society and people's social lives have become progressively de-territorialised and de-traditionalised (see Urry, 2000). As a consequence, people's tastes, values and norms are perhaps less determined by 'societal' institutions, involving education, government and family (McCrone, 1992; Urry, 1992b). The model of the Chinese tourist gaze, however, addresses this bias in the existing literature suggesting that, although the role of technolgy may become more dominant in the future (see Chapter 8), there is still little evidence to suggest that the nation-state in China will entirely lose its power to shape and tailor the tourist gaze of Chinese citizens . Therefore, the model of the Chinese tourist gaze proposed in this thesis is, arguably. more appropriate than Urry's foriginal concept to the study of Chinese tourists' gazes.

### 9.3.3 The contributions of the concept of the Chinese tourist gaze

Despite its limitations which will be discussed shortly, the concept of the Chinese tourist gaze arguably contributes to existing knowledge systems in the following ways:

First, the concept and its corresponding frameworks (Frameworks *5.1* and *8.10*) not only shed light on what contemporary Chinese tourists usually prefer to see and how they visually appreciate the desired tourist objects but also visualise and theorise how their gazes and photographic activities are influenced, shaped and tailored by a combination of social, cultural and technological factors. Indeed, in the extant literature, no attempt has yet been been made to develop an instrumental theoretical framework to facilitate the study and understaning of these issues, particularly for Western scholars who still dorminate the community of tourism studies. As Pearce *et al*. (2013: 145-6) observe:

> Western researchers, who still comprise a dominant group in the tourism studies community, can find it difficult to understand Chinese tourists. The puzzles can be posed as the following questions: What is it that Chinese

tourists really seek as tourists? In fact, are their motives and experiences different from western tourists? Are they predisposed to mix with their hosts or do they clearly prefer intra-group interaction? Do they view the natural environments of visited locations with a different sense of the human-environment connection or with a spiritual framework unfamiliar to those with a western mindset?

As discussed in Chapter 1, this gap in the literature not only may be a result of the previously mentioned over-estimation of the role of technology and mobilities in shaping tourists' gazes globally, but also may be attributed to a misleading presumption about the behavior of 'future' of non-Western tourists. That is, not only non-Western alternative cultural warrants but also non-Western tourists' behaviours (see Foucault, 1988), which are largely shaped by these warrants, will be respectively subjugated to the surveillances of the doxa, tourism planners and people serving as orthodox tourists in Western societies (See Urry, 1992b; Dann, 1993). On this basis, it could be argued that Western scholars should focus primarily on studying Western rather than non-Western tourists' taste, gazes and travel behaviours.

Nevertheless, this presumption has yet to be realised in practice. Indeed, reflecting the outcome of other studies (e.g. Zhang *et al.*, 2005; Kwek and Lee, 2010), this thesis identifies the fact that Chinese tourists' gazes and travel behaviours remain more or less subject to the influence of Chinese traditional culture. Thus, not only would understanding and studying non-Western tourists appear to be necessary, but also  the concept and frameworks of the Chinese tourist gaze proposed in this study are potentially valuable in providing rich insights into Chinese tourists' taste, gazes and visual practives (such as, photo-taking, deliberate observation and imagining authenticity).

Second, many clues are offered to  potential changes in Chinese tourists' gazes and photographic practices, especially in terms of how and why they will be gradually becoming de-exoticised in future (see Chapters 4, 5, 8). Therefore, the generalisability of the concept of the Chinese tourist gaze may become enhanced as successive researchers build on it to understand and analyse what Chinese tourists will see and how they visually perform in a tourism destination in future.

Last but by no means least, in order to explore the cultural roots of the Chinese tourist gaze, Chapter 3 in this thesis contributes a wealth of insights into the élite travelers' gaze in pre-modern Chinese societies. Certainly, in the contemporary literature

Chinese traditional philosophies, such as Confucianism, are clearly used to explain Chinese tourists' travel preferences and travel behaviours (see Arlt, 2006; Shepherd, 2009; Pearce *et al.*, 2013). However, few, if any studies, have systematically explored the formation and characteristics of the éite travelers' gaze in pre-modern China (see Gong, 2001). To a great extent, the tourist gaze in general could, arguably, mirror people's social taste and aesthetic preferences in a specific society (see Adler, 1989: Ousby, 1990; Löfgren, 1999). Accordingly, it is fair to claim that Chapter 3 provides an important reference for the future scholars who wish to focus on the history of vision and visuality in early Chinese society.

In addition, in terms of the contribution to tourism business, the tourism industry both in China and in those countries that now attract Chinese tourists might also benefit from this research, since an understanding of the ever-increasing numbers of Chinese tourists, their tastes and how they might visually experience a specific destination, is likely to be instrumental, particularly in terms of tourism policy-making and designing tourism products to attract, cater for and satisfy Chinese tourists.

In the third edition of *The Tourist Gaze (3.0)*, Urry and Larsen (2011) introduce some new and fresh dimensions and characteristics of tourist photography afforded by the advent of digital cameras (see Chapter 2). However, as smart phone cameras are becoming increasingly pervasive, progressively and rapidly replacing the conventional digital camera in many respects, it is timely to investigate tourists' engagement in smart-phone-camera photography which is, of course, the other focus of this study.

### 9.3.4 Chinese tourists and smart-phone-camera-photography

This study has shown that, owing to its ease of use, the technological functions it offers and its social role, the smart phone camera is becoming increasingly popular and widely used amongst Chinese tourists who are less interested in photography *per se* and, thus, treat photo-taking as no more than a means of recording their personal travel experiences (see Chapters 7 and 8). To a great extent, the smart phone camera is not only a camera but also toy which provides Chinese tourists with enormous pleasure and shifts the focus of their travel photography away from the gazes constructed and marketed by the tourism industry to something else that pleases their eyes or that they are undoubtedly delighted to encounter or witness (see Chapter 7).

Moreover, since these smart devices are also frequently employed to frame a variety of surprising, beautiful but fleeting moments experienced in their everyday lives, the (photographic) gaze of many Chinese tourists largely overlaps their everyday gaze. In

other words, as considered earlier, the Chinese tourist gaze is becoming increasingly de-exoticised (see also Chapters 4, 5 and 8).

Furthermore, the use of smart-phone-cameras to take photographs has further enhanced both the 'playfulness' and interactiveness of tourist photography and the sociability between photographer and the photographed (Chinese) tourist. More specifically, some Chinese tourists, particularly the younger generations, no longer want to carefully compose a 'proper' holiday snapshot of their travel companions who pose more formally for them. Rather, these younger individuals seem to prefer capturing the improvised or spontaneous performances of their companions, often without them realising it, and subsequently sending them these 'surprising' photographs at the earliest opportunity, primarily via a smart phone app. Indeed, as the results of the second field study clearly demonstrate, this spontaneous, unstructured photo-taking and photo-sharing can evoke laughter and happy conversations between photographer and the photographed. In turn, those who are photographed are then often motivated to turn the tables, to do the same to the photographer. Therefore, this type of improvised and spontaneous photo-taking and photo-sharing might evolve and eventually become a circular and reciprocal game (see Chapter 7), potentially contributing to the enjoyment of all who are participating in this game. Moreover, physical tourist places are intersected by the virtual space and thus become the 'pleasure periphery' (see Molz, 2012).

Nevertheless, it is unlikely that these unconventional and slightly 'surprising' photographs will subsequently be shared on the personal social networking timelines of either the photographer or the photographed where an individual's 'manners' and 'appearance', serving as a Goffman (1959), 'front region', are carefully maintained and where more general social standards determine interaction on the account. Rather, the intimacy and 'togetherness' between the photographer and photographed created during travel is protected within the security, privacy and trustworthiness of the communal virtual space where they share the photographs of their spontaneous behaviours. Indeed, when the Chinese tourists return home and their 'togetherness' evaporates, this sort of photographic game terminates because such photographs are no longer shared on the communal virtual space (see Chapter 7).

Despiter these emerging dimensions and characteristics that smart phones have introduced to tourist photography, the reflexivity and embodiment of this practice have not yet been diminished; behind the photographs that the respondents in this study shared with me their embodied and reflexive travel experiences (see Chapters 7 and 8).

Also, it should be noted that tourist photography, in general, is a performative part of the tourist gaze (see Urry and Larsen, 2011). Therefore, similar to their gaze, tourists' smart-phone photography practices are still subject to a number of social and cultural factors. In this study, I have identified that the post-Socialist state and social realities in China still reserve the power to influence, directly or indirectly, the way in which some Chinese respondents identified photo-opportunities (see Chapter 8).

### 9.3.5 The contributions of the revealed dimensions and characteristics of tourist smart-phone-photography

As I have pointed out at the beginning of this thesis, there are few, if any, empirical studies that focus upon how now universally-employed smart phones have altered the landscape of tourist photography. Thus, the dimensions and characteristics of tourist smart-phone-photography revealed in this study are novel and may enlighten successive researchers both as to what has changed in the realm of tourist photography and why and how Chinese tourists take photographs nowadays. Equally, by identifying how Chinese respondents shared their photographs, knowledge and understanding of Chinese tourists' travel connections as well as their attitudes towards the multipliciting social networking sites/mobile-apps has been provided.

## 9.4 The Dangers

### 9.4.1 Introduction



**Figure 9.2:** Tourist spots in Chinese arte usually packed with tourists during the week-long Chinese National Day Holiday

Source: http://www.takefoto.cn/viewnews-178803.html

*Figure 9.2* (on last page) illustrates vividly how crowded popular tourist spots in China have become, particularly during the busy seasons. Certainly, in this instance it appears that Chinese tourists have outnumbered the carrying capacity of this particular destination. At the same time, the number of Chinese tourists travelling to the other parts of the world has increased dramatically in recent years; between 2000 and 2008, outgoing tourism from China increased by 338% (Yeoman, 2012: 26) whilst it has been predicted by the China Tourism Academy that the number of Chinese tourists travelling in 2014 will increase by 18% in 2014 alone, reaching a total of 116 million (Waldmeir, 2014). Moreover, not only did China become the world's largest source of international tourists in 2012, but this already significant number will continue to grow in the next few years, primarily as a result of the growing middle class in China and the relaxation of visa regimes in many Western countries, such as Germany, France and the UK. To a great extent, therefore, it is reasonable to claim that the Chinese tourist gaze is progressively becoming globalised. Certainly, the flow of large numbers of Chinese tourists will bring enormous economic benefits to the destination countries. According to *Barclays' Tourism Dynamics Report 2014*, for example, Chinese tourists are expected to spend £1 billion in the UK by the year 2017 (http://www.caithness-business.co.uk/article). However, negative consequences and even dangers ma present themselves at the same time, particularly with regard to crude oil consumption, global climate change and impacts on tourist destinations. This section will discuss these negative consequences and dangers.

### 9.4.2 Oil Consumption

The globalisation of Chinese tourist gaze may potentially aggravate the existing shortage of oil and result in another oil crisis or oil shock. Though it should be noted that there is at the time of writing temporary over-supply / falling prices in crude oil markets resulting from shale oil and gas production in the US, excessive supply from the Middle east and a slow-down in demand, particularly from China, the world's economic development is always powered by energy. In fact, if it is fair to claim that whilst coal-based steam power supported the industrial development of the West during the Victorian period of the nineteenth century, it was that oil largely underpinned economic development in the Western societies over the course of the twentieth century (see Urry, 2013: 1-18). Indeed, since it was first discovered and refined in mid-nineteenth-century Pennsylvania (see Urry, 2013: 5), oil – this 'energy-dense, storable, mobile, versatile, convenient' (Urry, 2013: 6) black gold – not only has become essential to almost every aspect of contemporary daily life but has also dramatically powered both the accumulation of national and personal wealth and development of

the mobility of both people and goods at least in western societies. However, as Simmons (2005: 342) questions:

> Can the world cope with the peaking oil supplies? After all, it was the oil miracle that made the twentieth century an unprecedented era for wealth and personal freedom in the developed nations, changing almost every aspect of how we live, travel and eat.

In the same vein, Homer-Dixon (2006: 81) also draws a similar conclusion below from his observation and analysis of peak oil:

> Oil powers virtually all movement of people, materials, foodstuffs, and manufactured goods-inside our countries and around the world.

Despite its power and functionality, oil is finite and irreplaceable. Thus far, no other source of energy has been developed that could thoroughly substitute for energy-dense oil, no matter how hard scientists have tried to replace it with possible alternatives, such as wind, hydrogen and nuclear energy (see Yeoman *et al.*, 2007:1356-7). Nevertheless, accompanying the progressive growth in social wealth and social mobility around the world, oil is still consumed at a staggering rate, as was particularly the case during last century, when the price of oil was relatively low. Take the USA, for instance. According to Urry (2013), American economic, cultural and military hegemony during the twentieth century was heavily grounded upon cheap and plentiful oil. Though accounting for just five percent of the world's population, this country generated one-third of global wealth, at a cost of twenty-two percent of world energy and one-quarter of total carbon emissions (Urry, 2013: 10). Moreover, American people drove approximately a third of the world's cars and contributed up to half of the world's transport-generated carbon emissions (see Borger, 2008). There is little likelihood of this fast-paced consumption declining in the first decade of the twenty-first century, particularly with the emergence of China and India as the world's new economic powers. As a consequence, in just over 150 years the human race has, to date, has collectively pumped out more than half of known oil reserves – that is an estimated 2 trillion barrels of oil – that were formed in the earth over millions of years (Yeoman *et al.*, 2007: 1355).

With respect to tourism in particular, this is an industry that is ihighlyfuel-driven, as its numerous sectors are powered by oil, involving transportation, accommodation, hospitality and events. In particular, the transportation sector is comparatively oil-

intensive, with the aviation component alone consuming 243 million tonnes of fuel annually, which is equivalent to 6.3% of world refinery production (Nygren, Aleklett, & Ho, 2009). And this is to say nothing of other modes of oil-powered transport, particularly the motorcar (see Urry, 2008). Also, aviation, on the whole, tends to be very sensitive to fluctuations in the price of fuel. Typically, the longer the flight, the higher the fuel costs as a proportion of the airlines operating costs (Ringbeck *et al.*, 2009). Therefore, long-haul airlines are more subject to pressures imposed by oil price hikes. And if the affected long-haul airlines were unable to effectively respond to the higher oil price at the earliest opportunity, their stimulated operating cost would be probably passed on to the customers instead. For example, in the summer of 2008, when the price of crude oil climbed up to the notorious US$147 per barrel mark, Thai Airways dropped its non-stop Bangkok–US flights for commercial reasons, given that fuel then represented 55% of operating costs on this route - a cost burden that could not realistically be passed on to their customers (Bangkok Post 2008). Of course, higher fares for air travel in the short term does not have to prevent tourists from travelling to specific remote tourism destinations, since, as Becken and Schiff (2009) have urevealed in their study, tourists' decision-making to commence a long-haul travel, is in reality, subject to many other social and cultural factors, including their perception of how remote a destination is and whether it matters or not (see also Blomgren and Sorensen, 1998). Moreover, geographical remoteness sometimes could be compensated for by the particular attractiveness of a destination (Hohl and Tisdell, 1995). Alternatively, it could serve as an integral part of seduction of a destination (Becken, 2011:370). However, in the long term, high oil prices and other costs of long-haul air travel will undoubtedly have an effect on global flows of tourists, as substantiated in other research (e.g. Brons, *et al.*, 2002: Gillen, 2004). Equally, long haul flights and international arrivals can be hampered by an oil shock and a resulting chronic economic crisis, though these often lead to a sharp drop in the price of oil, at least in the short term. This can be demonstrated by the oil shocks in the years 1973 and 1990. Not only did the economic growth rate in each period falter through the inflationary effect of energy price rises; tourism demand as well as tourists' expenditure unsurprisingly also fell, resulting in slow or even negative growth in international tourism arrivals (UN-WTO, 2006). In a similar fashion, during the worldwide economic and financial crash of 2008, the oil price peaked and banks collapsed and had to be bailed out (see Urry, 2013: 21-35). As a result, a variety of negative effects impacted on travel, including the bankruptcy of airlines, a reduction in tourists' disposable incomes and the possible collapse of speculative leisure and tourism developments (Urry and Larsen, 2011: 230).

Yet it is still interesting to note that, as oil prices dropped significantly from the fourth quarter of 2008, the consumption of oil in China continued to increase (see (Ringbeck *et al.*, 2009). Specifically, with the development and growth of its national economy, China's oil imports doubled between 1999 and 2004. Thus, as peak-oil researcher Kunstler (2006) estimates, at the current rate of growth in demand, within a decade China may be consuming one hundred per cent of the currently available world exports of oil within a decade. And this assumes no growth in demand elsewhere in the world and no fall off in global production (Kunstler, 2006: 84). However, a closer examination of the structure of China's fast growing oil demand reveals that most of the current growth is still primarily driven by the manufacturing sector which, to a great extent, produces goods for other countries (Wilson, 2014; see also Butler, 2014). In effect, as Wilson (2014) observes, Chinese per capita use of energy for travel and the household is still a fraction of the levels in Europe and the USA. Nevertheless, significant growth in per capita consumption might occur, especially in terms of travel, leisure and the household (see Butler, 2014). Thus, attracting increasingly more Chinese tourists to travel abroad could further boost the consumption of oil and aggravate oil shortages. Therefore, it is reasonable for us to question whether the existing finite oil supply could fuel the globalization of the Chinese tourist gaze or the increasing flow of Chinese tourists out of China in a sustainable way. Alternatively, it is necessary to evaluate the extent to which the occurrence of another oil shock is likely to occur as a consequence.

*9.4.3 Climate Change***:** Rising oil consumption inevitably will contribute to climate change. According to Urry and Larsen (2011), higher levels of $CO_2$ and greenhouse gas in the earth's atmosphere seems to have resulted in at least a 0.8℃ rise in global temperatures (see also IPPC, 2007). Furthermore, such $CO_2$ and greenhouse gas levels and world temperatures will continue to rise significantly over the subsequent few decades, in spite of the fact that energy efficiency strategies are proposed to use by many tourist-generationg/receiving countries, which include technical advances, improving air traffic management (ATM), 'economic measures' and the use of biofuel (ICAO, 2009). As *The Stern Review* predicts, average global temperatures may rise up within several decades from between 3℃ to a staggering 10℃, resulting in a five to twenty percent reduction in world consumption levels (Stern, 2007: 3). Even a worldwide temperature increase of 3℃ is beyond human experience and would impact on temperature patterns, rainfall, crops, animals and, of course, the economy worldwide (Urry and Larsen, 2011: 231). In fact, it has been reported that climate change will badly squeeze South Asian economies by up to 1.8 percent by the year 2050 and 8.8 percent by the end of this century (see *Figure 9.3*) (Mallet, 2014). Equally,

in 2010 China experienced extreme weather events as higher world temperatures worked their way into localised weather patterns (Dow and Downing, 2011: 38).

Addimittedly, the aforementioned energy efficiency strategies literally could reduce emission of $CO_2$ and greenhouse gas, in reality, but its effectiveness would be largely overweighted by growth in transport volume and infrastructure (Hall *et al.*, 2013; see also Scott *et al.*, 2010). Indeed, flows of tourists are unlikely to restrain, as most nations, featured by China and USA which legally challenge EU emission trading scheme, still take the stance of pro-tourism, because of the massive benefits contributed by this global industry (Gössling *et al.*, 2008). Let alone the firm attitudes of tourists, who regard travel as one of the essential rights constituting their citizenship (see Peters *et al.*, 2009:248). Moreover, an uncertain technological future and a lack of agreed global framework for emission reduction might also undermine efficiency gains.

Thus, although China– to date the world's largest emitter of $CO_2$ and greenhouse gases – has recently begun to promote low-carbon transport, as manifested in the development of its high-speed train network, it is feared that the continuous growth in car/airplane-based migration and travels of Chinese citizens both in China and abroad will increase its carbon emissions significantly and further strengthen global warming (see Urry, 2013).
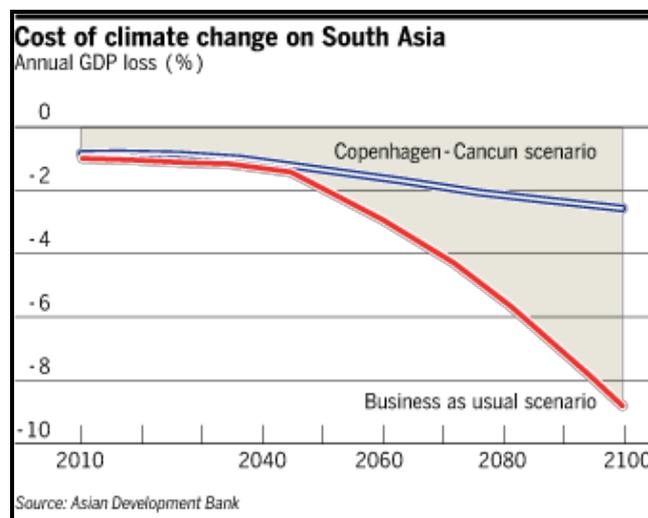


**Figure 9.3:** Cost of climate change on South Asia
(**Source**: Mallet, 2014)

*9.4.4 Tourist Destinations***:**

The arrival of international tourists in ever-increasing numbers has had a significant influence on some tourist destinations, particularly in Asia, in terms of their histories, local arts and host cultures. For example, in order to satisfy the presumed tastes of the

growing influx of Chinese tourists, Bali – a predominantly Hindus Indonesian resort island – has allegedly transformed the carvings on statues and figurines from Hindu gods, such as elephant-faced Ganesh and Vishnu riding a winged horse, to Guanyin, the Chinese Buddhist goddess of mercy (Anderlini, 2010). In a parallel fashion, the histories in Vietnam and Macau are being partly negotiated to please Chinese visitors (see Chan, 2009; Ong and du Cros, 2012). However, no studies have yet been undertaken into how the growing number of Chinese international tourists might in the future generate huge pressures on the local destination environments and societies.

Thus far, I have introduced the dimensions of the Chinese tourist gaze and its possible negative implications. The question remains as to what will occur in the future, as sometimes we care more about the future than the present. In next section, I will employ two scenarios to analytically predict the possible landscapes of the Chinese tourist gaze several decades latter in future.

## 9.5 Futures

In the the year 2025, Theodore Twombly is a lonely, introverted man who works for a Los Angeles-based business that employs professional writers to compose heartfelt, intimate letters for people who are unwilling or unable to write letters of a personal nature themselves. Being unhappy because of his impending divorce from childhood sweetheart Catherine (Rooney Mara), Theodore purchases a talking operating system with artificial intelligence, which is not only personalised through a female voice but also designed to grow and evolve human interaction and worldly experiences. The operating system (OS) names itself/herself 'Samantha'. This socially-isolated writer is fascinated by her ever-growing emotionality and fresh way of looking at the world. They bond over their discussions about love and life, such as when Theodore explains that he is avoiding signing his divorce papers because of his reluctance to let go of Catherine. Samantha proves to be constantly available, always curious and interested, supportive and undemanding.
(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Her_(film; see also Cheung, 2014)

The above paragraph describes the plot of the American science-fiction comedy-drama film *Her*, which was directed by Spike Jonze and shot both in Los Angles and Shanghai. In this film, Jonze describes a scenario from our technology-obsessed lives in future: Theodore Twombly (played by Joaquin Phoenix), the lonely, isolated and depressed writer, has to rely excessively on digital and intelligent technologies ('Samantha',

played by Scarlett Johansson) to sustain his personal life and to satisfy his entertaining, emotional, sociable and even sexual desires. To a great extent, he can be labelled as a member of the generation of technology. Indeed, in this award-wining film it seems that Mr Twombly does not have the desire to undertake long-haul corporeal travel or to personally see either friends or places on the other side of the world. Rather, he appears to be satisfied with gazing at the computer screen to send voice emails to friends, having conversations and making jokes with Samantha, his personal intelligent secretary (see *Figure 9.4*), playing a highly interactive virtual game that we have never seen before (*Figure 9.5*), and looking at the city view, which we cannot precisely identify as Los Angles or Shanghai, from his balcony (*Figure 9.6*). Sometimes, via his smart phone, Samantha guides Twombly to take a stroll in and explore the city, where everything is computerised (*Figure 9.7*).



**Figure 9.4**



**Figure 9.5**



**Figure 9.6**



**Figure 9.7**

**Figure 9.4-9.7:** Scenes from the film Her
(***Source****:*http://feministing.com/2014/02/28/feministing-chat-why-her-is-the-most-feminist-film-of-the-year/)

In fact, Twombly is not a lone wolf. According to the film, there are 641 people in the city falling in love with that OS (Samantha) at the same time. Let alone more individuals, who sustain their personal relationship with the distanced, intimate other, by employing some other intelligent services, such as voice emails. Also, the whole city

is like a self-contained, isolated society, where citizens travel infrquently and their corporeal movement gives the way to imaginative and virtual mobilities.

This film scenario might well be applied to the potential situation in China (or even globally) some decades in the future, when the remaining two trillion barrels of oil preserved in the earth have been largely depleted. At the same time, new forms of energy, such as biofuels or hydrogen, may not yet bridged the gap left by the depleted supply of oil. In such a scenario, it is likely that oil will be used primarily to meet people's essential work, household and transport needs. The global economy will have probably been restructured and international tourism is unlikely to be on the on agenda, having come to be regarded as unnecessary and a luxury luxury (see also Kunstler, 2006; Urry and Larsen, 2011). Consequently, intercontinental air travel by Chinese tourists will have been significantly reduced, such travel being considered torepresent the wasteful consumption of oil; international travel will have become what it was two centuries earlier, an élite activity affordable to only the élite. With regards to the majority of people, domestic travel will be the main touristic activity, using cheaper (than flying) and lower-carbon high-speed trains or, on occasion, they might fly short-haul to some regional destinations in other parts of Asia. Similarly, China would probably only attract international visitors, though not in large numbers.

However, their inability to travel to another continent may not necessarily be a problem for the Chinese of the future, as the constantly evolved digital, intelligent and tourism products in China and elsewhere might be sufficient to meet their entertainment needs. Moreover, their connections with the distanced other could be sustained via a wide array of mobile technologies, such as smart phones (see Sheller and Urry, 2006; Elliot and Urry, 2010; Molz, 2012). In particular, a large variety of internationally-themed parks might be developed all over the nation, contributing significantly to satisfying their curiosity. Alternatively, they might explore another continent through a sort of interactive virtual map or a similar intelligent service/product, which would provide them with augmented authentic experiences (see Molz, 2012) of being there. Thus, it is reasonable to presume that the Chinese tourist gaze of the future might become not only more technology-bonded and dependent but also bodiless and de-globalised. Equally, the international tourism system is likely to have collapsed (Urry and Larsen, 2011: 235).

Perhaps we should not be so pessimistic, however, as new kinds of fuel might be discovered or produced that overcome the consequences of oil depletion, meaning that people will be able to continue travelling travel as frequently and extensively, if not

more so, than they currently do. Urry and Larsen (2010) go as far as predicting that the year 2050 will be 'a future of hypermobility and hyper-tourist consumption', define by 'the way that social status is derived from high levels of extraordinary consumerism and especially from long-distance machine-based movement and the discovery of new tourist sites' (Urry and Larsen, 2010: 233). More specifically, in this 'hyper' world, people might be always 'on the move' (see Elliot and Urry, 2010) in a space intersected by corporeal, imaginative and virtual mobilities (see Urry, 2007). The average person might be travelling four to five hours a day, so overcoming the notion of a constant and limited travel time (Urry and Larsen, 2011: 233). Cars might become less popular, with greater opportunities for personalised air travel.

Therefore, in this second scenario, the majority of the rapidly expanding Chinese middle-class would live the kind of 'mobile lives' which at present primarily belong to the privileged élite in the West (Elliot and Urry, 2010; see also Urry, 2013). Not only will they study and live in other parts of the world but also frequently travel and migrate from one place to another for purposes of either doing business, leisure or meeting distant friends. To a great extent, individuals' social life and work will become rather intense, and the boundary between them will be mobilised (Urry and Larsen, 2011; see also Chapter 4). In order to satisfy the needs this large population, local arts and cultures in numerous places will be tailored and repackaged, and even new architectures might be established in many of cities incorporating some elements of Chinese aesthetics (see Schmid *et al.*, 2011; see also Chapter 4). Thus, the Chinese tourist gaze would travel on an unprecedented scale.

Accompanying flows of ideas, sounds, images and capitals, the future frequent and extensive travels of Chinese people might significantly deterritorilise Chinese society (see Oakes, 1998; Urry, 2000). Moreover, the extent of this deterritorilisation is likely to fall beyond the control of the Chinese post-socialist state which would then be unable to sustain its cultural hegemony in the country and therefore no longer be able to tailor Chinese people's' tourist gaze (see Oakes, 1998; see also Chapter 5 of this thesis). Rather, having been inspired by their experience of overseas destinations, Chinese tourists might encourage their government to redesign the management of many domestic natural and cultural heritages sites which have been constructed in theme-park styles (see Chapter 5). In addition, with the combined influences of the introduction of new energy sources, governmental policies of de-industrialisation and the banning of the use of coal, significant environmental improvements might be achieved (see Urry, 2013). This being the case, Chinese tourists consequently might be no longer feel the desire to travel overseas to experience clean, natural

environments as they do today. Nevertheless, they may potentially still have the desire to experience locals' primitive and 'immobile' everyday life in some destinations, although the number of such destinations might in reality be becoming increasingly small.

In the future, while 'on the move', Chinese tourists will still rely on mobile technologies to sustain connections with their colleagues, families and friends, who are likely to be also travelling. Alternatively, they would make much use of travel guides on their mobile devices to plan tours and to explore the destination. Sometimes, they might have the impulse to take a photograph of either themselves or to frame surprising, beautiful but fleeting moments and experiences, and then to send the images to distant others other or to upload them to personal social-networking accounts for social purposes. Thus, in this future scenario, the Chinese tourist gaze remains technology-fashioned.

**9.6 Limitations of this Study and Possible Research Opportunities in Future**

These two scenarios certainly cannot sketch out precisely what the landscape of Chinese tourist will actually be in future. Thus, future research should consistently and progressively not only focus on how global and Chinese society is evolving but also evaluate the extent to which identified social, cultural environmental and technological transformations might alter the characteristics and dimensions of the Chinese tourist gaze. Moreover, future research might also address some of the limitations of this study, as follows:

First, the majority of the respondents participating in this study are from the rapidly expanding Chinese middle-class. In contrast, the working-class population, including the unemployed, construction workers and other skilled labourers, are typically excluded from outbound travel and, therefore, could not be included in this research Nevertheless, to study the (domestic) tourist gaze of these 'poor and dispossessed' (Urry, 2013: 124) and the manner in which they photographically frame tourist destinations in China would enrich the dimensions of the concept of Chinese tourist gaze which I have proposed here.

Secondly, despite the fact that I have discussed the possible de-exoticisation of the Chinese tourist gaze and tourist photography, there is no firm empirical evidence that reveals how Chinese tourists actually employ their personal smart phones to take and share photographs in their daily lives. Accordingly, further researchers could address

this limitation by assessing empirically the extent to which Chinese people's gazes and photographic practices in travel intersect with those in their everyday lives.

And finally, this study has focused exclusively on photography. However, the use of video might also fashion the Chinese tourist gaze, particularly as smart-phones and the current proliferation of mobile apps now enable Chinese tourists to shoot and share videos or short films easily whilst travelling or on holiday. Thus, more investigations are demanded to study Chinese tourists' video-shooting practices and their relationship with the Chinese tourist gaze.

Nevertheless, the significance of the established theoretical model of Chinese tourist gaze and identified characteristics of smart-phone-led tourist photography cannot be overweighed by these limitations, as they, at least, have conspired to provide multiple important clues to what, why and how Chinese tourists tend to see and photographically frame at the beginning of the 21st Century.

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