

Chapter 1

Emotionality, Reason, and Dark Tourism: Discussions Around the Sense of Death

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ABSTRACT

*The present chapter questions to what extent visitors in dark sites are really interested for heritage issues or understanding the roots of moral disasters as the specialized literature suggests or simply are in quest of pleasure-maximization. This text is based on a criticism of the book *Heritage that hurts* authored by Joy Sather-Wagstaff. Far from any emotionality, dark tourism represents an ideological mechanism to reinforce the supremacy of liberal cultural values which are enrooted in late-capitalism. As the previous backdrop, to what extent tourists visiting these sites emulate (living as victims) or produce a genuine empathy with suffering is the main question goes unnoticed for sociologists and anthropologists. This essay review, which explores the roots of emotions not only continues our previous research in regards to the rise of Thana-Capitalism.*

INTRODUCTION

Not surprisingly, in recent years dark tourism has captivated the attention of the greater part of academy as well as scholars interested in these new emergent segments worldwide. This activity includes visits to cemeteries, abandoned prisons,

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museums, or spaces hit by natural disasters or terrorism. In the wide spectrum of these products, death is the common-place (Stone & Sharpley, 2008; Stone, 2011; Cohen, 2011; Biran, Poria & Oren, 2011; Podoshen, 2013; Korstanje & George, 2015). Though originally dark tourism research permeated in United Kingdom, sooner this expanded to others nations which have suffered a traumatic past as slavery, genocides, or natural disasters (Hartmann, 2014). Following Phillip Stone (2012), dark tourism serves for visitors to prefigure their own death, gazing through the others' death. The potentiality of dark tourism not only accelerating recovery processes in post disaster context, in which case community reinforces its resiliency to adversity, but by recycling obliterated cities into a more profitable spectacle has been widely studied by specialists from different angles (Seaton 1996, 1999; Foley & Lennon, 2000; Strange & Kempa, 2003; Korstanje & Ivanov, 2012). The polemic is given by the controversy it wakes up. While some voices claim that dark tourism commoditizes human's suffering to levels which may very well lead towards sadism (Howie, 2010; Verma & Jain, 2013; Heuermann & Chhabra, 2014; Korstanje, 2016), others, rather, emphasizes on the quest of more real experiences to interpret the own life or being-in-this-world is one of the main interests of these tourists (Miles, 2002; Ryan & Kohli, 2006; Wilson, 2008; Stone, 2013; White & Frew, 2013).

As the previous backdrop, to what extent tourists visiting these sites emulate (living as victims) or produce a genuine empathy with suffering is the main question goes unnoticed for sociologists and anthropologists. This essay review, which explores the roots of emotions not only continues our previous research in regards to the rise of Thana-Capitalism (see further Korstanje 2016), but discusses the chief argument of Sather Wagstaff (2011) who considered Dark Tourism as an instrument to forge an universal solidarity across cultures and nations. In her book *Heritage that hurts* she holds the thesis that visitors are receptive building empathy with victims, which leads to engage emotionally their biographies with tragedy. In sharp opposition to this belief, we argue that dark tourism reinforces the sacred- aura of first world consumers commoditizing others' pain as a reminder of their own supremacy. Far from being an instrument of mutual understanding, dark tourism disciplines emotions to impose an atmosphere of social Darwinism where winners take all.

The following questions were drawing our reflection: what are looking visitors of these site for? is death consuming the end of emotions? to what extent, may emotions be rechanneled through heritage or consumption as specialized literature suggests? are emotions conducive to altruism or individualism? are people aware of their inner emotions?

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