

The Accelerated Sublime: Landscape, Tourism, and Identity

Claudia Bell, John Lyall

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Over the past two hundred years, transportation technology has enabled citizens of any nation to visit, for the purposes of entertainment and leisure, nearly any place on the entire globe. Nations compete for tourists, promoting themselves by showing off their beautiful landscapes and by holding out promises of previously unattainable excitement. As a result, locations and landscapes once considered sublime are becoming increasingly mediated and commodified into both products and elements of national identity constructs.

As digital photographs make possible the instant transmission of any image from its point of origin to any destination, tourism has increasingly become a means through which we simply accumulate experiences to add to our self-constructed, accelerating autobiographies. Tourists seek ever more exciting landscape venues and activities for these experiences, while nations, ever more mindful of the need to attract a global audience, have transformed their sublime native lands and artifacts into mere grist for this ever-accelerating mill. As the authors demonstrate, the nature of tourism in the twenty-first century is transforming both national identity and international consumption, making the one nearly indistinguishable from the other.



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