



Hunting humans: A future for tourism in 2200



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ABSTRACT

This paper offers a future scenario to expose the potential engagement of tourism in the year 2200. Taking a socio-constructionist approach to research and through the analysis of secondary data, it explores current issues and debates concerned with the *environment*, disasters and depletion of natural resources; *social* context including movies and entertainment, the media and technology, the evolution of the theme park and cultural transmission; and *economical* realities, covering poverty vs. world elite and global culture, all of which are seen as drivers of the potential future tourism market. In so doing, it presents a narrative (scenario), provoking the notion that in the year 2200 death and hunting humans will form part of the tourism entertainment industry and a practice carried out by the wealthy-elite, a view backed with substance. It argues, that as a result of past and current engagements with murder, death and human atrocities, and significantly our relationship with death, humans will gradually become more accustomed to death as a form of spectacle, influenced by current entertainment, movies and the media. Death as entertainment by form of detachment (emotionally and physically) will further influence the future fun aspect of hunting humans. Significantly, changes in our natural environment will lead to great challenges, lack of water, depleted food resources and greater disparity between the wealthy and impoverished; all of which will drive the change in our humanly existence. This papers aims to provide a provocative account of the 'potential future meaning of tourism', through the application of current knowledge, and significantly, it is our relationship with death and violence that are central, death and violence are becoming diluted and thus, will be a source of future entertainment and a tourism activity – in less humans can reach a level of transcendence that has never been present, to transcend the culture they have created, one that has always witnessed violence as a means to survival. If violence can be detached then we will be presented with a 'wild card', a future that is truly out of this world.

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1. Introduction

In what circumstance is it acceptable for one human being, for entertainment or leisure, watch or even pay to see the death of another human being? Is it something that the reader considers acceptable or not? This article will begin to investigate this question by exploring the future of tourism activities. Death as a spectacle is not a new phenomenon in social spaces, in fact, our past arguably shows the human fascination for death, through various forms, to be more of a social activity – people being in the actual presence and social space where death occurs – than our present condition; Roman gladiatorial

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games and public executions are well documented examples throughout history. In order to understand tourism activities in the future, it is necessary to appreciate our historical social undertakings. From a futurist perspective, it is also necessary to understand present social patterns to understand the future, such as, technology, wealth, resources, culture, the environment and the human use of leisure time. Therefore, to understand the future, to offer predictions of future tourism, it is necessary to have a holistic understanding of the past and the present, as predicting the future can be defined as *'The forecasting of the future on a systematic basis, especially by the study of present day trends in human affairs'* ([The Oxford English Dictionary, 2015](#)). As noted by Kim Wilkins, the past is forever present and visible in our new ideas:

'There is a tendency to see the Middle Ages as a long way off; at the far end of a spyglass. We aren't medieval; we've become modern, rational. We've superceded what we were in that "dark age". But just like a spyglass, the medieval folds up inside the modern. It inhabits us even as we try to disavow its proximity, its persistence, its always-there-ness' ([Wilkins, 2013: 254](#)).

In the case for Wilkins, it could be suggested that contemporary war, fighting for land and resources is a reflection of medieval battles for similar power status; our relationship and involvement with death has been continuous throughout time. A review of futures literature has driven this author to apply a socio-constructionist perspective of society to present a potential future tourism scenario and importantly to determine and measure the drivers that are shaping it. This paper concerns itself with endeavouring the potential to foresee a tourism market of the future. To do this, a scenario planning approach is applied. By exploring worldly conditions, a 'future tourism scenario/narrative' is presented, and ultimately the potential 'future meaning of tourism' is critically assessed, discussed and presented.

This paper begins with an observation of the past and present complexion of tourism and its relationship with death, and as a supply and demand phenomenon; to do so it applies a dark tourism perspective.

2. Dark tourism: past and present

Exploring and understanding the historical and modern forms in which dark tourism practices transpire will further highlight the pattern in which death and our relationship with it has existed in its many social entities; ranging from grievance to spectacle. Thus, enabling a projection for potential future practices of tourism in 2200.

2.1. Supply of dark tourism

What is dark tourism? Authors such as [Rojek \(1993\)](#) have defined activities similar to dark tourism, and pre-empted the coining of the term by Malcom Foley and John Lennon in the 1990s see [Foley and Lennon \(1996\)](#). Rojek discussed the concept of "black-spots" or 'the commercial development of grave sites and sites in which celebrities or large numbers of people have met with "sudden" and 'violent' death' (*ibid.*, 1993: 136). A common and widespread term often used is one offered by [Stone \(2006a: 146\)](#), who defines dark tourism as *'the act of travel to sites associated with death, suffering and the seemingly macabre'*. Stone's definition permits for the incorporation of a wide selection of sites and attractions to be categorised within it. [Lennon and Foley \(2000\)](#) adopted a supply-side focus in attempting to define dark tourism, by offering a number of case studies of dark sites. Similarly, from a supply perspective [Stone's \(2006a\)](#) dark tourism spectrum identifies the perceived product features of dark tourism within a "darkest-lightest" framework of supply ([Stone, 2006b](#)). The large and diverse scale and appearance of dark tourism in its various manifestations can be seen in [Wright's \(2014: 18\)](#) work who begins to present a Table of literature covering the dark tourism story to date; Table offers an introduction and understanding to some of the popular research papers and categories of attractions to which authors have explored the field of dark tourism.

Since its ever-growing status in academia, the dark tourism concept has absorbed attention from the wider academic sphere and media circles. Similarly, various destinations, sites and attractions around the globe have also attracted and fascinated (due to their dark relations) audiences. What is evident from the literature is dark tourism, as an activity, has existed in practice, if not in name, throughout history. [Sharpley \(2009\)](#) observed its early manifestations; these include the Roman gladiatorial games, religious pilgrimages or travel to witness medieval public executions. For example, the last public execution in France was in Versailles in 1939, with the execution of the German criminal Eugène Weidmann (born 1908). The event drew several hundred spectators to witness the staged event ([Rare Historical Photos, 2014](#)). Public executions of the past arguably saw greater participation in the actual viewing of human death as a public spectacle, in comparison to current societies.

More recently, over the last century, dark tourism continues to be both widespread and diverse. [Smith \(1998\)](#), for example, suggests that sites or destinations associated with war probably constitute the largest single category of tourist attractions in the world. More recent attractions vary enormously, from the commonly cited examples of the Sixth Floor in Dallas, Texas ([Foley & Lennon, 1996](#)) or graveyards ([Seaton, 2002](#)), to Holocaust sites ([Biran, Poria, & Oren, 2011](#); [Cole, 1999](#); [Dann, 1998](#); [Miles, 2002](#); [Podoshen & Hunt, 2011](#); [Strange & Kempa, 2003](#); [Zelizer, 2001](#)) and slavery-heritage tourism ([Dann & Seaton, 2001](#)). More so, as noted, there are few if any similarities between major disaster sites such as Ground Zero in New York or a destination that has been struck by a natural disaster (see [Wright, 2014](#)), to manufactured, playful attractions such as the "Dracula Experience" in Whitby, UK. The supply features are thus varied and complex, present across all societies and death (actual or representation) and destruction are central to their distinction to other forms of tourism.

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