

Part I

Literary Tourism

In a first take, we approach the relation of literature and tourism from the distant poles of a direct fictional thematization of tourism in a literary text and of the “non-fictional” representation of the place in travel literature. In both cases, the relation is “personified”: in “The Birthplace”, the hero has to cope with his role as the guide at a landmark of literary tourism and allows us to relate the problem of touristic mediation to issues in tourism theory and to the literary problematics of authorship and fiction. Personification here concerns Gedge in his problem of personifying, as guide, the touristic discourse, which conflicts with the other personification, that of Shakespeare “author”-izing his “works”; lastly, Gedge finds a solution in personifying himself as a performer of stories, in becoming an actor who writes (or improvises) his own script and this saves his self-esteem, the historical truth, and his job.

A different form of personalization can be encountered in James’s travel essays: here the narrator/author stages his “impressions” according to two basic modes of representation: either as a “scene” in associating the place with a discourse or a story; or as a “picture” in which his perception is staged as aesthetic source of significance. The later James will push the travel essay as a means of expression to the limits of the founding concepts of the genre: the significance of perceptions and scenes becomes more personal, it approaches the purely autobiographical for which the place supplies the motivation. It thus points to the question of how literature may possibly effect the “touristification” of the reader.

