Site/Sight: Landscape and the Development of the Tourist's Gaze in Early Travel Films

Joss Winn

14 April 2002

Illustration *1* Rene Magritte, *La Condition Humaine,* 1933.

The eye that has been properly educated sees landscape present itself as a spectacle. [Jonathan Smith, quoted in Taylor 1994: 9]

In this paper I discuss how British filmmakers in the 1920s were working with the simultaneously emerging industry of popular tourism and *within* a tradition of commercial image-making that can be seen at least as far back as the eighteenth century. For much of the essay, I draw upon research from disciplines other than film studies, discussing the development of mass tourism in England and the visual culture which accompanied and assisted its growth in the late Victorian period. I will discuss how the development of tourism, even in its infancy, can be related to changes in landscape painting and photography and that the commercialisation and consumption of the English landscape (what we call, 'mass tourism') only took place once its image could be reproduced and distributed to a mass consumer audience. I believe that it is only by coming to terms with the changing economies of the tourist industry and its effect on the consumer's appetite for particular versions of the English landscape that we can really situate and understand the early genre of 'travel films.' Prompted by Jonathan Smith's comment above, I aim to show how filmmakers carried on a tradition of image-making which encouraged the tourist's eye to see the English landscape as a spectacle to be consumed and an arena where class distinctions could be reconfirmed. To do this, later in the paper, I look at a number of films which indulged the consumer's gaze by promoting tourism in East Anglia during the inter-war years.

Gazing at the Spectacle

The silent film genre of travel films, travelogues, tour films, views, scenes and panoramas is one of the earliest popular forms of film making and a significant precursor to later documentaries and other non-fiction film. Because travel signifies a journey, the earliest examples of the genre may also be regarded as simple narratives which offered a 'journey of the mind' even when the camera remained stationary, fixed on a view of the sea or other landscape. The films I shall go on to discuss in the latter part of this paper are from the 1920s and early 1930s yet the travel film clearly found its form in the first decade of the century and changed very little compared with the dramatic evolution of fiction film during the silent period. The straightforward consistency and lack of formal innovation in the genre may be due to it being marginalised early on as exhibitors quickly turned their attention to fiction film and the

2

'actuality' became absorbed into newsreels and early forms of commercial advertising. [Søressen 1999: 102-3] In fact, a consistency in the purpose and uses of the travel images, goes even further back to pre-cinematic ways of representing the English landscape, notably through painting and photography and, by extension, the most spectacular of early nineteenth century image making, the Diorama and moving panoramas.
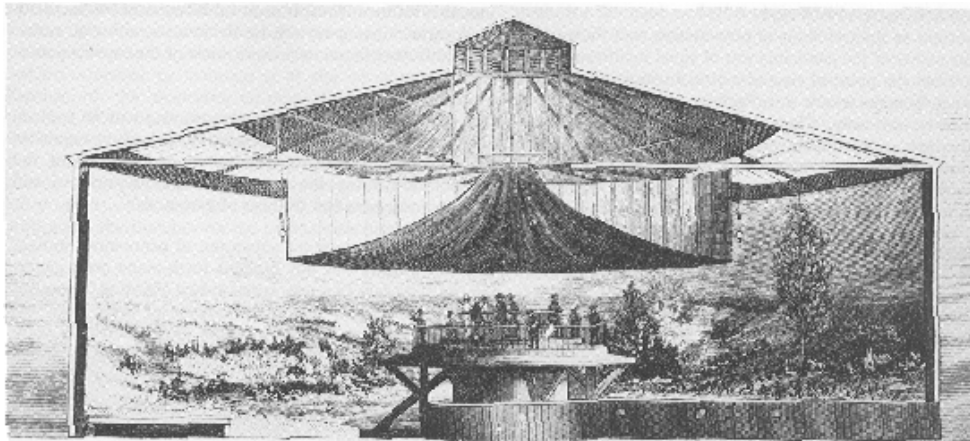

Illustration *2* Panorama, Gettysburg, USA, 1884

Since the late eighteenth century, London's Leicester Square was the center for viewing 360-degree panoramic paintings of places and historical events. These early immobile paintings, evolved into 'moving panoramas' during the early nineteenth century, in which long strips of canvas were unrolled from a cylinder hidden from the audience's view. The canvas was stretched across a rectangular frame at the front of the theatre, taken up by a second cylinder the opposite side. At the peak of its popularity, the moving panorama was a 'feature length' entertainment, typically taking the audience on two hour journeys along major rivers accompanied by narration and other visual and sound effects. [Altick 1978: 129; Oetterman 1997]

Louis Daguerre's Diorama shows of the 1820s, also offer a precedent for precisely the kind of experience travel films one hundred years later would attempt to achieve. The sensation of 300 people watching fifteen minute presentations of two giant painted scenes gradually evolving before them frequently parallels the experience of travel films I shall describe later.

In Daguerre's Interior of the Cloisters of St. Wandrill, a portion of the

desolate ruin was seen as lighted by the midday sun, while the rest was thrust into darkness. Outside, as fleecy clouds passed across the sun, the leaves of the shrubs that half-covered the decaying mullions rustled in the wind and their shadows were reflected in the adjoining columns. In the Rouen scene, following an early morning storm, a rainbow appeared and the roofs of the buildings shone as if recently wetted by the rain. The next season's picture of a ruined chapel began with a thick February fog enveloping everything beyond the wall; then gradually, as if dispersed by the wind, the fog lifted, the tops of the trees and the snow on the distant mountains became visible, and at the end the whole valley, with its variety of tints and shades, was revealed. [Altick 1978: 167]

People of all classes flocked to the panoramas in anticipation of pleasure, spectacle, fantasy and daydreaming on a scale unlike they would normally experience. Their anticipation was accompanied by a new kind of gaze; a way of looking that was constructed and informed by emerging industrialisation, capitalism and modernisation and with these, new ideas about the mass production of goods and consumer markets including tourism.

Here, we should introduce the work of Tom Gunning who argues for a mode of early non-fiction film making characterised by 'the aesthetics of the view.' Gunning's notion of the 'view' is closely connected with his writings on the 'cinema of attractions', a descriptive term for an early exhibitionist cinema dominant prior to 1906-7. The cinema of attractions presented a succession of curious or novel views without the temporal development of a narrative structure, and this 'showing' rather than 'telling' allowed the viewer a great deal of imaginative freedom. [Gunning 1990; 1998: 258] Among the films from this period, Gunning has distinguished the 'place film': typically a series of independent shots presenting a certain landscape or locale. The 'place film' contains various views, often using the camera to create a panoramic vision of the landscape. This aesthetic of the 'view' in the cinema of attractions, is characterised by the way it mimes the act of looking and observing. "In other words, we don't just experience a 'view' film as a presentation of a place, an event or a process, but also as the mimesis of the act of observing." [1997: 15]

Illustration *3 Great Yarmouth. For health, sunshine, pleasure,*

1933.

To 'observe' is not strictly synonymous with 'spectate' (i.e. 'look at'). Etymologically, 'observe' means 'to conform one's action', 'to comply with', as in observing rules, codes, regulations, and practices. These codes are always socially and historically defined. Unlike the passivity of the spectator, the observer's view is privileged. His gaze signifies his position in the hierarchy of class, education and leisure. [Taylor 1994: 13]

Since the seventeenth century, vision has been placed at the top of the sensory hierarchy. The ear and tongue responsible for 'hearsay' were superseded by the preeminence of the 'eyewitness' and to observation. [Adler 1989: 24]   By the late seventeenth century, the 'Grand Tour' had become firmly established for the sons of the gentry and by the late eighteenth century, it was common for the sons of the upper-middle class, too. 'Sightseeing' was initially an historical enterprise of learning, a gathering of the facts observed first-hand rather than a reliance on the fable. Not until the late eighteenth century did the traveller's observations develop into the aestheticised gaze we know today. During this period,

> "the character of the tour itself shifted, from the earlier 'classical Grand
> Tour' based on the emotionally neutral observation and recording of
> galleries, museums and high cultural artifacts, to the nineteenth-century

5

'romantic Grand Tour' which saw the emergence of 'scenic tourism' and a much more private and passionate experience of beauty and the sublime."
[Urry 1990: 4]

The land (and art) owning aristocracy shifted from the emotionally detached practice of scientific observation in favour of connoisseurship and the display of 'taste'. This class of people had both the leisure time and necessary education to bring into focus and read the landscape and its representations. Through their prolonged and contemplative gaze they would endow the view or picture itself with romance, nostalgia or other special significance. This suggests that "the category of 'landscape' [was] primarily not a phenomenon of the natural lie of the land, or human geography, but an attribute of sight." [Taylor 1994: 12] This gaze which 'takes in the view' was a pre-informed observation, one which was not always learned through direct experience with all the inconveniences of nature.

"Landscapes could be taken in by surrogate viewers, and later presented to their audiences, who viewed them at a safe remove from the originals. Landscapes could come already fashioned for readers or viewers into accounts, poems, or pictures - and from the mid-nineteenth century they appeared in the forms of photographs."
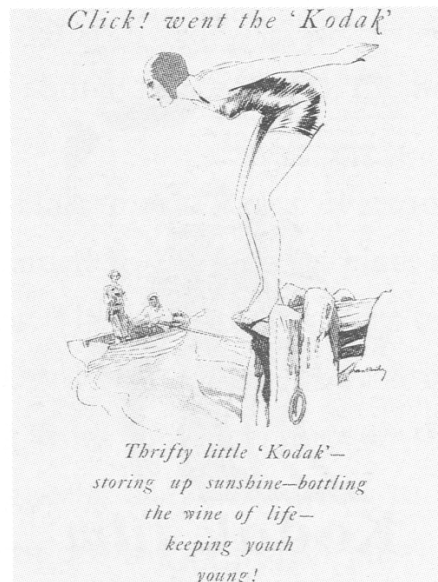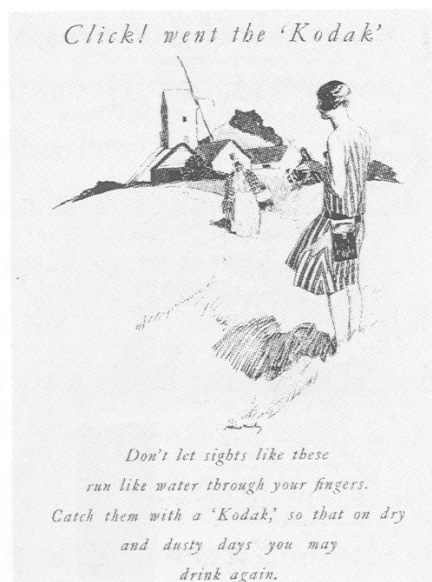[Taylor 1994: 13]

Illustration *4 Click! Went the 'Kodak.'* Advertisement from *Punch,* 1928/1929.

Certainly, all of this resonates with Gunning's argument that watching a 'view' film is a mimesis of the act of observing. It was not just an act of passive spectatorship, but, like viewing the panorama, Diorama, painting or photograph, it was a cerebral activity, one where "we never look at just one thing; we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves." [Berger 1972: 9] By the early twentieth century, this relationship was affected by mass production and consumption and the English landscape, long the object of an acquisitive gaze, was no exception.

The Tourist's Gaze

Tourism is based on a simple division between the ordinary and the extraordinary. It always involves a departure from established routines to engage with a different set of stimuli. Tourism also presupposes its opposite, namely, regulated and organised work. [Urry 1990: 1] Mass tourism began to emerge at a time when Britain was richer and more mobile than any other European nation. The industrialisation of the late nineteenth century mobilised a disciplined and regulated workforce. In the first decade of the twentieth century, workers had more disposable income than ever before and employers saw the advantage of allowing regulated holiday time because it safeguarded labour from the traditional laxity and fluidity of the work process. [Berghoff 2002: 163] Tourism was becoming a social practice, characteristic of being 'modern'; it marked one's 'status' since it was no longer distinct to a particular class. The idea of 'getting away from it all', from the pollution, noise and overcrowding in order to tend to one's health and relaxation extended from the traditional spas of the eighteenth century to the emerging seaside resorts of the late nineteenth century. Industrialisation also provided the infrastructure necessary to support mass tourism, providing roads, transport, accommodation and catering. Self improvement was to be found in self-gratification rather than self-edification although noble claims to the contrary, relying on eighteenth century notions of personal development continued to play an important role in legitimising tourism and the commercial exploitation of the English landscape that followed. [Berghoff 2002: 166]
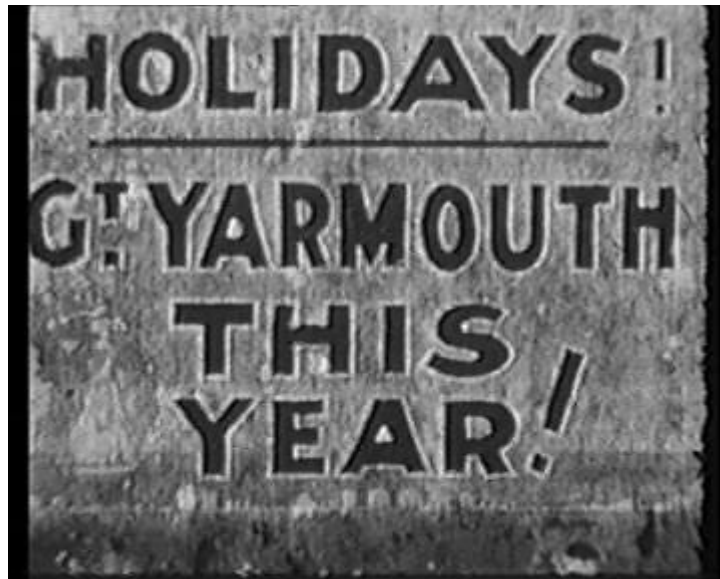
Illustration *5 'Holiday's! Yarmouth',* 1930s.

Tourism is initially centered around immaterial consumption, namely images, experiences and prestige which usually lead to the further exploitation of material items and services. The films I shall discuss later in this paper, can be read as stimulants to this initial immaterial consumption, offering attractions, sensations, fantasy, romance and nostalgia.

The tourist's gaze is intimately tied to the immaterial, it is at the center of tourism and the experience the industry provides. From an economic and social perspective, the tourist is first and foremost the consumer, socialised to encode commodities with social meanings. As a form of consumerism, tourism rests on a "dialectic of novelty and insatiability." [Urry 1990: 13] Thus the tourist and his gaze is situated firmly in the arena of consumption, aroused and informed by the work of professionals in the media and other areas of image-making. Poets and painters, then later photographers were the first to construct and develop this avaricious gaze. It is a gaze which covets a variety of images "from physical to moral health, from social reform to self-indulgence, from eternal youth to education." [Berghoff 2002: 171]

Examples of tourism and the tourist's gaze that I wish to examine in more detail are the practises and views of nineteenth century rural painters and photographers who, along with writers, were responsible for creating an aura [see Benjamin 1973] of

romance and nostalgia about the English landscape. Throughout the nineteenth century and peaking in the early twentieth century, thousands of tourist-artists throughout the world left the established urban centres of art production to live and work in the European countryside. [see Lübbren 2001] Artist's colonies sprang up all over Europe, including England, ranging from just a few individuals to over 500 people, mainly painters and usually middle-class and male. Some artists were transient while others settled permanently, or at least seasonally, in rural villages. The colonies grew by word of mouth and through their exhibitions. Artists would gather in these villages so that they could work close to nature and be among other like-minded people. While the formal styles of painting were often quite different among artists living together, wider issues such as national identity and an identification of the countryside with their heritage was common to all.

Much of the landscape painting of this period we know today was either from these colonies or in some way connected to them. The colonies were in their heyday during the mid-nineteenth century, a time when landscape painting moved from a 'romantic' fascination for mountains, rivers, lakes, valleys and waterfalls, to an interest in the flat and coastal areas of Britain. [Howard 1991: 89-102] The artists themselves, were city-dwellers acute to the emergence of modernity and with it, popular tourism. They wrote and painted in ways which disdained the effects of industrialisation, yet were entirely reliant on modern forms of transport to passage their way from city to countryside. The landscapes they painted were a synthesis of their urban stereotypes of the countryside as an imagined, exotic, removed place immersed in nature and their ambitions of finding 'authentic' images of a time gone by. They were 'place-myths,' "metaphors of a modern nostalgia for the pre-modern." [Lübbren 2001: 136] They mixed the past with the present and included stock motifs such as traditional costume, heroic men, flat horizons and luminous gray skies. Their urban buyers would recognise the landscapes as 'typical' and a cyclical exchange would occur as the buyer imagined certain views of the countryside and the artist drew from those stereotypes and interpreted reality through this urban gaze, painting an edited representation of the landscape that eventually satisfied an observation twice removed. Richard Bergh, a painter and founder of an artist's colony in Sweden, wrote that 'every landscape is a state of mind,' yet quite often, it seems, it was more of a meeting of minds. His semi-spiritual, romantic attitude towards the landscape, one of solitude and individualism can be read as a defense against the real threat of collective tourism which would undermine the artist's privileged gaze and thus the rarity of his art. [see Urry 1990: 45]

As word spread of the artist's colonies, as their work became better known and influential, they quickly became irritated that viewers of their art should actually take up the implicit invitation to view the landscape themselves. The uniqueness of their 'view', their representation of nature, diminished as mass tourism encroached upon them. Ironically, the artists also became tourist attractions themselves and were seen to represent the myth of the representations they were creating.
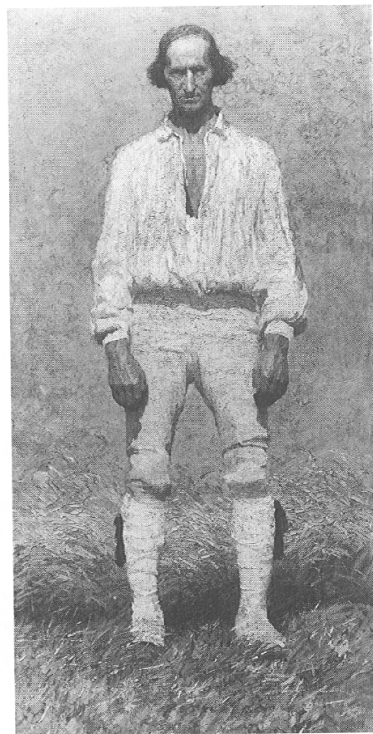

Illustration *6* Carl Bantzer,

Harvest Worker from Hesse, 1907.

Illustration *7* Paul Gauguin, *Washerwoman at Pont-Aven,* 1886.

Urry adds two other dichotomies to that of the 'individual/collective' example shown above. He argues that 'authentic/inauthentic' and 'historical/modern' are descriptive pairs which work in friction to construct the object of the tourist's gaze. [1990: 83] It is not surprising that we can effortlessly apply these dichotomies to describe the process of landscape art in the nineteenth century and, in a similar way, travel films of the early twentieth century. Individual artists with romantic presuppositions about rural life, left modernity to seek 'authentic' traditional lives by living close to nature. Their paintings may be seen as 'documentary romanticism' [Lübbren 2001: 40], representing an 'authentic' life (in a nationalistic sense) as it was performed for them by local people who, in many cases, acted as their muse. This 'authentic' lifestyle often meant imitating the past, wearing costume when it hadn't been worn for years, or re-enacting modes of work that had long been replaced. In their art, painters presented romantic ways of life as *real* ways of life. They escaped the *regulated* work ethic of industrialised cities to arrive in the countryside and interpreted the work of peasants as obeying the *natural* rhythms of life. As Lübbren notes, "one of the key images for sightseers in their leisure time is 'the labour of others in non-modern systems of production.'" [2001: 50] It was, in Gunning's sense, an 'attraction', a performance of the landscape enacted for the artist as observer. The artist would then exhibit his painting to an urban audience who could mimetically observe the performance, too.

11

This brings us closer to discussing our films of East Anglia, but by way of introduction, I would like to mention the photographer, P.H. Emerson who was travelling around the Norfolk Broads in the late nineteenth century and photographing the landscape and people working (what he called, 'picturesque labour') in those landscapes. [see Taylor 1994; McWilliam & Sekules 1986] Emerson's ideas and practices provide a representational and technological link between rural landscape painters and the later travel film genre. As a photographer in the nineteenth century, he was dependent on painting for many of his images and and philosophy of naturalism. Like the painters, he was of a particular class that enabled him to take extended holidays devoted to his art, and like the painters, he was aware of and irritated by day-trippers and other tourists to the area who he certainly felt distinct and apart from both in his reasons for being there and his relationship with the landscape.

Illustration *8* 'The Photographic Craze', *Amateur Photographer,*

1887.

Emerson's reason for being in and around the Norfolk Broads was "to produce truthful pictures of East Anglian Peasant and Fisherfolk life and of the landscape in which such a life is lived." [1888: Preface] It was not his intention to popularise the area nor exploit its people, though we could argue that his photographs did assist this process much the same as the rural painters did for their subjects (his photographs clearly depict a 'performance' by the peasant class in the way the painters' work does). Perhaps the greatest contradiction in Emerson was that he was a member of the bourgeoisie desperate to protect the peasant-class from *other* members of his class, namely upper middle-class tourists whom he feared would destroy his bastion of

12

naturalism. He was highly critical of the effects of tourism on the area as can be seen from his writings:

> the days of this old world life are numbered – soon will ... the noisy, fussy steam launch send its rippling waves through the dike up to the farmer's front door; soon will the stucco villa, fresh from the jerry-builder's hand, stare at the farmer; soon will he learn such sweet terms as 'the Bungalow', 'Nelson Villa', 'Victoria House', and all the snobbery of philistinism will blare at him from gaudily-painted gates ... Will not the modern hotel, with electric bells, elevators, hot-air pipes, dynamo-machine, tele-gear *à la* Jules Verne, water tricycles, and the devil knows what, spring up? Oh yes! Not long hence before the *batterie de diable* will be filled with fresh air seekers, not Nature-lovers. Photographic outings with their appointment of a leader (often blind)... [1888: 81]

Certainly, we can identify the three dichotomies of authentic/inauthentic, historical/modern and individual/collective, applying equally well to Emerson as they do to the rural painters to whom he had close connections with both socially and artistically.

A number of the films we shall look at are pictorially indebted to the photographic images of Emerson, a pioneer in the area of photographic observation of rural English life. His published images are highly selective representations of landscapes chosen for their remoteness from urban centres and typically bourgeois stereotypes of pre-modern life and English naturalism. As well as defending the people and their environment, Emerson was highly critical of the peasant who aspired to adopt an 'unnatural' life in the city. In Emerson's world (his family owned a sugar plantation in Cuba), class-position was intimately tied to social order and there was no question of mobility between classes. Emerson's conservationist attitude was both a gesture of self-preservation as much as an attempt to preserve England's natural history.

> His goal was a purely selfish one: to preserve the peasantry, a fundamental basis of the social order, within a country park in which the gentleman photographer can divert himself. [Knights 1986: 19]
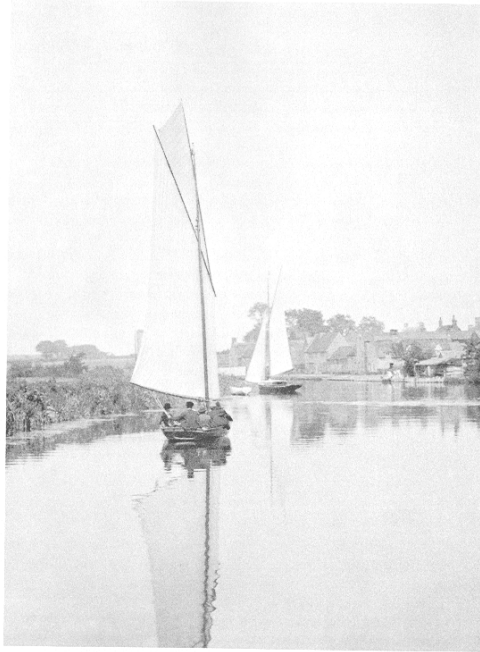
Illustration *9*   Emerson, *The Village of Horning,* 1887.

Illustration *10*   Emerson*, Haymaker With Rake,* 1888.

Illustration *11*   Emerson, *Cantley Wherries Waiting for the Turn of the Tide,* 1887.

It is tempting to go into more detail about Emerson's work and his ideas of naturalism but hopefully the illustrations provided will speak for themselves. The thing which most interests me here is Emerson's ambiguous position as a tourist on the Norfolk Broads and his role as the 'founder of contemporary photography', influencing like-minded tourists (and film makers) for decades to come.

During the time Emerson was on the Norfolk Broads, photography had become "one of the 'ordinary industries' of England." [Taylor 1986: 73] It was one of the most popular commercial products of the time integrated into both 'up market' and 'down market' tourism and one of the staples of any serious photographer's output was images of landscapes. Taylor has shown that in the 1890s, photographers were being warned in the *British Journal of Photography*, not to expect to produce images of any quality with cheap consumer cameras and that only whole and half-plate cameras were capable of reproducing images worthy of a long and distinguished tradition of artistic representation. [Taylor 1986: 76] By contrast, the *Amateur Photographer* magazine, founded in 1884, was aimed at a different class of reader,

encouraging them to integrate photography with leisure and the family, printing numerous articles on where to go for holidays, how to get there and what to do there, including holidays on the Broads. [Taylor 1986: 79]. This distinction between the reader of the *BJP* and *AP* suggests both a different kind of photographer and tourist. While one had the luxury of time and education, learned in naturalism and photographic technique, the other was a 'tripper', keen to make the most of their money and leisure time, perhaps sailing, 'picnicing' and photographing their exploits.

The Norfolk Broads in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was an undeveloped, poverty stricken area with a particularly distinct divide between the land-owning class and their labourers. To dissuade others from imitating him, Emerson would describe the area to others as second-rate for photography being too rough and unconventional, not particularly pretty and photographing from a boat 'unsatisfactory.' Yet he also knew that it was one of the last places in England where the tourist could benefit from underdevelopment, where life was cheap, the spectacle of 'natives' was plentiful and the landscape still reflective of the picturesque traditions of the past. The intentional exclusion of other people, particularly class-based exclusion, led to tension among the variety of tourists on the Broads at any one time. Serious amateur photographers were advised to try and avoid the crowds by going to areas which were most popular with their own class of people. London workers went to the beach, the lower-middle classes went further north up the coast and the middle classes went inland to gaming reserves. [Taylor 1994: 94] Most tourists were not there to absorb the landscape at all, but looked forward to boating, fishing, relaxing and drinking. This irritated tourists like Emerson who sought authenticity in solitude, romance in underdevelopment, and history and tradition in the habits of peasants.

It was not unusual for Emerson to take a few days before reaching a place to photograph, suggesting a discerning eye and considerable leisure time and money. The photographs of pleasure-seekers on the Broads were, by contrast, hurried snapshots primarily for the purpose of recording that they had 'been there, done that." Kodak introduced the Brownie 'You push the button and we do the rest' camera in 1900, a cheap camera for children which almost anyone could afford. These new amateur photographers were distinctly different from those of Emerson's generation and class, the old guard of the picturesque. They shared few assumptions about what photography was for and its relationship to any kind of artistic tradition. The new generation of amateurs saw photography as a leisure pursuit equal to cycling. The

technology and science of their hobby was mostly hidden from them and thus there was little inclination to experiment. These 'snappers' of the early 1900s, were primarily interested in photographing their families on holiday and rarely did they see anything 'heroic' or romantic about the mud and poverty of the Norfolk Broads. [see Seiberling 1986]

When Emerson published his work, he released the photographs in limited edition books after which he destroyed the negatives. He was aware that photography threatened the tradition of high-art to which he aspired, that it could mechanically reproduced images which were identical to one another, thus depreciating the unique aura of each 'view.' By doing so, he was making a statement: that his art (we might add, his gaze) was uniquely personal, just as the painter's was and that it was not available to anyone but the select and privileged few. It was assurance that his images would remain exclusive, not circulating among people of all classes and that the landscape he coveted would remain the property of the land-owning few. Today, this seems like a naive gesture since he was clearly influential during his time and was a pioneer in contemporary image-making. But the systematic destruction of his negatives positioned him among a tradition of artists rather than tourists; his work was not meant for mass production nor consumption. Unfortunately for him, he had shown what was possible with the photochemical process, what it could achieve when gazing at the picturesque and the influence photography could have on the popular enjoyment of the English landscape.

A Humanised Landscape

The East Anglian Film Archive (EAFA) holds a number of commercial, silent travel films which specifically promote tourism and an enjoyment of the region. Below is a list of twelve films I have chosen to discuss with a brief preliminary description of each title.

1. *Beauty Spots of Britain. The Broads.* 1920s., 35mm. 10 Minutes. A 'phantom ride' tour of the Norfolk Broads showing landscapes, views, recreation, local areas of interest.

2. *Great Yarmouth. For health, sunshine, pleasure.* 1933, 35mm. 9 Minutes. Views

of Great Yarmouth town and beach filmed during summer parades.

3. *Sunday. A Yarmouth Study.* (Pathe) 1920s, 35mm. 2 Minutes. Views of Yarmouth on a Sunday showing the town resting from work.

4. *'Holidays! Yarmouth'* 1930s., 35mm. 2 Minutes. Views showing a mix of seaside recreation, local heritage and the Broads.

5. *Blickling Hall. Norfolk. England's Stately Homes.* (Pathe) 1929, 35mm. 1½ Minutes. Views of Blickling Hall and gardens.

6. *Sudbury.* (Pathe) 1920s., 35mm. 1½ Minutes. Views of Gainsborough's birthplace with particular interest in England's heritage.

7. *'Cameos of a Norfolk Broads Holiday'* 1934, 35mm. 15 Minutes. Rivers scenes from a boat travelling along the busy Norfolk Broads. Ends with advertisement by a London company for holidays on the Broads.

8. *Broadlands.* (Pathe/Eve's Film Review) 1931, 35mm. 2 Minutes. River scenes and boat traffic. Shows women having fun on the Broads, dancing on their boat.

9. *With Eve on The Broads.* (Path/Eve's Film Review) 1930s., 35mm. 2 Minutes. River scenes. Women navigating their boat before mooring. An appearance of film star, Ivy Duke and husband who are also out cruising.

10. *All Aboard For The Broads!* (Topical Budget) 1925, 35mm. 3 Minutes. Shows holiday makers washing up, cleaning and dancing on their boats.

11. *The Throwabouts* (Pathe/Eve's Film Review) 1930s. 35mm. 2 Minutes. A speed boat shows off what it can do on the Broads.

12. *White Sails* (Pathe/Eve's Film Review) 1933, 35mm. 2 Minutes. Scenes of boats on the river and a busy mooring area next to a pub on the Broads.

As we can see, all of the films are from the late 1920s and early 1930s, not because I have a particular interest in films from this period but because these dates are most

commonly represented, suggesting that the number of travel films produced around this time was higher than ever before. There are good reasons for believing this is true which are important to mention here.

In 1921, the Advertising Act was passed which allowed local authorities to promote their area and they seized upon the opportunity to update their images in line with a post-war desire for reconstruction. Until this point, much of the resort advertising had been undertaken by the railway companies who produced colourful booklets and posters yet local authorities had long been conscious about developing their own self-image. With this Act, local governments were then free to commission their own advertising during a "crucial period of image establishment for most British resorts." [Bekerson 2002: 140]

On a national level in 1926, hoteliers created the 'Come to Britain' Movement. This was a voluntary coalition between shipping lines, railways, major shops and the Association of Health and Pleasure Resorts to attract international tourism, an area in which Britain was falling behind its European neighbours. There was also the formation of the Travel Association in 1928 to provide funding from the Board of Trade to assist tourism in Britain and increasingly, 'holidays with pay', were being given, eventually prescribed by law in 1938. In addition to these timely initiatives, there had long been societies and associations which had campaigned to bring the English landscape to public attention. The Commons Preservation Society had been campaigning since 1865, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings since 1877, and the National Trust since 1895. Following them, the Council for the Preservation of Rural England was set up in 1926, the Youth Hostel Association in 1930 and the Ramblers' Association in 1935. [Matless 1998: 25]

Another influence on the number of travel films produced at that time, especially those that focused on England's landscape and heritage, was the proliferation of books, guides and maps published to assist an increasingly mobile population in getting to their destination as swiftly as possible. By the 1920s, taking a train to the area was common and services were frequent. National car ownership was increasing, rising from 78,000 in 1918 to over two million in 1939 and popular books like H.W. Morton's *In Search Of England* (1927), featuring photographs of quiet lanes, ancient cathedrals and and timeless inns, established a "motoring pastoral genre" of literature which encouraged readers to pursue open-air leisure. [Matless 1998: 64] The book

credited with beginning 'guide-book tourism' in East Anglia was *The Handbook to the Rivers & Broads of Norfolk & Suffolk* by G.C. Davies (1882). Davies' book, which appeared in over fifty different editions for several decades after it was first published, set the standard for writing and imagery of the region.
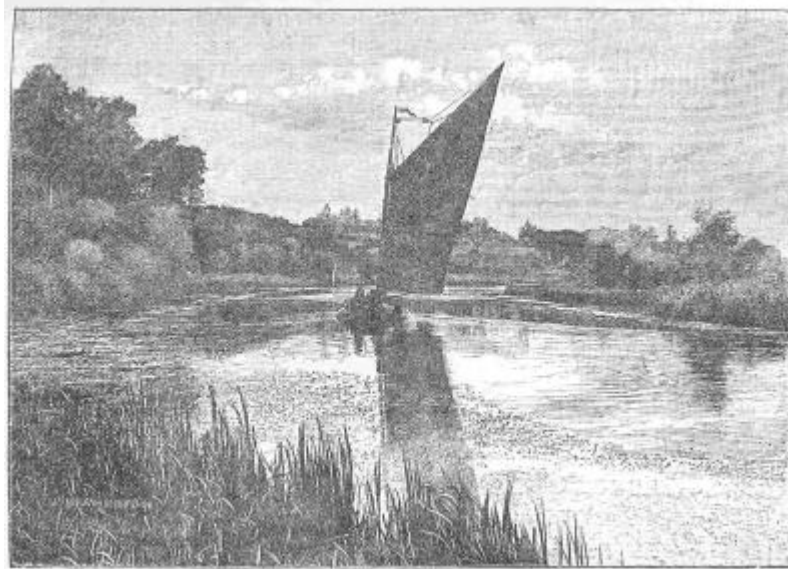

Illustration *12* Davies, 1882.

Illustration *13* Davies, 1882.

Such publications collected and presented images which 'stood for England' and 'Englishness'. Why a culture of images which 'stood for England' had developed to this point is part of what I have tried to indicate so far, but there were also more specific reasons during the inter-war period which affected the national obsession with 'Englishness' and the rush to represent it on film.

The vogue for celebrating England and Englishness in all areas of cultural representation reached a peak in the 1930s. This was a time of intense national anxiety after suffering huge losses during the First World War and facing the rise of Fascism on the continent. The rural landscape had taken on new connotations of death and desolation that had affected households all over Britain. Unlike the Second World War when the countryside was promoted as a safe haven from the destruction of urban centres, the First World War had dramatically altered both the literal and imagined English landscape as it became a place where soldiers were billetted, hospitalised and died. [Potts 1989: 162].

As we have seen from Emerson, images of landscape have always been wrapped up with people's conception of social order. The suburban population had always had the countryside to take refuge in, not just literally but psychologically; the landscape was part of a nationalist and nostalgic ideology with which city dwellers had retained a sense of tradition and continuity and the First World War had threatened this continuity of Self. We can see in Emerson's work and the paintings of the rural artists a form of nostalgia suggestive of change occurring, a way of life dying out as modernism crept in. While their nostalgia may have been a conservative clinging to the past, nostalgia also signals the opportunity for change and transformation.

Lübbren, Matless and Potts have all pointed out that the relationship between modernity and nostalgia is a transformative one. For Lübbren, nostalgia is the "counterpart of utopia" and that "both modes of looking at the world are also fundamentally modern." [2001: 14]. It is a form of disaffection with the present which can also transform the present. Nostalgia is not a sentiment that has always existed in the English mind but rather an emotion particular to modernism [see also Ousby 1990: 69] not only located in a particular time but also in a particular space. Potts has argued that nostalgic images of the countryside during the inter-war years have acted as critiques, "projections of the impulses which might help create a radically better order in the future." [1989: 173]. Unlike both the earlier landscape myth of the Victorians

and the later myth of the English countryside during the 1940s, the nostalgic sense of 'Englishness' during the inter-war years can be seen as a symbol of change when people were forming a new relationship with the countryside, establishing a mode of viewing that grappled with both the past and the future. The countryside was no longer the natural haven of Emerson's photographs but was increasingly seen as man-made, the accumulation of man's efforts over the centuries. This view of the landscape was more humanised than naturalised and rationalised people's interference in the countryside during both wars and during periods of leisure. From this period, people no longer necessarily travelled to the countryside for self-edification, study of the 'natives' or solitude, but rather *involvement* in the difference it offered to urban living, and careless *pleasure* in the open skies, networks of rivers and accommodating beaches. Even preservationists' attitudes changed as they realised that modernism gave rise to orderly progress and planning, justifying a new way of taking possession of the countryside. [see Matless 1998: Ch. 1, 2].
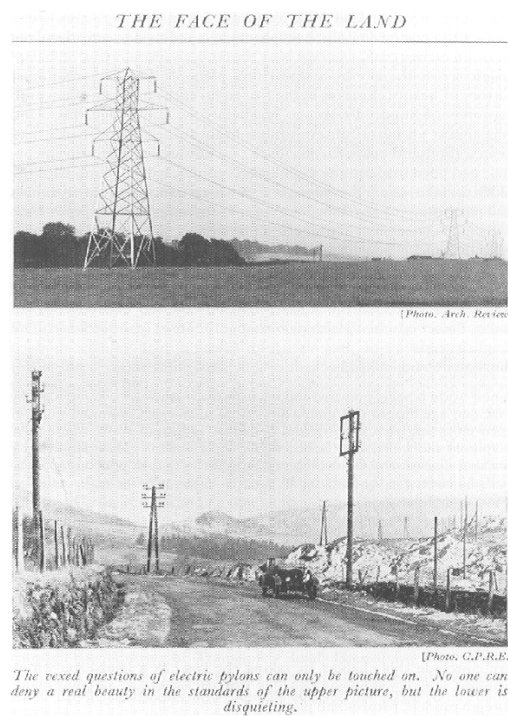

THE FACE OF THE LAND

[Photo. Arch. Review

[Photo. C.P.R.E.

The vexed questions of electric pylons can only be touched on. No one can deny a real beauty in the standards of the upper picture, but the lower is disquieting.

Illustration *14* Pylons. Peach & Carrington, *The Face of the Land,* 1930.

This question of 'Englishness' has also been discussed by Andrew Higson in relation

to early fiction films which portray the landscape as 'picturesque.' He points out that "Englishness is not inherent in a landscape" but rather, "read in such a way by connotation." [Higson 2001: 54] This reminds us of Taylor's argument that landscape is an attribute of sight. In the case of a film audience, people would come to the cinema already pre-informed by existing modes of social and cultural representation that constituted 'Englishness' at that time. Higson's emphasis is on the way films during this period contributed to a "sense of mapping the nation by filming the landscapes" [Higson 2001: 55] whereas I have tried to show that the nation had long been "mapped" by traditional forms of illustration. This is not to disagree with Higson's argument because indeed we do see a new kind of 'Englishness' being represented in the interwar years. But I do wish to 'fill it out' a little to show how by the 1920s, the performance of 'Englishness' was ingrained into British image-making (although appropriating the landscape for national identity is by no means unique to England) and had long been exploited by the tourist industry. My addition to Higson's argument would be that film makers drew heavily, indeed relied on, the tourist's gaze which had been nurtured since the nineteenth century. As I mentioned at the beginning of this paper, I see very little innovation in 'place' films of this period. Representationally, they add little to a notion of Englishness rooted in the landscape that wasn't already well established and I am much more inclined to see them as commercial products which benefited from and contributed towards forms of economic and cultural consumerism.

Each of the East Anglian films listed above was made on 35mm film for theatrical distribution. Several of them are made by the newsreel companies, Pathe and Topical Budget. During the War, Topical Budget had been under the control of the British government, but from 1919 to 1931 it was owned by the newspaper magnate Edward Hulton. Pathe produced newsreels and 'cinemagazines' like *Eve's Film Review,* which included, among other things, 'travel items'. Cinemagazines were short, general interest films not connected to any particular news item. The travel films I have selected would have been part of a longer ten minute presentation featuring a variety of 'interest' items such as "fashion parades, animals performing tricks and demonstrations of household gadgets..." [Hammerton 2002: 163] Being less subject to changes in current affairs than newsreels, they had a considerably longer distribution life and were shown widely throughout Britain, enjoyed by cinema audiences who were used to a rush of news and short frivolous items before the main feature.

It is not surprising that Hammerton has pointed out the relationship between the cinemagazines and the earlier 'cinema of attractions' claiming that "elements of the cinema of attractions remained highly visible within the 'full supporting programme' and, in particular, within the cinemagazine." [2002: 170] With regard to our travel films, we have identified a strong case for this argument suggesting how audience's were well tuned for the spectacle of the picturesque and the attraction of running amok in the countryside.

Illustration *15 All Aboard For The Broads!,* 1925.

Hammerton shows that the variety of the cinemagazine was its strength, that is was a form of film making where seemingly unrelated items could be strung together without concern for narrative, scooping up "all those bits and pieces that early film makers relished, but which had been gradually pushed to the edges of the main feature: travel items, semi-pornographic displays of the female body, musical hall acts and so on." [2002: 172] Although unrelated in content, the examples she lists here were linked by the audience's expectations and way of viewing the films as consumers. Fashion items, household gadgets, displays of the female body and tourist locations, though a mixed bunch, do all speak to the viewer in a similar way. It is, in one sense, a matter of making objects and experiences available to the consumer, establishing a relationship, as Berger would have it, between things and ourselves.
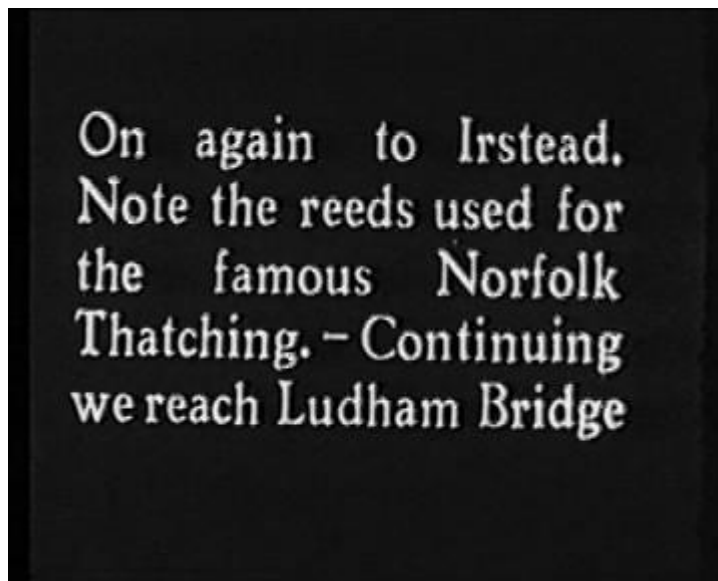
Illustration *16 Cameos of a Norfolk Broads Holiday,* 1934.

All the travel films chosen from EAFA show an attempt to both educate and entertain. The viewer is invariably taken on a journey where local 'highlights' are pointed out in order to impress upon the audience the uniqueness of the area and thus its attraction. Archetypal images of landscapes, work, relaxation, games, celebrations and cultural history are combined with movement and presented as 'real.' Whether it was indeed *true* or not was secondary to the purpose of the films which functioned for many as vicarious travel, enabling every class to visit Gainsborough's birth place or Blickling Hall, Norfolk.
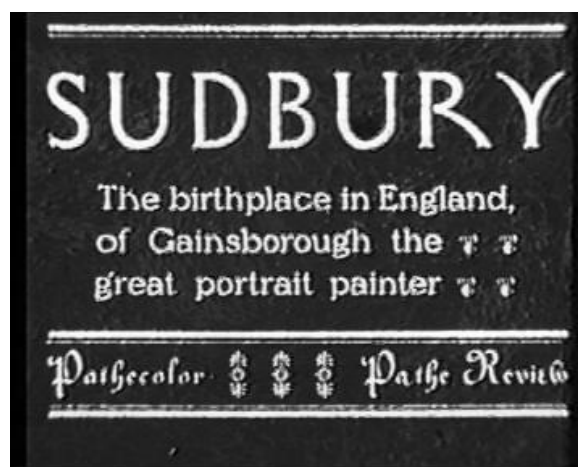
The vicarious function of travel films is no more apparent than in the 'phantom ride' form of the genre, where the camera appropriates the eye of the audience, gazing from a train or tram window, giving movement to an otherwise static camera. An excellent example of this type of shot can be seen in *Great Yarmouth For Health, Sunshine, Pleasure.* After showing stationary aerial views of the main seafront road, pier and beach ("These views were taken on a height of 150 feet"), the camera cuts onto a tram riding down the main street crowded with shoppers and holiday makers. In this instance, the tram moves in a straight line down the road and the camera pans to areas of interest. It is a remarkable scene of town life at the time, engaging the viewer

directly with the hustle and bustle of the street. The film is what Peterson has called a 'people-orientated travelogue' rather than a 'landscape-orientated travelogue.' [1997: 86] It was made during the July carnival week and features 'views' that are truly carnivalesque: decorated people in exotic costume and 'native types' are abundant everywhere.

Many of the cinemagazines are a combination of both the people and landscape-orientated film. The Pathe *Eve's* films and the one Topical Budget example display the humanised inter-war landscape that we discussed earlier. They are all very similar in construction with young male and female actors portraying tourists enjoying careless fun. *All Aboard The Broads* begins with the subtitle, "Nothing Like Norfolk Inland Oceans for a really good time!" Actor-tourists then emerge on these 'oceans' from beneath a bridge on a small boat, waving at the camera from a distance as if to welcome the audience to their world. An intertitle reads, "Work first!", then both men and women (presumably partners or good friends reminding us of later 'Club 18' imagery) mop down the deck together, then wash up pots and plates from their meal. While doing so, they glance at the camera as if it were members of the audience on board with them. The next intertitle is, predictably, "Then play!" and they spontaneously begin singing and dancing, acting the fool for (and with) the camera/audience. The film ends with an intertitle, "The Mascot", and a woman holds a life ring (labeled, 'Hazard Wroxham') in front of her face.

The *Eve's* films depict the same kind of innocent fun: Speed boats tearing up the Norfolk Broads: "few of us have seen motor boats perform like this fellow"; girls hoisting sails in a busy mooring area: "A sail, a sail – My Kingdom for a sail – (not the two and eleven three variety most frequently in Eve's mind"; and there are also moments in these girl's lives for relaxation, too, as they drift slowly away onto more open waters. But lest the audience forget, *Eve on the Broads* declares, "Rivers and canals are Eve's highways on the Broads" and we see a large commercial boat full of people pass by. Later, in contrast to this modern parallel between boating on the Broads and motoring, 'Eve' comes across the film star, Ivy Duke and her husband also enjoying "a nice shady spot" with their boat moored by a leafy river bank. This is more akin to the idyllic images of the Broads we have seen previously only in this instance, a joke is made about the 'work' Ms. Duke's husband is doing as she "slaves away" while he smokes his pipe laying horizontal on the deck. It is a wonderful depiction of the middle class at home in the English landscape, the woman remains domesticated doing light work while the husband has time and space to gaze both at her and the landscape. Emerson's vision of young rural women minding their flowers are here updated to images of a film star and female friends loading their boat and cooking while "hubby" gazes upon the 'view'. The image of the Broads and the work taking place there have been domesticated although the model of picturesque landscapes and daily work routines remain.

Besides the upbeat and immediately modern cinemagazine vision for the Broads, other, dedicated, views of East Anglia remain distinctively nostalgic. *The Beauty Spots of Britain. The Broads* shows the surrogate observer (via a 'phantom ride' in a boat), the famous thatched bungalows along the rivers, a "general view" of Wroxham ("excellent for sailing"), a "view from the railway bridge", "Belaugh village church ... quaint and picturesque." Each view is a long shot from a boat, combining imagery of recreation (golf, family boating, feeding swans, sailing) and an uncomplicated version of the picturesque. Salhouse Broad, we are told, is "a gem of Broadland scenery" which would be hard to deny from watching the film. Throughout it, intertitles announce a succession of 'views' which use well established compositions of meandering rivers, landscapes split horizontally by the water and sky, the camera frame divided by the river and its banks, sailing boats reflecting on the water. The image of the Broads in this film is that of a well kept place, populated but not over-crowded. It offers the holiday maker relaxation, the conveniences of small villages, riverside pubs and churches and traditional work routines of thatching and milling.

Finally an intertitle introduces "Ranworth Broad ... 150 acres ... a picturesque and quiet lagoon" and the film ends abruptly with a tinted sunset.

A similar film is *Cameos of a Norfolk Broads Holiday*. The final intertitle reveals its sponsor:

> For details of the holiday, including craft, or weekly hire and loan of films,
> apply to Lake's Ltd. 10 Broadland House, 22 Newgate Street. London.
> E.C.1"

Like *Beauty Spots...*, it features sailing and motor boats, picturesque images of the river and its banks, thatching, feeding ducks, holidaying families, windmills and 'native' workers. An intertitle reassures the audience of "something different. Good open sailing on wide waters (Barton Broad) and safe peaceful anchorage at Neatishead." As well as providing safety and comfort for the family, it is also " an artist's paradise – the beautiful river Ant up to Wayford Bridge." As we are guided along this 'phantom ride', we are privileged to see fishermen, horses, local children playing by a haystack with their dog, a thatcher unloading reeds from his boat and "some beautiful examples of Norfolk thatching on Horning bungalows, and finally of Horning Regatta."

Formally, what links all of these 'view' films is that "the camera literally acts as a tourist, spectator or investigator, and the pleasure in the film lies in this surrogate of looking." [Gunning 1997: 15] Gunning identifies this style of film making in films from the turn of the century and argues that the the primary method of identifying the genre is that they clearly identify the camera's presence. We see this most clearly when watching the cinemagazine, but the camera is also brought to our attention in other films by the use of intertitles which indicate before hand that we are about to be shown a 'view of so and so...' This simplest of devices clearly establishes a relationship between the audience and the view of the camera. The world the spectator gazes upon is primed for them and by the middle of each film, one can guess almost exactly what each shot will look like following an intertitle. The editing of the travel films may be likened to a photograph album where there are leaps from one location to the next, perhaps, if we are lucky, introduced by a written caption or other piece of memorabilia which helps ease us into the next location. The occasional observation of work, like in the paintings and photographs, also acts as a mediation between the nature of the countryside and the culture of the urban visitor. It 'places' both people and their environment for the benefit of the 'comfortable classes'. [Gunning 1997: 18]

One such film which deals with the work routine is *Sunday. A Yarmouth Study*. The film is a series of views of Yarmouth on a Sunday when the working classes rest. It begins with the ships coming in for the day and wide picturesque views of large

fishing boats in the docks. The "great fleet is still – a silent forest of masts and funnels." The ships, like the town's people, are "safe ... away from the battering sea." The sky is dramatic, with great clouds pierced by sunlight silhouetting the boats and circling gulls.

On Monday, the "dawn calls the fleet from its rest" and cuts to a shot of the waters battering the sea wall. Boats begin to leave the harbour and a poetic intertitle waxes, "For I must go down to the sea again." The last two shots are of a solitary silhouetted fisherman by the harbour and then finally a perfect seascape with a dramatic sky and vast ocean.

In this film it is the *absence* of work in an area of Yarmouth built around the fishing industry which distinguishes it as a film *about* work. Not only that, it suggests that the day of rest is deserved, that even fishermen observe the Sabbath and that once it is over, they dutifully go back to sea. It is a reassuring view of the world, a poetic view of man's toil and a romantic vision of the sea reminiscent of an earlier interpretation of nature, that which is harsh, desolate and unforgiving. The Yarmouth in this film does not invite the bather and holiday maker, it invites the adventurer, the serious traveller rather than the 'tripper', who wishes to gaze at the process of work by heroic men. We are presented with twenty-fours hours of a *place* bound to an ideological narrative, it is as much a *sight* of labour as a site of labour; "the social attitudes here are pre-existent, rather than argued" [Gunning 1997: 19] as the working classes are shown their *place* just as the middle classes can confirm it.

Conclusion

Hopefully, by now, the implications of Jonathan Smith's carefully worded statement, that "the eye that has been properly educated sees landscape as a spectacle", are clear. I have tried to address, at times discursively, each of the relationships implied in this sentence showing how the tourist's eye, or 'gaze' has been nurtured over two centuries to view the rural English landscape as something 'other'; that is, in opposition to the urban environment. While the economic force behind this 'education' has always been present, our image of the landscape, and therefore the relationship we have had with it, has shifted and continues to do so. By discussing and often comparing the process of early panoramic paintings, the work of rural painters and Emerson, I have tried to gradually focus in on a region of England which is well represented on film. At the same time, I have attempted to relate the production of these images to an emerging industry of mass tourism, one which is by definition based on consumerism.

Tourism has been a particularly interesting industry to examine, because like the film industry, its success rests on a desire among people to consume the immaterial, presenting different experiences and sensations that often steer the consumer's appetite towards the consumption of the material. Travel films are an example of this. By

tracing the rise of mass tourism, we have also found ourselves discussing the rise of a mass production of images, moving from the singular giant spectacle of the Diorama and panorama shows to the fervent output of a landscape tradition of painting, to the mechanical reproduction of photographic images up to the weekly production and distribution of cinemagazines, advertising films and travelogues. No industry nor artistic tradition exists in a vacuum and I have purposefully tried to avoid approaching the films of East Anglia through the singular lens of film history. Rather my approach has been to consider why the films were made, who they were made for and what assumptions were being made about the audience. Because of this, I am inclined to see the films in economic terms, as a product produced by a commercial company for a paying audience who have come to the theatre to gaze upon a 'world of difference.' In this world, representations of leisure and labour reconfirm the audience's existing position within class relations and support wider attempts to adjust the audience's gaze upon the landscape in support of broader changes in society and culture.

As I have said, I find little in these films that is original or innovative, and nothing which is provocative or critical of their contemporary culture which is not surprising but always disappointing when the representation of the 'other' and the movement from one landscape to another are areas so ripe for intellectual engagement and the 'education' of a tourist's gaze. The 'attraction' of the films lies in their temporal dimension, animating familiar landscapes and inviting the viewer into a simulated travel experience; one in which the emotions and gestures of 'Englishness' and romance, nostalgia and progress, solitude and shared leisure, disguise the broader dichotomies of individual/collective, authentic/inauthentic and historical/modern. By using these models of the tourist's gaze, we can align the 'views' of the travel film with both the gaze of the tourist and the tourist-filmmaker who has always been responsible for much more than 'just looking.'

References

Adler, Judith (1989) 'Origins of sightseeing', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 16: 7-29.

Altick, Richard B. (1978) *The Shows of London*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press.

Beekerson, John (2002) 'Marketing British Tourism. Government Approaches to the Stimulation of a Service Sector, 1880-1950', in *The Making of Modern Tourism. The Cultural History of the British Experience, 1600–2000*, Basingstoke, Palgrave, 133-158.

Benjamin, Walter (1973) 'The Work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction', *Illuminations*, London, Fontana.

Berger, John (1972) *Ways of Seeing*, London, Penguin Books.

Berghoff, Hartmut (2002) 'From Privilege to Commodity? Modern Tourism as an Individual Experience', in *The Making of Modern Tourism. The Cultural History of the British Experience, 1600–2000*, Basingstoke, Palgrave, 159-180.

Davies, G. Christopher (1882) *The Handbook to the Rivers & Broads of Norfolk & Suffolk*, London, Jarrold & Sons.

Emerson, P.H. (1887) *Life and Landscape on the Norfolk Broads*, London, Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington.

Emerson, P.H. (1888) *Pictures of East Anglian Life*, London, Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington.

Gunning, Tom (1990) 'The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, its Spectator and the Avant-Garde', in Thomas Elsaesser with Adam Barker (eds.) *Early Cinema. Space, Frame, Narrative*, London, British Film Institute, 56-62.

Gunning, Tom (1997) 'Before documentary: early nonfiction films and the 'view' aesthetic', in Daan Hertogs & Nico De Klerk (eds.) *Uncharted Territory. Essays on early nonficiton film,* Amsterdam, Stichting Nederlands Filmmuseum, 9-24.

Gunning, Tom (1998) 'Early American Film', in John Hill and Pamela Church Gibson (eds.), *The Oxford Guide to Film Studies*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Hammerton, Jenny (2002) 'The Spice of the Perfect Programme: The Weekly Magazine Film during the Silent Period', in Andrew Higson (ed.) *Young and Innocent? The Cinema in Britain, 1986-1930*, Exeter, University of Exeter Press, 162-175.

Higson, Andrew (2001) 'Figures in a Landscape: The Performance of Englishness in Cecil Hepworth's Tansy (1921)', in Alan Burton and Laraine Porter (eds.) *The Showman, the Spectacle and the Two-Minute Silence: Performing British Cinema Before 1930*, Trowbridge, Flicks Books, 53-61.

Howard, Peter (1991) *Landscapes: The Artist's Vision*, London, Routledge.

Knights, Sarah (1986) 'Change and Decay: Emerson's Social Order', in McWilliams, Neil & Sekules, Veronica (eds.), (1986) *Life and Landscape: P. H. Emerson. Art & Photography in East Anglia 1885-1900*, Norwich, Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, 12-20.

Lübbren, Nina (2001) *Rural artist's colonies in Europe. 1870–1910*, Manchester, Manchester University Press.

Matless, David (1998) *Landscape and Englishness*, London, Reaktion Books Ltd.

McWilliams, Neil & Sekules, Veronica (eds.), (1986) *Life and Landscape: P. H. Emerson. Art & Photography in East Anglia 1885-1900*, Norwich, Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts.

Oettermann's, Stephen (1997) *The Panorama: History of a Mass Medium*, translated by Deborah Lucas Schneider, New York, Zone.

Ousby, Ian (1990) *The Englishman's England. Taste, travel and the rise of tourism*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Peterson, Jennifer (1997) ' 'Truth is stranger than fiction': travelogues from the 1920s in the Nederlands Filmmuseum', in Daan Hertogs & Nico De Klerk (eds.) *Uncharted Territory. Essays on early nonficiton film,* Amsterdam, Stichting Nederlands Filmmuseum, 75-90.

Potts, Alex (1989) ' "Constable country" between the wars', in Raphael Samuel (ed.) *Patriotism: the making and unmaking of British national identity*, London, Routledge, 161-86.

Seiberling, Grace (1986) *Amateurs, Photography, and the Mid-Victorian Imagination*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

Taylor, John (1994) *A Dream of England. Landscape, Photography and the Tourist's Imagination*, Manchester, Manchester University Press.

Taylor, John (1986) 'Landscape and Leisure', in McWilliams, Neil & Sekules, Veronica (eds.), (1986) *Life and Landscape: P. H. Emerson. Art & Photography in East Anglia 1885-1900*, Norwich, Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, 73-82.

Urry, John (1990) *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies*, London, Sage Publications.