practicalmatters

Worshiping at Nature's Shrine

Thomas S. Bremer

Rhodes College

Abstract

Yellowstone National Park serves as a historical case study for considering the role of travel practices, sociocultural constructions of identity, discourses on authenticity, and consumerist orientations in the designation of particular places as sacred. The history of pilgrimages to America's national parks offers an example of the touristic translation of spiritual value into economic value. Specifically, places in the modern world are constructed (both materially and conceptually) largely in accordance with the values and logic of consumer capitalism. Consequently, any discussion of particular locales that people find significant must account for the ways that they conceptualize and utilize places through a consumerist orientation.

As he moved from town to town in the rounds of his itinerant ministry, the Rev. Edwin J. Stanley, a Methodist circuit preacher riding the rough country of Montana Territory in the 1870s, listened intently to the tales of unrivaled natural wonders to be found along the Upper Yellowstone River. He eventually relented to his curiosity about this Yellowstone "Wonderland," a place where he had been told, "In no country on the globe, within the same area, has Nature crowded so much of grandeur and majesty, with so much of novelty and variety." Off he went in August of 1873, not even eighteen months since President Ulysses Grant had signed into law the act establishing Yellowstone as America's (and the world's) first national park, to experience for himself the enchantments of a place "unrivaled in wild and weird wonders."[1]

One of Rev. Stanley's early stops in the park was Tower Falls, where he discovered a secluded hideaway ideal for reverent contemplations. "Inspired by the surroundings," he later recalled,

> I lingered long in that retired chamber alone, meditating on the wonderful works of Nature; and as I watched the water descending in jets and crystal showers, and listened to its hushed murmur, subdued to softness by the overhanging cliffs and towering pines,

Practical Matters Journal, Spring 2016, Issue 9, pp. X-XXX.

> I could but admire the modestly beautiful little cataract hid away in this lonely yet lovely solitude, where it would not be observed by the curious hundreds passing near, and I returned to camp feeling myself a better man, and meditating upon the greatness, wisdom, and goodness of Nature's God.[2]

Such spiritual revelry, though, paled when he reached the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone. After an arduous climb down to the river's edge deep in the chasm, Stanley and his companions felt the sublime power of the canyon's magnificence:

> [W]e were awed into silence and reverence, feeling that we were in the very antechamber of the great God of Nature, and that he was talking to us and teaching us lessons of his greatness, his grandeur, and his glory, that human language must ever fail to express. A sense of the awful pervades the mind, and we almost felt that we were trespassing upon sacred ground. I felt like baring the head and bowing the knee to One who could pile up rocks in such stupendous majesty, and carve and paint them in such matchless splendor, "who cutteth out rivers among the rocks;" "who holdeth the waters in the hollow of his hand," and spreadeth them out in such grandeur and beauty. "Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty. Heaven and earth are full of thy glory."[3]

Rev. Stanley's experience in Yellowstone, though, was not all spiritual elevation. His moments of awe-inspiring piety were punctuated by evidences of a frightening underworld bubbling up in the park's thermal features. He recalled images from John Bunyan's popular Protestant allegory *The Pilgrim's Progress* as his party toured the boiling lakes of the Lower Geyser Basin:

> Could we but have heard the cries of the tormented, Bunyan's picture of the pit in the side of the hill which the pilgrims were shown by the shepherds on their way to the Celestial City, where they "looked in and saw that it was very dark and smoky;" thought that they "heard a rumbling noise as of fire, and a cry of some tormented, and that they smelt the fumes of brimstone," would have been complete.[4]

Yet, such frightening evocations of the infernal regions notwithstanding, Stanley predicted the popular appeal among future spiritual seekers of the park's geysers, hot springs, and bubbling mud pots. With rapturous enthusiasm he recounted his tour of the Upper Geyser Basin, "the centre of attraction in the National Park," where, he surmised, "in future years, not far hence, either, the philosophers and tourists, and the lovers of the sublime and the wonderful in Nature, will gather from all countries and climes to make investigation, to behold and wonder, and even worship at Nature's shrine."[5] Yellowstone would soon become, as this itinerant minister of God rightly predicted, a pilgrimage shrine of international repute.

At "Nature's shrine" in the precincts of Yellowstone National Park, Edwin Stanley encountered what he regarded as an authentic spiritual experience of divine reality. He was not alone in finding God in nature's marvelous attractions. In fact, Stanley's sojourn to Yellowstone typified a nineteenth-century Christian piety inclined toward a reverence for nature and encouraged by the commercial interests of a tourist economy. This confluence of piety and profiteering, of course, was nothing new in the annals of religious travel:

entrepreneurial enterprises have populated pilgrimage routes and holy destinations as long as reverent humans have been engaged in devotional travels.[6] But by the 1870s, this long history of religious travel had entered a modern, industrialized era that expanded the goals, motives, and destinations of devotional journeys beyond the bounds of conventional sectarian traditions. In places like Yellowstone National Park, modern people found aesthetic and spiritual value in a perceived connection with the natural world.

The Aesthetic Value of an Authentic Place

Place is closely related to identity, both at the individual and collective levels.[7] In the contemporary world of neoliberal consumer capitalism, economic concerns mediate emplaced identities. Specifically, places in the modern world are constructed (both materially and conceptually) largely in accordance with the values and logic of consumer capitalism. Consequently, any discussion of particular locales that people find significant must account for the ways that these places are conceptualized and utilized through a consumerist orientation.

This is as true for religious places as it is for other culturally significant locations. One way that many highly regarded religious places gain their meaningful significance is through devotional travel practices which make evident the connection between identity, the socioeconomic foundations of place, and religion. Attention to the relationship, both historically and in contemporary contexts, between travel practices alternately identified as "pilgrimage" and "tourism" brings into focus a synergy between religion, place, and commerce.

Although many observers prefer to distinguish between pilgrimage and tourism, in actual practice such distinctions become difficult to uphold. In many ways, pilgrims and tourists are interchangeable social actors. As anthropologists Victor and Edith Turner famously quipped, "a tourist is half a pilgrim, if a pilgrim is half a tourist."[8] On the one hand, contemporary travelers undertaking devotional journeys rely to a large extent on the conventions, practices, and infrastructural support of the tourist industry. Conversely, recreational travelers in many cases discover spiritual or religious dimensions to their tourist experiences, whether they seek such experiences intentionally or merely stumble upon them by accident. Often those engaged in recreational travel attribute aesthetic meaning to their tourist experiences through the categories and language of their respective religious orientations.[9]

Significant to this connection between religion and tourism is a discourse on authenticity. Specifically, the trope of authenticity lends aesthetic value that enhances both religious and economic worth. The discourse on authenticity in fact plays a crucial role in religion, both for religious adherents as well as for the scholars who study them. For the people who constitute religious communities, their claims of piety in many cases imply claims of authenticity. This is most apparent in apologetic and proselytizing contexts. Put simply, asserting one's own religious orientation, practices, beliefs, and traditions as "true" and superior insinuates an authentic spirituality that contrasts with the false and inauthentic pretenses of others' religious understandings and practices. In the rhetorical exchanges that circulate between diverse religious worlds, true religion is authentic religion.[10] As for scholarly studies of religion, a good deal of academic efforts and resources are dedicated to developing authentic understandings of religion. Indeed, as religious studies

scholar Russell McCutcheon reminds us, the discipline of religious studies to a large extent "exists by chasing after the authentic."[11] This pursuit of authenticity in religious studies gives scholars the authority to describe, explain, and expound upon the true meanings, purposes, and implications of the religions they study.[12]

Authentic religion also offers economic value for religious adherents and the scholars who study them as well as to modern society more generally. Historian Laurence Moore has argued that the secularization of modern society is less about the disappearance of religion and more about its commodification.[13] The processes of religious commodification gain a great deal of their value in the claims, whether explicit or implied, of an authentic, true religion or spirituality underlying the religious commodity. This economic value of authenticity in things religious is especially apparent in the marketplaces of tourism. Religious objects, architecture, art, music, ritual events, even religious people themselves do not escape the processes of aestheticization and commodification of the tourist economy.[14] This business of turning religion into commodified objects, events, and experiences comports well with tourists' desires for authenticity, thus heightening the value of their touristic efforts. In short, authentic religious experiences or items offer spiritual value that translates to economic value.

One clear example of the touristic translation of spiritual value into economic value can be seen in the history of America's national parks. These sites of national significance display the characteristics of sacred space that, according to religious scholar Lynn Ross-Bryant, are places "where the many and conflicting stories of the culture are embodied and performed."[15] The specialness of the parks, especially the earliest ones, relies to a large extent on social and cultural constructs of "nature." In particular, American national parks were conceived as preserved areas of wilderness consisting of regions separate from humans and their interventions, which, as Ross-Bryant observes, "seems to be the authentic form of nature."[16] This sociocultural conceptualization of wilderness generates an ethical mandate of preservation for the parks. Relying on the language and rhetoric of museums, the national parks put preserved nature on display as it was long ago, frozen in a time before human interference. Ross-Bryant concludes, "The rhetoric of the parks tells us that to enter into a park is to leave behind what humans have created and place ourselves in the natural pristine world."[17]

Preserving these pristine worlds as refuges from modern society, though, requires development and management. It entails the building of accommodations for the comfort, safety, enjoyment, and pleasure of visitors. "Improvements" include lodging and camping grounds, eateries and gasoline stations, roads and trails, museums and souvenir shops, and all of the support infrastructure needed to manage places of intense tourist visitation. As Ross-Bryant observes wryly, "it should be obvious that this is not nature untouched by humans."[18] Nevertheless, the human touch recedes to near invisibility for most visitors intent on experiencing pristine nature: "the boundaried space," in Ross-Bryant's analysis, "came to be understood as sacred space and the parks emerged as national pilgrimage sites."[19]

The earliest and perhaps the most famous of these wilderness pilgrimage destinations is Yellowstone National Park, established by Congress in 1872. Despite its reputation as a preserve of unmarred wilderness, Yellowstone National Park is a very carefully managed, developed, and heavily manipulated piece of real estate.[20] The National Park Service manages Yellowstone, in the words of the legislation that created the park, "as a public park or pleasuring-ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people." To

that end, responsibility for the park is granted to the Secretary of the Interior with a duty to "provide for the preservation, from injury or spoliation, of all timber, mineral deposits, natural curiosities, or wonders within said park, and their retention in their natural condition."[21] Thus, Yellowstone's enabling legislation emphasizes both public enjoyment and perpetual preservation of park resources "in their natural condition," burdening the Secretary with an impossible task of self-contradictory goals: retaining Yellowstone's wonders in their natural condition, it seems, would preclude the presence of people who have come to experience a pleasuring-ground set aside for their benefit and enjoyment. Fulfilling this difficult challenge requires intense management of the park and its resources as well as policing the visitors who arrive by the millions each year.

The Yellowstone Shrine

People travel to Yellowstone with a variety of motives and interests, nearly all having to do with nature. Some come for the stunning vistas of mountain scenery, others for the curious spectacles of thermal features, while yet others are captivated by the allure of wild animals in their natural habitats or the adventure of pitting oneself against the challenges of a wild land.[22] And similar to most pilgrimage destinations, the difficulty of the journey heightens the attractiveness of this authentic western place. Yellowstone is not conveniently located near major population centers, and getting there requires some planning and effort.[23] But modern transportation makes the journey far easier than it was in the early days of the park. In fact, the history of development in the park centers around convenience, comfort, and safety of visitors, but an authentic aesthetic of rustic proportions remains an appealing attraction for many people who arrive in the Yellowstone wilds.[24]

Before the railroads offered service to the park, visitors arrived on horseback or on foot. Yet despite the difficulties and dangers involved in getting there, visitors were touring Yellowstone even before the establishment of the national park in 1872. A report from that year discussing relations with Indians in Montana notes, "Even on the Yellowstone, which is considered the most dangerous and exposed portion of the Territory, tourists and parties of pleasure, (in one case including ladies,) were safely traveling to and fro during last summer [1871], and examining with delight and astonishment, the geysers, hot springs, canyons, waterfalls and mud volcanoes of this most wonderful of all places on the earth."[25] Accommodating these visitors was in fact an early priority for the park. Ferdinand V. Hayden, head of the U.S. Geological Survey of the Territories, included in the maps drawn during the official expeditions that he led to Yellowstone in 1871 and 1872 recommendations for "five localities where buildings could be erected for the accommodations of visitors. These localities could be leased to suitable persons for a term of years. They are in close proximity to the principal curiosities in the Park."[26] Visitor accommodations likewise were among the earliest concerns of the national park's first superintendent, Nathaniel P. Langford, who noted the numerous requests he had received for permission to put up small hotels in the new park. He remained cautious, though, about rushing headlong into development projects, preferring instead to put off any plans until a thorough survey of the park could be conducted. In his initial response in May 1872, to the Secretary of the Interior acknowledging his appointment as park superintendent, Langford stated, "I do not think it best to grant many leases for

hotels &c., nor these for a long time:— but at least one stopping place for tourists should be put up this year." In seeking clarification of his authority as superintendent, he asked the Secretary in the same letter if his powers included authorization "to make all necessary regulations for the building of one public house, or more if needed, and generally, for the protection of the rights of visitors [specifically against exorbitant tolls on private roads], and the establishment of such rules as will conduce to their comfort and pleasure."[27]

Without clear guidance from Washington and lacking funds to manage the park, development in Yellowstone was negligible in the early years. Getting to Yellowstone remained a daunting adventure through much of the nineteenth century. Philetus Norris, the park's second superintendent, argues in his 1877 report for the need to develop better routes to Yellowstone:

> The permanent opening of this great natural route from the North and East, and the assured extension, of the Northern, Utah road, into, at least, the Snake river valley, from the South, will develop rivalry in excursion tickets, from all the important cities, of the Nation, inviting teeming throngs of tourists, to the bracing air, the healing, bathing pools, and matchless beauties of the 'Wonder Land.'[28]

Even after the railroads laid tracks right up to the entrances of the park, the first in 1882 with the initial Northern Pacific Railroad terminus at Cinnabar, Montana (later moved a short way to Gardiner, Montana, adjacent to the north entrance of the park), a visit to Yellowstone remained a bit of an ordeal. As one visitor in the 1890s complained, his Yellowstone trip "would have been far more comfortable if there had been less dust, fewer mosquitoes, and better roads."[29] Another commentator, Carter Harrison, the former mayor of Chicago who toured Yellowstone in 1890, observed that the carriages transporting tourists throughout the park were not able to follow too closely to each other, "For at times the dust on some of the reads is very deep, causing passengers in some of the vehicles to be choked and rendered very uncomfortable."[30] Overcrowded hotels was another of his complaints: "At such times one is compelled to take a bed in a room with several others and may even be forced to crowd two in a bed."[31] Harrison's summary assessment notes the unevenness of available accommodations in Yellowstone during his 1890 visit:

> The hotels at Mammoth Hot Springs and at Yellowstone canyon are large, each capable of housing two or three hundred guests. The beds are clean and soft, the table fair and the attendance quite good. At Norris, the hotel is poor and the managers are impolite. At the Lower and at the Upper Geyser Basin, the houses are unfinished, and the rooms not sufficient in number, but the people do their best to please. This endeavor should cover a multitude of sins.[32]

A good number of nineteenth-century visitors did not avail themselves of hotel offerings, preferring instead (either from aesthetic preference or financial necessity) to enjoy a more rustic experience. During his visit in 1890, Carter Harrison mentions that he saw many parties who "take tents and enjoy a regular roughing life."[33] For some people of means, though, "roughing it" included considerable help. Harrison's account notes that some parties "have a number of attendants who generally go ahead to prepare the camps for the night, while the tourists loiter along the way to inspect the marvels or to botanize."[34] For at least a few

folks, indulging in the authentic experience of nature required the services of hired help.

Some of the pilgrims to Yellowstone in the nineteenth century came to be healed. Even before Ferdinand Hayden's geological expedition in 1871, a health spa had taken root at Mammoth Hot Springs, where Hayden reported as many as fifty customers inhabiting the "very primitive" lodgings and enjoying the healing properties of the steaming mineral waters. Hayden himself was convinced that "there is no reason why this locality should not at some future period become a noted place of resort for invalids."[35] Rev. Edwin Stanley in 1873 likewise reported,

> There are several springs, the water of which is used by the scores of invalids already flocking here to be healed of their maladies. Here, also, are the small bath-houses erected by the proprietors, for the use of which a handsome sum is generally exacted. The medicinal properties of each fountain seem to be different, and the invalid can use that best adapted to his case…. Some remarkable cures have been effected here, mostly of diseases of the skin, and rheumatism. But I think that the invigorating mountain-air and the healthful influence of camp-life have much to do with many cures that are effected, as these are known to be wonderful remedies in themselves for many of the ills which flesh is heir to.[36]

As late as the final decade of the nineteenth century, expectations still circulated regarding Yellowstone's potential as a restorative destination for ailing pilgrims. Carter Harrison predicted in 1891 that "sanitariums will be established to make the park a blessing to the afflicted of the country." He noted not only the curative properties of the hot springs but also the health benefits of the mountain air, although he warns it may not be helpful to those suffering from consumption (i.e., tuberculosis). "The rarified atmosphere," he wrote, "makes their breathing very laborious and painful." Nevertheless, Harrison goes on to report, "The majority of those whom we have seen here for health are camping out and seem to be having a good time. They have their horses, and spend their time fishing and riding."[37]

Healthful waters and rarefied air aside, the vast majority of people who came to Yellowstone in the early years of the national park were most interested in experiencing the glorious wonders of nature. The Rev. Stanley's ruminations regarding Yellowstone's "antechamber of the great God of Nature" were neither unique nor particularly unusual among spiritually inclined visitors. Such is the case in the descriptions of Harry J. Norton, who had visited Yellowstone in its first year as a national park, a full year before Rev. Stanley's trip there. Norton's account repeatedly struggles to express the sublime grandeur of the sights he viewed. He recalls entering the geyser basins:

> Look cautiously, tread carefully—for we are now in the enchanted land, surrounded on every side with mystery and marvel. One brief hour has sufficed to change our quiet, love-inspiring, soul-entrancing scenery into that of a land of awe and wonder. The natural king has faded from our vision, and the supernatural monarch has ascended the throne with glittering crown, and with magic wand is ever directing our footsteps through his mystic domain.[38]

He sums up the sublime beauty of the Giantess Geyser by remarking how "the air glistens with the falling

water-beads as if a shower of diamonds was being poured from the golden gates of the Eternal City."[39] The Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, though, escapes adequate description; Norton explains,

> To say that we can *describe* (literally) their grandeur and marvellous beauty, would be to assume to correctly portray the illuminated heavens, or carve out of poor, weak words the glories of the Heavenly City itself. The subject is beyond the conception of the most vivid imagination—language is inadequate to express the unapproachable picture presented.[40]

The description of the canyon in the guidebook portion of his book concludes, "the whole scene is clothed with a splendor that speaks of Divinity."[41]

The divine splendor of Yellowstone for many visitors was sometimes eclipsed by less noble perceptions; ambivalence often crept into pilgrims' experiences. One notable example is in the recollections of British literary figure Rudyard Kipling, who visited the park in 1889. Particularly bothersome were the other travelers he observed in the park. Kipling's account expresses considerable disdain for American tourists and Americans more generally. For instance, after witnessing Fourth of July celebrations at Mammoth Hot Springs, the eminent writer remarked, "Today I am in the Yellowstone Park, and I wish I were dead."[42] The patriotic festivities he witnessed included the pontifications of an unnamed clergyman who assured the raucous gathering that "they were the greatest, freest, sublimest, most chivalrous, and richest people on the face of the earth, and they all said Amen."[43] Kipling also registered disappointment in some of the natural features of the park, as when his group toured the Norris Geyser Basin. He described the stark landscape there as "the uplands of Hell," where it seemed to him "as though the tide of desolation had gone out, but would presently return, across innumerable acres of dazzling white geyser formation."[44] His attitude changed, though, when he arrived at the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone. The vibrant colors and dramatic contrasts of canyon walls, roaring river, and graceful waterfalls inspired more ethereal imagery as he perched at sunset on a jutting ledge overhanging the canyon's depths: "Now I know what it is to sit enthroned amid the clouds of sunset. Giddiness took away all sensation of touch or form; but the sense of blinding colour remained."[45] The aesthetic splendor of the canyon's display erased, at least for a moment, the disappointment and disdain he had felt in previous days.

Underlying visitors' perceptions of their Yellowstone experience, whether disappointing or sublime, was an aesthetic of authenticity. The dominant appeal for nearly everyone who went there lay in the park's promise of untrammeled nature. Many of Yellowstone's early pilgrims reveled in an authentic experience of divine creation in the scenic vistas and unrivaled enchantments of the park's natural features. Yellowstone was, for many who ventured there in the nineteenth century, a place of authentic sacred encounter.

An Authentic Place

The history of American national parks relies on a discourse of authenticity that invokes a binary distinction between nature and artifice. With the exception of the first national *protected* area—Hot Springs Reservation in Arkansas—the earliest parks were places of sublime scenery, locations where modern people could engage in authentic experiences of their God's handiwork.[46] Implicit in the designation of national parks in the nineteenth century was an insistence on their authenticity as untouched, undeveloped reserves

not manipulated by the corrupting interventions of human efforts.

This early view of America's national parks as untainted natural reserves coincides with nineteenth-century conceptions of the American west. In fact, two distinct visions of the west loomed large in the nineteenth-century American imagination, as historian Mark Daniel Barringer notes. On the one hand was the Old West, a land of opportunity, a place of unrivaled resources awaiting the commercial ambitions of miners, timber operatives, ranchers and farmers, as well as the array of support services and industries capitalizing on the settlement and development of western lands. On the other hand was the New West, a place of redemption, a terrain of spiritual revitalization gained through a reverence for nature and authentic experiences of the western frontier.[47] Yellowstone epitomized the latter view, but the park's aesthetic value also coincided with the more opportunistic promises of the Old West. Public interest in the redemptive experiences of the national park generated economic opportunities for railroads, lodging enterprises, tour operators, and a host of other entrepreneurial undertakings. Consequently, pilgrimage to the authentically pristine environs of Yellowstone, like religious travel everywhere, offered redemptive experiences for the tourist-pilgrims who made the journey while filling the coffers of the opportunistic business proprietors along the route.

This circumstance has not abated. As Edwin Stanley predicted, the philosophers and tourists, all lovers of the sublime and the wonderful in Nature, still gather to worship at Nature's shrine. What Rev. Stanley did not say but only implied in his observations, those philosophers, tourists, and seekers of the sublime would pay handsomely for the redemptive value of the national park. Consequently, Yellowstone continues to generate aesthetic value that profits those who serve the pilgrims in their journeys to America's natural Wonderland.

Endnotes

1 Edwin James Stanley, *Rambles in Wonderland: Or, up the Yellowstone, and among the Geysers and Other Curiosities of the National Park* (New York: D. Appleton, 1878), 7.

2 Ibid., 65.

3 Ibid., 77-78.

4 Ibid., 95.

5 Ibid., 96.

6 Evidence of the close relation between pilgrimage and trade can be found throughout the ancient world. One prominent example is pre-Islamic pilgrimage in the Arabian peninsula; as Joy McCorriston notes, "ancient Arabian states attracted pilgrims for and with both religious and economic reasons. The intertwined socioeconomic activities and devotional aspects of pilgrimage can be traced throughout Arabian history and pre-history as a leitmotif for the constitution of Arabian society"—Joy McCorriston, *Pilgrimage and Household in the Ancient near East* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 31. In ancient America, the example of Chaco Canyon in New Mexico also

exemplifies the confluence of devotional travel and trade: "The great-house sites were scenes of pilgrimage fairs where visitors consumed goods and services under a ritual metaphor"—Nancy J. Akins, "Chaco Canyon Mortuary Practices: Archaeological Correlates of Complexity " in *Ancient Burial Practices in the American Southwest : Archaeology, Physical Anthropology, and Native American Perspectives*, ed. Douglas R. Mitchell and Judy L. Brunson-Hadley (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001), 167.

7 For an overview of place and identity in geographical studies, see Marco Antonsich, "Meanings of Place and Aspects of the Self: An Interdisciplinary and Empirical Account," *GeoJournal* 75, no. 1 (2010). In my own earlier work on place and space as analytical categories, I noted the commonplace idea (at least among cultural geographers and others interested in the social constructions of space) that "the making of place always involves the making of identities, and, conversely, the construction of identity always involves the construction of place." See Thomas S. Bremer, *Blessed with Tourists: The Borderlands of Religion and Tourism in San Antonio* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 4-5.

8 Victor Turner and Edith Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: Anthropological Perspectives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 20.

9 Michael Stausberg notes that "religion in various forms is present on the itineraries of other forms of tourism [besides 'religious/spiritual tourism'] including but not limited to cultural tourism, diaspora tourism, ecotourism, heritage, urban, and wellness tourism"— see Michael Stausberg, *Religion and Tourism: Crossroads, Destinations, and Encounters* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 28. Similarly, Alex Norman draws attention to the sometimes blurred distinction between tourist and spiritual seeker in his study of "spiritual tourism," which he recognizes in circumstances involving "a tourist who undertakes a spiritual practice or seeks spiritual progression in the course of their travels, usually with the intention of gaining 'spiritual benefit'"—see Alex Norman, *Spiritual Tourism: Travel and Religious Practice in Western Society* (New York: Continuum, 2011), 17.

10 A version of this argument appears in Thomas S. Bremer, "Consider the Tourist," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Material Religion*, ed. Manuel A. Vásquez and Vasudha Narayanan (Wiley-Blackwell, (forthcoming, expected publication in 2016).

11 Russell T. McCutcheon, *The Discipline of Religion: Structure, Meaning, Rhetoric* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 186.

12 An expanded version of this point is made in Bremer, "Consider the Tourist."

13 R. Laurence Moore, *Selling God: American Religion in the Marketplace of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 5.

14 Bremer, *Blessed with Tourists*: 6.

15 Lynn Ross-Bryant, *Pilgrimage to the National Parks: Religion and Nature in the United States* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 4.

16 Ibid., 5.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid., 5-6.

19 Ibid., 6.

20 Mark Daniel Barringer emphasizes the commercial interests in park management; he contends that "parks like Yellowstone were the sites of some of the most intensive commercial activity in the American west"—see Mark Daniel Barringer, *Selling Yellowstone: Capitalism and the Construction of Nature* (Lawrence:

University Press of Kansas, 2002), 7.

21 A transcript of the 1872 Yellowstone Act can be viewed at http://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/anps/anps_1c.htm.

22 Two significant and overlapping appeals that drew nineteenth-century visitors to national parks, and are still relevant motivations for many visitors even today, were "promotions and advertisements that constructed national parks as places of natural curiosities and nationalist vistas of canyons and waterfalls—uniquely American 'wonderlands'—but also . . . those that portrayed the parks as ideal representations of spiritually uplifting nature preserved, protected from the corrupting effects of development"—see Barringer, *Selling Yellowstone*: 35.

23 Salt Lake City, Utah, is just over 300 miles away, and the slightly larger city of Boise, Idaho is nearly 400 hundred miles from Yellowstone; Denver, Colorado, the twenty-first largest city in the United States, is more than 600 miles away.

24 For a history of development of Yellowstone accommodations, see ibid.

25 James Richard Boyce Sr., *Facts About Montana Territory and the Way to Get There* (Helena: Rocky Mountain Gazette, 1872), 8.

26 Hayden points out his recommended sites for development in a letter of February 9, 1874 to Hon. C. Delano [Secretary of the Interior]; a typescript copy of the letter is in the Horace Marden Albright Papers, 1918-1972 (Collection 2056), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles: Box 27.

27 A typescript copy of the May 20, 1872 letter from N. P. Langford to Hon. C. Delano, Secretary of the Interior, is in the Horace Marden Albright Papers, 1918-1972 (Collection 2056), Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles: Box 27.

28 These conclusions from his 1877 Superintendent's report appear in a manuscript copy of Philetus Norris, "The Great West. Introductory to a Journal of Rambles over Mountains and Plains," available in the manuscript collection of The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

29 Charles J. Gillis, *Another Summer: The Yellowstone Park and Alaska* (New York: Printed for private distribution, 1893), 29.

30 Carter H. Harrison, *A Summer's Outing and the Old Man's Story* (Chicago: Dibble Publishing, 1891), 61.

31 Ibid., 62.

32 Ibid., 80-81.

33 Ibid., 62.

34 Ibid., 63.

35 Quoted in Barringer, *Selling Yellowstone*: 17.

36 Stanley, *Rambles in Wonderland*: 57-58.

37 Harrison, *Summer's Outing*: 70-71.

38 Harry J. Norton, *Wonder-Land Illustrated; or, Horseback Rides through the Yellowstone National Park* (Virginia City, Montana: Harry J. Norton, 1873), 11.

39 Ibid., 28.

40 Ibid., 38.

41 Ibid., 78.

42 Quoted in Ross-Bryant, *Pilgrimage to the National Parks*: 55.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid.

45 Ibid.

46 The Hot Springs Reservation, established by the U.S. Congress in 1832, predated Yellowstone National Park by 40 years Kim Heacox, *An American Idea: The Making of the National Parks* (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 2001), 229 (photo caption). Withdrawing Arkansas's natural springs from private development created a precedent for later parks, but as Alfred Runte notes, reserving Hot Springs was "in recognition of its medicinal value, not with the intent of protecting scenery"—see Alfred Runte, *National Parks: The American Experience*, 2nd rev. ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 26.

47 This notion of two wests in the American imagination of the nineteenth century comes from Barringer, *Selling Yellowstone*: 21.