



Dark tourism, abjection and blood: A festival context



Jeffrey S. Podoshen^{a,*}, Grace Yan^b, Susan A. Andrzejewski^c, Jason Wallin^d,
Vivek Venkatesh^e

^a Department of Business, Organizations and Society, Franklin and Marshall College, 415 Harrisburg Avenue, Lancaster, PA 17603, USA

^b Department of Sport and Entertainment Management, College of Hospitality, Retail and Sport Management, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208, USA

^c California State University – Channel Islands, 1 University Drive, Camarillo, CA 93012, USA

^d Department of Secondary Education, University of Alberta, 116 St. and 85 Ave., Edmonton, AB, T6G 2R3, Canada

^e Concordia University, 1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd W., LB-579, Montreal, Quebec, H3G 1M8, Canada

H I G H L I G H T S

- We find more novel insights and implications that take the study of dark tourism further beyond the historic and educational realms and into a more present-centered orientation.
- The spaces we have studied are a lived consumption experience with specific subcultural narratives and a quest for extremity relating to the death and darkness.
- Transitory space acts as important moment in dark tourism experience.

A R T I C L E I N F O

Article history:

Received 19 March 2017

Received in revised form

29 August 2017

Accepted 3 September 2017

Keywords:

Holocaust tourism

Atrocity tourism

Dark tourism

Group attribution error

Attribution theory

A B S T R A C T

Dark tourism and its implications have been gaining significant prominence in both the literature and in practice in the recent past. Understanding the process and outcomes of dark tourism related to tourists and local hosts can play a key role in relations between the two groups of people. This paper, utilizing long-form interview data and content analysis, examines the psychological processes of some global Jewish citizens in relation to tourism activity and local hosts surrounding historic Holocaust sites located in Eastern and Central Europe. These attribution-oriented processes, which include the group attribution error, the perseverance effect and the role of atypical information generate novel insights into social-psychological activity nested in dark tourism. Our research yields significant implications on collective memory and narrative, representation, authenticity and ownership within the context of dark tourism.

© 2017 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Phenomenology emphasizes the attempt to get to the heart of subjective matters by describing phenomena as they appear and manifest to the consciousness of the experiencer (Moran, 2000). It is often depicted as the study of essences (Heidegger, 1971; Merleau-Ponty, 1945), as well as the exploration of human

experience (Polkinghorne, 1989) as Sartre (1970) believes, life is not to be reduced to a set of static objectives but must be understood in a manner that is meaningfully lived. From this perspective, phenomenology carries inherent relevance to tourism inquiry and, in particular, to festivals and events, considering that lived experience and perceptions of said experiences are an essential and integral component of this category of tourism (Pernecky & Jamal, 2010; Ziakas & Boukas, 2014). According to Geertz (1973), every event consists of interrelated dimensions of the personal, existential and socio-cultural. In tourism activity people can locate symbolic expression through festival representations in a search for meanings and identities. Meanwhile, despite the fact that festival tourism has already become a quintessential category of the

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: jpodoshe@fandm.edu (J.S. Podoshen), chengyan@mailbox.sc.edu (G. Yan), susan.andrzejewski@csuci.edu (S.A. Andrzejewski), jwallin@ualberta.ca (J. Wallin), vivek@education.concordia.ca (V. Venkatesh).

growing and increasingly relevant experience economy (Pernecky & Jamal, 2010), there is surprisingly little discussion on phenomenological experience in the event and tourism literature (Ziakas & Boukas, 2014) and there have been repeated calls for deeper examination (Patterson & Getz, 2013; Robinson, Picard, & Long, 2004).

Given the importance of festivals, their growth in global economies and a growing fascination with dark tourism (Podoshen, 2018) and dystopian dark tourism (Podoshen, Venkatesh, Wallin, Andrzejewski, & Jin, 2015), this study employs a phenomenological framework to examine visitors' experiences in Black Metal (an extreme subgenre of heavy metal) festivals and concert tours, specifically those that involve abjection, blood, violence and material traces of death. Abjection is a visceral reaction to the vile, disgusting and repulsive that also encompasses the realization that the vile, disgusting and repulsive is a part of our existence as humans (Kristeva, 1982). Festivals featuring abjection fall in line with Bakhtin's (1984) interpretation of carnivals, where people subvert and liberate routines and structures imposed by society through a combination of humor, chaos, the grotesque, the sacred, as well as the profane. In this sense, Black Metal festivals and concert tours constitute an *extraordinary* space which provides visitors with experiences of difference, darkness and danger, sustained by shocking forms of musical performance, lyrics, and ambience within the liminality of the festival space (Yan, Kloeppel, & Li, 2016). Black Metal festivals also create a framework for the hyperreal condition of death and blasphemy (Podoshen, Venkatesh, & Jin, 2014; Venkatesh, Podoshen, Urbaniak, & Wallin, 2015) – amongst other dystopic themes – alongside a critical reflection on political, social and cultural factors that impact the production of dystopic artforms. With this in mind, our work is driven by the following objectives using the interpretative phenomenological frame: a) to closely examine, as Stone (2011) calls for, dark tourism that centers on interrelationships between the tourism activity and conditions of society; b) to shed light on the specifics of the tourists' experiences while actually attending dark tourism festivals that feature abjection; and c) to provide novel theory building into dark tourism motivations that go beyond the hedonic, the quest for remembrance, heritage and other related variables that have been well-discussed in the literature. Dark tourism related music festival experiences are relatively new phenomena (occurring after the turn of the 21st century) and, as such, require theoretical explanation that stems beyond current knowledge.

2. Literature review

2.1. Dark tourism

Stone and Sharpley (2008) inform us that dark tourism allows death to be more strongly integrated into society and the public discourse. It makes absent death present and more explicitly woven into the context of our lives. Secondly, by engaging in dark tourism, humans can reduce a sense of dread for their impending or inevitable demise. This, the authors mention, can assist in creating a feeling of security. There is also the suggestion that some dark tourism activities help the tourist mitigate fears of death in a manner that is generally viewed as culturally acceptable (Biran & Buda, 2017). Additionally, the act of touring locations associated with death can give humans a contemplative space related to dying and death. Sharpley and Stone (2009) tell us that dark tourists are generally motivated by the desire to gain knowledge and understand an aspect of the world that was/is not fully elucidated. The interpretative aspect is vital to the experience (Sharpley & Stone, 2009), meaning that consuming things that are “very dark” are not just about experiencing death in empty space, voyeurism or

mere *schadenfreude* (Stone, 2006). Further, dark tourism can provide an emotional and cognitive space that becomes enmeshed with the physical (Yan, Zhang, Zhang, Lu, & Guo, 2016). *Deathscapes* as Maddrell and Sidaway (2012) term them, allow for an interactive process between tourists and a particular space involving the use of the semiotic.

Recent literature in the field of dark tourism has embraced the nuances of more novel conceptualizations about death consumption that move beyond the traditionally-viewed motivations and variables of simulation (Lennon & Foley, 1999; Podoshen, 2013; Podoshen et al., 2015), community building and tensions therein (Kang, Scott, Lee, & Ballantyne, 2012; Venkatesh et al., 2015), questioning morality (Bolin, 2012) and the challenge of order and rationality (Lennon & Foley, 2000). More nuanced theoretical insight in recent years has centered on the search for novelty (the unusual and unfamiliar) in tourism experiences and darker tourism experiences (Buda & Shim, 2015) as well as visits to places where there is legitimate and immediate threat of harm; termed *danger-zone* tourism (Buda, d'Hautessere & Johnston, 2014).

Related to this danger aspect, Sparks and Sparks posit that violence enables some individuals to have sensory delight and that this delight in and of itself is enjoyable. Baumeister and Campbell (1999), Kottler (2011) and Sparks and Sparks all present work that suggests that humans may obtain “sadistic” pleasure by consuming violent media, thus satisfying an inherent desire for engagement with violent and death-oriented material. Pleasure in consumption is associated with meaning (Alba & Williams, 2013). This runs in tandem with Venkatesh et al.'s (2015) assertion that death and violent consumption facilitate a type of *hyperreality* that allow consumers to better come to terms with death or that facing violent consumption can act as a form of preparation for an inevitable violent future (Podoshen et al., 2015). This conception of hyperreality – derived from Baudrillard (1981) – is a type of “reality by proxy” or system condition that views reality as part of the constructed symbolic world (Firat & Dholakia, 2006). Venkatesh et al. (2015) posit some forms of consumption of death and the abject are actually a rejection and/or deferment of death. This dovetails with Podoshen's (2016) take that increased concern about death in the public eye comes as little surprise as massive concentrated wealth has set the stage for a serious exploration by some to avoid or circumvent death. The desire to evade death assumes myriad forms beyond the belief of a metaphysical life-after-death. The speculative idea of colonizing planets beyond Earth and hence abjecting the ramifications of global climate change, overpopulation, resource scarcity and prospect of extinction have already been operationalized. In a general sense, the economic background of Western late capitalism supports this scene of abjection, casting away the image of death via the ideals of compulsory happiness, excess positivity, and the interminable agitation of the body into affective production (Baudrillard, 1990). Even where Western capitalism feeds on death, it is almost always the death of the “other” semiotized as abject.

2.2. Phenomenology and black metal festivals

Phenomenology largely originated with Husserl (1970), who put forth that a philosophical account of knowledge has to remain faithful to the deepest experiential evidence. Specifically, phenomenology begins with the philosophical view that the meanings of things are always related to the concrete, existential possibilities of the world that individuals exist in (Heidegger, 1971). In other words, all objects are encountered in a specific perspective where all consciousness occurs in a temporal flow through human perceptions. It emphasizes that experiences need to be interpreted through grouped content and the mode of being, in regards to full

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/5108605>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/5108605>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)