

Tourism and Crime: key themes

12

Edited by

David Botterill and Trevor Jones

Dark Tourism and Sites of Crime

 Published by Goodfellow Publishers Limited, Woodeaton, Oxford, OX3 9TJ
<http://www.goodfellowpublishers.com>

Copyright © Goodfellow Publishers Limited 2010

All rights reserved by Goodfellow Publishers Limited. The text of this publication, or any part thereof, may not be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, storage in an information retrieval system, or otherwise, without prior permission of the publisher.



Design and setting by P.K. McBride

12 Dark Tourism and Sites of Crime

John Lennon

This chapter will:

- ◆ Explore in detail the relationship between crime and its attraction to visitors
 - ◆ Consider the phenomenon of dark tourism and its relationship with crime with reference to some UK and international case examples
 - ◆ Develop the relationship between crime and visitation by tourists and the response of policy-makers and governments to issues of commemoration and development
 - ◆ Examine the range of responses to crime sites and what they tell us about ourselves through appeal and visitation.
-

Introduction

Dark tourism (sometimes referred to as thanatourism) has become established in the last decade as a niche tourism area. Death, suffering, visitation and tourism have been interrelated for many centuries (Foley and Lennon, 1996a; Seaton, 1999). Indeed for many years, humans have been attracted to sites and events that are associated with death, disaster, suffering, violence and killing. From ancient Rome and gladiatorial combat to attendance at public executions, sites of death have held a voyeuristic appeal. As previously recorded, the site of the first battle in the American Civil War was sold as a potential tourist site the following day (Lennon and Foley, 2000) and viewing of the battlefield of Waterloo by non-combatants was recorded in 1816 (Seaton, 1999). These sites associated with death and disaster that exert a dark fascination for visitors are frequently linked to crime locations and the perpetration of lawful and unlawful acts. The sheer diversity of forms of dark tourism sites are significant and have been the subject of emergent research (see for example: Foley and Lennon, 1996a; Lennon and Foley, 2000; Seaton, 1996; Seaton and Lennon, 2004; Dann and Seaton, 2006; Ashworth, 1996; Sharkley and Stone, 2009). However the relationship to criminal acts and punishment for crimes is an important one that has received limited direct attention.

The identification of dark sites and their visitation

Dark tourism has generated much more than purely academic interest. The term has entered the mainstream and is a popular subject of media attention. More importantly it is used as a marketing term on sites such as <http://thecabinet.com> where the category of dark destinations has been in use since 2006. The appeal of a range of global destinations associated with dark acts shows no signs of abatement. Most recently the enduring appeal has been reinforced in New York, Paris and beyond. The Ground Zero site now attracts significantly greater numbers of visitors since the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 (Blair, 2002). In Paris, the death site of Diana, Princess of Wales evidenced pilgrimage and visitation following her death and the site of her burial place – Althorpe – achieved significant visitation for the three years following her death. In Africa, sites in Angola, South Africa, Sierra Leon, and Rwanda have all demonstrated the appeal of dark histories to visitors (Rowe, 2007).

Academic interest in these phenomena was intimated in the work of Rojek (1993) and Ashworth (1996) and Foley and Lennon (1996a) introduced the term ‘dark tourism’ latterly exploring the phenomena as the subject of a monograph (Lennon and Foley, 2000). This has in turn led to considerable interest both in academia, main stream and electronic media. The range of dark sites associated with the phenomena is considerable and varies significantly from Holocaust sites (which can incorporate genocide, mass killing, incarceration and experimentation) to the manufactured Merlin Entertainment operations which recreate tableaux and have very limited historical artefacts. This highly successful company creates ‘Dungeon experiences’ in Edinburgh, London and York, which feature crime, punishment, disease and a host of dark elements. More broadly, dark tourists can be found at grave sites, crash locations, sites of assassination, and at museums of torture and death. For many of these sites, elements such as visitor management and conservation, interpretation and marketing, retailing and catering all create issues and challenges. Operationally issues of ethical presentation, visitor behaviour, site management, revenue generation, marketing and promotion, all create areas that are fraught with difficulties and frequently the subject of criticism and debate.

Dark tourism has been in existence as an element of tourism for many centuries (Foley and Lennon, 1996a; Seaton, 1996). Fundamentally, we can identify elements of the ancient, the modern and the post-modern in understanding these phenomena. Murder, execution and sites of lawful and unlawful death have served to attract the attention of visitors and residents from ancient times to the current day. Education and the nature of the learning experience are frequently used to justify and explain motivation for development and visitation in the modern world. Indeed, the idea of travel as an education experience of new and previously unvisited destinations is frequently used as a rational argument, associated with discussions of modernity. More recently it is the significance of communications

Chapter extract

**To buy the full file, and for copyright
information, click here**

[http://www.goodfellowpublishers.com/academic-publishing.php?promoCode=&partnerID=&content=story&st](http://www.goodfellowpublishers.com/academic-publishing.php?promoCode=&partnerID=&content=story&storyID=208)

[oryID=208](http://www.goodfellowpublishers.com/academic-publishing.php?promoCode=&partnerID=&content=story&storyID=208)



All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recorded or otherwise, without the written permission of Goodfellow Publishers Ltd

All requests should be sent in the first instance to

rights@goodfellowpublishers.com

www.goodfellowpublishers.com