

Chapter 6

The Real Westworlds

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, with globalization, dark tourism has become one of the rising stars of popular culture and tourism trends; in fact, it has existed in human life for centuries. Although the role of the media in this popularization process is great, visits to tombs and monuments, museum visits, historical sites, and places that are remembered with negative stories actually get involved in the dark tourism activity, albeit unknowingly. Dark tourism has been the subject of academic research in the last two decades, thanks to its popularity; basically, it describes travels to places famous for death, catastrophe, natural disaster, war, or legendary narratives. The heartbeat of the “storyteller,” who had an important place for Walter Benjamin and that he defended to disappear, started to be heard again in the dark tourism event. This research is the product of an effort to rethink the storyteller through dark tourism.

INTRODUCTION

Since its inception, the world is in a continuous evolutionary process; especially in the last century, it has entered into an unprecedented transformation process. But unlike before, this time it is the human who shapes the transformation. This human-made transformation process took place especially in the fields of transportation, communication, digitalization and transformed the age we are in, into a brand new universe unlike the previous ones. Whether it's called global, postmodern or digital, the only certainty is; this age is overflowing with uncertainties and creates confusion every day. However, the transformation that has undoubtedly affected human life the most, threw the local all over the globe and removed the borders. This way it is; everything that is local and authentic has now become particles oscillating inside the sphere, and in this order one only has to choose and experience.

The circulation of the mentioned local items through the means of communication that can reach every corner of the globe such as television, cinema and internet; It provides the formation of a popular

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culture on a global scale. This new cultural structure, which has become a collage, including images, objects, places and even times, and the diversity it creates; it has laid the groundwork for a temporary and pleasure-oriented lifestyle. For this reason, people now focus on experiencing and continuing as much as fast as possible in this multi-particle universe in which they live. This pleasure-oriented and fast lifestyle also creates dissatisfaction in people. People who experience “dizziness” in the face of the abundance of experiences are running after a new one every day. Georg Simmel took this situation as “attitude of (*blasé*) being tired of the world” (Simmel, 1971). Attitude of being tired of the world; it is caused by the frequency and frequency of contrast nerve stimulation. According to Simmel; People who are not intellectually brilliant do not feel tired. The main thing that haunts people from the world is the pursuit of limitless pleasure because such a lifestyle forces the nerves to react maximally and continuously. However, after a certain point, people cannot react to anything. What causes this is; the limitlessness of changes and experiences. Simmel’s attitude of being tired of the world, which he describes as the mood of metropolitan life; after a while, it creates a state of dissatisfaction and inability to taste. According to him; another reason for this is that everything is exchanged with money. Even experiences are purchased with money, resulting in the graying of human life after a while (Simmel, 1971:329). It is not surprising that people constantly seek new experiences and pleasures in the fast and complex metropolitan life, based on Simmel’s thought.

In this quest, the postmodern human who spends his/her daily life in metropolises and corporate companies, swinging between flexible working hours; tends towards leisure activities and spends on these services. Among the leisure activities, it is undoubtedly touristic activities that promise to get away from everyday life in the most assertive way. However, like many other things in our age, the concepts of tourism and tourist have had their share of the transformations experienced; it has taken on a brand new state called post-tourism. When it comes to tourism for people, what matters is not only going to a beautiful place, looking at the perfect scenery or resting; it’s also about experiencing adrenaline, experiencing other lives, other times, and even other events. Being aware of this situation, tourism companies have been providing experience-oriented services, especially with adrenaline in recent years. “Dark” places, a fresh alternative for companies and customers looking for different destinations and experiences; it gives both sides of the market what they want. The places called “dark tourism” destinations are basically places famous with death, disasters and sadness. These places have a post-apocalyptic atmosphere where time stopped after the event. The aforementioned post-apocalyptic atmosphere provides postmodern people with the exciting experience they seek, while at the same time allowing tourism companies to sell services to their customers through ready-made narratives. These ready-made narratives, which have already been promoted through communication tools, are sold as flawlessly simulated packages by companies and give customers “dark” experiences. Thanks to simulated experiences in these dark destinations, postmodern metropolitan people who love to play games; he/she can both escape from his/her daily life and dive into extraordinary narratives that he/she cannot experience in his/her own life.

BACKGROUND

With this study; it is aimed to bring a different perspective to the dark tourism activity, which has recently reached a high level of popularity and has been the focus of academic research, especially in the last two decades. Earlier studies focused on issues such as the positioning, popularity, psychological and sociological triggers or effects of dark tourism, which does not have a very old history in the literature,

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