

POST-MODERNITY AND THE EXCEPTIONALISM OF THE PRESENT IN DARK TOURISM

REBECCA CASBEARD

CHARLES BOOTH

BRISTOL BUSINESS SCHOOL,
UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST OF ENGLAND

The paper is a polemical essay concerning approaches to the historical other; a critique of the exceptionalism of the present displayed in some of the contemporary dark tourism literature. We review claims in this literature that dark tourism is both a product of and signifier for post-modernity. We utilize the criteria underpinning these claims to analyze two historical cases of thanatological travel in the first half of the 19th century and conclude that, as both cases self-evidently demonstrate recognizably 'contemporary' aspects of dark tourism, conceiving of the latter as 'post-modern' is historically inaccurate and misguided. The essay closes with a plea for a historically-informed sensitivity in researching the field.

Ludwig Wittgenstein (as cited in Monk, 1990, p. 536-7):

Hegel seems to want to say that things that look different are really the same, whereas my interest is in showing that things that look the same are really different.

This is a polemical essay concerning contemporary approaches to the historical other in the dark tourism literature (Sharpley & Stone, 2009). Our main aim is to subvert and critique what we call the *exceptionalism of the present*. That is, to take issue with presentist arguments about dark tourism that contemporary society is somehow bracketed off from the past, and that contemporary social and cultural conditions can or should therefore be accorded exceptional status. We argue in this paper that claims that dark tourism is a post-modern phenomenon are exceptionalist, presentist, and do not stand up to historical investigation. However, in denying this particularistic claim, we do not wish to endorse Hegel's universalism, which in historical terms implies what we might ironically call a "Flintstones" view of history (Booth & Rowlinson, 2006, p. 3) where historical agents are "just like us."¹ We disagree. Neither, however, are they "nothing like us." The past might be a foreign country, and they might do things differently there, but that does not imply

that the things they do are out of our reach, or that they don't share a "family resemblance" to the way we do things. In particular, although we recognize that significant historical events may give rise to historical discontinuities (typically, the American Civil War and First World War are variously claimed as events of this type) we consider that – as has been pointed out by revisionist historians of both conflicts – continuity is often concealed by discontinuity.

In a sense, claims about post-modernity exemplify the least convincing historical arguments for discontinuity, given that it seems impossible to agree on the nexus point, though we note in passing Charles Jenck's perhaps sardonic suggestion that "the post-modern epoch began on 15 July 1972 at 3.22 p.m. when the Pruitt-Igoe public housing development in St Louis, Missouri...was knocked down, having been recognized as uninhabitable" (as cited in Johnson & Duberley, 2000, p. 92). In any case, we think conceiving of post-modernity as a distinctive historical epoch is wrong, as are arguments that dark tourism is solely a phenomenon of post-modernity, and we explore our counter-argument in the paper.

We are, of course, by no means alone in contesting the claim that dark tourism is exclusively a product of, and signifier for, post-modernity. Lennon and Foley (2000) themselves expressed a limited ambiva-

lence about their conceptualization, as they stated that they do not propose to debate the philosophical implications of their position, and readily admit that their chosen terminology of post-modernity is interchangeable with alternative conceptions such as "late capitalism, or late modernity" (p. 11). Other approaches have also been highly critical, including that of Seaton (2009) in his most recent review of the field. In his attack on post-modern approaches to thanatourism (his preferred term) he argued that such accounts, characterized by the work of Rojek (1993) are "radically unhistorical" (Seaton, 2009, p. 524). He also considered that Lennon and Foley's earlier philosophical position is subverted by the realist turn that their later work (at least Lennon's – e.g., Wight & Lennon, 2007) has taken.

Whilst we accept and endorse the first point, we think the second misses the mark. The problem here is not that Lennon and Foley (1999, 2000) exemplify a *philosophical* commitment to post-modernism (although Rojek clearly does); if so the ambivalence, remarked on above, reveals a singularly weak set of philosophical commitments. Like Wight (2006), Seaton (2009) appears to be conflating epistemological approaches with questions of historical periodization. Rather, our position in this essay is that it is claims regarding the *exceptionalism* of post-modernity (or late capitalism, etc.) which render many assumptions about dark tourism deeply problematic. We concur, in other words, with Seaton (1996, 1999, 2009), when he argued that thanatouristic behavior has existed for centuries. In his 2009 chapter, he points to specific cases (the ancient and medieval Christian cult of death, antiquarianism and the 'discovery' of heritage, and romanticism and thanatourism) which stress the traditional and enduring nature of thanatological travel which, he argued, has been given particular impulse by emergent forces in European social and cultural history over time. In this essay, we limit ourselves to two very different episodes within the last of Seaton's periods of historical thanatourism, the Romantic era. Specifically, we are concerned to show, not only that thanatouristic travel existed in this era (surely a rather well-established point), but also that this phenomenon exhibits precisely the attributes that Lennon & Foley (1999, 2000) used to justify their exceptionalist position. The latter, we

therefore conclude, is philosophically self-refuting and historically inaccurate.

This paper is organized in five sections. Following this introduction we briefly establish, with some inevitable redundancy in the context of this special issue, some key definitional and methodological issues concerning dark tourism and/or thanatourism. Next, we review approaches to the field that contend that dark tourism is an exclusively post-modern phenomenon. Unfairly, we single out the bestselling book by Lennon and Foley (2000) as the paradigm example of this tendency. We then present two historical case studies which, we argue, clearly match Lennon and Foley's criteria and thus render their post-modern argument deeply problematic. We conclude the essay with suggestions for future research orientations and directions in the dark tourism field.

DARK TOURISM

It is a commonplace argument that sites associated with death, disaster, and atrocity are becoming an increasingly pervasive feature in contemporary heritage tourism, providing a journey "for the tourist who wishes to gaze upon real and recreated death" (Stone, 2006, p. 145). Foley and Lennon (1996) argued that dark tourism is positioned at the crossroads of the recent history of inhumane acts and the representation of these in news and film media, coining the term to "encompass the presentation and consumption (by visitors) of real and commodified death and disaster sites" (p. 198). This pervasiveness has thus been attributed to continuing human curiosity about death and related topics, and to the media and technological advances that, arguably, accelerate processes of public awareness and of the commodification of such topics: "Significant media and technological advances, particularly of late, have exposed societies around the world to the latest news of human conflict, death and suffering like never before" (Best, 2007, p. 30).

Earlier, Rojek (1993) adopting a consciously post-modern approach, defined "black spots" as "the commercial developments of grave sites and sites in which celebrities or large numbers of people have met with sudden and violent death" (p. 136). Subsequently, Rojek (1997) distinguished black spots, which he argued had an enduring historical element, from "sensation sights" [*sic*] in which the tragedy that is the source of attraction is contemporary: "these are places in which violent death has occurred, or where abduction, chase or siege is occurring, or has recently

occurred, and to which sightseers travel both physically and through reverie" (p. 63).

There is considerable literature attending to definitions, shades, and categories of dark tourism, and space precludes more than a general overview in this essay. One conception relevant to our argument is that of thanatourism defined as the travel to a location wholly, or partially, motivated by the "desire for actual or symbolic encounters with death, particularly . . . violent death" (Seaton, 1996, p. 240). Seaton (1996, pp. 240-242) suggested a typology of thanatourism comprising of five categories. The first, a travel to witness public enactments of death, dates back to gladiatorial combat and public executions, and has modern manifestations in the sightseers who rush to disaster scenes. The second category is travel to see sites of mass or individual deaths, after they have occurred, and encompasses a vast amount of dark tourism behavior. A prominent example of this in the literature is the travel to Holocaust death camps (see Ashworth, 2002; Beech, 2000; Charlesworth & Addis, 2002). The third is travel to interment sites of, and memorials to, the dead; this includes visits to graveyards, catacombs, crypts, war memorials, and cenotaphs. A fourth activity is travel to view the material evidence, or symbolic representations of death, in a location unconnected with its occurrence. This includes museums where weapons of death, the clothing of murder victims, and other artifacts are put on display. Lennon and Foley (1999), for example, focused on the permanent exhibition in the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C. One final category, the travel for re-enactments or simulation of death, has come to encompass staged battle re-enactments (e.g., Thompson, 2004), and the organization of war-weekends (see, for example, Wallace, 2007).

In terms of the categories proposed by Seaton (1996), the most common research areas relate to the second and third categories. Wight (2006) confirmed that, as a field of academic enquiry, dark tourism research has primarily examined the movement and motivation of visitors to sites of death and disaster. A significant proportion of academic research (e.g., Blackburn, 2000, 2002; Grundlingh, 2004; Henderson, 2000; Iles, 2006; Lunn, 2007; O'Dwyer, 2004; Seaton, 1999; Smith, 1998) focused on tourism associated with war, battlefields, and other aspects of military history. Other areas of investigation common to the field include historical sites associated with former communist, fascist, or apartheid regimes (e.g., Wight &

Lennon, 2007), slavery heritage (e.g., Teye & Timothy, 2004), sites of confinement and punishment (e.g., Blackburn, 2000), and those associated with the deaths of celebrated individuals, such as John F. Kennedy and Diana, Princess of Wales (such as Walter, 2001).

As a result of the predominantly site-specific nature of dark tourism or thanatourism research (Seaton, 1996), current literature consists almost exclusively of case study enquiry. Wight (2006) argued that the methodologies adopted focus chiefly on qualitative inquiry including cumulative case studies (e.g., Lennon & Foley, 2000), discourse analysis (e.g., Siegenthaler, 2002) and questionnaires and mixed methods (e.g., Austin, 2002; Wight & Lennon, 2007). A number of academic papers (e.g., Siegenthaler, 2002) engage in semiotic or hermeneutic analysis. However, Dann and Seaton (2001) commented that no studies within this field of investigation can be described as constructivist. Notwithstanding this claim, others have argued that "[p]hilosophical approaches to academic research in the area of dark tourism have been commodiously post-modern or poststructuralist² making prevalent reference to the recreation of authenticity and to the dilemmas faced by attraction managers attempting to bring history closer to the audience through the use of imagery, multi-media and other more engaging interpretation" (Wight, 2006, p. 121).

THE PROBLEM OF POST-MODERNITY

We believe this insistence on categorizing dark tourism as a phenomenon of post-modernity presents a number of fundamental problems. We argue, first, that there arises a contentious issue of historical periodization. Lennon and Foley (2000, p. 3) argued that "tourist interest in *recent* [our emphasis] death, disaster and atrocity is a growing phenomenon...we intend to signify a fundamental shift in the way in which death, disaster and atrocity are being handled by those who offer associated tourism 'products.'" The insistence on dark tourism as a phenomenon of post-modernity thus arguably rules out the identification of many "dark" sites (e.g., sites associated with the slave trade) as actually dark due to (a) temporal distance from the present, and (b) as we shall see below, the failure of such sites, allegedly, to arouse anxiety and doubt about the modernist project. This narrow definition is therefore only *historical* in the sense that the phenomenon is temporally

located within an epoch characterized as post-modernity. However, as stated above, Seaton defined the related idea of thanatourism, as “travel to a location wholly, or partly, motivated by the desire for actual or symbolic encounters with death” (1999, p. 131). Such encounters are temporally unrestricted, both explicitly and by implication, in Seaton’s (1999) account of tourism and Waterloo, thus implying a more inclusive categorization of dark tourism than that of Lennon and Foley (2000).

Implied within Lennon and Foley’s (2000) project, then, is a sense firstly that dark sites can only be classified as such if the events connected with them occurred within living memory (generously, in the last 100 years). In principle, this would not preclude a visitor to the Gettysburg battlefield in 1875 from being classified as a dark tourist, was periodization the only question at stake. In this sense, (see Figure 1) the period in which dark tourism can occur slides through and over time, with sites receding out of living memory and thus out of darkness in the process.

We would probably accept that this conception holds for sites which, even though they may at the time excite considerable interest, are connected with transient or ephemeral events, or with cultural or political issues that are themselves time-limited. We would, on the other hand, strongly argue that variants of dark tourism that primarily concern *enduring* issues of memory, identity, resistance, and sacrifice (e.g., the Holocaust and sites associated with the attempted genocide of European Jewry, Gallipoli tourism by Australians or New Zealanders, or tourism connected with slavery sites by African Americans) would not satisfy this criterion. Scholars of social memory (e.g., Cubitt, 2007; Misztal, 2003) have, moreover, long since dismissed living memory as a construct of any theoretical or historical significance in the study of collective memory.

However, the second aspect of the Lennon and Foley (2000) thesis is that dark sites enjoy such a status if and only if they give rise to anxieties about the modernist project. This necessarily confines dark tourism to the period after 1870 or so, if quotidian scholarly understandings of modernism are applied in this

case. However, it is far from clear whether Lennon and Foley are in fact referring to *modernism* or to *modernity* (which we would characterize as associated with post-Enlightenment rationality, rise of industrialization, establishment of recognizably modern forms of liberal democracy, etc., thus extending the potential historical starting point for dark tourism a century or so further back). Their terminology suggests – though their historicization denies – the latter to be their target.

Lennon and Foley’s (2000) further insistence on the role of global communication technology in facilitating dark tourism negates this uncertainty, as they make it clear that they consider the rise of this technology (connected to the development of radio/wireless telegraphy and associated technologies) to be a twentieth century phenomenon. They suggested interdependence between communications technologies and dark tourism: “global communications technologies are inherent in both the events which are associated with a dark tourism product and are present in the representation of the events for visitors at the site itself” (Lennon & Foley, 2000, p. 16). They go on to say “it has been argued that the sinking of the *Titanic* was the first, real, global event, due to its impact upon news and media worldwide” (Lennon & Foley, 2000, p. 17).³

Previously, Foley and Lennon (1996) argued that dark or tragic tourism:

is an intrinsic part of the post-modern world. The simulation of experiences, the critical importance of reproduction and duplication and the centrality of media and technology are characteristically present in any examination of these locations. Thus the contemporary context for dark tourism is that of post-modernism. (p. 199)

In a later article, they repeated that “[d]ark tourism is consistent with accounts of post-modernity” (Lennon & Foley, 1999, p. 47).⁴ We find this conception deeply problematic.

HISTORICAL CASE STUDIES

We outline below two brief historical case studies which we consider exemplify recognizably – if we accept Lennon and

Foley’s (2000) definition – post-modern dark tourism occurring within the early nineteenth century; both of which gave rise to widespread feelings of anxiety about humankind’s relation to the natural and social world at the time, and both of which were facilitated and disseminated by relatively novel contemporary technological developments. The first is the case of the Willey House, which we believe has not received any attention in the dark tourism literature hitherto. The second is tourism connected with the Battle of Waterloo, which was the focus of Seaton’s 1999 paper. Although there is some overlap, our concerns are different to those of Seaton (1999), and we hope that we are presenting material new to the readers of this paper. We stress that neither account is particularly detailed or original, and we confine ourselves to the use of one main secondary source in each case. The accounts are therefore intended to be suggestive rather than definitive.

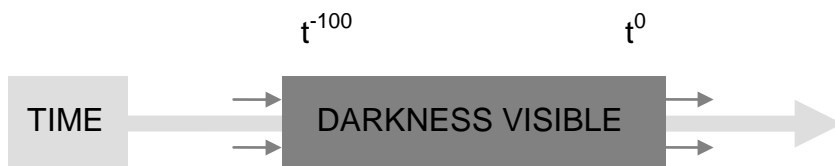
THE WILLEY HOUSE

On Monday night, 28 August 1826, the entire Samuel Willey household – Mr. and Mrs. Willey, five young children, and two hired men – were killed by an avalanche in Crawford Notch in New Hampshire’s White Mountains. Triggered by a fierce thunderstorm, the slide started near the top of Mount Willey (4,300 feet), carved a channel fifty feet deep, and obliterated the road at the bottom of the valley. Incredibly, the Willey’s house was spared: a boulder had divided the landslide directly behind the house so that it passed by on either side. But for some reason the family had gone outside and was buried under the stream of earth, stones and uprooted trees. An open bible, a burnt candle end, and unmade beds were later found as evidence of the family’s sudden departure. No survivors witnessed the disaster. (Purchase, 1999, p. 1)⁵

As Purchase (1999) made clear in his extended account, the Willey House tragedy caught the imagination of the nation, and both immediately and over time engendered an outpouring of journalistic, literary, and scientific comment. Reference was made to it in a variety of widely circulating cultural forms including poetry, painting, memoirs, and travel writing.

More significantly, in the context of this paper, the tragedy and responses to it encapsulated a profound cultural shift in American attitudes towards landscape, and, by extension, with nature itself. Purchase (1999) argued that, prior to the

FIGURE 1. Dark Tourism, Time, and Memory



early nineteenth century, the pastoral ideal in America was rooted in a Jeffersonian notion of stewardship. Here, humans realized their relationship with nature by managing it. By extension, land was either manageable (for human benefit), or it was literally worthless. The farmer was the productive citizen whose efforts underpinned the wealth of the nation. Where land was not productive in this sense, it was a non-place, a nowhere, with neither cultural nor economic value. Prior to the Willey tragedy, the White Mountains (and by extension, all America's wild landscapes), were nowhere. The Willey disaster changed this. As travelers, intellectuals and commentators struggled to make sense of the seemingly arbitrary and remorseless nature of the tragedy, they borrowed from European notions of the romantic sublime in re-defining the relation between nature and humankind. Instead of being nature's master, humans instead were subject to nature's vagaries and whims, as described in Thomas Cole's 1828 diary:

the sight of that deserted dwelling standing in a little patch of green in the midst of that dread wilderness of desolation...though the slides rushed on either side they avoided it as though it had been a sacred place. We walked among the rocks and felt as though we were but worms, insignificant and feeble, for as worms a falling rock would crush us. We looked up at the pinnacle above and measured ourselves and found ourselves as nothing. (as cited in Purchase, 1999, p. 75)

Whereas cultural value could be ascribed to this new sense of *sublimation*, and the resulting reflexive apprehension of our relationship to a vast and indifferent universe, the economic value of this landscape could only readily be realized through tourism. However, in the early years of the nineteenth century, the Willey site was not readily accessible to tourists. The artist Thomas Cole (above) was among early visitors who managed to make their way to the house, and he later founded his artistic reputation on paintings of the White Mountains. Similarly, Moses and Mary Jane Thomas visited the house in 1831, finding it "shut against vandals, 'relic hunters, with yankee blades' who liked to hack off pieces of the furniture to keep as souvenirs" (Purchase, 1999, p. 28). Likewise, referring to a visit a few years later:

We went into the bed rooms where the slumbers of the ill-fated inmates had been broken on that terrible night by the voice of the slide, and into the kitchen where they had lived, with the

desolate hearth around which they had gathered and heard the evening storms howling along the Notch. The walls and plastering were scrawled over with names. We wrote...our own linked together on the wall with a fragment of coal. (Nathaniel Rogers, *Miscellaneous Writings*, pub. 1849, quoted in Purchase, 1999, p. 39)

Generally, large scale tourism to Crawford Notch had to wait for new technologies of tourism and travel infrastructure (e.g., all-weather roads, regular coach – and later, rail – services, and hotels) to facilitate access. This occurred from the 1850s, and the Willey House (itself subsequently converted into a hotel annex) and the White Mountains remained a popular tourist destination, publicized through the work of the emerging Hudson River School of fine artists,⁶ until the house burnt down in a fire at the turn of the twentieth century. Today, the locality is a featured Historical Site in Crawford Notch State Park.

THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO

On the top of the ridge in front of the British position...we traced a long line of tremendous graves, or rather pits, into which hundreds of dead had been thrown...The effluvia which arose from them was horrible...deadly was the smell that in many places pervaded the field. From one of them the scanty clods of earth which had covered it had in one place fallen, and the skeleton of a human face was visible. I turned from the spot in indescribable horror, and with a sensation of deadly faintness which I could scarcely overcome. (Charlotte Eaton, *Waterloo Days: The Narrative of an Englishwoman Resident at Brussels in June, 1815*, cited in Shaw, 2002, p. 75)

The Romantic sublime also played an important part in shaping attitudes and practices of tourism relating to the battle site of Waterloo (1815).⁷ Although tourists were unimpressed by the "dreary" natural scenery (see Wordsworth's sonnet, to follow), the scale of the battle, the number of casualties, and its role in ending the once seemingly-invincible Bonapartist Empire, engendered similar feelings of dread, horror, and sublimation as did glimpses of wild and merciless nature. That it was combined, at least among British tourists, with a sense of national victory, meant that responses to the battlefield site were often⁸ extremely complex, involving the plurivocal expression of visual and emotional reactions, often contradictory, as in this case where triumphalism and irony, horror and elegy

vie with the perception of the bleakness and mundanity of the physical setting:

A WINGED Goddess – clothed in vesture wrought / Of rainbow colours; One whose port was bold, / Whose overburthened hand could scarcely hold / The glittering crowns and garlands which it brought – / Hovered in air above the far-famed Spot. / She vanished; leaving prospect blank and cold / Of wind-swept corn that wide around us rolled / In dreary billows; wood, and meagre cot, / And monuments that soon must disappear: / Yet a dread local recompence we found; / While glory seemed betrayed, while patriot-zeal / Sank in our hearts, we felt as men 'should' feel / With such vast hoards of hidden carnage near, / And horror breathing from the silent ground! (Wordsworth, 1820, lines 1-14)

In a similar sense to that in which contemporary dark tourists' motivation is argued to be connected to such tourists confronting the prospects of their own death (Stone & Sharpley, 2008), some romantic commentators extended this focus on human finitude to that of their own culture itself. Of course, the end of Bonapartism engendered considerable public and private reflection on the impermanence of glory and of achievement. Shelley's sonnet *Ozymandias*, published shortly after Waterloo, is certainly a reflection on the outcome of the battle; it is also worth quoting, however, Shelley's friend Horace Smith's sonnet, ostensibly on the same ancient object found in the sand. The annihilation contemplated here is not the historical figure of Ozymandias, or that of the author/tourist, but of entire modern civilization:⁹

In Egypt's sandy silence, all alone, / Stands a gigantic Leg, which far off throws / The only shadow that the Desert knows: / "I am great OZYMANDIAS," saith the stone, / "The King of Kings; this mighty City shows / The wonders of my hand." The City's gone, / Nought but the Leg remaining to disclose / The site of this forgotten Babylon. / We wonder, and some Hunter may express / Wonder like ours, when thro' the wilderness / Where London stood, holding the Wolf in chace, / He meets some fragments huge, and stops to guess / What powerful but unrecorded race / Once dwelt in that annihilated place. (Smith, 1818, lines 1-14)

Needless to say, the poems of Wordsworth, Shelley, and Smith were not the only written responses to Waterloo.

Mirroring the battlefield itself, where the books and letters of the dead were “spread over the field like the rubbish of a stationer’s shop” (contemporary account cited in Shaw, 2002, p. 67), the battle engendered public and private accounts (and artistic representations) of every description and of varying degrees of factual reliability and literary or artistic worth.¹⁰ With the exception of the poems quoted above, we will confine ourselves to two aspects of “tourism at a distance” related to the battle, and mediated by artifactual and representational technology.

Travel to the battlefield, albeit within the financial reach of some of the “shopkeeping classes” and above, was clearly not an option for reasons of time, money, or convenience for all those who wished to be a Waterloo tourist. Nevertheless, some aspects of dark tourist consumption could be experienced in London and elsewhere. The first, minor, example is that of Napoleonic memorabilia. Following the battle, interested Londoners could view Napoleon’s clothes (at 1 St. James Street), his horse (at 97 Pall Mall) or his coach. The hyperbolic advertising copy for the latter exhibition, at Bullock’s Museum in Piccadilly, echoes messages of sublimity common to many responses to the battle and is thus worth quoting here:

in approaching this carriage, an immediate connection is formed, with the greatest events and persons, that the world ever beheld....The diversity of thought that must arise, and the energy of those feelings that must be involved in regarding this object, surpass those which could be excited by almost any other on earth. (Bullock, 1816, p. 9)

Cruikshank’s caricature of the exhibit indicates that the coach was of considerable interest to the fashionable London public. A cartoon, dated 1816 and entitled *A swarm of English bees hiving in the Imperial carriage*, shows dozens of spectators crowding into, clambering over, and surrounding the coach, tussling with each other in the crush. Several people were trampled underfoot, and a variety of “inappropriate” responses to the artifact – including an amorous couple canoodling inside the coach – are illustrated. A disconsolate Frenchman is shown weeping before a bust of Napoleon in the background.

More central to our case are the great Waterloo panoramas, enormous battle paintings exhibited in the round at huge purpose-built venues. The first was the *Battle of Waterloo* panorama exhibited first at Barker’s Leicester Square Rotunda

from March 1816 to May 1818 (with subsequent displays in 1820-21, 1842-43 and 1852-53. Barker was said to have retired on its profits). In a curious prefiguration of Baudrillard’s (1994) notion of the hyper-real, the *Times* wrote of panoramas, that “there are aspects...which in great panoramas...are conveyed to the mind with a completeness and truthfulness not always to be gained from a visit to the scene itself” (as cited in Shaw, 2002, p. 81). A more ambitious, revolving, effort was displayed in 1820 by the entrepreneur Peter Marshall:

Together with a full military band, state-of-the-art lighting, pyrotechnics and other technological effects, the audience were treated to a revolving display of the main incidents of the battle. As the band played *See the conquering hero*, the charge against the French and the appearance of Wellington were met with a rousing chorus of cheers. (Shaw, 2002, p. 84)

Thus we find the *virtual representation* of the battle of Waterloo some 75 years before the invention of commercial cinematography, with sound and special effects, and in color.

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

In a sense, these selective accounts stand for themselves.¹¹ We consider that both cases amply illustrate that dark tourism of a recognizably contemporary nature existed during the early nineteenth century. Moreover, we would argue that technological developments (in the case of tourism infrastructures in the Willey house), and representational media (in the case of Waterloo) significantly facilitated the consumption of dark tourism products in these cases. In both cases, the events associated with each site were very widely publicized in journalistic, literary, artistic, and (in some cases) scientific media, as well as in the case of the Waterloo panoramas, where they actually formed part of the tourist experience. Finally, there can be no doubt that the two events aroused considerable anxieties, doubts, and reflections concerning the relation of humankind to nature and to the universe, connected as they were to contemporary notions of romantic sublimation. In these respects the cases, we argue, fully meet the criteria for post-modern dark tourism as specified by Lennon and Foley (2000). This leaves us with the provisional conclusion that the categorization of dark tourism as a phenomenon of post-modernity is incoherent and unhistorical. The reasons for this post-modern periodization ascribed to dark tourism are beyond the scope of this paper, and would

perhaps be an interesting subject of study and further research. We would only make a plea, as the field continues to develop depth, breadth, and theoretical sophistication (e.g., Sharpley & Stone, 2009), for a historically-informed sensitivity in our research that recognizes both familiarity and strangeness in the historical other, and which does not seek to exemplify the spurious doctrine of an exceptionalism of the present.

NOTES

1. In the sense that Fred and Wilma Flintstone drive a car, go to the supermarket, etc.
2. We note that Wight’s point here seemingly refers to, and arguably conflates, *post-modernism* as an epistemological position as well as *post-modernity* as a historical epoch.
3. The technologies they specifically mention (2000, p. 8) in this respect are photography, telegraphy, sound and cinematic recording, radio and television, and communication satellites. Although they cannot but concede to the historical record that some of these technologies existed prior to 1912 (their “relatively arbitrarily” selected tipping point) they insist that the time-space compression they connect with post-modernity is associated with a “congruence” of at least some of these inventions”. They go on to claim that visual and verbal media reports (for example) from earlier conflicts using some of these technologies were “relatively divorced from the day-to-day lives of all but those directly affected”. Our case studies suggest historically documented contra-indications to this argument.
4. The fourth aspect of Lennon and Foley’s thesis is that post-modern dark tourist sites combine educative and commercial aspects which accept “that visitation...is an opportunity to develop a tourism product” (2000, p. 11). We do not explicitly engage with this aspect of their project in the paper, although we should note that other conceptions of dark tourism might not concur with according definitive status to this conjunction. In the two (non post-modern) cases we discuss in the paper this aspect is unquestionably present, if “education” is broadly conceived, as it is by Lennon and Foley themselves.
5. The source for this section is Purchase (1999), except where otherwise identified.

6. For a useful source on the relationship between art and tourism in the New Hampshire White Mountains, the reader is directed to Garvin (2006) and the accompanying website <http://www.nhhistory.org/cv/crawford.htm>. Needless to say, we consider the use of both cultural media and tourism infrastructural technology in facilitating longer term popular tourism to the Willey House to be highly significant to our argument.
7. The main source for this section is Shaw (2002) unless otherwise stated.
8. But not always. Contemporary sources noted "a group [of sightseers] who called themselves 'the Brentford Lads,' members of the lower professional or shopkeeping class...Two of the lads picked a finger each from a Frenchman's half-buried hand, to be taken home pickled in spirits" (Shaw, 2002, p. 67).
9. This notion of the tourist contemplating ruins, and in the process reflecting on the finitude of past, present, and future civilizations, was a common enough Romantic trope as to receive satirical comment almost contemporaneously (see for example, Thomas Love Peacock's 1829 novel *The Misfortunes of Elphin* (as cited in Dingley 2000, p. 19), where a traveller's "soliloquy of philosophical pathos on the vicissitudes of empire and the mutability of all sublunary things" is accompanied by "an occasional peep at his watch" so as not to miss dinner). By 1865 *Punch* magazine, referring to Macaulay's reference to "some traveller from New Zealand [who] shall, in the midst of a vast solitude, take his stand on a broken arch of London Bridge to sketch the ruin of St Paul's", declared that Macaulay's New Zealander headed the list of a number of clichés that were henceforth to be outlawed as "used up, exhausted, threadbare, stale and hackneyed" (Skilton, 2004, p. 1). See also Skilton, (2007) for a more general account of 18th and 19th century literature on anticipated ruins.
10. In passing, we would certainly not agree with the assertion that these accounts were "relatively divorced from the day-to-day lives of all but those directly affected" (Lennon & Foley, 2000, p. 8).
11. It may be, of course, that the Romantic period is a special case. Against the background of a series of pan-European, if not world wars, it would be surprising if concerns about war, mortality, and societal finitude were not central in shaping cultural

phenomena (e.g., Shaw, 2000). The need for further historical research in the dark tourism field, to extend, qualify, or limit Seaton's (1996, 1999, 2009) lists of examples of historical instantiations of thanatological travel, for example, is pressing.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors wish to extend their gratitude to the organizers and fellow-participants of the International Conference on Tourist Experiences: Meanings, Motivations, Behaviours, 1-4 April 2009, held at the University of Central Lancashire, Preston, UK, for the original opportunity to develop, present, and refine the paper.

REFERENCES

- Ashworth, G. J. (2002). Holocaust tourism: The experience of Krakow-Kazimierz. *International Research in Geographical and Environmental Education*, 11(4), 363-367.
- Austin, N. K. (2002). Managing heritage attractions: Marketing challenges at sensitive historical sites. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 4(6), 447-457.
- Booth, C., & Rowlinson, M. (2006). Management & organizational history: Prospects. *Organizational History*, 1(1), 5-30.
- Baudrillard, J. (1994). *Simulacra and simulation*. (S.F. Glaser, Trans.). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Beech, J. (2000). The enigma of holocaust sites as tourist attractions: The case of Buchenwald. *Managing Leisure*, 5(1), 29-41.
- Best, M. (2007). Norfolk Island: Thanatourism, history and visitor emotions. *Shima: The International Journal of Research into Island Cultures*, 1(2), 30-48.
- Blackburn, K. (2000). Commemorating and commodifying the prisoner of war experience in south-east Asia: The creation of Changi Prison Museum. *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, 33, 1-18.
- Blackburn, K. (2002). The historic war site of the Changi Murals: A place for pilgrimages and tourism. *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, 34, 1-15.
- Bullock, W. (1816). *A description of the costly and curious military carriage of the late Emperor of France, taken on the evening of the Battle of Waterloo*. Piccadilly, England: London Museum.
- Charlesworth, A., & Addis, M. (2002). Memorialization and the ecological landscapes of Holocaust sites: The cases of Paszow and Auschwitz-Birkenau. *Landscape Research*, 27(3), 229-251.
- Cruikshank, G. (1816). A swarm of English bees hiving in the imperial carriage! [cartoon]. Retrieved from http://www.artoftheprint.com/artistpages/cruikshank_george_aswarmofenglishbees.htm
- Cubitt, G. (2007). *History and memory*. Manchester, England: Manchester University Press.
- Dann, G. M. S., & Seaton, A. V. (eds.) (2001). *Slavery, contested heritage and thanatourism*. Binghamton, NY: The Haworth Hospitality Press.
- Dingley, R. (2000). The ruins of the future: Macaulay's New Zealander and the spirit of the age. In A. Sandison & R. Dingley (Eds.), *Histories of the future: Studies in fact, fantasy and science fiction* (pp. 15-33). London, England: Palgrave.
- Foley, M., & Lennon, J. J. (1996). JFK and dark tourism: A fascination with assassination. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 2(4), 198-211.
- Garvin, D. (Ed.). (2006). *Consuming views: Art and tourism in the White Mountains, 1850-1900*. Concord, NH: New Hampshire Historical Society.
- Grundlingh, A. (2004). Reframing remembrance: The politics of the centenary commemoration of the South African War of 1899-1902. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 30(2), 359-375.
- Henderson, J. C. (2000). War as a tourist attraction: The case of Vietnam. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 2(4), 269-280.
- Iles, J. (2006). Recalling the ghosts of war: Performing tourism on the battlefields of the Western Front. *Text and Performance Quarterly*, 26(2), 162-180.
- Johnson, P., & Duberley, J. (2000). *Understanding management research: An introduction to epistemology*. London, England: Sage.
- Lennon, J. J., & Foley, M. (1999). Interpretation of the unimaginable: The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington D.C. and 'dark tourism'. *Journal of Travel Research*, 38(1), 46-50.
- Lennon, J. J., & Foley, M. (2000). *Dark tourism: The attraction of death and disaster*. London, England: Continuum.
- Lunn, K. (2007). War memorialisation and public heritage in Southeast Asia: Some case studies and comparative reflections. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 13(1), 81-95.

- Misztal, B. A. (2003). *Theories of social remembering*. Maidenhead, England: Open University Press.
- Monk, R. (1990). *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The duty of genius*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- O'Dwyer, C. (2004). Tropic knights and hula belles: War and tourism in the South Pacific. *Journal for Cultural Research*, 8(1), 33-50.
- Purchase, E. (1999). *Out of nowhere: Disaster and tourism in the White Mountains*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Rojek, C. (1993). *Ways of escape: Modern transformations in leisure and travel*. London, England: Macmillan.
- Rojek, C. (1997). Indexing, dragging and the social construction of tourist sights. In C. Rojek & J. Urry (Eds.), *Touring cultures: Transformations of travel and theory* (pp. 52-74). London, England: Routledge.
- Seaton, A. V. (1996). Guided by the dark: From thanatopsis to thanatourism. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 2(4), 234-244.
- Seaton, A. V. (1999). War and thanatourism: Waterloo 1815-1914. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 26(1), 130-158.
- Seaton, A. V. (2009). Thanatourism and its discontents: An appraisal of a decade's work with some future issues and directions. In T. Jamal & M. Robinson (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of tourism studies* (pp. 521-542). London, England: Sage.
- Sharpley, R., & Stone, P. R. (Eds.). (2009). *The darker side of travel: The theory and practice of dark tourism*. Bristol, England: Channel View.
- Shaw, P. (Ed.). (2000). *Romantic wars: Studies in culture and conflict, 1793-1822*. Aldershot, England: Ashgate.
- Shaw, P. (2002). *Waterloo and the romantic imagination*. London, England: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Siegenthaler, P. (2002). Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japanese guidebooks. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 29(4), 1111-1137.
- Skilton, R. (2004). Contemplating the ruins of London: Macaulay's New Zealander and others. *Literary London Journal: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Representation of London*, 2(1). Retrieved from: <http://www.literarylondon.org/london-journal/march2004/skilton.html>
- Skilton, R. (2007). Tourists at the ruins of London: The metropolis and the struggle for empire. *Cercles: Revue Pluridisciplinaire du Monde Anglophone*, 17, 93-119.
- Smith, H. (1818, February 1). On a stupendous leg of granite, discovered standing by itself in the deserts of Egypt, with the inscription inserted below. *The Examiner* (London), 73.
- Smith, V. L. (1998). War and tourism: An American ethnography. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 25(1), 202-227.
- Stone, P. R. (2006). A dark tourism spectrum: Towards a typology of death and macabre related tourist sites, attractions and exhibitions. *Tourism: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 54(2), 145-160.
- Stone, P. R., & Sharpley, R. (2008). Consuming dark tourism: A thanatological perspective. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 35(2), 574-595.
- Teye, V. B., & Timothy, D. J. (2004). The varied colours of slave heritage in West Africa: White American stakeholders. *Space and Culture*, 7(2), 145-155.
- Thompson, J. (2004). *Wargames: Inside the world of 20th century war reenactors*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian.
- Wallace, T. (2007). Went the day well: Scripts, glamour and performance in war-weekends. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 13(3), 200-223.
- Walter, T. (2001). From cathedral to supermarket: Mourning, silence and solidarity. *The Sociological Review*, 49(4), 494-511.
- Wight, A. C. (2006). Philosophical and methodological praxes in dark tourism: Controversy, contention and the evolving paradigm. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 12(2), 119-129.
- Wight, A. C., & Lennon, J. J. (2007). Selective interpretation and eclectic human heritage in Lithuania. *Tourism Management*, 28(2), 519-529.
- Wordsworth, W. (1822). After visiting the field of Waterloo. In *Memorials of a tour on the continent, 1820* (p. 4). London, England: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown.