

Are We There Yet? Conceptualizing a Lighter Destination for Dark Tourism

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## ABSTRACT

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Are We There Yet? Conceptualizing a Lighter Destination for Dark Tourism  
(Under the direction of Dr. Margaret Wiener)

This thesis explores the contemporary phenomenon of dark tourism, defined by Lennon and Foley (2000) as the visitation of sites associated with the themes of death, dying, and atrocity. I present an analysis of identified patterns in the use of photography and film, the manipulation of landscape, and general exhibit presentation at dark tourism sites that focuses on dark tourism concerned with the events of the Holocaust, with particular attention given to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Auschwitz-Birkenau, and the Holocaust Museum of Southwest Florida. These patterns contribute to the overall effect of distorting the history and compartmentalizing both spatially and temporally the events presented at dark tourism sites. This effect creates an artificial distancing between the tourist and the events depicted by situating them in a past more distant than to which they actually belong, in turn fostering a perspective that the events central to dark tourism are irrelevant to contemporary society.

This artificial distancing, in conjunction with prevalent attitudes toward the tourist community, impacts the potential and purpose of dark tourism sites. Drawing on Nietzsche and Todorov, I conclude that the incorporation of alternative approaches to the presentation and use of history, integrated with the educational methodology presented by Freire and Reardon, may assist in developing the positive potential of dark tourism sites as well as transforming the negative reputation with which dark tourism sites are currently associated.

To all those whose death and suffering are the substance of dark tourism. May their sacrifice be made meaningful through an education which inspires the promotion of positive peace, mutual trust and understanding, and tolerance.

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## INTRODUCTION

The term dark tourism was coined in the 1990s by John Lennon and Malcolm Foley. It describes the increasingly popular tourist practice of visiting sites of or associated with themes of death, dying, and atrocity. Various other terms such as “thanatourism” (Seaton, 1996), “black spot” tourism (Rojek 1994), and “atrocity” tourism (Beech, 2000) are used less frequently to describe the same phenomenon. These terms originate from research in academic areas concerned with Travel and Tourism, Leisure, and Hospitality. These fields typically place focus on defining dark tourism and constructing a site typology. This research prioritizes dark site supply including business-centered development and management strategies of tourist sites. There is a corresponding lack of holistic consideration given to the tourist communities who visit these sites, the purposes and potential of these sites, and the long-term social effects that these sites may have on tourists.

The intention of this thesis is to explore some of these voids. Particular attention is given to the question of the positive potential of dark tourism sites. Therefore, the overarching question for this thesis is: How do the standards of dark tourism site presentation affect the capacity and long-term potential of dark tourism? I utilize the work of Nietzsche (2005) and Todorov (2000) for insight into the use of history within dark tourism. I depend upon the work of Freire (2000) and Reardon (1988) for alternative peace-centered approaches to education in my analysis and discussion. Although they are becoming commonplace, dark tourism sites can be easily perceived as distasteful, harmful, and catering to voyeuristic tendencies. If the more serious of dark tourism sites are intended to educate

about and bear witness to events of atrocity and wide scale human suffering, they may also serve as a means by which to actively diminish the presence of these events in the world today. The patterns in the production of these sites, coupled with the commonly held perceptions of tourists who frequent them, can affect the capacity of what dark tourism may achieve and the long term social repercussions of the sites.

The analysis presented here of dark tourism site manufacture and presentation highlights the construction of distance between the tourist and the historic event exhibited. This temporal dislocation minimizes the relevance of dark tourism and its subject matter for tourists, and thus reduces the positive capability of the site. Therefore, I conclude this thesis by suggesting different approaches to presenting and utilizing history and incorporating alternative methods of education at dark tourism sites. These revaluations may allow for the greater use of dark tourism sites and also alter the negative reputation with which they are currently associated.

My research interest in this topic resulted from personal experiences visiting dark tourism sites, particularly those of and associated with the Holocaust. Although sites designated as dark tourism cover a spectrum of intensity, solemnity, and consequence, it is the sites associated with the Holocaust that are consistently referenced within the literature and are considered the epitome of the sector of dark tourism. Although I appreciated some of the information provided at these sites, I left the sites feeling disturbed, not only by the topic matter being addressed, but also by the composition and ambiguous purpose of the sites themselves. These visits, however, allowed me to see first hand the patterns in the production of dark tourism sites, which I describe at length in my thesis. These patterns are: one, the use of still photography and film; two, the manipulation of landscape; and three,

generalized exhibit presentation. Each of these contributes to the distortion of the history presented to the tourist who visits dark tourism sites. This distortion results in the artificial distancing of the tourist from the events that are depicted.

Seeking out dark tourism is associated with an individual's desire to see and experience something that is unknown, taboo, and even dangerous. Enzensberger (1996) describes these motivations for the tourist of the nineteenth century, but they appear equally relevant to today's tourist despite the changes in access and opportunity. Dark tourism allows for an escape from reality into something that once was and still may be a threat to humanity but is packaged in such a way as to make it benign. Tourists are insulated by the false distance constructed between themselves and the original event through the heavy mediation of the dark tourism site. This occurs through the use of common museological features such as the heavy dependence on the photography of atrocity. Sontag (2003), Griffith (2006), and Kleinman and Kleinman (1997) each provide commentary on how the photography of victims produces additional distance between the victim and spectator while simultaneously objectifying the victim. Zelizer (1998) suggests that photographs, particularly of genocide and its victims, have attained an iconic status where more recent photographs mimic those of past events. The underlying message to viewers is that photographs document events that are firmly entrenched in the past, and therefore, cannot be altered. Photographs and the dark tourism sites where they are included act as mnemonic devices that, according to Todorov (2000), remember and memorialize events of atrocity so that we can forget.

The lack of interpretation of the photography at tourism sites contributes to the anonymity of the victims and contexts depicted. Dehumanizing victims in this manner

allows the spectator of the scene to, using both Jünger and Urry's phrase, "empty their gaze" (Hüppauf 1997:26, Urry 1995). Victims are presented merely as victims rather than human beings on behalf of whom the public should act. Without a thorough historic context, events appear as disassociated from the present and are relegated to a more distant past than to which they actually belong. Without the inclusion of the appropriate context of the history preceding and following dark events, the events appear random and even unavoidable. This causes tourists to assume any action they could make in the present toward the alleviation of such evils is futile.

The second pattern includes the manipulation of the tourist landscape such that a tourist experiences an event from a discrete start to a discrete finish even though these moments do not actually exist. Physically, the dark tourism site is circumscribed and presents a physical boundary between the information the site provides and the external lived-in world where the information has the potential to be utilized. The physical disassociation of the tourist landscape from contemporary society implies that the lessons of the past are insignificant for the present and future.

The temporal detachment that is produced by these aspects of dark tourism sites – photography, interpretation, and landscape - is notable because it contradicts what is considered as a defining characteristic of dark tourism by Lennon and Foley (2000). Essential to dark tourism is the proximity to the events it memorializes. Dark tourism is a contemporary phenomenon that draws specifically on the events dating from the past one hundred years. Temporal proximity lends itself to living memory, which results in the intensification of the event for those exposed to it. The artificial distancing of contemporary society from the events incorporated into these sites directly contradicts this requirement.

This observation led me to consider the effects that the manipulation of time has on dark tourism practices and how this in turn translates into the purpose and potential of these sites.

The criterion of temporal proximity, reiterated by the authors Seaton (1998) and Stone and Sharpley (2008), is associated with the increased global media coverage that developed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The technological improvements in communication during the last century have allowed the global community to experience a remote event as if it had occurred locally. The access facilitated by media, particularly through photography and film, fosters a simultaneous curiosity in these events and the ability to revisit the event on demand. According to the authors Malcolm and Foley (2000), Seaton (1998), and Stone and Sharpley (2008), the attention given to events of death, suffering, and atrocity by both news sources and the subsequent development of dark tourism sites is attributed to an inherent human curiosity of mortality and the darker aspects of humanity. These topics have been hidden from the everyday, with death becoming increasingly medicalized and concealed from public view. Thus, dark tourism can often appear as a spectacle, and tourists who view these sites for entertainment purposes are perceived as voyeuristic. The sometimes insensitive appropriation of suffering by and for dark tourism contributes to the negative reputation of both it and the tourists who visit.

The fabrication of distance decreases the tourists' ability to identify the direct relevance of dark events to contemporary society. This extends to the Holocaust, despite the fact that the Holocaust is relevant not only through actual proximity and living memory, but because acts of atrocity, including genocide, are still being committed in spite of the declarations that they would "never again" occur. The global community could and would, as a result of new technologies, immediately and efficiently publicize atrocities or the threat

of them so that the public could bear witness and be required to act on behalf of innocent people. Dark tourism has developed as one means by which the public can bear witness to human suffering. Despite the nearly universal agreement to this statement of “never again” by way of the Geneva Conventions, genocide and other crimes against humanity during wartime have continued to occur since 1949.<sup>1</sup> While the actual incidences of death, suffering, and atrocity may not have escalated, the global awareness of such events has. Bearing witness to these devastating events however, has not had the intended effect of actively preventing their continued appearance in contemporary society. Bearing witness requires individuals to act on behalf of victims and generate change in the present and for the future.

In conclusion, and drawing from the normative pedagogical framework of Paulo Freire (2000) and the field of peace education, I question whether the current manifestations of dark tourism provide a means by which to promote change and reduce the continued occurrence of such events and if not, why? According to this framework, it is not enough to inform the tourist public of events of death, suffering, and atrocity. It cannot be assumed that simply learning about crimes against humanity will prevent them from occurring in the future. Dark tourism sites offer a unique opportunity not only for educating the public about past events but also to show tourists how their daily actions can aid in preventing the continuation of human atrocity. Exhibition of the events of the Holocaust, like all of dark tourism, has the potential to accomplish a variety of goals, not all considered equally reputable, which include bearing witness, education, memorialization, financial gain, and entertainment. These goals, the conventional portrayal of tourists who are the expected consumers of such sites, and traditional museological practices may actually impede the

ability of dark sites to provide a place to bear meaningful witness and that is capable of promoting an active reduction in the continuous occurrence of the dark events these sites represent.

In order to make use of this potential, the production of dark tourism sites must be reevaluated, particularly by fields that can approach the topic of dark tourism outside of the preoccupations of the current literature which focus on dark tourism supply as well as their business and management strategies. Anthropology offers one such alternative perspective. Topics for reconsideration include the current place of history in the present, the treatment of the tourist as an ethnographic subject, and an intentional reflection on the capacity and long-term effects of dark tourism sites. The presentation of dark tourism sites must be altered to include adequate interpretation and provide contextual information that carries past events into the present. The boundaries of dark tourism sites need to become permeable so that what is contained in them becomes relevant to contemporary society. With this in mind, dark events such as the Holocaust cannot be given a discrete end, but should be tangibly connected to the present. A discussion about current day events of human suffering as comparable to these past events ought to be initiated. This will emphasize to tourists that these events are a real element of the modern world, rather than a thing of the past. Tourists need to be presented not only with a history lesson, but also how this history is applicable to today. This requires the physical remodeling of the dark tourism site, as well as the reconsideration of the tourist as an active participant rather than a passive observer at these sites and within society.

Sites of dark tourism seek to inform tourists, to varying degrees, about past events of human suffering and atrocity. In presenting events that are considered negative and even

shocking, these sites provide a logical means by which to work toward reducing contemporary examples of the past events they seek to represent. Philosophers such as Nietzsche (2005) support this manner of the active use of history in service to the present. With this in mind, dark tourism sites must avoid the treatment of history as a static thing dictating the conditions of the present. Instead, history can work to improve the conditions of the present. Todorov (2000) echoes these sentiments, although he frames “history” as “memory”. He considers the act of bearing witness to past events of atrocity a necessity. Dark tourism sites, despite providing a venue for doing so, may have the negative effect of pushing dark events to the periphery of memory where they are unobtrusive and become normalized through institutional domestication. Todorov (2000) suggests that by presenting dark tourism in terms of exemplary memory rather than literal memory, these sites are capable of the positive effect of actively promoting the peace that dark events lack. Exemplary memory allows history to be made relevant to the present through the establishment of a relationship between similar events that have occurred at different periods of time. This results in the recognition that, while we acknowledge past victims through commemorations, memorials, and museums, there remain victims of comparable circumstances on whose behalf action needs to be taken in the present.

Both Nietzsche (2005) and Todorov (2000) convey that history should be employed within and for the present, not as a topic for strict theoretical instruction, but for active application that contributes to the health of the present, with implications for social justice. Dark tourism is one means of presenting historic events of atrocity, providing a unique and potentially effective opportunity to educate the public on historic memory in a manner that

Nietzsche (2005) and Todorov (2000) espouse. In order to facilitate this productive use of dark sites, a different educational methodology needs to be adapted.

Both Paulo Freire (2000) and Betty Reardon (1988) provide commentary on educational methodology that provides insight into the challenges encountered at dark tourism sites. Freire (2000) suggests that we move away from the banking approach to education in which sterile information is transferred from teacher to student. The alternative, problem-posing education, empowers students by allowing them to recognize the ability of information to transform into knowledge through active application. Relevant to dark tourism is the relationship Freire (2000) emphasizes between history and the individual who is living in the present, particularly the potential utility historic knowledge may have for positively impacting the present and future.

Betty Reardon (1988) builds on these ideas by criticizing the importance attributed to the quantity of information rather than the quality within education. Pursuing quality within education, keeping in mind purpose rather than quantifiable objectives, contributes to the student's capacity to effect change within society. Central to this idea is calling attention to the relationship between events, past and present, which is largely ignored within the presentation of history at dark tourism sites. Those in the position to develop and manage sites of dark tourism must consider the alternative concepts of history provided by Nietzsche (2005) and Todorov (2000) and the various educational methodologies described by Freire (2000) and Reardon (1988). Incorporating these approaches may increase the impact and utility of dark tourism sites on and for the present. More than shaping tourists' opinions of past atrocity, dark tourism has the ability to shape the physical conditions of the present.

A few dark tourism sites, such as the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, The Holocaust Museum of Southwest Florida, and The Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles already offer exhibits that aim to achieve this purpose. These sites are unique, however, and the incorporation of exhibits in dark tourism sites that stress the active application of information in contemporary society for the mitigation of human suffering and overall peacebuilding are limited. These exceptions must become the standard in dark tourism production and management so that the sites may not only increase their positive capabilities, but also reduce the strong negative perception often associated with the sites and those who visit. By redefining the purpose of dark tourism sites, there is the distinct possibility of producing and promoting lightness and diminishing the darkness associated with them.

## **Chapter 1: Dark Tourism**

### **AN INTRODUCTION TO DARK TOURISM**

The moment of departure to a conventional tourist destination or vacation spot of a family, couple, group of friends, or solitary explorer can easily be visualized: the animation and commotion, the anticipation, the onset of relaxation, and perhaps even a bit of trepidation for the upcoming change from the expected everyday routine. Escape is sought, usually in the form of “pleasant diversion in pleasant places” (Wight 2006:119). In general, tourists travel to places that are picturesque, calming, or catering, be they imposing displays of the natural world, perfectly manicured landscapes intended to indulge the senses, or alternate worlds filled with figments of the imagination. Such sites entice because of the positive attributes that tourists have identified in each, be they beauty, idealism, or fantasy.

Despite the undeniable allure of sites with these attributes, there is a growing engagement of tourists with sites that play host to the unpleasant and oppose beauty, idealism, and fantasy. These tourist sites display suffering and death resulting from varying manifestations of atrocity and disaster. In recent years, the visitation of these attractions is most commonly designated as dark tourism (Lennon and Foley 2000:3). Alternatively, it has been labeled “thanatourism” (Seaton 1996), “black spot” tourism (Rojek 1994), and “atrocity” tourism (Beech 2000). Based upon the frequency with which each of these terms is encountered in both academic and popular literature, this paper will adopt the use of the term “dark tourism”. In his article, *A Dark Tourism Spectrum: Towards a Typology of Death and Macabre Related Tourist Sites, Attractions and Exhibitions*, Phillip Stone states:

‘dark’...alludes to a sense of apparent disturbing practices and morbid products (and experiences) within the tourism domain...it is suggested that dark tourism may be referred to as the act of travel to sites associated with death, suffering and the seemingly macabre. [Stone 2006:146]

Moving beyond Stone’s focus on the physical “act of travel”, Lennon and Foley (2000) emphasize “the presentation and consumption (by visitors) of real and commodified death and disaster sites” in describing and defining dark tourism (Lennon and Foley 1996:198). For the purpose of this thesis, the understanding of dark tourism requires the inclusion of the act of tourist travel to and from dark tourism sites, the on-site interpretation of a historical event depicting atrocity and human suffering, and the consumption of this product by the tourist. The initial overview of dark tourism provided here will develop these definitions through a brief explanation of the history of the development of dark tourism, including its antecedents and the conditions under which its current incarnation has emerged.

Although the escalating appearance of and interest in sites of dark tourism is a recent phenomenon primarily connected to the past century, dark tourism has been linked to traditions with a longer history. Its characteristics are recognizable in pilgrimages, Roman gladiatorial events, and public executions, all of which Lennon and Foley describe as “early forms of such death-related tourism” (Lennon and Foley 1996:3; Stone and Sharpley 2008:574). Further, Stone and Sharpley (2008) include in this list the popularity of morgue visitation in 19<sup>th</sup> century Paris, which they compare to the popular contemporary exhibit “Bodyworlds”.<sup>2</sup> Although there are perceptible differences between contemporary dark tourism and these examples, they share an association with death, violence, and suffering and are illustrations of the underlying preoccupation humanity has with mortality (Lennon and Foley 2000:3). Although pilgrimages are typically accompanied by a deeper religious or ideological significance for its participants than is attributable to the average dark tourism

site, the intent of a pilgrim's destination is typically the site of an event associated with death, such as a tomb or reliquary. Roman gladiatorial games glorified the spectacle of death, displaying unedited violence and human suffering.

Contemporary manifestations of dark tourism build upon the sustained attraction to suffering, death, and atrocity that is evident in these previous traditions. Dark tourism sites representing events regarded as relevant to a global audience may retain the ideological significance attributed to pilgrimage and homage. The expansive interest in the topic of death and subsequent attempt to package it in a consumable experience is unsurprising. Berger points out "to neglect death is to ignore one of the few universal parameters in which both the collective and individual self is constructed" (Stone and Sharpley 2008:580). Despite its macabre nature, the theme of dark tourism is based upon a universal condition: mortality. The medium of dark tourism provides a means by which we can confront death. Stone points out, "(western) society's apparent contemporary fascination with death, real or fictional, media inspired or otherwise...is seemingly driving the dark tourism phenomenon" (Stone 2006:147). Stone's statement underscores the modern fetishization of death and death-related topics, and perhaps of more significance, alludes to the particular dependence that dark tourism has on the media's role in disseminating information.

Dark tourism's current form relies heavily on "the development of a media and communications-driven tourism motivations [that] are a feature of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century", which distinguishes contemporary dark tourism from its earlier manifestations and entrenches it firmly within the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Lennon and Foley 1999:46). Advances made in global communication and the proliferation of imagery in print and film has increased public awareness of events of mass atrocity during the past century, from the bombing of Pearl

Harbor in 1941, to the Vietnam War in the 1960s, and the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami.

What originates as a confined event, rapidly transforms into one that is at once global and beheld locally. The media is largely responsible for producing an account of the event that is later incorporated into the interpretation at dark tourist sites. Some of the most familiar of dark sites, including Auschwitz concentration camp in Poland, the assassination site of John F. Kennedy, Jr. in Dallas Texas, and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., share a perceptible common characteristic. That is, the event represented at the tourist site, whether the site is primary or secondary, memorial or museum, has occurred in recent history and in the presence of increasingly widespread media coverage.<sup>3</sup> Because global media coverage is a requisite component in the production of dark tourism, its chronological beginning is often attributed to the sinking of the Titanic in 1912, which is described as “the first, real global event, due to its impact upon news media worldwide” (Lennon and Foley 2000:17; Stone 2006). This provides for only one hundred years of history with which dark tourism can engage, a time period that can be further reduced by placing an indeterminate buffer of time between the event and the presentation of the interpreted event to tourist audiences. Although a dark site may be visited in the immediate aftermath of an event, if interpretation occurs and a tourist infrastructure is built too quickly, it may encounter the risk of being judged as “unseemly” and “construed as ‘exploitation’” of suffering (Lennon and Foley 2000:9).

Despite the controversial nature of providing a too expedient on-site interpretation of a dark event, temporal proximity is an essential component in the production of dark tourism. Technological advances in global communications and the increase of media resources are imperative to the appearance and subsequent development of dark tourism; coincident with

these improvements is the new immediacy with which the public receives this information. The accessibility and proliferation of news sources, the speed at which information and images are transmitted, and the numbers of consumers that are reached globally cause a collapse in space and time, allowing even the most remote events to appear local. This has an overall effect “upon public awareness and perception of events, bringing these [events] ‘into our living rooms’” and within living memory (Lennon and Foley 2000:16).

Chronological distance, the temporal proximity that the present has to a past event, becomes central to the production of dark tourism. Not only is this due to the required technology that only the modern age provides, but to the direct proximity to the event itself. Even as events exemplifying characteristics of dark tourism disappear from the news cycle, they remain accessible through both archives and living memory. Experiencing these events “ad infinitum” contributes to the intensity of the event for observers (Stone and Sharpley 2008:577-578). This ability for instant replay is particularly relevant for establishing dark sites that result from identifiable events. A notable example is the destruction of the World Trade Center, in which the images of the falling towers were seared into the global collective consciousness. The same is often noted regarding the assassination of John F. Kennedy; the image of Jacqueline Kennedy’s immediate reaction to the gunshots as the presidential motorcade continues along a Dallas street is an equally familiar image, even to those too young to have seen the original newscast in 1963. Both events have prompted the development of primary and secondary dark tourism sites.<sup>4</sup> In fact, the site of the World Trade Center Complex is now more popular as a dark tourism destination than it was as a tourist site prior to the events of September 11th, 2001 (Sather-Wagstaff 2006:65).

The characteristics associated with temporality and media aid in differentiating contemporary dark tourism sites from sites that, although representing atrocity and human suffering, result from incidents occurring prior to the explosion in global communications in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The same broadcasting that produces curiosity also serves to create an overwhelming anxiety over the “project of modernity,” as viewers attempt to justify the presence of the horrific in contemporary times (Lennon and Foley 2000:3). In this sense, “dark tourism sites challenge the inherent order, rationality and progress of modernity” (Stone and Sharpley 2008:577-578). Visitation of dark tourism sites of atrocity that date prior to these technological innovations does not evoke the same unease. These events are relegated to a more distant past and, therefore, appear to lack direct relevance to the contemporary world. Although suffering, death, and atrocity remain prevalent in society, the presence of each is repulsive to contemporary western standards because of the expectations that each “should be morally inconceivable, politically impossible and economically unsustainable” (Lennon and Foley 2000:22). Despite, or perhaps because of the contradiction between suffering, death, and atrocity and the modern project, it has become a topic of fascination. Suffering, death, and atrocity however, are more permissible and even expected in a past for which society no longer feels responsible and where violence can be attributed to an assumed cultural coarseness. The failure of events of suffering, death and atrocity dating prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century to invoke a sense of unease or dread distinguishes them from today’s dark tourism. The absence of realistic images or living memory to assist in the substantiation of an event contributes to a corresponding lack of interest and concern.

The heavily visited tourist sites of Pompeii or Waterloo are examples of tourist sites that while representing dark events that caused a heavy loss of life due to natural disaster and

warfare, inflict far less anxiety on the tourist. This is due to the lack of realistic visuals of the original event through film and photography and the time that separates the original event from the current day. Because there is no living memory of the destruction of Pompeii or the Battle of Waterloo, these events lack the validation of a first-hand account beyond, relative to today's sources, the scant written records available at the time of the original event.

Although Pompeii and the Battle of Waterloo both serve to illustrate the distinction between contemporary dark tourism and tourism based on more remote events associated with death, the Battle of Waterloo also provides a compelling example of the importance that media representation and its immediate availability have in contributing to the popularization of a tourist site. The media driven “mechanical reproduction” of an event is one of five steps of the marking process, accredited to MacCannell (1976), that explains how touristic objects are “made meaningful, through progressive semiotic separation and differentiation from others” which leads to its “sight sacralization” and results in a creation of a “quasi-holy object in the eyes of the pilgrim-tourist” (Seaton 1998:140).<sup>5</sup> Stone describes the promptness with which tourists flocked to the site of the Battle of Waterloo even before the battle had concluded, contributing substantially to the number of first-hand accounts of the event. Innovations in the news industry led to the increased speed of production and decreases in paper-making costs while simultaneous improvements in travel networks allowed for a greater ease in the dissemination of publications across Europe (Seaton 1998:147).

Advances in paper-based global communication during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, much like what would later occur in the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the growing ubiquity of the television and later accessibility of the internet, served to increase the awareness of sites of atrocity. This subsequently contributed to their attraction to tourists, and thus was instrumental in the

intentional production of associated tourist sites to a degree that was previously unseen. Although Waterloo had been visited by tourists prior to 1815, it remained “[h]ardly an entity on a map”; it was only after the battle when “Waterloo came to resonate throughout the world until it transcended its status as a historical event with a specific location” (Seaton 1998:140). An infrastructure developed in immediate response to the demand of the increasing numbers of tourists and the experience of visiting the battlefield of Waterloo was quickly commodified. Local residents took advantage of their proximity to the battle site and quickly turned their collections of artifacts, which included an array of buttons, badges, boots, and pieces of uniform taken from the battlefield, into a business. More compelling is the documentation of the intentional production of fake relics after the depletion of the originals; local residents sought to provide an authentic experience to the visitors, even if provided in an artificial manner (Seaton 1998:137; Hibbert 1969:217). The closer one could arrive to the event the site represented, the more authentic the experience. Because of this, for example, soldiers who fought at the battle became popular to employ as site guides, “the most famous of whom was Edward Cotton who...established his own museum and hotel under the Butte de Lion, where he exhibited Waterloo relics including skulls from the battlefield” (Seaton 1998:139). Waterloo provided the tourist with the appeal of authenticity even after the method of legitimizing the experience had to be fabricated by alternative means (Seaton 1998:136). Waterloo was to the European population of the 19<sup>th</sup> century what sites of World War I and World War II battles are to today’s global community.

#### COMPLICATING DARK TOURISM: AUTHENTICITY, COMMODIFICATION, AND SHADES OF DARKNESS

Attempts to authenticate sites are central to contemporary dark tourism and approaches similar to those originally employed at Waterloo remain serviceable today. For

example, in much the same way that soldiers led tourists on excursions to the battlefield of Waterloo, the Robben Island World Heritage Site in South Africa employs former political prisoners as tour guides. This is an effort to provide a more intimate look into the jail through their personal, first-hand accounts.

Other sites seek to provide an authentic experience through the replication of atrocity environments as a simulated experience for the tourist, which requires the commodification of events and conditions. This particular feature often meets with condemnation. The experience of human suffering cannot be re-actualized as a touristic encounter and attempts made to do so have the consequence of trivializing the original suffering. An example of this is the Imperial War Museum in London, England, which attempts to recreate the experience of trench warfare for visitors. The “Horrible Histories: Terrible Trenches” exhibit is described on the Imperial War Museum website:

Find out about life in the terrible trenches during the First World War in a new family exhibition at Imperial War Museum London.

Discover the barmy battleplans and foul food. See how soldiers dealt with lovely lice, gruesome gas, sickness and sores. Try on the curious clothing, climb through a mining tunnel and explore an officers’ dugout. Peer into no-man’s land with a periscope, smell the stench and spat the rats!

Will you survive the terrible trenches?<sup>6</sup>

Actively marketed for families with children 8-12 years old and free to children under five, the exhibit clearly attempts to make warfare accessible and fun for visitors. The concern here is that warfare should not be accessible and it certainly is not fun. Although the interactive exhibits may aid in retaining the attention of the visitor, the replication of trench warfare trivializes the devastating effects of warfare, the massive casualties, physical and psychological damage to soldiers and civilians, the destruction of rural and urban landscapes,

and the deterioration of international relations, as an innocent diversion. Creating a supposed “realistic” replication of the soldiers’ experience during World War I is both objectionable and implausible. Suggesting that the experience, which the museum has created, replicates World War I as it actually transpired negates the hellishness that did occur by reducing war into a game and a series of alliterative statements. Further, museums have a voice of authority, which acts to legitimize these implications.

The well-respected United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. similarly incorporates a more somatic experience by leading the tourists through exhibits in narrow, dimly lit corridors that mimic the enclosure of the boxcars by which victims of the Holocaust were transported to concentration camps. When the exhibits are crowded the space becomes claustrophobic. The space becomes thick with bodies moving slowly through an exhibit that is both physically and mentally disorienting. During an experience at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum an educator related to me an anecdote about the question most often asked of museum staff: What are the dimensions of the boxcars that victims were transported in? The educator asked what I thought the intention of the question might be. Immediately, I imagined a linoleum floor, located in a gym of an elementary school, the shape and size of a boxcar outlined with garish colored tape and filled with students’ bodies in a morbid attempt to impress upon the students the experience of the victims of World War II.<sup>7</sup> The staff responding to inquiries will not give out the boxcar dimensions. All of these various degrees of attempting to recreate a past experience of atrocity are futile. Desire to recreate these events in a commodified manner is inappropriate and dilutes the severity of the actual events when tourists believe they are being subjected to similar treatment or encountering like experiences of either soldiers or victims. Suggesting

that it is possible to recreate such abominations undermines the message that museums are imparting and the terror that existed and was endured first-hand by victims.

Relative to the dark sites associated with the World Wars and the Holocaust, the commodification of the on-site experience at the location of the Battle of Waterloo does not likely generate the same discomfort for tourists or criticism by commentators. According to the analysis of dark tourism by those such as Lennon and Foley, this lack of distress would be partially due to the length of time that has elapsed since the event. The Battle of Waterloo is no longer in living memory and while much technological progress had been made in the field of printing and publication in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, it lacked the replication of images and film to which the 21<sup>st</sup> century society has become accustomed. The collapse of space and time that Lennon and Foley (1996, 2000) refer to fails to occur in cases prior to the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In short, contemporary society, and more particularly, contemporary tourists, do not share the necessary relationship with the event that would elicit a strong emotional response, be it repugnance, curiosity, sympathy, or delight.

Despite the constraints of time and media that serve to define dark tourism, a wide spectrum of sites are acknowledged, most often including battlefields, death camps, graveyards, prisons, assassination, and death sites, as well as locations of natural disasters. Attractions relating specifically to war often are recognized as the largest overall group of tourist attractions (Sather-Wagstaff 2007:68-69; Stone 2006:147, Stone and Sharpley 2008:574). Although the presence of dark tourism is “widespread and diverse,” the treatment of dark tourism as a subject of study is neither global, nor well represented and the “literature remains eclectic and theoretically fragile” (Stone and Sharpley 2008:574, 576). There is a tendency toward a comprehensive and linear categorization of dark sites however, the

typology remains fragmented. It appears less as a comprehensive structure for examining dark sites, resembling instead, a series of descriptive labels that may (or may not) pertain to an individual site by varying degrees. There is also an underlying inclination to directly equate the type of event or space that is represented at a dark tourism site with a level of darkness that becomes attributable to the particular site. If this assumption were followed, then all prison sites, for example, would manifest the same level of darkness. The prison sites of Robben Island and Alcatraz would be placed within the same category of dark tourism sites based solely upon their operation as prisons in recent history.<sup>8</sup> In this scheme, little consideration would be given to their differences, including the purposes they served during their tenure as prisons or what purpose they currently serve as tourist destinations.

Despite the inadequacy of attempts to create a typology, the impulse for doing so suggests that “the universal term ‘dark’ as applied to tourism is too broad and does not readily expose the multilayers of dark tourism” (Stone 2006:150). It is due to the diversity of sites that authors feel a need to distinguish ‘shades of darkness’ between types of sites, based on “characteristics, perceptions and the product traits” (Stone 2006:145). The undertaking is also indicative of the discomfort at comparing, for example, Graceland to Hiroshima, disparate types of sites but both included under the auspice of dark tourism.<sup>9</sup> While both sites fall into this category, they clearly do not share the same historical presence or ramifications. If the darkness of a site can fall along a scale of intensity that is dependent upon its characteristics, then Hiroshima is a site of the darkest nature while Graceland, the home and resting place of the ‘King’ of rock and roll, is considerably lighter in tone. The conclusion that a site of dark tourism falls upon a distinct point along a spectrum of darkness relates directly to the conspicuous variations in existing examples of dark tourism sites.

Despite both types of sites being described as dark tourism, typologies usually differentiate between actual sites of death and sites that are merely associated with death (Stone 2006; Miles 2002). In the case of Hiroshima and Graceland, Hiroshima is a place of mass death while Graceland is only associated with Elvis Presley and specifically the mysterious circumstances of his death. The relationship between primary and secondary sites is best exemplified by comparing dark tourism sites that derive from the same event, but are located at a distance from one another, such as Auschwitz-Birkenau and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. or any of the other numerous Holocaust museums or memorials located some distance from primary Holocaust sites (Miles 2002). In this case, “locational authenticity” serves to intensify the darkness of the site (Stone 2006:151). As established, the element of time plays a role in the development of dark sites, but it also effects the subsequent typing of sites by shade. There is a relationship between the amount of time that has transpired since the event and the moment when the dark site is consumed by the tourist that contributes to dictating the site’s position along a spectrum of darkness (Stone 2006; Miles 2002). More recent events may appear darker than those that have receded from living memory and Miles (2002) also identifies the empathy elicited by a site as a measure of darkness. Larger degrees of empathy will, according to Miles, occur at sites that are spatially affiliated with the event being represented. Further, the extent of exploitation is among the characteristics that are associated with the measure of darkness at a particular site, therefore, supplier motivations must be taken into account.

Although the variations between sites involving primary and secondary site distinctions and considerations of time, empathy, and exploitation speak to the nuances of dark sites, none allow for a comprehensive dark tourism typology. Time has previously been

identified as a necessary requirement of dark tourism's overall development and likely affects sites individually as well. The stimulation of empathy by sites has as much to do with the capacity and experience of the tourist as with the spatial and temporal relationship the site has with the visitor. Lastly, exploitation of a site, relating to the overall tastefulness of the presentation, is again a measure of both the supplier and tourist's motivations. The supplier attempts to cater to the desires of the tourist for the purpose of creating increased visitation with the goal of financial gain, rather than being guided by, for example, education or memorialization of an event. From considerations such as these, the complexities of dark tourism begin to take shape, particularly when attempting to identify the typological characteristics by which sites can be categorized. The characteristics that are chosen to classify dark sites typically focus on the supply of dark tourism sites rather than the consumer, and they fail to adequately project the potential for these sites for contemporary society beyond a contained touristic experience.

Stone (2006) suggests that creating a typology of dark tourism will lead to better overall understanding of the phenomenon, contributing to more foundational research that targets questions of consumer demands and motivations which are central to dark tourism's development. The typological system that Stone (2006) presents is one such classification system. Although much more comprehensive compared to the series of disarticulated characteristics of dark tourist sites discussed above, it remains entirely focused on suppliers. Stone (2006) presents seven categories evident within the spectrum of dark tourist sites including: 1. Dark Fun Factories 2. Dark Exhibitions 3. Dark Dungeons 4. Dark Resting Placing 5. Dark Shrines 6. Dark Conflict Site and 7. Dark Camps of Genocide.<sup>10</sup> Stone's typology is clearly but perfunctorily arranged along a gradient of darkness, "dark fun

factories” being notably lighter than sites of genocide. Although an attempt has been made to create a framework that encompasses all manifestations of dark tourism sites, Stone allows that “the Dark Tourism Spectrum is a fluid and dynamic continuum of intensity which is anchored by various, though not necessarily exclusive, product features and characteristics” (Stone 2006:158). Stone concedes that external variables affect the placement of various sites along the spectrum and in doing so, allows for the possibility of dynamism of dark tourist sites as a result of both internal and external factors.

While Stone’s typology serves to create a framework upon which the study of dark tourism can be framed, other systems of classification may actively discredit the field of dark tourism as a subject of intellectual study. Dann’s (1998) use of alliteration in creating a comprehensive list of dark tourism site types, while intended for serious consideration, makes the topic laughable; the site types include ‘perilous places,’ ‘houses of horror,’ ‘fields of fatality,’ ‘tours of torment,’ and ‘themed thanatos’ (Stone 2006:148). These labels emphasize the potential for what are humorless events to be flaunted as spectacles, reducing significant sites to fun houses, the main intention of which is to be consumed by entertainment seeking tourists. Despite being negligent, this typology has the useful consequence of calling attention to the possibility of less reputable representations of dark history, which raise questions of ethics and morality of the dark tourism practice, purpose, external influences, and the motivations of the tourist who visit these sites.

It is these aspects - purpose, influences, motivations – that are the variables external to the tangible sites but that decisively shape their presence, altering their position on Stone’s spectrum. These variables have the possibility of restructuring the current manifestations of dark tourism and redefining the perception of dark tourism by audiences and commentators.

In some cases, without any attempts to qualify the respectability of various forms of dark site presentation, “commentators suggest the heritage sector is an inappropriate and even immoral vehicle for the presentation of death and human suffering” (Stone, 2006:150; Hewison 1987; MacCannell 1992; Urry 1995; Walsh 1992). These commentators allude to the inherent danger present in exhibiting suffering, death and atrocity for public consumption. This criticism results from concern that sites of dark tourism and the associated event are vulnerable to “inauthenticity,” “romanticization” and “trivialization.” While these negative assertions and concerns are valid, they fail to take into account the potential dark tourism sites hold as unique education facilities that inform an inquisitive public on distressing topics.

The malleable nature of dark tourism needs to be explored more fully for an appreciable understanding of the practice. Dark tourism is not simplistic, rather it is “multi-layered historically and sociologically, and from those layers disparate groups and derive subtly nuanced, diverse range of meanings” (Wilson 2008:9). This suggests that the identification of similarities between dark tourism sites that contribute to categorizing a site is a task rather superficial in nature. Variables actively shape the site. The importance of considering these sites in a more nuanced manner is not only due to the fact that over the past century the custom of visiting dark tourist sites has increased perceptibly, but also because the relation between contemporary audiences and previous dark events may have a very real effect on contemporary interactions within the global community upon which dark tourism has thrived. The following chapters will explore essential components of dark tourism, including tourists, site presentation and interpretation, the reliance on photography, the manipulation of landscape, and the misrepresentation of time. Considerations of each topic is essential for a more comprehensive understanding of not only what dark tourism is, but

how its production directly relates and influences the extent of its current use and diminishes its positive potential.

## THE TOURISTS

The lack of existing research investigating the tourists who consume dark tourism is often noted in dark tourism literature, but rarely addressed (Stone 2006, Lennon and Foley 2000). Despite the acknowledgement of this deficiency and a growing recognition that tourists' motivations, experiences, and the long-term repercussions of visiting dark sites are essential to a comprehensive treatment of dark tourism, few authors critically evaluate the role of the tourist in dark tourism (Sather-Wagstaff 2007). The reason for the repeatedly blatant dismissal of tourists stems from the negative impressions with which tourists are associated, be it their fashion sense, social clumsiness, cultural inattention, or trivializing consumption. These perceptions are sufficiently universal to have infiltrated popular culture with well-known examples such as the films *National Lampoon's European Vacation* and *My Life in Ruins* as well as in popular music lyrics such as Pulp's *Common People*. Scholars reflect these same attitudes as well:

John Jakle (1985:3-4) notes that the earliest tourism scholars, including Edward Relph (1976), Boorstin (1961), and Cohen(1974), perceived and represented tourists and tourism as characterized by inauthenticity, ignorance, gullibility, passivity, escapism, shallowness, having a lack of meaningful sociocultural value and function, and being culturally destructive. These characteristics remain the primary ways in which tourists are most typically represented in the present, even when addressed within anthropology. [Sather-Wagstaff 2007:5]

Nebel (1950) states “[t]he swarms of these gigantic bacteria, called tourists, have coated the most distinct substances with a uniformly glistening Thomas-Cook slime, making it impossible to distinguish Cairo from Honolulu, Taormina from Columbo” (Enzensberger 1996:120).<sup>11</sup> Nebel suggests that tourists are parasitic in nature. The presence of tourists in

large quantities is encouraged by the development of tourist agencies. These agencies supply site accessibility, which contributes to an increase in the amenities that facilitate tourism and potentially leads to the homogeneity of once striking landscapes. In essence, Nebel identifies tourists and tourism as a major contributing factor in globalization. Enzensberger suggests that Nebel's critique of the tourist is a usual one and suggests that, “[i]ntellectually, his critique is based on a lack of self-awareness that borders on idiocy, morally, it is “based” on arrogance” (Enzensberger 1996:120). Enzensberger believes that this “arrogance” is the result of tourism being perceived as an exclusive activity of the elite class. Tourism, however, has become an increasingly affordable activity for a larger demographic. It is the reputed lower classes which are increasingly joining the tourist community and that carry the blame for the negative impressions resulting from the industry’s growth.

Although additional social subgroups that comprise the tourist community are just as much a part of the problem as the rest of the tourists, “desecration is always somebody else’s doing” (Enzensberger 1996:121). A more contemporary form of this prejudice arises from the group of tourists that self-identify as visitors or travelers, as opposed to the common tourist. They are described as “socially responsible ecotourist, humanitarian aid vacationer, or backpacker” (Sather-Wagstaff 2007:58). These individuals suggest that their willingness and preference to seek out less commercialized tourist routes, with a “leave no trace” ethic praised for being culturally sensitive and intellectually superior is a worthier endeavor than traditional tourism activities. Rather than seek out what is comfortable, be it the Holiday Inn in Sarajevo, Bosnia or the McDonalds in Yaroslavl, Russia, these travelers attempt to live as a local, and similar to the elitist travelers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, have idealized their version of tourism.

According to Nebel, the 19<sup>th</sup> century traveler's desire to seek and discover unexplored places emerged from the romantic ideal, the actualization of which was available only to those who could afford it. Emerging technological innovations of this century, such as the railroad, not only allowed greater access to these pristine places, but they also increased the possibility of reaching the once unattainable. The very thing which was sought, a "pristine landscape and untouched history", disappeared with every successful attempt; the society that tourists so desperately were venturing to escape, merely closed in upon them even more tightly (Enzensberger 1996:125). Despite this need to escape the known, tourists demanded the comforts to which they were accustomed as well as the unspoken guarantee of returning home in order to share accounts of their experience; in a sense, "travel beyond the world of commodities [had] itself become a commodity" (Enzensberger 1996:129). Since the Romantic Movement, which stimulated some of these early tourist sensibilities, the danger, singularity of experience, and inaccessibility, has largely disappeared.

The development of dark tourism may actually serve to reestablish some of these early attractions to tourism while still falling within the confines of a commodified industry. Dark tourism can provide, through its thematic subjects of death, suffering, and atrocity, the element of danger and anxiety that was once prevalent in all forms of travel. Tourists to dark sites leave the comforts of their own familiar society in order to experience the darkest aspects of another. This allows for a form of escapism but includes the maintenance of an environment in which the danger is temporally bound from the viewer or from which tourists are physically barred. Despite the ubiquitous presence of commercialization on and around tourist sites, those that have lesser accessibility are deemed more impressive, lending to greater prestige. This distinction is prized by both the tourist and by second-hand consumers,

a group which includes those waiting at home to hear accounts of the tourist. The communication of the travel experience to second-hand consumers can occur through direct interaction with the tourist after his or her return home or through alternative means such as blogs. Blogs allow the second-hand consumer to accompany the tourist remotely despite the boasted inaccessibility of the locations from which blogs are written and published through a world-wide connection. Upon returning to their home society, tourists become the attraction; their experiences are consumed second hand while the display and the gifting of “the souvenir insures the tourists against doubting their own experience...and provides a piece of evidence for their return” (Enzensberger 1996:134).

Stone and Sharpley (2008) provide “ontological security” as another underlying cause for the expansion of tourist sites specifically oriented around death and suffering.<sup>12</sup> According to Giddens (1990, 1991), ontological security is derived through the maintenance of a sense of order. In contemporary society, this is achieved “through various institutions and experiences that protect an individual from direct contact with madness, criminality, sexuality, nature and death” (Stone and Sharpley 2008:581). Dark tourism sites are deviations from ontological security, serving as intermediaries, providing a means by which individuals may come into contact with what is undesirable in a controlled and benign environment. Specifically, dark sites are a manner in which to experience death, a once public and ritualized affair that is increasingly medicalized and concealed within western society. According to Stone and Sharpley (2008), the consequence of suppressing death from public view is “mortality resurfacing in society through the seemingly obsessive ‘pornographic media coverage of death’, whereby ‘death becomes removed, abstracted, intellectualized, and depersonalized’” (Stone and Sharpley 2008:584; Walter 1991:295).

Although the authors point out the contradiction between the private nature of death and dying and the simultaneous ubiquity of death in media, art, and music, it is hardly surprising that there is an interest in a subject that has become insulated from the public, is regarded as a taboo, or packaged in a sanitized manner. The incorporation of death into popular culture is a subversive means by which to return it to the public realm, regardless of the artificial nature in which it appears. Dark tourist sites focused on death, “provide a means by which tourists can be allowed to indulge in their curiosity and fascination with thanatological concerns in a socially acceptable and, indeed, often sanctioned environment, thus providing them with an opportunity to construct their own contemplation of mortality” (Stone and Sharpley 2008:587). A strong argument can be made for the connection between society’s relationship with death and mortality and dark tourism. While not a causal relationship, it does suggest rather importantly that “dark tourism may have more to do with the life and living, rather than the dead and dying” (Stone and Sharpley 2008:589).

Despite an acknowledgement of both the reasoning and history responsible for the pervasive, negative perception of tourists, often tourists still are considered disapprovingly. Sather-Wagstaff states, “[i]n scholarly works on “dark tourism,” tourists are, at best, represented as passive spectators of these sites and at worst, destructive consumers whose motivations for visiting such sites are highly questionable and whose actions of visitations desacralize sites” (Sather-Wagstaff 26:2007). Although many sites of dark tourism attempt to present informational material in a manner dictated by the respectable purposes of education and memorialization, tourists themselves are often attributed with disreputable motivations. Dann (1998) suggests eight motivations of dark tourists: 1. the fear of phantoms 2. the search for novelty 3. nostalgia 4. the celebration of crime or deviance 5. basic bloodlust

6. dicing with death 7. undertaking journeys and 8. holiday in hell (Stone and Sharpley 2008:576). Although Stone and Sharpley (2008) point out that these phrases are descriptions rather than motivations, they further serve to discredit the tourist. None refer to the possibility of a genuine desire to seek information, supplement traditional educational methods, or to commemorate victims represented at a particular site; while these alternative incentives are much less sensational than Dann's suggestion of "basic bloodlust", they are much more plausible.

As an alternative to the negativity and hostility with which tourists are judged, Sather-Wagstaff instead suggests that tourists should be considered "participating agents in the social production, consumption, performance, and construction of historically salient commemorative sites through various tourist and everyday practices, both during travel and post-travel" (Sather-Wagstaff 27:2007). The typical manner in which tourists are treated removes their agency and instead places it entirely within the hands of those groups in control of the production and presentation of tourist sites. With this limitation, tourists can only be "end-point consumers whose meaning-making agency is limited to the interpretations of sites/sights already produced by various organizations" (Sather-Wagstaff 2007:44). Sather-Wagstaff (2007) puts forth a plausible theory as to why these judgments are both so extreme and profuse, particularly within the academic anthropology community. She explains that there is a tension between tourists and anthropologists that exists as a result of the similarities between the two groups. Despite varying intentions and motivations for travel, both tourists and anthropologists can be attracted to the same locations. For anthropologists, particularly early in the establishment of the academic field, tourists were negative additions to their field locations, as they preferred sites that were pristine and

untouched by outside influence. Notably, it is this untouched quality that is held in common by both tourists and anthropologists that causes the conflict between the two groups. Within the relationship constructed between anthropologist, ethnographic subject and tourist, the tourist inevitably falls to the lowest tier as the “savage Other” or “hopelessly ignorant Other”, whereas the scholar and ethnographic subject are given the more enviable and infinitely more respectable labels of “knowledgeable Other” and “primitive Other” (Sather-Wagstaff 2007:57-58). Sather-Wagstaff’s treatment of the tourist:

is not intended as a means to demonstrate that tourists are all necessarily “good, nice” people or that they irrefutably and totally defy the stereotypes that that have been assigned but one that takes them as seriously as we do our other, more traditional ethnographic subjects. [Sather-Wagstaff 2007:48]

By treating the tourist as a viable ethnographic subject rather than a parasitic entity, a complementary relationship between tourist and tourist site is revealed. A reconsideration of the tourist may also contribute to an increase in the anthropological literature within which the tourist is featured and potentially providing much needed critical reflection on dark tourism.

In order to fully appreciate and understand the presence and continuing development of dark tourism it is essential that tourists be treated in a manner which bestows them agency. This is particularly necessary if dark tourism sites want to escape equally negative appraisals of their character and purpose as static spaces commodifying death, suffering, and atrocity and whose purpose is to create spectacle for the satiation of voyeuristic tendencies and provide entertainment for mindless masses. The active engagement by the tourist will allow for a dynamic place representing past events of death, suffering, and atrocity with the potential to make it relevant to contemporary society. Only an actively engaged tourist has the ability to make the potential positive impact of dark tourism a possibility, allowing the presented information to become knowledge through practice in society.

## DARK SITE INTERPRETATION AND PRESENTATION

Despite, or perhaps because of, the assumption that tourists are passive, uncritical observers incapable of internalizing information, many dark tourist sites lack substantial interpretation of the physical representations of events, be they buildings, artifacts, film, or art installations. Of even greater concern is the inclusion of site interpretation that is framed specifically through a strict interpretive lens. Admittedly, all interpretation will incorporate some manner of bias. Todorov notes “history is rewritten each time the management team changes” (Todorov 2000:7). Like any company or official group, a supplier of a dark tourism site will have a mission statement with an accompanying set of goals. Even the most seemingly objective interpretations require museums to choose only a small selection of artifacts to place on display while the vast majority is kept in climate-controlled archives both on and off-site. Particular stories and perceptions of events coinciding with singular artifacts will be excluded merely on the basis of space limitations. Site interpretation is problematic when its main goal is to present or validate an ideological framework or the framework adopted by the site causes either the intentional neglect or manipulation of information. These purposes are in competition with the objective of informing the tourist audience of and about the events that either occurred on site or that the site is attempting to represent.

Some examples of interpretive bias are more disquieting than others. The early interpretations of the Holocaust that were employed both at and apart from dark tourism sites

during the Cold War are quintessential examples of state centered interpretation in which the events of World War II are translated through a Marxist framework. Sachsenhausen is one such example of this manipulation, presenting the story of the communist struggle against fascism while ignoring the victimization of the Jews (Lennon and Foley 2000:23,41).<sup>13</sup> After the change of state apparatus and the fall of the Iron Curtain, Sachsenhausen, as well as other sites, were re-interpreted, and previously unrepresented victims were acknowledged after 40 years of enforced silence.

In other cases, negative aspects of a region's history that cause the local community discomfort are omitted altogether in preference for more favorable portrayals. This produces an overall distortion in the representation of historic events at tourism sites, which more readily acknowledge admirable events than those that are unflattering to the society that claims kinship with the event that is being displayed. This potential for a skewed representation of history may effect not only what dark tourism sites are chosen for development but also their locations. For instance, British representation of the World War II era affirm the British support of the allied forces, however, on the Channel Islands there is a blatant disregard of the actions that conformed to Nazi ideology through "collaboration, fraternization and compromise" (Lennon and Foley 2000:67). In this case, interpretation of the events of World War II is based on selective memory, reinforcing a history that is acceptable while the undesirable elements are erased from public view. As a result, the tourist sites representing World War II on the Channel Islands are described as "at best, misguided and, at worst, deceptive" (Lennon and Foley 2000:75). It is important to remember that "to retain only the positive aspects of one's past and to obliterate all traces of the evil is to present a cultural and historical landscape that is, to say the least, incomplete"

(Lennon and Foley 2000:34). Despite the poor reputation dark tourism has for appropriating human suffering, it is essential to include such sites in order to maintain an uncensored portrayal of history.

Even the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. may be guilty of infusing partiality into its interpretation, however well respected and popular the institution. It is apparent to this tourist, and noted by others, that the portrayal of the United States liberation of the death camps by American troops is, at times, overbearing. Besides emphasizing the role the United States played in World War II, this overstatement may serve as a means by which American audiences can feel a greater connection to a war which, with the exception of Pearl Harbor, did not occur on American soil despite now being represented and memorialized upon it. The fact of the matter is that the United States has very little direct association with the Holocaust, limited to military involvement and subsequent immigration by groups victimized by the Nazi regime. This point is often a source of conflict and criticism for the museum; attempting to forge a stronger relationship between the American public and the events of the Holocaust through the exhibit content is a logical strategy for diminishing this gap. Regardless of the intention, the tourist may receive a skewed or even false representation of dark events.

Although the danger of misrepresentation is present at all tourist sites, it may have a greater impact on sites that focus on the portrayal of death and suffering because of both the solemnity and significance inherent to these events. Tourist sites are informational resources, but ones that visitors are not taught to actively question in a critical manner. Without the intentional critical analyses of the information being exhibited, the tourist will assume the absolute truth of the presentation. Some sites simply lack comprehensive interpretation.

There is no single discrete reason as to why this occurs, but it is evident that dark sites, due to their sensitive nature, are difficult to interpret. The challenge of interpreting dark sites contributes to the fragmented nature of the information and material presented to tourists. For instance, there is a conspicuous absence of interpretation for the masses of confiscated objects belonging to the victims of Auschwitz-Birkenau that remain on display both on-site and at secondary locations. The display of personal effects of the victims of the Holocaust at Auschwitz is one that has become familiar through either direct visitation or through the frequent reproduction of images portraying this sight. Large, glass-encased spaces filled with hair, shoes, and toiletries belonging to the victims of the genocide have become iconic. Clearly, these displays have an impact upon the viewer and can evoke an extremely emotional response; however, without interpretation, a tourist may never move beyond this reaction, and the exhibit appears as a spectacle. Lennon and Foley also make note of the “almost complete absence of any commentary upon the objects themselves, thereby trusting the visitor to analyze and evaluate the exhibits” (Lennon and Foley 2000:25). They identify this interpretational silence again at the site of Birkenau. Located nearby, a bus shuttles tourists to Birkenau from Auschwitz. Although this shuttle appears a simple and pragmatic convenience to visitors, the shuttle bus implies a particular relationship between the two sites, causing a blurring of geographical boundaries. Once at Birkenau, tourists encounter even less interpretation, the majority occurring at Auschwitz. Instead, tourists are confronted with what is expected to be a solemn landscape littered with the remains of gas chambers, barracks, and platforms. The interpretation is described as “reverential as opposed to historical or sequential” (Lennon and Foley 2000:57). Within the lack of clear interpretation is the “assumption or expectation from those who manage the site that visitors’ conclusions

can move in only one direction – but this is seldom, if ever, stated at the Auschwitz sites” (Lennon and Foley 2000:25). This “assumption” should not absolve the need for site interpretation; rather, the magnitude of what occurred at the site should require it.

While some interpretation is quietly missing, other sites tend to circumvent it by placing focus on those objects or stories that may be easier to present to a potentially diverse tourist audience. Many museums with the main theme of war, for example, include uniforms, paraphernalia, and technology of the particular era represented. The Imperial War Museum “traditionally exhibited technology not only because it confers major military advantage and social progress, but also because it represents a safe, sanitized version of war and is ‘easy to digest’ for visitors...precisely measured and are seldom the subject of moral debate” (Wight 2006:124). These objects are chosen for what is perceived as their unobtrusive and neutral demeanor, not requiring explicit references to potentially sensitive events or demanding moral or ethical outrage and empathy on part of the viewer. Although intrinsic to warfare, items such as uniforms, badges, or weaponry can be depersonalized and, therefore, detached from death, suffering, and atrocity in a way that provides an emotional respite for viewers.

The lack of interpretation or the avoidance of it altogether is related to the many unfounded perceptions of tourists. The criticisms that contribute to the negative perception with which tourists are viewed may foster mediocre site interpretation. The assumed passivity and ignorance that defines a tourist are not characteristics associated with an individual that would produce a detailed evaluation of a site’s composition and associated interpretation. If a site is not going to be subject to intense scrutiny by the tourist for whom it is intended, there is less incentive for assembling a product beyond reproach. Also, inherent

in site interpretation is also a contradictory assumption that tourists will derive the correct conclusions from incomplete information and that they have already been educated on the topic presented and do not need a thorough explanation of the history. In either case, the reasoning responsible for this manner of site interpretation is faulty and it appears a lazy approach to an important undertaking.

Tourists have a right to be thoroughly informed of the events that are being presented at dark sites. Furthermore, the victims of atrocity, specifically the Holocaust, should have the dignity of being remembered in a manner that does not reduce their experience to a collection of depersonalized belongings. Without sufficient interpretation at the site of Birkenau, school children climb and lunch on the unmarked building foundations without recognizing the implications of their actions.<sup>14</sup> Young's words are revealing:

The sum of these dismembered fragments can never approach the whole of what was lost. That a murdered people remain known in Holocaust museums anywhere by their scattered belongings, and not by their spiritual works, that their lives should be recalled primarily through the images of their death, may be the ultimate travesty. [Lennon and Foley 2006:60; Young 1993:132-133]

And yet, images, film, and objects will often remain the focal point of tourist attention even when interpretative text is present. This material and image centered approach is evident upon even cursory observation at a dark tourist site. During my visit to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, I observed that crowds of tourists are not urgently reading the historical narratives presented to them. Instead, they are gathered around the graphic images of Nazi medical experiments and of the concentration camps and their inhabitants at the moment of liberation, each displayed prominently, sometimes on monitors operating in a continuous loop. The main attraction here is not the words, but the images, their contents often graphic and shocking. Lennon and Foley state, “[t]he photographic images have the

ability to transmit the reality of the death camps with a shock effect that words can rarely achieve” (Lennon and Foley 2000:29). The emphasis on the visual, through both still photography and action film, at dark tourism sites has been enabled by suppliers and is the result of the many influences on the tourist including time constraints and attention spans, media influence and societal prevalence, and the lack of translation services for non-local tourists.

## **Chapter 2: The Production of Distance at Sites of Dark Tourism**

### THE COMPOSITION OF DARK PHOTOGRAPHY

The overwhelming presence of images and film that represent death, suffering, and atrocity is requisite in the development of dark tourism and essential to the production and presentation of dark sites. The proliferation of violent images capturing human suffering and death is also a major concern of the practice of photography, and more specifically the professional field of photojournalism. In this way, the discussion that surrounds the photography of death, suffering, and atrocity, as a commodified and heavily consumed good, is also relevant to dark tourism. As the pervasiveness of the photograph has increased over the past one hundred years, it has overtaken the status of print media and has become a preferred means of transmitting information. Pictures now do more to inform reality than accurate historical data does (Lennon and Foley 2000:80). A photograph provides visual evidence that someone has been *there*, someone has seen *that*. For viewers, a photograph's veracity need not be questioned, because it appears as an objective testimonial of an event that has occurred. After all, "*a picture is worth a thousand words*" and a narrative, however evocative, cannot portray an event in the same manner. These assumptions are highly problematic within the field of photojournalism and have serious implications for dark tourism as a result of its reliance on photography. The indiscriminate dependence that the public has on images for obtaining information may cause a lack of critical reflection on photographs and film, and also leads to a simultaneous disregard for written interpretations

when they are present. Thus, where a picture may be worth a thousand words, Saroyan notes that it may only be so “if you look at the picture and say or think the thousand words” (Zelizer 1998:5).

There is a need to consider the appropriation of death and suffering in photography and more specifically, to critically evaluate photography’s role in dark tourism. Prior to World War II, the photographic documentation of death and suffering was markedly different than that which the public has become accustomed to today. Images from World War I, for instance, had not been primarily intended for public consumption, but were generally utilized for military training or procured for private collections and purposes. Rather than being political commentary, photographic collections of this time were better suited for the needs of a historian seeking to document war, if in a somewhat sanitized manner. Anti-war photographs or images attempting to elicit a moral or ethical response would have been heretical. With this in mind, Ernst Friedrich’s (1894-1967) public exhibit of blatantly anti-war photographs located in the Anti-War Museum in Berlin was a major divergence from the conventional use of photography during this period (Hüppauf 1997:21).<sup>15</sup> Friedrich boldly displayed the suffering of the people, both military and civilian, as well as the destruction of the surrounding landscape during a period in which representations of heroism and the ideal war were expected.

Divergences from this standard of photography increased during World War II, particularly with the events of the Holocaust. Progressively, this alternative perspective took into account the inclinations of the public audience, which guided the increasingly politicized content of photography. The growing dependence of the public on photography was facilitated by the fact that the Holocaust “exceeded the capacity of words to describe”

(Sontag 2003:25). The images allowed for the initial disbelief of the narratives to be transformed “into the horror of recognition” (Zelizer 1998:14). Photography quickly became the preferred news source due to the perceived “immediacy and authority greater than any verbal account in conveying the horror of mass-produced death” (Sontag 2003:24). Because photography, as well as the increasing accessibility of the images, was a relatively new technology, its potency was increased. Contemporary viewers take the pervasiveness of images for granted. Not only was the subject matter of Holocaust photography inconceivable to the people of that time, the photographs themselves would have been analogous to a luxury item rather than a common household necessity.

The changes in photography and global communications that altered the manner in which the public learned about the atrocities of the Holocaust are the same that contributed to the development of dark tourism. Just as the photographs that are chosen for public consumption influence what events the public acknowledges and about which it voices concerns, so too do they influence potential sites of dark tourism. Kleinman and Kleinman state, “[i]mages of trauma are part of our political economy. Papers are sold, television programs gain audience share, careers are advanced, jobs are created, and prizes are awarded through the appropriation of images of suffering” (Kleinman and Kleinman 1997:8). The development of dark tourism can be added to this list. Similar to sites of dark tourism, photographs are prone to censorship and manipulation by various sources, such as governments, and are at times sterilized prior to public consumption. Like a dark tourism site, the potential impact of a photograph depends largely upon the timing of its publication or display.

There exists strong criticism of the use of images for depicting death, suffering, and atrocity, those themes represented in dark tourism. Due to the dependence of photographs and film in many dark tourism exhibits, these criticisms become relevant to the discussion of dark tourism. Many authors (Griffith 2006; Sontag 2003) suggest that photographs inherently objectify that which is pictured; this becomes contentious when the photographs depict individuals or groups of people. Sontag states that regardless of the context, “[p]hotographs objectify: they turn an event or a person into something that can be possessed” (Sontag 2003:81). Referring specifically to the images of Abu Ghraib, Griffith (2007) suggests that the photographs not only “rob the detainees of humanity, but they actually embody the process of negation found in pornography, objectifying the photographed for one’s own gain” (Griffith 2006:83). His statement implies that the consumption of photographs depicting victims of this nature has voyeuristic tendencies.

Similarly, sites of dark tourism also are often criticized for lending themselves to voyeurism. Motivations for consuming such sites are varied, and there are tourists who may seek out these sites for the perverse desire to be entertained by the death and suffering of others, rather than for more justifiable inducements related to education or bearing witness. Sontag adds more pointedly, “violence turns anybody subjected to it into a thing,” an object (Sontag 2003:12). Without adequate interpretation to accompany the photograph, or, more to the point, exhibits of dark tourism, this danger can be more prevalent. Without a narrative to explain to the viewer the scene captured within the context of the photographic image, the viewer can create his or her own narrative including diverging assumptions, which may have little accuracy. Potentially worse is not attempting to understand the image at all, but to

perceive it as one would a spectacle, a temporary visual entertainment without any long term contemplation or tangible impact.

Contributing to the objectification of those captured in a photographic image is the relationship that develops between the photographer and that which is photographed. In addition to these two constituents of a single photograph are those individuals that may not be seen within the frame of the image, although present at the site. A power dynamic manifests between the various individuals that are involved in a single photograph, placing the object of the image in a place of severe disadvantage and vulnerability. In reference to Nazi soldiers who took photographs of victims in concentration camps during World War II, Hüppauf notes, “[t]he photographer’s position in relation to his object is always one of power and privilege, and in the case of the photographer of violence in the extermination program, this power was limitless” (Hüppauf 1997:32). This genre of photography exemplifies the distinctive tendency in which the photographer appears to be taking the photographs from an elevated vantage point, which further emphasizes the position of power that the photographer embodies.

The physical distance required to achieve this effect is also a topic of scrutiny due to its ability to contribute to the subject-object distinction between the photographer and photographed. The concern is that in distancing oneself from the death, suffering, or atrocity that is being captured on film, the photographer becomes disconnected from the event in a manner that absolves responsibility for intervention. The question of whether or not a photographer should act on behalf of the object of photographic representation is what Kleinman and Kleinman refer to as the “the photojournalist’s dilemma” (Kleinman and Kleinman 1997:6). Despite the potential consequences of inaction, the distance maintained

by the photographer is considered a professional standard of conduct. ‘Documentary’ demands that no touching occurs to alter the image that emerges through the viewfinder. The only manipulation that is permissible is the actual taking of the picture, including the way the photographer orients him or herself around the object being photographed. The viewer must not forget that the photographer’s choice in what to include or exclude within the frame of a photo requires manipulation of the image even as it is an essential and expected part of photography. These choices rule out the possibility of absolute objectivity that viewers often attribute to photographs; the photographer has made subjective decisions in order to create a superior image attributable to framing, lighting, context, and angle, as well as inclusions and exclusions.

Jünger attributes the photographer’s ability to maintain this separation to the emptying of the gaze, which “change[s] the character of living processes to that of a specimen” (Hüppauf 1997:26). Victims depicted in this manner are dehumanized and effectively silenced, made uniform through the removal of individual’s “name, opinions, relatives, and histories, [and] that each has reasons for being where he is now” (Malkki 1996:387-388). Although the emptying of the gaze may be a coping mechanism that photographers adopt to manage their exposure to violence, it may produce the unacceptable result of “turn[ing] bodies into objects” (Hüppauf 1997:32). These concerns suggest that it is only the photographer that may be implicated as acting in a delinquent, predatory manner; however, authors such as Sontag also implicate those who observe either the event or the image. Again, because realistic imagery is central to the production of dark tourism, tourists should be included in discussions of the consumption of photographs depicting themes of death and suffering. What is more, Urry (1995), in an echo to Jünger’s description of the

photographer's empty gaze, refers to the tourist gaze. Sather-Wagstaff describes Urry's concept of the tourist gaze as "a process of consuming sights/sites without much questioning of the construction of such while also aggressive in that it is from the privileged perspective tourists as leisured class of people consuming often less privileged Others" (Sather-Wagstaff 2007:104).

If, as Sontag suggests, observers of photographs depicting violence deserve the same scrutiny as the photographers and onlookers of violent scenes, then tourists viewing images at sites of dark tourism must also be integrated into the relationship between photographer, photographed and onlooker. The consumption of these images continually serves to objectify and re-objectify the scene that is captured in the image. Like the photographer, the viewer or tourist is in a place of power, clearly removed from the vulnerable position to which the object is relegated. The observer is further separated from the image by space and time. Because of this, the observer remains sheltered, neither physically knowing nor sensing any of the fear captured on film. Additionally, the observer does not assume any of the responsibility of choosing to act on behalf of victim(s) that only exist within the photograph.

#### THE CAPACITY OF DARK PHOTOGRAPHY: INTENTIONS, CONSUMPTION, AND REPRECUSIONS

It is important to acknowledge that the photographs or films found within the context of dark tourism sites were not necessarily produced with the intention of being incorporated into a museological exhibit. In most cases, the photographer had other intentions. One exception worth noting is War Photo Ltd., a museum located in Dubrovnik, Croatia. Specifically dedicated to war photography, photojournalists are in complete control of the selection of photographs included in the exhibition space. Essential to each photograph is a caption providing first hand interpretation of the image. Photojournalists, however, do not

always retain control over how an image is made public or the textual interpretations that accompany it. Although a photographer might have respectable intentions for producing an image, once it is sold, the image is susceptible to manipulation. Sontag warns that “[t]he photographer’s intentions do not determine the meaning of the photograph, which will have its own career, blown by the whims and loyalties of the diverse communities that have use for it” (Sontag 2003:39). Additionally, Happauf stresses “photos themselves do not and cannot convey moral positions...[they]need a verbal context in order to make visible a certain attitude and value judgment in relation to their objects of representation” (Hüppauf 1997:30). The farther a photograph moves away from its source, the more distant the context of the image becomes. A generic caption supplied by editorial staff ignorant of the nuances of the scene recorded in the image may provide the only explanation that the audience receives. Identifying the objects in an image is a task the viewer typically accomplishes accurately and without guidance, however, the narrative belonging specifically to the photograph can only be furnished by the photographer. Additional witnesses of the same sight may have divergent explanations. By appealing only to the “general abhorrence of war” or other events associated with death, suffering, and atrocity, the photograph causes the actual conditions and circumstances of the event, including the victims and the place, further anonymity (Sontag 2003:9). While the image “invites the written information which alone can specify its relation to localities, time, individual identity, and the other categories of human understanding”, the written information must still be produced in an intentional manner (Zelizer 1998:6). Without the narrative, the image remains simply an image and although it may be particularly memorable, does not lend itself to comprehensive understanding.

Robin Andersen (1988) suggests, “without a social or political context, and without information or explanation which would explain or account for suffering, photographs which document pain, misery and death *cannot* elicit public concern and empathy” (Campbell 2003:71). Considering this, those controlling the production and management of dark tourism sites should not assume that the consuming public will reach the appropriate conclusions simply by experiencing a place of dark tourism. Photographs and film, as well as artifacts, including objects, architecture, and landscape, demand explanation. Clearly, increasing the proximity of the given interpretation to the event being depicted will increase the opportunity for providing an accurate narrative. Likewise, when the narratives intended to accompany images are produced at a distance from the event, not only is there a greater danger for misinformation or ambiguity, but those appropriating the images can use them for the promotion of their own social, religious, or political ideologies. Sontag offers an anecdotal example as to why this lack of attribution and narrative can be dangerous:

During the fighting between Serbs and Croats at the beginning of the recent Balkan wars, the same photographs of children killed in the shelling of a village were passed around at both Serb and Croat propaganda briefings. Alter the caption, and the children’s deaths could be used and reused. [Sontag 2003:10]

All that the public can be certain about when looking at the images Sontag refers to is that children were killed during the shelling of a village. The details remain unknown, and because the children are anonymous, their deaths can be manipulated to serve the needs of opposed political groups and their associated military organizations. The photographer could have provided a narrative explaining his image, potentially providing information on the location, the victims, and those responsible for the destruction and accompanying death.

Tourists visiting sites of dark events need to be aware that the images presented to them have likely had a long history before being incorporated into the exhibit. The context

of the photograph and the motivation of the photographer, integral components of images, are subject to filters. These filters, whether imposed actively by an editorial staff or passively by the intangible effects of space and time, will erode the particulars from a photograph. Beyond this, as Sontag's disturbing example from the 1990s Balkan Wars illustrates, the same image may be utilized to present seemingly incompatible narratives. It is necessary to remember that photographs are not objective documentations of events, but rather products that are intentionally created for a specific purpose.

But what are the intentions in producing and publicizing photographs depicting violent events? The majority of images documenting the horrors of the Holocaust were taken during and after liberation of the concentration camps. Rather than trying to prevent the crimes continuing occurrence, the photographs served to bear witness to the events. Zelizer (1998) states that the initial lack of imagery associated with the violence is often blamed for the length of time during which the acts of genocide continued. This implies that had photography of concentration camps and their victims been published earlier, it would have been followed by a more immediate abatement of the atrocities. Following World War II, the documentation of atrocities did increase, but despite this, "coverage has not prevented atrocity's recurrence" (Zelizer 1998:203). "Never again" quickly became again and again despite the global awareness that is largely facilitated by photography.

Another question follows: if the photographic documentation of these events does not provide a means for more immediate resolution to acts of inhumanity, why? The public's inability to respond with action or empathy to images of violence may be related to the iconic status that atrocity photographs have attained since World War II. The repetitive sequence of images the media feeds the public does not allow for contextual knowledge of the atrocities

to be transmitted alongside the pictorial displays. This results in a failure to elicit a more active response in the viewers. In addition, new images often mimic iconic photographs dating from World War II and Vietnam. By imitating the documentation style of past events, Zelizer (1998) argues that these images somehow excuse viewers from acting in the present. Beyond this, photographs inherently imply the event took place in the past. The possibility that the atrocities depicted are already firmly entrenched in the past (much like the consequential publication of the photos documenting World War II concentration camps after liberation had already taken place), further relieves viewers from any responsibility for action. The photographs say, “this is what has happened, but it is already too late.”

According to John Berger, atrocity photos allow the viewer to feel the emotions of “despair” and “indignation.” The former allows the viewer to remain inactive, but the latter encourages action, due to the sensation of “feeling morally inadequate” (Campbell 2003:71). Both feelings are only temporary and can be relieved through a quick monetary contribution, a well intentioned, if misguided, reaction. Sontag elaborates:

so far as we feel sympathy, we feel we are not accomplices to what caused suffering. Our sympathy proclaims our innocence as well as our impotence. To that extent, it can be (for all our good intentions) an impertinent – if not an inappropriate –response. [Sontag 2003:102]

Despite critical reactions to the commercialization of atrocity-centered photojournalism, there is acknowledgment that the images produce a response by appealing to a viewer’s sense of humanity; they also bear necessary witness to events. Although breaking the silence that surrounds atrocity is a positive outcome of the photojournalist’s work, concerns have arisen regarding the manner in which the audience experiences and consumes these images. Some hold the influx of violence within the media accountable for an overall desensitization of the public, resulting in the “produc[tion of] moral fatigue, exhaustion of empathy, and political

despair” (Kleinman and Kleinman 1997:9). Similar to the desensitization that occurs through the inundation of violent images, the same phenomenon occurs with dark tourism exhibits, such as the belongings of the victims of the Holocaust that become easily recognizable and achieve an iconic status. This status “can reduce the emotive reaction and harden the visitors. In this way, the emotion is lost, reduced by knowledge in anticipation and familiarity from media images” (Lennon and Foley 2000:60; Lanzmann 1995).

There is a real danger that the photography of atrocity and war, while intended to make people aware of exceptional states of suffering, may have the accidental consequence of normalizing suffering. Such normalization is often mistaken for making viewers ‘numb’ to images and is the cause for the feeling of powerlessness when it comes to creating change in response to the photos. Further, normalization has led to a blind viewer:

The world filled up with images of horrors, and they loudly proclaimed the viewers’ eyes had grown unseeing, proceeding to unburden themselves of the responsibility to hold onto the elementary gesture of looking at what is presented to one’s gaze.  
[Azoulay 2008:11]

Alternatively, to keep silent about these crimes against humanity would promote ignorance, a greater hazard. There is also always the possibility of the absolute suppression of images:

The official silence is another form of appropriation. It prevents public witnessing. It forges a secret history, an act of political resistance through keeping alive the memory of things denied. The totalitarian state rules by collective forgetting, by denying the collective experience of suffering, and thus creates a culture of terror. [Kleinman and Kleinman 1997:17]

Not only does there exist a right to know of and bear witness to suffering, but also an obligation. Sontag firmly believes that “[n]o one after a certain age has the right to this kind of innocence, of superficiality, to this degree of ignorance, or amnesia” of suffering present in the world (Sontag 2003:114). Even if viewers feel that they are impotent to act against such suffering, “[t]he images say: This is what human beings are capable of doing – may

volunteer to do, enthusiastically, self righteously. Don't forget" (Sontag 2003:115). While images may serve some function in bearing witness to past atrocity, they do not promote and may be a further impediment to the actions necessary to prevent the occurrence of similar atrocities in the present. Compounding the effects of the pervasive presence of photography at dark tourism sites is the actual construction of the sites and surrounding landscapes.

#### SPACE AND PLACE: THE LANDSCAPE OF DARK TOURISM

Contributing to the sense of futility tourists acquire as a result of consuming large quantities of increasingly iconographic images is the landscape within which the images are presented. Ness states, "[i]t would be a mistake to consider touristic landscaping a neutral, let alone innocent, element" (Ness 2005:135). Although Ness (2005) focuses her discussion on Pearl Farm Beach Resort, a site which is the antithesis of dark tourism, her argument finds applicability to the tourist sites discussed here.<sup>16</sup> Ness describes tourist landscapes as "spaces" in contrast to "places"; according to Heidegger's, places require active place-making through "lived, event-defined, multilocational happening" (Ness 2005:120). Ness suggests the currently constructed tourist space of Pearl Farm Beach Resort is in conflict with the culturally-infused and lived-in place it was previously. This displacement, which she describes as "injurious", fueled violence at the resort in May of 2001. This locational violence of tourist spaces is explained as the latent interaction between the tourist space, which has been created for the purpose of consumption, and the place that once existed.

A tourist space is produced by the deliberate objectification of a place, removing all of its characteristics as a location "embedded with intentionally—with thoughtful, even argumentative, and emphatically moral characters...deeply sensed and consequently instilled or emplaced in their inhabitants as emotionally charged realities" (Ness 2005:120). Sites of

dark tourism have undergone just such a process, cementing the negative transformation of a landscape through the static recreation of the event being represented. As spaces, tourist sites also become what Marc Auge (1995) calls “non-places”:

Non-places, which are typified in tourist landscapes, do not afford experiences of sustainable human relationships and practices. Non-places are not available to continuous lived experience, in any classically cultural sense of the phrase. They contrast with what Auge terms ‘anthropological places’ (1995:81), locations where cultural experience can become established and deeply emplaced. In sum, touristic landscaping tends to move beyond re-placing altogether. Instead, it tends to effect a de-placing of the landscape—an extreme form of locational transformation in which ‘placeness’ itself—the capability to become a place in the phenomenological (and cultural sense of the term here employed) is itself transformed. [Ness 2005:120]

This explanation has dangerous implications for tourism sites, with perhaps a greater danger for sites of dark tourism. Because these sites are intentionally removed from the lived-in landscapes of place, they are made irrelevant for contemporary society, which the tourist represents. This occurs through two means. First, the visual cues provided to physically guide the tourist through a dark tourist site does not allow the site to function independently and beyond a choreographed visitation. The dark tourist site exists and operates as a bounded, intentionally designed environment. The cues, signage, or docents, which direct tourists through the site, make the site “symbolically consumable,” further objectifying the space and contributing evidence that the tourist non-place is no longer a “livable, ongoing presence” (Ness 2005:121). As static, uninhabitable representations of isolated events that are unconnected to the present, tourist sites do not appear to make sense within an “anthropological place.” What exists within the boundaries cannot be applied beyond them. In addition to being physically bounded, these sites reflect extreme temporal parameters. The events described within these parameters have been successfully divorced from contemporary society, as well as separated from the remainder of the historical context of the event. The historical context that borders the dark event is missing and made irrelevant.

With this in mind, the label “black spot” becomes oddly fitting as it suggests an isolated blemish suspended in space, disconnected from temporal or spatial contexts (Rojek 1993). The representation of a dark event that is circumscribed in such a way is neither relevant to the histories which boarder it, nor to contemporary society.

According to Ness (2005), tourist spaces are intended to be consumed by the tourist on only a single occasion. This limitation results from the narrow range of capabilities the tourist site offers the visitor relative to a living and culturally viable place that offers a dynamic environment within which an individual may act. For sites such as Pearl Farm Beach Resort, having the goal of providing an idyllic although equally uninhabitable space, all “evidence of human occupation is, of necessity, diminished and marginalized” (Ness 122:2005). If habitation were to occur within this space, the resort would cease to be marketable as a utopian retreat. There are however, those populations that continue to live next to the bounded site. In the case of Pearl Farm Beach Resort, the local inhabitants were physically relocated to a place not visible from the resort. The wider landscape surrounding Auschwitz-Birkenau, including the city of Krakow, located about 65 km away from the site of the concentration camp, is a similarly inhabited place. Although there are boundaries to the dual tourist sites of Auschwitz-Birkenau, they are not impermeable; the acts of atrocity committed on this landscape do not have discrete borders. As a result, just as with the local inhabitants of the Pearl Farm Beach Resort, the local inhabitants of the wider Auschwitz-Birkenau landscape also have also felt some degree of displacement. These individuals have been displaced not by the development of a resort, but by the memorializing of a tragedy. Ness emphasizes, “[t]here is nothing poetic or exaggerated about the experience of a loss of place”, and it can be “just as devastating when people stay where they are as when they

emigrate” (Ness 2005:120). Both the negative transformation and the continued paralysis of the Auschwitz-Birkenau landscape is damaging to the psyche of those living within reach of the site. Ness elaborates, the “objectification, abstractions, perfections, and other fundamental deformations of place must be recognized as the potential agents of trauma and cultural loss as well as of commercial gain, consumable pleasure, and global prosperity” (Ness 2005:135). The trauma of the dark event is further compounded by the manipulations of a place into a touristic space.

The permeability of the boundaries defining a dark tourist site implies that the construction of a touristic landscape may produce less an exact representation of an event and more fabrication than tourists are led to believe. It is not only the boundaries that are of concern; site composition is affected as well. Auschwitz, for instance, was largely constructed to benefit the experience of the tourist. The “Arbeit Macht Frei” (“work makes (one) free”) sign was moved in order to maximize the impact of the site. Wight explains that “[o]ther artefacts and structures have been imported from various peripheral sections of the camp and set out in such a way as to create a ‘chronologically correct’ tour amounting to a slow crescendo of increasingly stark interpretation from start to finish” (Wight 2006:119). The problem with the construction of a “start” and “finish”, however abstract, is that there is no “finish”. The idea the tourist can be led to a definitive conclusion of the site is an additional physical cue for the tourists to disassociate the events represented on-site from what lies beyond the “finish” line. This is particularly true if the site narrative does not extend into the history that follows the event of focus. If the event is portrayed and perceived as disassociated from the present, it absolves tourists from internalizing what they have learned or even from remembering what they have witnessed. In this way, museums and

especially memorials, remove the need for the intentional remembrance of events because these spaces maintain the memory passively through their physical presence. The sites, acting like material mnemonic devices, stand in mute testimony.

Dachau provides another notable example of site manufacture. This particular concentration camp is described as an “icon for Western tourists”, and despite being one of the less prominent extermination sites, it has become one of the most visited (Lennon and Foley 2000:40). James Young suggests that this popularity is largely media driven due to the featuring of Dachau in media coverage of the liberation as well as its function as a site for post World War II war criminal trials (Lennon and Foley 2000:40). The development of Dachau as a principal Holocaust tourist site supports the premise that interest in dark tourism and the popularity of a particular site is heavily dependent on global media coverage the site receives during relevant events. James Young describes the site as follows:

It offers an excellent museum with carefully maintained grounds. However, it is almost a sanitized monument, well groomed and reinvented after many of the original buildings were lost following successive reuse in the period post-1945. Thus Dachau cannot provide an ‘authentic’ experience but rather an interpretive memorial experience. The primacy of many of the camp features has been lost in its reinvention. [Lennon and Foley 2000:40]

In addition to Dachau’s intentional assembly, it is notable that prior to its use as a tourist attraction the site was actively utilized by the communist regime. James Young explains that the camp was appropriated by the communist government for the purpose of managing individuals or groups that opposed their party; by the 1960s, the site had become overgrown and during discussion of potential redevelopment of the site, the townspeople were opposed to a tourism-based operation (Lennon and Foley 2000:43). The aversion toward the plan for tourism development expressed by the community living in close proximity to the site was likely related to an underlying need to divorce their present from the portion of their past

related to the Holocaust. Recreating the site as it existed during World War II prevents such separation. Both the history of the local opposition to tourism development and the use of the site by the communist government for the management of dissidents are integral pieces to the overall history of Dachau. As such, they should be incorporated into the current site interpretation. Focusing on only the events central to the tourist site, in this case World War II, the Holocaust, and war crime trials, while disregarding the subsequent historical events and minimal mention of the development of the site as a tourist destination, reduces the context of the site and neglects those that created the anthropological place that existed prior to World War II as well as the more recent history of the locals that live in the surrounding region.

This disassociation of the dark event from both the distant past and the present causes the site's potential messages to appear irrelevant to current society. The onsite attack at Dachau in 1992, in which an individual identified as a neo-Nazi burnt the barracks housing the permanent exhibit focusing on Jewish prisoners, illustrates that the ideologies that produced the Holocaust remain present and active in contemporary society (Lennon and Foley 2000:43). This event highlights the relevance that past events have to contemporary society and suggests that the museological treatment of the historic events must acknowledge connections to the present. The burning of the barracks should be incorporated into the site's exhibitions just as readily as it has translated into the presence of additional security officials on site.<sup>17</sup> The attack, like the locational violence that occurred at Pearl Farm Beach Resort, illustrates that the anthropological place that once existed at the tourist site remains absolutely relevant to some populations in the present. Specifically, contemporary neo-Nazi groups feel an affinity with the criminal actions carried out at Dachau during the Holocaust.

It is not accidental that neo-Nazi groups would choose to communicate support of these ideologies at Dachau. What is more, the act of vandalism implies that the ideological conditions that fueled the events of the Holocaust are still present and functioning today. This should be incentive enough to merge the present with the events of the past, making the events of the Holocaust, which appear to belong to a distant and alien world, valid to today's society.

These arguments are not meant to suggest that sites of past atrocity should simply be left without any mediation. Disregard may lead to even further difficulties. Not only may sites be physically unsafe, but they can also provide a locus for the unmitigated reinforcement of the values that underlie the Holocaust. Birkenau was largely destroyed by German forces just prior to liberation, leaving foundations and other potentially hazardous remains on the landscape. Development of the site may have actually offered physical protection to groups living in close proximity and to unsolicited visitors. Holocaust sites with histories of such intensity are optimal for incubating the hatred, ignorance, and prejudice that once operated them. Leaving them untouched as shells of their former function, may contribute to the continual propagation of dangerous ideology. Alternatively, the absolute destruction of these sites dismisses the victimization and inconceivable suffering endured by millions of innocent individuals under the goal of exterminating an entire cultural community.

Beyond the need for maintaining site safety, tourist landscapes are rebuilt with a concerted "effort to create a space that is capable of attracting and holding a tourist gaze, a space that is not continually messed up by the ongoing practices of everyday life" (Ness 2005:132). This attitude limits the possible positive effects dark tourist sites may have on

contemporary society through the experience they provide tourists. In a sense, dark tourism sites *need* to be “messed up by the ongoing practices of everyday life” in order to make historical events part of and pertinent to the present, and to make the death and suffering of the victims meaningful to today.

#### REVISTING CHRONOLOGICAL DISTANCE

Chronological proximity is essential to the production of dark tourism. Events that provide the impetus for creating a dark tourist site or attraction are generally confined to the previous century, and it is not unusual to point directly to the sinking of the Titanic in 1912 and subsequent media coverage as the perceptible turning point in global communications that led to dark tourism. Temporal proximity allows for the presence of living memory to be associated with the site. Additionally, the communications technology necessary for the global publication of dark events is established within this time frame. The nearer to the present the events have occurred, the darker their appearance; this correlates directly to the increase in living memory and media coverage. Despite repeated emphasis on the proximity between tourists and dark events, the presentation at the most significant of dark sites implies that what is being presented originates from a much more distant history. Disconnected from the present, the period of time being exhibited appears entirely alien due to the barbarity of the events described. Lennon and Foley describe this phenomenon:

A critical aspect of interpretation of Holocaust sites is dealing with what Steiner has called ‘the time relation’. Here he is referring to the contemporary nature of Auschwitz in human history and how incomprehensible that is. It appears as ‘the other planet’ to the one in which we live our everyday lives. [Lennon and Foley 2000:31]

Reminders that extreme acts of atrocity are recent occurrences are often unwelcome because without the safety of distance and circumscription, the dark site may threaten “ontological security” (Stone and Sharpley 2008).

By presenting the time of the dark event as removed from the present, contemporary society has distanced itself from the temporal placement of the act. Other ongoing or more recent acts of genocide pose an even starker threat to contemporary society. The severity of these events also is mitigated by both creating spatial distance and blaming the atrocity on the “primitive” nature of the society within which they occur by using phrases like “third world country” to differentiate between it and “western society”. The inaccurate presentation of the temporal relationship between contemporary society and the dark events is encouraged early on in education and is compounded further by the abstract nature of time. The result is an overall misconception of the temporality of events, which drives events into a more distant past. Despite an understanding of the relative chronology of events, Vietnam, the Civil Rights Movement, or World War II may, in terms of their connection to the present, appear just as remote as the Battle of Waterloo or Pompeii. The various means by which time is manipulated at dark tourism sites contribute to the physical distortion of the tourist landscape. Both the manipulation of time and the distortion of the landscape may allow for the importance of the event to be communicated to the tourist audience, but in a manner which suggests that it no longer has any bearing on the present beyond a necessary history lesson. Such temporal and spatial concerns are clear at Checkpoint Charlie: “there is little attempt to interpret events within a wider context of time and space – whether accurate or not. Thus, the past is disconnected from the present and the potential guilt of an older generation is marked as if an aberration from another place” (Lennon and Foley 2000:113).

By presenting a site as a mere “aberration,” an absolution of responsibility is not only granted to those involved with the past event, but also to those visiting and learning about what took place there. As anomalies, these are not events to which individuals learn to respond, but rather, to disregard. Aberrations, by definition, seldom occur, so internalizing these events appears superfluous.

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, while regarded as an exceptional site, also warrants reflection on the manifestations of temporal manipulations. As noted earlier, exhibits present events as isolated from the past and present. This approach is problematic because of the resulting lack of contextual information, including the history which precedes and succeeds the event central to the dark site exhibit. It is not surprising that the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum focuses on the events of World War II and the Holocaust; however, it has received criticism for doing just this. The German newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine* (“Frankfurt General”) commented that the museum gives a damaging impression of contemporary Germany and its citizens by marooning tourists learning about the Holocaust in World War II era Germany. The newspaper noted that there is no effort to portray or suggest that a different postwar Germany exists today (Lennon and Foley 2000:151). Although not a mission of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, further contextualizing Nazi Germany may allow greater understanding about when and why the Holocaust occurred. It may further provide a more realistic portrayal of the country as it exists today with the aim of eroding unjust stereotypes and preventing the construction of new prejudices.

A more thorough presentation of the development of the Nazi regime would further contextualize the events of the Holocaust. It could suggest to tourists that this genocide was

not an entirely random event as often is implied, but is related to a broader history. Increased comprehension of the Holocaust might actually contribute to understanding more recent acts of genocide, not as aberrations but as events integrated thoroughly into a wider historical, cultural, and political framework. Considering the circumstances that fostered the Holocaust and the model by which genocide was subsequently defined, may alter society's recognition of genocide in the present. In this way, instances of dark tourism focusing on genocide and the conditions of warfare, including inequality and intolerance, could become of greater relevance to tourists and therefore, contemporary society.

Another notable feature of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum is the distribution of identity cards of Jewish citizens affected by the Nazi regime upon entry to the permanent museum exhibit.<sup>18</sup> Clearly, the identity cards are meant to individualize the victims of the Holocaust in a manner that does not often occur when encountering the overwhelming statistics associated with the genocide. They act as a tangible visual aid, providing a name and face to those victims that typically remain nameless and faceless. Upon entry to the permanent exhibit, tourists are asked to assume the identity of this individual for the purpose of encouraging tourists to feel empathy for of the victims of the Holocaust. During the course of the exhibit, tourists may follow the progress of the individual presented on their card, learning of the individual's fate. To ask the tourist to project him or herself into the past and take on the identity of a victim of the Holocaust is problematic. First, any attempt to project oneself into the circumstances of a victim of the Nazi regime, without having actually experienced it first-hand, is impossible. This exercise is just as naïve as the Imperial War Museum's attempt to recreate the experience of Trench Warfare for its visitors. Second, a tourist should experience the museum as him or herself, as

a member of contemporary society, rather than attempting an unrealistic role-play. The only way to make the events of the Holocaust relevant to the present, and therefore meaningful, is to experience the exhibit as a member of contemporary society. Although the response to the identification cards largely appears positive, their impact is questionable considering “the irony of ‘discarded’ identities in litter bins at exit points and on the streets outside the museum” (Lennon and Foley 2000: 146). During my own visit to the museum, I saw these identification cards on floors throughout the exhibit, trampled by the feet of tourists. This may be an even more revealing disposal of the identities, raising the questions of what purpose and what effect these cards actually serve.

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum provides one example of how dark tourism can fail to represent past events as both relevant to and meaningful for the present, instead presenting them as aberrant specters of an inconsequential past. In order for dark events to be perceived as integral to the lived-in present, the spatial and temporal distances fabricated through museum practices must be eliminated. It is unfortunate that “orthodox museum display condones the feeling that one can stand back from the past and be ‘educated’ about it...promot[ing] the idea of the past as ‘another country’”(Walsh 1992). Experiencing the past through a dark tourist site should not be compared to visiting a foreign place, but rather should be an opportunity to comprehend and come to terms with the conditions of the present, in which the tourist lives. The discussions of photography, tourist stereotyping, site interpretation, touristic landscaping, the manipulation of time, and the overall negative portrayal of dark tourism advises that the standards used for the production of dark tourism sites require reevaluation and subsequent alteration. The alteration may cause a brightening of dark tourism sites, mitigating critiques that dark tourism is merely the

unseemly appropriation of death and suffering for the creation of an entertaining spectacle with the purpose of securing financial gain. Instead, dark tourism needs to refocus its attention on both the proximity and relationship these dark events of the past have with the present. Despite the death, suffering, and atrocity that is represented at these sites, the events can be transformed and made meaningful through active application of the information provided by dark tourism as it transitions to knowledge through utilization in contemporary global society. The emphasis on what was lost through events of extreme human suffering must be exchanged for contemplation on what possibly could be gained through increasing an awareness of these events.

### **Chapter 3: The Potential of Dark Tourism**

#### JUNCTION OF HISTORY, MEMORY, AND EDUCATION AT DARK TOURISM

In *The Use and Abuse of History*, Nietzsche discusses the relationship between history and the present including those who inhabit both. Clearly, those living in the present are born into conditions created by history, but Nietzsche warns that despite this inherent connection we must be careful not to become enslaved by the past. Such an unhealthy relationship may contribute to our inability to distinguish past from present and result in living in the wrong temporal “horizon” (Nietzsche 2005:7). Although “[w]e do need history...we need it for life and action....[w]e would serve history only so far as it serves life; but to value its study beyond a certain point mutilates and degrades life” (Nietzsche 2005:3). Nietzsche emphasizes that while the domination of the present by the past is injurious, history can serve the present and aid in the maintenance of “the health of an individual, a community, and a system of culture” (Nietzsche 2005:8). The present can be favorably shaped through informed action that is guided by historical knowledge. Nietzsche condemns the perception of history as a positivist science and suggests instead that “value and perspective change with the individual or the nation that is looking back at the past” (Nietzsche 2005:19). In approaching it as a science, the presence of history becomes excessive causing life in the present to be “maimed and degenerate” which “is followed by the degeneration of history as well” (Nietzsche 2005:12). The appropriate use of history requires both forgetting and avoidance of the treatment of history as a static thing dictating

the conditions of the present. The constructive use of history instead “avoids quietism, and...uses history as a weapon against it” (Nietzsche 2005:13). History should work to improve the conditions of the present rather than dominate it. The present should not consider the past a golden period of infallibility, but consider it critically, condemning it when necessary.

The Goethe quote that opens the preface of *The Use and Abuse of History* does well to serve thoughtfulness on the purpose of history: “I hate everything that merely instructs me without or directly quickening my activity” (Nietzsche 2005:3). History should not be taught for absorption as a mere series of facts to be retained by the student, but treated as a wide, encompassing vista, the view of which changes according to who regards it and the position from which it is observed, both spatially and temporally. The lessons of history should not remain in the past but bear relevance to the present and future, transformed into the action that Goethe demands. Todorov builds on Nietzsche’s ideas, although with a shift of focus, in *The Abuses of Memory*. Opening with a quote from Jacques Le Goff, Todorov emphasizes that memory, which encompasses the past, should actively serve the needs of the present and future: “Memory...seeks to save the past in order to serve the present and the future. Let us act in such a way that collective memory may serve the liberation and not the enslavement of human beings” (Todorov 2000:6). Todorov explains that memory is the “interaction” between “effacement and conservation” because memory requires an intentional selection of past events for conservation, while others are forgotten (Todorov 2000:8). Selection for the retention of history in the form of memory and the corresponding forgetfulness is not inherently bad, but a necessity. It is when memory is coerced and forgetfulness engineered that the selection of memory becomes problematic. Although the choice of memories and

their use in the present do not necessarily dictate one another, Todorov notes the relationship between the two. He specifically considers that in the cases of tragic memory, the public is obligated to utilize the past comprising these memories in a particular manner. “When events lived by an individual or a group are exceptional or tragic in nature, the right to recover the past becomes a duty: that of witnessing” (Todorov 2000:9). It follows, in accordance with the words of Goethe, Nietzsche, Le Goff and Todorov that the act of witnessing must surpass the mere acknowledgment of such events through instruction and be transformed into action that allows for the past to serve and have relevance in the present.

Todorov emphasizes the connection between the past and present, suggesting that even when people attempt to actively disassociate from their past, they remain connected through the very act of positioning themselves against it. Todorov provides an antidote illustrating the negative repercussions of dismissing historical events or memory. The repression of childhood memories, particularly the negative, is associated with causing mental instability. It is the active remembering of these memories that is believed to lead to recovery. After the memories have been confronted, rather than remaining central to the individual, he or she “will seek to push them into the periphery where they are inoffensive, will seek to domesticate them and thus defuse them” (Todorov 2000:11). This is precisely what happens with dark events of the past. Dark tourism provides a means to confront the dark memories emanating from history. Although these memories require witnessing, they also create a simultaneous instinct toward repression. The result is the confrontation of these events through the mediums of memorial and museum. In these locations, events are pushed to the periphery of memory, where they remain unobtrusive and are normalized through institutional domestication.

The normalization of dark events is not an intentional or positive result for the use of history at dark tourism sites. What constitutes the positive use of the memory of historic events, specifically those associated with death, suffering and atrocity? Todorov asks this question and encourages the assessment of the “potential results” of utilizing historical memory, stating, “judging by that yardstick acts that claim to be founded on the memory of the past, we prefer, for example, peace to war” (Todorov 2000:14). This implies that rather than facilitating the normalization of atrocity and human suffering, and beyond increasing public awareness of the memory of dark events, the “potential result” of dark tourism may be to actively promote peace. Achieving this positive potential depends on the way memory is presented to the public. Todorov divides representations of historic memory into two categories, the literal and the exemplary. Literal memory is “an intransitive fact, leading nowhere beyond itself” (Todorov 2000:14). Exemplary memory, on the other hand, allows a specific historic memory, while retaining its unique nature, to become one instance within a group, making the event more meaningful through comparison. “I open this memory to analogy and to generalizations, I make of it an exemplum and I extract a lesson from it; the past thus becomes a principle of action for the present”; this is “potentially liberating” (Todorov 2000:14). Stated simply, literal memory allows strictly for memory while exemplary memory allows the possibility of justice. Despite the potential of exemplary memory, it often faces the criticism that the comparison of events of atrocity dilutes their intensity and singularity. The comparison necessary to produce exemplary memory however, does not remove the singularity of subjective experience. Todorov is careful to explain that “to compare does not mean to explain (by causal relation) still less to excuse” and the intention is not to create “an exact hierarchy of martyrs” (Todorov 2000:16,18).

Exemplary memory allows history to be made relevant to the present through the establishment of a relationship between similar events that have occurred at different periods of time. This results in the recognition that while we acknowledge past victims through commemorations, memorials, and museums, there remain victims of comparable circumstances on whose behalf action needs to be taken in the present.

Both Nietzsche and Todorov convey the view that history should be employed in and for the present, not as a topic for strict theoretical instruction, but to actively contribute to the health, with implications of social justice, of the present. While Nietzsche speaks of history in broad terms, Todorov focuses his attention on events of human atrocity, both discussions of which are relevant to dark tourism. Dark tourism is one means of presenting historic atrocities, providing a unique and potentially effective opportunity to educate the public on historic memory in a manner that Nietzsche and Todorov espouse. Both authors suggest that the way we approach history is instrumental in how history can serve the present. Dark tourism needs to adopt an educational methodology to facilitate the “potential result” of promoting peace advocated by Todorov. Dark tourism as it usually operates is more inclined to present the past in the positivist manner that Nietzsche condemns or as the literal memory Todorov denounces as unproductive.

Paulo Freire (2000) offers a potential solution to the educational challenges confronting the beneficial use of dark tourism for and in the present. Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* discusses what he calls the “banking approach” to education, elements of which can be identified in many educational institutions and facilities, including dark tourism sites. In the banking approach, students are likened to empty depositories to be filled with information provided by depositors, or teachers. Successful students, who Freire

likens to “containers” or “receptacles” meant to be filled, “records, memorizes, and repeats” the information given without actualizing and making it meaningful (Freire 2000:71). In this system, the greater the deposit, the more effective the teacher is considered. This technique assumes that the movement of information is unidirectional. The result is the formation of a relationship between educator and student in which the educator is all-knowing and the student is ignorant. This system of education is defined by a “lack of creativity, transformation, and knowledge”; “[k]nowledge emerges only through invention and reinvention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world and with each other” (Freire 2000:72). The banking approach to education ultimately fails because knowledge is created only through the active application of information to the world; without this engagement, information remains sterile. Educational banking also depends heavily upon narration through which information becomes “lifeless and petrified”. Reality is presented as “motionless, static, compartmentalized, and predictable”, the focus being on the “sonority of words, not their transforming power” (Freire 2000:71). Of even greater concern than the generation of a skewed perception of reality, is the effect that the banking system of education has upon students. Students respond passively to their environment, unable to critically evaluate means by which they can intervene through action within their society.

The characteristics of banking education bear a striking resemblance to the presentation of historic events at sites of dark tourism. Information is presented in a narrative form, whether through an exhibition or docent, both of which take the role of omniscient teacher while the tourists are assumed passive and ignorant. The presentation of the past is disassociated from contemporary society, very similar to the description Freire provides of

the alienation of the student from the reality in which he or she lives and the resulting inability to act in it. Banking education does not foster the ability to identify and form links between events, problems, and facts. Likewise, the segregation of past from present disallows tourists from creating connections and applying the lessons of the past within their own society. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire concentrates his attention on a student population that is oppressed through the banking technique. These students are trained to accept the circumstances in which they live through the educational system that maintains it. These members of society are described as negative, marginal, inadequate, and unhealthy. A similarly pervasive and unfavorable view of tourists exists and manifests itself in the manner which tourists are educated at dark tourism sites. The educational techniques of dark tourism assume the tourists' inability to actualize the information that is provided to them by transforming it into knowledge through real world engagement. While banking education serves the needs of oppressors by maintaining an environment in which they may continue to oppress, dark tourism normalizes the suffering of human atrocity, an equally oppressive consequence for tourists and both past and current victims of oppression.

Freire acknowledges the possibility that students may come to the self-realization that they have the capability to transform their surroundings with the information they have gained. Without external guidance, however, this is rare; more typically, a student must be actively led to this possibility. An educator cannot simply wait for this realization to occur, but rather, alter his or her educational methods, allowing "students to engage in critical thinking and the quest for mutual humanization" (Freire 2000:75). This requires an adjustment of the traditional relationship between student and teacher. At a dark tourism site this may manifest through the creation of a dialogue between tourist and educator, so that the

tourist may take an active role in his or her educational experience. The physical presentation of dark tourism sites can also be modified for experiential learning that focuses on its transformative capacity to end the very atrocity they seek to represent. Freire refers to this alternative method of education, one in which the students are considered conscious, influential individuals, as “problem-posing”, where “education involves a constant unveiling of reality” and “strives for the *emergence* of consciousness and critical intervention in reality” (Freire 2000:81). Of particular relevance to dark tourism is the essential relationship to and with history that is at the base of educational problem-posing:

In sum: banking theory and practice, as immobilizing and fixating forces, fail to acknowledge men and women as historical beings; problem-posing theory and practice take the people’s historicity as their starting point...affirms women and men as beings who transcend themselves, who move forward and look ahead, for whom immobility represents a fatal threat, for whom looking at the past must only be a means of understanding more clearly what and who they are so that they can more wisely build the future. [Freire 2000:84]

Freire’s reflection on history suggests that not only is the problem-posing approach more appropriate for dark tourism due to its emphasis on the underlying relationship between and individual and history, but it also allows for an increase in the utility of dark tourism as it focuses on the potential for the applicability of historical knowledge on the present.

Another solution is posited by Betty Reardon, author of *Comprehensive Peace Education: Educating for Global Responsibility*. Reardon also criticizes the importance given to the quantity of information imparted to the student versus the quality of that information. Like Freire, Reardon identifies that many educators “continue to engage in an educative process that is much more a matter of the teacher’s transmitting information or interpretations to students than a process of mutual exchange” causing “an impediment to transformation rather than a means to it” (Reardon 1988:54). Pursuing quality within education, keeping in mind purpose rather than quantifiable objectives, contributes to the

student's capacity to effect change within society. This includes the promotion of peace. Central to this idea is calling attention to the relationship between events, past and present, which is largely ignored in the presentations of history at dark tourism sites. Dark tourism educates the tourist public about violent events that, being firmly situated in the past, have come to discrete conclusions, and, therefore, are disconnected from the present. As a result, these sites imply a lack of the same or similar violence in the present; this is what Reardon refers to as "negative peace". Dark tourism has the ability, however, to create "positive peace" through the dismantling of cultural structures that promote violence.<sup>19</sup> This requires acknowledgement of violence still present in contemporary society and the "responsibility *for* and responsibility *to*" act against it (Reardon 1988:62). Reardon points out the resistance, a result of the inherent risk, to both promoting and implementing practices that actively change structures, systems, and relationships. The slow inclusion of "active responsibility" within the education curriculum is

being impelled by a slowly but definitely emerging paradigm shift from an antagonistic, simplified, fragmented, reductionist view of the world, which now conditions our behaviors and institutions, to a complex, integrated, and holistic view of the world and of human society. [Reardon 1988:56]

The educational apparatus currently in place at dark tourism sites appears to encompass characteristics of the former paradigm, contributing to a faulty understanding of the relationship between history and the present and discouraging tourists from responding to information in an active manner. The espousal of qualities that define the newer paradigm could stimulate tenets of peace that belong to problem-posing education as well as concepts supported by Nietzsche and Todorov. Those in the position to develop and manage sites of dark tourism must consider these possibilities and their potential for increasing the impact

and utility of dark tourist sites on and for the present. More than shaping tourists' opinions of past atrocity, dark tourism has the ability to shape the physical conditions of the present.

## CONCLUSION

There is a range of dark tourism sites available for visitation by today's tourist population. While all manifestations of dark tourism draw upon the themes of death, suffering, and atrocity, the spectrum varies, including sites based on fictional events and those that endeavor toward realistic representations of historic events. The former typically provide entertainment to tourists, akin to a theme park ride or fun house with interactive elements designed to hold the attention of even the most unresponsive tourist. The latter group of sites is more subdued as a result of the delicate content of the exhibits, but is still designed to hold the gaze of diverse tourists. All dark sites, like any place of tourism, offer a commodified experience regardless of the sensitivity of the topic on display. It is unfortunate that "all forms of consumption are considered deficient in social value, meaningfulness and authenticity", because this effects the reception and potential impact of all forms of dark tourism (Sather-Wagstaff 2007:66). Commodification should not bear the blame for the negative interpretation of dark tourism, nor should it provoke the assumption that visiting dark tourism sites provides nothing of social or cultural value. Instead, it must be acknowledged that "in many societies, consumption and commodification are entangled with literally everything in contemporary everyday life, even that which is believed somehow, to be absolutely beyond the reach of commodification" such as the death, suffering, and atrocity which afflicts human beings (Sather-Wagstaff 2007:110). Because of their content, dark tourism sites, particularly those of more historical consequence, may be subject to intense scrutiny because of the danger inherent in appropriating human death and suffering for

consumption in a manner that is considered improper. Sites can, as a result, be judged as more or less tasteful depending on the overall level of commercialization found on site and how it manifests in the exhibition through the information conveyed and the choice of materials on display. Site commodification need not, however, eliminate its potential utility.

Despite even the best intentions at the darkest of tourist sites, as in those memorializing the Holocaust, dark sites are perceived negatively as spectacles to be experienced by entertainment seeking tourists. The unfavorable attitudes surrounding the development of dark sites are often implied, but rarely explored in depth. This paper has presented possible latent causes for the casual dismissal of dark sites and their potential value. These include standard site characteristics, consisting of site interpretation, their incorporation of photography, and touristic landscaping. Also of concern are the tourists for whom dark sites are intended and his or her association with a prevalent negative stereotype. Lastly, there is the more general difficulty of temporality, intensified by the manipulation of time within the presentation of historic events at dark tourism sites. Together, these factors have a powerful impact on the dark site's potency. A logical conclusion of the analysis presented here is that the total potential of the serious dark sites is drastically reduced. This results from production and management decisions that shape site presentation and distances the tourist physically, temporally, and emotionally from the events being displayed. Although educating the public about a significant past historical event is commendable, this goal inherently limits the capacity of such sites to affect both the present and future by failing to emphasize history's continuing relevance to contemporary society.

Dark tourism needs to be reevaluated so that its potential can be harnessed. While not a revolutionary recommendation, it is one that is forgotten amid development strategies that

focus on the attracting of visitors to a site for the goal of increasing revenue. Lennon and Foley state:

Tourism as a form of educative enterprise is strongly associated with the key principles of modernity...Defining elements of 'modern' tourism has included ideas of universalism, classification and the liberal democratic state. The wealth and freedom to travel and the education to benefit from the experiences are facets of late industrialism which arose in the context of universal suffrage, the spread of education and the onset of a tourism which encompassed aspects of travel, accommodation and attractions. In some of its earliest explicit support for the tourism industries of Europe, the EEC (as was) expressed it as a matter of mutual cultural exchange leading to common understandings and making war less likely in the future. [Lennon and Foley, 2000:7; Wilson and Van der Dussen 1993; Waites, 1995]

Early perceptions of the utility of tourism allude to the possibility that it could mitigate the prospects of future warfare through building cultural understanding. Tourism in its contemporary manifestation developed simultaneously with the influential changes associated with industrialization, social alterations such as the achievement of universal suffrage, and the events of World War I and World War II. That tourism could produce social change itself, particularly oriented toward an anti-war and peacebuilding agenda, is unsurprising. With the devastation experienced during the World Wars and the Holocaust still visible as scars in the landscape and people, the hope that tourism could reduce the probability of similar events from occurring in the future is a reasonable expectation.

Despite this, dark tourism has not been taken advantage of fully as a tool to prevent atrocity and to promote peacebuilding. The manner in which dark events are currently presented to the public drastically reduces tourism's potential. Early intentions for tourism can no longer be actualized due to the removal of the relationship between past events of human death, suffering, and atrocity and the conditions of the present. The dark events of today are presented by the media in a manner that suggests that it is futile for people to act for the purpose of generating change. Significant sites of dark tourism are ideal instruments

with which to teach the consequences of war as well as peacebuilding, however, it requires that the information provided to tourists has the capacity to be transformed into action.

Tourists cannot be expected to recognize the use of the knowledge on their own; instead, they must be guided in how to enact it in daily life. That tourists require intentional direction is not to suggest that they are passive observers of dark sites. Tourists must be taught that their visitation to dark sites has relevance beyond their direct interaction with the site; they can take what they have learned and apply it in their future experiences.

Educating the tourist about historical events is merely the first step in this process.

Some current approaches to dark tourism:

relegate the dead to a cycle of inevitable and teleological progression, rendering how and why they died irrelevant. War and genocide would thus be understood as something unavoidable, not to be feared, and certainly not something to be ameliorated or prevented in the future for any rational reason. [Sather-Wagstaff 2007:72]

This lesson is incorrect and insupportable. The suffering, death, and atrocity presented at dark tourism sites are absolutely avoidable and steps can be taken by all individuals to prevent future occurrences of such events. Dark tourism sites offer a unique opportunity to stress the individual's capacity for contributing to these changes.

Despite this, very few dark sites seek to actively reduce the incidence of human suffering and promote peace. There are notable exceptions that should be considered as positive examples to be incorporated into experientially-based learning at dark tourism sites. These examples are only the beginning of the possibilities that may be developed to increase the capacity of dark tourism. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, for instance, offered a temporary exhibit entitled *From Memory To Action: Meeting The Challenge of Genocide*:

**From Memory To Action: Meeting The Challenge of Genocide** is an interactive installation that uses cutting edge technology and compelling eyewitness stories to invite visitors to join a growing community of people taking action against genocide. Located in the Museum's Wexner Center, the installation introduces visitors to the concept and law of genocide, to three contemporary cases of genocide — Rwanda, Srebrenica in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the Darfur region of Sudan — and to eyewitness testimonies from activists, survivors, rescuers, journalists, humanitarian aid workers, and more. It also poses the question to each visitor: "What will you do to meet the challenge of genocide?"<sup>20</sup>

This exhibit maintains the theme of the museum, but by providing contemporary examples of genocide including Bosnia-Herzegovina, Rwanda, Burundi, DR Congo, Chechnya, and Sudan, as well as the legal basis of the term “genocide”, tourists gain a broader understanding of the Holocaust and how it relates to the present. The exhibit requests the tourists’ direct interaction with material on display by asking what each visitor will “do to help meet the challenge of genocide today”. Presenting this question communicates to tourist that while they may not be experiencing genocide first-hand, they can be an active part of the solution at home through the intentional performance of daily decision-making. It suggests that he or she has a responsibility to both themselves and their fellow human beings regardless of distance. These tourists are learning how to make a difference. Tourists are asked to submit an answer to this question on the pledge wall at the museum and are given an access code to continue their interaction after they return home through an online site dedicated to the exhibit. The website provides a manner by which tourists can continue their involvement in the elimination of genocide by tracking their pledge, learning other means by which individuals can confront genocide, and accessing further resources on the topic. A handout also furnishes five ways in which to “Help the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Confront Genocide Today”, including 1. Join our Community of Conscience 2. Contact the Media 3. Communicate with Decision Makers 4. Get Engaged in Your Community and 5. Support Education and Relief Efforts. The individual receives information on how to fulfill

each of the five recommendations. The project emphasizes that “[a]ction takes many forms, and every action counts”.<sup>21</sup> This exhibit provides a means by which the Holocaust becomes relevant to contemporary society by informing the tourist audience of more recent and current genocides as well as showing them what they can do to positively impact these events through individual actions. This will also affect the way in which they perceive and respond to other acts of suffering, death, and atrocity such as warfare and natural or man-made disaster.

A second example of how dark tourism can take advantage of its potential for promoting change and counteracting events of human suffering may be found in the development of a small, but effective Holocaust museum located in Naples, Florida. The Holocaust Museum of Southwest Florida is distinctive due to the manner in which it was created, the story of which leaves a lasting impact on those that visit. The museum has its origin in a classroom project by students and teachers of the Golden Gate Middle School, led by Social Studies teacher, David Bell, and Art teacher, Michelle Lee. The initial project was entitled “Out of the Ashes”, an exhibit produced by nineteen students in conjunction with their teachers to fulfill the mandatory Holocaust Education requirement of the Florida Public School system. Bell expanded on the original curriculum while Lee incorporated art in the presentation of the material, including the use of dioramas, essays, tiles, paintings, and poetry. Local residents Diane and Homer Helter contributed a collection of authentic artifacts and images for permanent loan to the exhibit.

From the initial middle school project, the exhibit has grown into a museum and educational center with a 501(c)(3) status. Its unique beginning emphasizes to tourists the lesson that they can make a difference through their actions just as the nineteen middle

school students have done. The museum offers the typical amenities of docent and audio guided tours, special events, temporary exhibits focusing on contemporary events of atrocity, and a lending library. Beyond this, the museum provides special attention to the education of younger members of the community by facilitating class visits as well as establishing a traveling exhibit, situated within an authentic boxcar and available to groups outside of the Naples area. The educational mission is described on the website:

The mission of the Holocaust Museum goes beyond the teaching of the Holocaust as history to its relevance for us today. Knowing about this watershed event from the past is essential to building a foundation for action in the present.

Our educational programming begins with the Holocaust and ends with connections to what has happened in the lifetime of the students and what they can do to make a difference. Respect for others begins with their family and community, then extends out to those in need around the world.<sup>22</sup>

The Holocaust Museum of Southwest Florida does not present the Holocaust as an isolated event to be viewed at a historical distance but instead focuses on the atrocity's relevance to contemporary society. The emphasis on how individuals, particularly students, can foster change and promote peacebuilding in their own communities is central to the goals of the museum. The museum moves beyond bearing witness to the Holocaust to taking part in actively working toward the eradication of the hatred, inequality, and suffering so ubiquitous during the Holocaust, which continues to victimize individuals and groups today. Because the museum originated as a student-developed initiative, it demonstrates to the visitors the influence that their own ingenuity can produce.

Although the Holocaust Museum of Southwest Florida is small compared to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, it manages to portray the events of the Holocaust, the progression toward World War II, and the events which followed. This contextual information is essential in developing an understanding of the events not as

random and isolated, but born out of a history of their own. By identifying the events and social circumstances leading to the Holocaust, students today can understand current atrocities as part of a wider framework of which they are also a part. As a contributing element of that framework, they have the ability to impact it directly by promoting change through peacebuilding and resolving conflict. The exhibit also includes images and stories of victims and survivors from their lives prior to and after the Holocaust, calling attention to the fact that these individuals were not just victims, but named, contributing, and vibrant members of society, knowledge that is sometimes lost in the inundation of images without captions. Tourists can more readily identify with these individuals rather than the anonymous masses so often depicted in Holocaust representations and the larger genre of the photography of atrocity. The presentation of information is shifted temporally, so that the Holocaust becomes relevant to today. The exhibit frequently reminds tourists:

today we are able to study the horrors of the past and see new tragedy unfolding around us. Will we...attempt to make our voices heard? Will we stand up in the face of injustice...or will we be another generation of bystanders?<sup>23</sup>

Genocide and suffering caused by war remain daily events to which there are contributing factors that can be countered in local communities. The sense of futility fostered by media portrayals of atrocity is transformed into a sense of capability and empowerment.

Rather than being end products documenting isolated events, dark tourism sites must continually evolve, interacting with both the proceedings and people comprising contemporary society. Enzensberger states “[w]e have a history of peoples – but the history of *people* has yet to be written. This is why tourism, as something of the people, still lacks historical self-understanding” (Enzensberger 1996:120). Tourists need to be reflexive in their consideration of dark events. Instead of disassociating themselves, othering both actors

and victims of the event of concern, tourists must widen the picture in order to encompass themselves. Assimilating the criticisms considered here into dark tourism sites may encourage tourists to reconsider their personal relationship with the event and its players.

The subject matter of the darkest of tourism sites will remain controversial.

Interpretation of such elemental sites of European history continually has to be managed with care. Its relationship to tourism and its potential appearance as a spectacle and entertainment are problematic. This situation becomes acute particularly when offered to a tourist public who are invariably curious about suffering, horror and death. Horror and death have become established commodities, on sale to tourists who have an enduring appetite for the darkest elements of human history. [Lennon and Foley 2000:58]

By developing alternative objectives for dark tourist sites, the negative associations of dark tourism may be mitigated. The goals of dark tourism can expand to encompass the production of sites that strive toward experiential education and demonstrate to viewers their role as active participants in peacebuilding and conflict transformation in order to reduce the violence to which they are bearing witness. Essential in this transformation is that the lessons being learned can be actualized post-travel. “The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum’s own research shows the visitor behaviour pattern to be highly reverential in behavior, predominantly education-oriented, and willing to spend up to 3 hours in this location” (Lennon and Foley 2000:156). While the tourists’ behavior at this site may be noteworthy, three hours of attention should not be lauded as an impressive accomplishment. A visit to the memorial museum should foster an awareness the tourist carries with them as they exit the memorial museum. The “reverential” response should not be limited to the structure which houses material evidence of the Holocaust, but be translated into daily actions and interactions opposing the ideologies that fueled the events of the Holocaust; acts of genocide such as those incorporated into the *From Memory To Action: Meeting The*

*Challenge of Genocide* exhibit, and warfare.

By restricting the purpose of dark tourism sites to providing historical accounts highlighting themes of death, suffering, and atrocity, a unique opportunity and instrument contributing to the elimination of such events is lost. Lennon and Foley ask, “[i]s exposure to barbarism an antidote to that very barbarism?... Indeed, the world fifty years after the Holocaust is not restrained by the world fifty years before” (Lennon and Foley 2000:157). Simply informing tourists about the details of such events, whether in a tasteful or vulgar manner, does not prevent the occurrence of atrocity and human suffering in the world today. There is an unexplored potential in dark tourism sites that has only started to emerge in limited forms, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum exhibit and the development of The Holocaust Museum of Southwest Florida being two examples. Other solutions to the dilemma of dark tourism exist. The Museum of Tolerance, located in Los Angeles, California, could be a prototype for future museums and the reevaluation of existing dark sites. The mission of the Museum of Tolerance is to promote tolerance and peace through education about events such as the Holocaust.

The Museum of Tolerance (MOT) is a human rights laboratory and educational center dedicated to challenging visitors to understand the Holocaust in both historic and contemporary contexts and confront all forms of prejudice and discrimination in our world today...

The decision was made to create a museum - but not an ordinary museum of artifacts and documents. As Simon Wiesenthal expressed, it must not only remind us of the past, but remind us to act. This Museum should serve to prevent hatred and genocide from occurring to any group now and in the future. The daunting task was to create an experience that would challenge people of all backgrounds to confront their most closely-held assumptions and assume responsibility for change.<sup>24</sup>

Due to contemporary society’s attraction to death and events of suffering and atrocity, dark sites have attained marked popularity amongst tourists. Marketability contributes to their

potential for reaching large numbers of individuals with lessons central to The Museum of Tolerance. There is a growing recognition of a need for action that moves beyond the traditional educational opportunity. The negative stereotypes currently defining the tourist must be overcome. Instead, the tourist must be seen as an active participant capable of synthesizing and internalizing the information imparted. Dark sites must broaden their narrow offerings to accommodate the potential of this newly acknowledged tourist and of the present in which he or she resides. Dark tourism has the ability not only to educate tourists about events of death, suffering, and atrocity, but actively contribute to the decrease in the occurrence of the events it attempts to represent through both education and the facilitation of action of and for peace.

## NOTES

**Note 1:** The Geneva Conventions, comprised of four Conventions and three protocols, is an international agreement ratified by 194 states. The Fourth Geneva Convention dates from 1949 at which time the previous three were revised. The three additional protocols have been added subsequently. The entirety of this international body of law seeks to protect civilians and non-combatants during wartime and ensure humanitarian treatment (Trombly, 2003).

**Note 2:** Bodyworlds is an anatomical exhibit featuring plasticized human bodies. The plastination process was developed by Gunther von Hagens at the University of Heidelberg's Institute of Anatomy in the late 1970s. The intention of the multiple traveling exhibits is to promote health education for a lay audience. The exhibit highlights the uniqueness of each human body on display suggesting a true authentic experience. For more information on this exhibit refer to the website <<http://www.bodyworlds.com/en.html>>.

**Note 3:** For the purposes of this thesis, primary sites refer to dark tourism sites in which the events being portrayed took place at the same location. Secondary sites develop at a distance from the location of the original event.

**Note 4:** Both the assassination of John F. Kennedy and the destruction of the World Trade Center are represented through both primary and secondary sites. Tourists visit Dallas where they can visit The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza from which the assassination occurred and walk the path of the presidential motorcade. Alternatively, popular secondary sites exist including the burial place of John F. Kennedy at the eternal flame in Arlington Cemetery.

The destruction of the World Trade Center is another example of a dark event that allows for onsite visitation, but the increasing development of memorials located at a distance provides secondary sites. Of note, is the dedication of a 30 foot bronze sculpture at Arazim Park in Jerusalem, the base of which is partially comprised of World Trade Center debris.

**Note 5:** Seaton (1998) outlines the five steps of MacCannell's sight sacralization model which includes 1. Naming 2. Framing and Elevation 3. Enshrinement 4. Mechanical Reproduction 5. Social Reproduction

**Note 6:** Refer to the Imperial War Museum website <http://london.iwm.org.uk/server/show/conEvent.2377>>.

**Note 7:** The information here derived from an informal and undocumented conversation the author had with an assistant professor of justice and peace studies, including a background in teaching Holocaust literature in higher education, while visiting the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in May of 2009.

**Note 8:** Strange and Kempa (2003) discuss two of the arguably most visited former prison sites, Alcatraz Island and Robben Island. Although both are former prison sites, Strange and Kempa suggest that the divergences in their respective histories and their development as

tourist sites have influenced the significance of the sites as tourist destinations. As a result, they cannot be placed within the same category of dark tourism simply because they both are former prison sites. For example, although Alcatraz Island represents penal injustices, the popularity of the site has been largely media driven, deriving from high budget Hollywood films. On the other hand, Robben Island, designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site represents the history of apartheid in South Africa, and is, according to Strange and Kempa, more likely to attract tourist who have an interest in South Africa, Nelson Mandela, and the history of apartheid.

**Note 9:** Graceland, the home of Elvis Presley, is located in Memphis Tennessee. This site is considered a dark tourism site due to the preoccupation that the public has with Elvis' tragic and untimely death. Graceland is also the resting place of Elvis and his family members. For more information on this dark tourism destination refer to the website <[http://www.elvis.com/graceland/tours/elvis\\_overview.asp](http://www.elvis.com/graceland/tours/elvis_overview.asp)>.

The Torture Museum is a small museum located in Amsterdam, Netherlands featuring various instruments of torture. The author visited this site in 2001. For more information on this dark tourism site refer to the website <<http://www.torturemuseum.com/content.html>>.

**Note 10:** An additional system of categorization is offered by Seaton (1998). He outlines five categories of dark tourism sites including 1. witnessing death as a public event 2. site of mass or individual death 3. internment or memorial sites 4. viewing of evidence or representation of death and 5. watching or participating in a reenactment of death.

**Note 11:** Thomas Cook (1808-1892) formally organized his first group travel excursion in 1841. Four years later opened a travel agency from which he would develop both domestic and international prepackages travel itineraries (Enzensberger 1996:128). His name is still attached to one of the world's leading leisure travel groups Thomas Cook Group PLC. Refer to the website <<http://www.thomascookgroup.com/>>.

**Note 12:** From Giddens (1991), Ontological Security is defined as "a sense of continuity and order in events, including those not directly within the perceptual environment of the individual" (Giddens 1991:243).

**Note 13:** Sachsenhausen is a concentration camp located 20 kilometers outside of Berlin. Although not considered a major concentration camp, 100,000 individuals are believed to have lost their lives at this site. This site is an essential example of the problem of interpretation based on ideology. Although the site was memorialized in 1961, the interpretive focus was on the Soviet role in the liberation and concern for Communist prisoners. Other groups victimized by the Nazi regime including Jews, Slavs, Roma, and Jehovah's Witnesses were largely ignored. There is evidence of crimes attributed to the Communist regime occurring onsite during the period of 1945-1950. This causes further interpretive tensions by creating a need for commemorating two distinct events at the same location (Lennon and Foley 2000:41-43).

**Note 14:** This was the author's experience during a visit made to Auschwitz-Birkenau in the Spring of 2002. The author observed school groups visiting the site of Birkenau eating lunch and playing on the structural foundations of the crematorium. Although behavioral guidance should be provided by group leaders in such cases, little site interpretation was available to instruct tourists in the history of the particular site or the decorum which it requires. Most of the site interpretation and formal exhibition is included at Auschwitz from where tourists may be transported by shuttle to Birkenau.

**Note 15:** Ernst Freidrich's original Anti-War Museum located in Berlin was opened in 1925, but was destroyed in 1933 by Nazi forces. The Anti-War Museum was reopened in 1982. For more information on both the original and current Anti-War Museum, refer to the website <http://www.anti-kriegs-museum.de/english/start1.html>.

**Note 16:** In May of 2001, the Pearl Farm Beach Resort was attacked by a group of 30 armed men who approached by boat. The attack resulted in the deaths of two employees and the injury of six others. Damage was also done to the berthing area including two speedboats and four jet skis (Ness 2005).

**Note 17:** Lennon and Foley note that due to the extreme threat of vandalization attributed to neo-Nazi groups, a full sixth of the site's state and federal budget must be given to security measures (Lennon and Foley 2000:44).

**Note 18:** Each visitor to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum receives an identification card just prior to entering the elevators which provide transport to the permanent exhibitions. The identification cards are divided by sex and bare resemblance to a passport. The card "tells the story of a real person who lived during the Holocaust". The informational card includes a photograph, name, date and place of birth for the individual and then traces the individual through the war years.

**Note 19:** Johan Galtung (1996), the founder of peace and conflict studies, makes a distinction between negative and positive peace. Negative peace refers to the absence of violence while positive peace refers to the active construction of peace through, for example, the development of social systems that allow for equality of all participants and the building of healthy relationships.

**Note 20:** Refer to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum website <[http://www.ushmm.org/genocide/take\\_action/installation](http://www.ushmm.org/genocide/take_action/installation)>.

**Note 21:** Refer to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum website <[http://www.ushmm.org/genocide/take\\_action/action](http://www.ushmm.org/genocide/take_action/action)>.

**Note 22:** Refer to the Holocaust Museum of Southwest Florida website <<http://www.hmswfl.org/education.html>>.

**Note 23:** This quote was recorded from the permanent exhibit at the Holocaust Museum of Southwest Florida.

**Note 24:** Refer to The Museum of Tolerance website  
<<http://www.museumoftolerance.com>>.

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