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# Shadow zones: dark travel and postcolonial cultures

ROBERT CLARKE, JACQUELINE DUTTON AND ANNA JOHNSTON

To travel, I must always move through fear, confront terror.<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

Travel has always reflected the lighter and darker sides of life, its myriad shades and colours, multiple nuances and intensities. Whether mobility is inspired by leisure, entertainment, or education; necessitated by hunger, thirst, reproduction, or escape; or demanded by political imperatives for conquest, expansion, and power, every journey carries with it the possibility of an engagement with shadow zones. Those who market travel, and those who study it, are certainly aware of the attractions that the darker side of travel holds for metropolitan travellers: ‘dark tourism’ as a set of practices and object of enquiry is enjoying growing popularity. Yet bell hooks’s statement above reminds us that for much of the world’s population travelling carries with it a different set of risks, and represents a very different kind of relationship to place and history than that experienced by the metropolitan tourist. Understanding the multiplicity of ways in which the experience of travel foregrounds the legacies of the past—and in particular the colonial past—is the work undertaken in that field of scholarship that we refer to here as ‘dark travel’: a field that takes as its object the texts, discourses, institutions, and performances of travel in sites marked by violence and historical trauma.

This article sets out a number of key themes to describe how scholarship in dark travel is emerging—especially scholarship that focuses on colonial and postcolonial contexts—and, in doing so, sets the context for the present volume. We also hope to inform future scholarship. In the first instance we define dark travel as a set of cultural practices pertaining to the experience, and importantly, the discourse of travel in sites that are marked as ‘dark’ (i.e. traumatizing, disturbing, unsettling) either by dint of their history or their present commodification. At the same time we suggest that it is necessary to conceptualize dark travel not so much as an *object* of study, but rather as an *orientation* and *disposition* towards the disparate field of postcolonial travel. Postcolonial travel is in a sense always already ‘shadowed’ by the legacies of colonialisms past and present. If we interpret the term ‘dark travel’ in this way then what kinds of ‘orientations and dispositions’ might be said to characterize it? While an obvious concern and engagement with the legacies of colonialism is a starting point, we also consider three main thematics: travel performances; spaces and routes; melancholia, return, and risk. Dark travel in postcolonial cultures invites a focus on the experiences of metropolitan and subaltern travellers through sites marked by the trauma of

colonialism and its aftermath. The following sections of this article develop our characterization of these thematics.

### **Dark travellers**

Travel and violence are two central themes of imperial and colonial history. Postcolonizing cultures are in a sense ‘aftermath’ cultures acting out and working through the legacies of their violent pasts. As such, while certain postcolonial travel practices can be considered continuous with a colonial heritage, others can be interpreted as oppositional and ameliorative. In either case, a focus on the postcoloniality of travel necessarily foregrounds a crude distinction between two kinds of travelling subject—*metropolitan* and *subaltern* travellers—and the way they emblemize and embody various workings of, oppositions to, and negotiations with colonial discourses and power.

To date travel studies has been dominated by a focus on the genealogies of metropolitan travellers and the discursive and physical violence embodied in such subjectivities. Imperial expansion widened the opportunity for Europeans to travel, via the infrastructures of empire (shipping routes, train tracks, and roads, amongst other travel technologies); it also increased the likelihood that violent encounters would typify such excursions to other cultures and lands. Indeed, Francis Galton’s best-selling handbook *The Art of Travel; or, Shifts and Contrivances Available in Wild Countries* (1855) insisted that European travel in colonial spaces required violence, declaring ‘It is impossible but that a traveller must often take the law into his own hands.’ Each traveller had to decide ‘what his scale of punishments should be’, in order to ensure that ‘your administration will be a reign of terror’.<sup>2</sup> Galton’s travels in Egypt and the Soudan in the late 1830s preceded his explorations in South West Africa (now Namibia) during 1851 (a travel account was published in 1852).<sup>3</sup> Experience in these locations convinced him that non-western spaces placed Europeans in physical and moral danger that could only be guarded against by initiating violence. Awarded a gold Founders’ medal by the Royal Geographical Society, Galton went on to influence the expectations of thousands of Britons embarking on—or simply reading about—travel under the aegis of empire.

While it would be unfair to associate all colonial travellers with Galton’s edict, the fact remains that colonial regimes are by their nature violent. From the Belgian Congo to the hinterland of New South Wales, European empires presented metropolitan travellers with an array of dark travel opportunities and experiences; while, on the other hand, the travel experiences of colonized subjects—as bell hooks’s statement in our epigraph reflects—were (and still are) often marked by fear, surveillance, and physical threat. While imperial ideology trumpeted the virtues of the West in bringing light to the dark places of the globe, we also know that the civilizing mission produced a legacy of violence. The mobility offered to privileged subjects of empire was mirrored, unequally, by the ‘dispersal’, displacement, re-deployment, and forced removal of those subjected to the force of empire. The emerging literature on the use of massacre as a ‘strategy’ of conquest gives contemporary audiences an insight into the way colonialism produced dark places and ‘badlands’ that left an indelible impression on the

consciousness of both the survivors as well as the descendants of perpetrators.<sup>4</sup> Legions of subaltern colonial subjects were forced to move far from their traditional lands and lifestyles by the exigencies of empire, part of the vast mobilization of unfree labour in modern (and indeed early modern) history. They became travellers: not as adventurers, settlers, soldiers or mercantilists, but slaves, transported convicts, indentured labourers, and refugees. A migrant working class forced to move to increase their chances of survival in emerging modern economies joined the increasingly leisured classes crossing oceans and continents.

Indigenous communities were regularly displaced either through their own strategic withdrawal from burgeoning locations of settler colonialism or by forced removal to reserves, missions, and industrial schools and villages. The journeys of these subaltern travellers were often marked by trauma and suffering, dispossession and dislocation; such travel was often 'dark', but these were not touristic itineraries. Subsequently, of course, some have become so; thus African-Americans, amongst others, tour the slave forts of the Gold Coast of Africa; contemporary urban Indigenous Australians journey to the 'countries' of their ancestors, or to the institutional sites to which they or members of their family were removed under government policies of forced removal.<sup>5</sup> Such journeys shadow those undertaken by the descendants of colonists for whom a tourist infrastructure has emerged to cater to the attractions of dark heritage: settler Australians and international tourists flock to convict heritage sites like the Port Arthur Historic Site and Management Authority in southern Tasmania to observe the picturesque ruins of nineteenth-century buildings of secondary punishment.

The historic, involuntary movements of people through space remind us of the travail—the labour—at the heart of much travel. Etymologically, in English, travel and travail originally share the same meaning. Dark travel reminds us that the *Oxford English Dictionary* definition of travail—bodily or mental labour or toil, especially of a painful or oppressive nature; exertion; trouble; hardship; suffering—continues to haunt our contemporary linguistic use of travel terminology. Insofar as the metropolitan traveller is a representative of imperial culture (as in the explorer's journal, the governor's diary, the visitor's itinerary, and so on) or the subaltern traveller a representative of the colonized (as in the slave or emancipist narrative), stories of journeys through colonial spaces are inevitably conditioned by the fact of violence: the memory of violence and violence that is a real and present danger.

Acknowledging as much might be interpreted as a reversion to a fairly standard critique of travel writing from within postcolonial studies: one that condemns the practice of travel as complicit with colonialist practices of appropriation and control, positions travel writing as a cipher of colonial discourses of subjection and governance, and constructs colonial travellers as metonyms of imperial culture.<sup>6</sup> Unreflective and Eurocentric conflation of dark travel and colonialism can occlude the travel experiences and texts of non-European subjects by focusing primarily on the perceived traumatization of the contemporary, privileged witness. Worse still, reiterating the darkness at the heart of colonial travel risks elevating a literary cliché to the status of sociological truth. Nevertheless, the legacies of colonial violence are inescapable. They cast shadows over many sites of contemporary travel, and they invite the traveller into often confronting

encounters with peoples and places past. At the same time, the gloomy suggestiveness of different locales can be central to their value as commodified sites within a diverse and highly competitive international travel marketplace. Understanding dark travel requires an understanding of the sites through which travelling subjects—metropolitan and subaltern—move, and the multiple meanings that these routes may have for diverse travellers.

As we have noted, and consider more fully below, in recent times the examination of dark travel has been dominated by concern for dark tourism. As a practice, dark travel must surely encompass dark tourism,<sup>7</sup> yet it goes beyond those over-determined sites of memory that are packaged for consumption—such as slavery trails across the Atlantic and ANZAC tours of the Western Front—or those that have been explicitly created and commodified for their very ‘darkness’, such as slum tours of Bombay, black cab tours of Shankill Road graffiti in Belfast, and Napoleon’s dark room at Longwood. While dark tourism is designed to elicit overt collective recognition of trauma and violence, potentially resulting in empathic exhaustion or compassion fatigue, adopting a more expansive understanding of dark travel—one that incorporates dark tourism as a subfield—might also offer scope for more diverse, individualized and collective emotional responses. In particular the practice of dark travel foregrounds a pressing issue of postcolonial subjectivity: namely, how is the consciousness of the traveller that is conditioned by its colonial inheritance able to make a reckoning of the violence of the colonial past? How is the perception of colonial violence influenced when the subject perceiving it is either the beneficiary, or primary or secondary victim, of such violence? What is the relationship between the experience of, for example, the contemporary British traveller following in the footsteps of famous imperial travellers—the source of many popular travel narratives<sup>8</sup>—and the experience of middle-class African-American travellers visiting the Gold Coast slave castle tourist sites (as acutely analysed by Caryl Phillips in *The Atlantic Sound*).<sup>9</sup> Do writers travelling David Livingstone’s route in southern Africa beat their native guides as Galton advocated, in order to guarantee the authenticity of their tracing of their imperial antecedents, or do they recognize and castigate the violence of exploration practices? If they re-enact Galton’s suggested ‘regime of terror’ or indeed if they discuss why they do not do so, how do we compare those beatings to those performed by travellers, at sites such as Sydney’s The Rocks, who pose for mock floggings in convict stocks or who photograph their friends and families in solitary confinement cells? In her novel *Homework* (1997), Suneeta Peres da Costa redeploys the ‘dark’ aspects of touristic flogging by extending a playful scene to a disconcertingly ironic one which suggests the sadomasochistic pleasures available in such performances.<sup>10</sup> At the same time her readers are reminded of how the practices of dark tourism relate to a broader set of travel formations and practices that reflect the relationship between the colonial past and the postcolonial present.

### Dark spaces

In addressing the second thematic—dark spaces—it is useful to turn our attention more fully towards the insights offered by dark tourism studies and to consider the

gaps in that scholarship. Dark tourism is proving to be a popular focus of social scientific research and it shares, and complements, the concern of postcolonial studies for the way space is transformed by power.<sup>11</sup> Most existing studies of dark tourism emerge from tourism studies, and share that field's quantitative methods and interest in heritage site interpretation and management. Considerable debate about terms—dark tourism, thanatourism, black spots, etc—preoccupied many early publications on the topic, and it is only recently that efforts have been made to begin to theorize the field: Richard Sharpley and Philip R Stone's edited collection *The Darker Side of Travel: The Theory and Practice of Dark Tourism* (2009) is a clear example of the way the field has matured in recent years. Yet there remains a curious paucity of cultural theory around this topic. In many studies of dark tourism, neither historicity nor questions of representation are subjected to careful criticism. Sharpley and Stone note the many debates about whether dark tourism can be recognized as a historical phenomenon—'that is, visiting sites or attractions that predate living memory'<sup>12</sup>—given that some scholars in the field summarily exclude such sites. John Lennon and Malcolm Foley, for instance, want to show that dark tourism is a specifically modern experience; indeed, for them it is 'an intimation of post-modernity'.<sup>13</sup> Yet other founders of the field undoubtedly consider the long history of dark travel: Tony Seaton's important 1999 essay, for instance, analyses battle-ground tourism pertaining to the Battle of Waterloo which began while the war was still underway in 1815.<sup>14</sup> Perhaps less well known in the Anglophone milieu is Jean-Jacques Becker's work on 'tourisme immédiat' in the early years of the Great War. With the first Michelin guide to the battlefields of the Marne appearing in 1917, not intended as 'a trip through devastated regions, but rather as a true pilgrimage',<sup>15</sup> those following its advice may well have found themselves in a very dark place if travelling in 1918.

Turning attention to the scholarship on dark travel and tourism in Francophone contexts reveals a different set of colonial histories, which engender a range of contrasting postcolonial responses to the legacies of such histories. Scholars of French and Francophone Studies, mainly from outside the Hexagon, have made significant contributions to thinking on contemporary postcolonial studies as well as the literature and culture of travel. In the United Kingdom, Charles Forsdick,<sup>16</sup> David Murphy,<sup>17</sup> and Aedin Ni Loingsigh<sup>18</sup> foreground the importance of understanding non-European perspectives in travel narratives to, from, and across Francophone zones, in examples such as Haitian revolutionary Toussaint Louverture's travelling practices,<sup>19</sup> which were recently elided with Haiti's 2010 earthquake in Nick Lake's novel *In Darkness*.<sup>20</sup> The African presence colours readings of France and Paris by several North American-based academics, whose postcolonial politics effect a radical darkening of the traditional symbols of Enlightenment and the City of Light, in Dominic Thomas's *Black France: Colonialism, Immigration, and Transnationalism*<sup>21</sup> and Tyler Stovall's *Paris Noir: African Americans in the City of Light*.<sup>22</sup> Lydie Moudileno,<sup>23</sup> Françoise Lionnet,<sup>24</sup> and Srilata Ravi<sup>25</sup> add their critical voices to those of the diasporic island communities whose journeys away from the tropics progressively darken their travels and writings, and, in Australia, Hélène Jaccopard<sup>26</sup> and Bonnie

Thomas focus on North African and Caribbean passages from violence and trauma into the light.<sup>27</sup>

With Francophonie's tentacles extending into every continent, maintaining France's hold more tightly on (de)colonized culture than in the Anglosphere (as is evidenced in the case of multilingual Mauritius), the long shadows of French colonialism mark out zones of darkness from the Pacific to the Caribbean, Quebec to Guiana, Indochina to the Maghreb. Subaltern Francophone citizens criss-cross the globe, often avoiding the *la France métropolitaine*, as Haitians such as Dany Laferrière reside in Montréal, whereas Djiboutian Abdourahman A Waberi and Congolese Alain Mabanckou occupy academic positions in the United States. Such detours reflect the relative reticence to embrace postcolonial theory and Francophone practices in France's academic circles (notable exceptions include Jean-Marc Moura<sup>28</sup> and Marie-Claude Smouts<sup>29</sup>): a special issue of *Public Culture* on 'Racial France' ably problematizes both the debate and the very existence of such.<sup>30</sup>

Predictably, in parallel to resistance to postcolonial approaches, dark tourism studies in French or on Francophone phenomena is practically non-existent in the centre, but it is emerging from the periphery. In the standard European tradition, 'tourisme de mémoire' is deemed to cover French battle sites and sites of mass atrocity such as the genocide at Auschwitz (in the work of Frederic Crahay), with debate limited to economic opportunism,<sup>31</sup> but little attention is evident around slavery memorials, France's involvement in decolonization conflicts, or indeed the Shoah (as in the work of Alexandra Derveaux). As one might expect, those scholars working on Francophone postcolonial studies are also exploring dark travel in both practical and performative modes—Nicki Hitchcott, for example, offers a particularly insightful reading of Véronique Tadjo's travel narrative on Rwanda following the 1994 genocide, which challenges received ideas about tourism and the genocide itself.<sup>32</sup> There is also some strong research surfacing in Quebec on 'tourisme noir', such as a bilingual edition entitled *Now: Images of Present Time/Maintenant: Images du Temps Présent*, which includes a chapter by Foley and Lennon translated into French on the spectacularization of dark tourism images, and another written in French by Albert Boime on photography's increasing inability to represent the impact of loss and darkness in the wake of 9/11.<sup>33</sup>

The limited research on France's own dark travel practices emphasizes 'tourisme de mémoire' or 'tourisme mémoriel' rather than 'tourisme noir', attesting to a continuing tension between what is remembered and how it is commemorated and articulated, both in popular and scholarly discourses. Any contemporary reference to memory in French inevitably recalls Pierre Nora's magisterial collection *Les Lieux de mémoire* (1984–1992), which brings together multiple-authored articles on a wide range of institutions, symbols, traditions, personages, that contribute to the collective cultural history of France. Notably absent, though, are any articles on colonization and independence, further marginalizing these difficult memories.

These Francophone contributions reflect a shift amongst scholars in Anglophone humanities towards considering dark travel in more expansive ways than those explored in dark tourism studies. The attention paid to visual representations of dark travel and the considerations of visual representations of dark travel

mentioned above prefigure to an extent Jonathan Skinner's edited book *Writing the Dark Side of Travel* (2012). In the introduction to this innovative work, Skinner makes an intervention by bringing questions of performativity to the analysis of travel practices and representation. He demonstrates an awareness of the cultural turn that transformed the broader humanities from the late 1970s onwards; thus 'We are all doubly disabled in trying to understand the Other and then trying to represent them.'<sup>34</sup> But 'writing' in Skinner's collection is interchangeable with dance and fieldwork interviews, and the pieces are often accounts of their authors' experience of tourist places rather than studies that subject travel practices and representations to historical or theoretical analysis.

Some in the field of dark tourism studies try to index the cultural complexity of trauma by attempting to place various sites along a spectrum of lighter, darker, and darkest tourism.<sup>35</sup> This approach is poorly conceptualized and difficult to sustain, as a number of critics have pointed out. As Michael S Bowman and Phaedra C Pezzullo pointedly ask, it is still not clear in much of the scholarship 'What's so "Dark" about "Dark Tourism"?' They argue that the label makes 'an implicit claim [...] that there is something disturbing, troubling, suspicious, weird, morbid, or perverse' about the sites or the tourists thus named, 'but what exactly that may be remains elusive and ill-defined because no one has assumed the burden of proving it'.<sup>36</sup> Many founding figures in the field expressly decline to define their terms: for example, Lennon and Foley state that they 'do not wish to enter into any philosophical debates' over the term 'dark tourism' or its use.<sup>37</sup> Nor do practitioners interrogate their own positionality. As Bowman and Pezzullo note: 'Labeling a site as "dark" seems to be a complicated matter of perspective and privilege.'<sup>38</sup> Ironically, despite the ongoing tortured questions about correct nomenclature in the field, until recent work, most utterly fail to situate the term 'dark' in terms of its racial or religious heritage.<sup>39</sup>

Considering the ways in which dark tourism forms part of cultural representation can help obviate the unedifying quantification of suffering and the foregrounding of the subjective experience of researchers, which can both over-determine the experience of other travellers and elide the suffering of past victims of violence. Understanding the ways in which trajectories deemed 'dark' are represented according to racial and religious contexts and hierarchies is one of the important contributions that *Shadow Zones* makes to this rapidly evolving field. In so doing, we bring colonial/postcolonial approaches to the field of tourism research. Crucially, although tourism sites located in contemporary postcolonial countries—and ventures that explicitly draw upon the history of empire, especially African slavery—are frequently included in the 'dark travel' genre, very little attention is paid to the specificity of these sites. This collection draws attention to the colonial and postcolonial contexts of dark travel across the Anglosphere and the Francosphere, and seeks to lay bare some of the racial and cultural assumptions of tourism practices. It does so through carefully theorized, historicized, and nuanced analyses of tourism as a set of cultural practices, and travel writing as one textual outcome of those practices. In this way we heed Judith Adler's call to bring literary histories of travel writing and cultural analysis of travel practices closer together in order to understand how deliberative travel works both as world-making and self-fashioning.<sup>40</sup> Tourism

can and does have a role to play in consolidating and informing collective memory of a traumatic past and perhaps even in society's 'working through' of such trauma.<sup>41</sup>

### **Dark moods and modes**

As we have noted, understanding modern travel—whether that be in the form of dark tourist visits to the sites of the African slave trade or the contemporary journeys of asylum seekers—requires a recognition of the history of colonialism and its aftermath. Travel has served as a motor for the development, as well as the critique, of colonialism. Dark travel involves journeys to and through physical and cultural sites and landscapes marked by the trauma of colonialism: as such dark travel is necessarily engaged with questions about the nature of the colonial past and how that past influences the present. These individual sites and broader zones are rendered special by virtue of the particular nature of cross-cultural conflict (or *inter se* violence) that took place there, the losses sustained, the traces that remain and the way those traces are deployed either in the name of personal and collective memory or of national and transnational history. Despite the contrasts that are commonly drawn between colonial and postcolonial conditions, the experience of dark travel is marked by its potential temporal and spatial simultaneity: it can be at once an encounter with past violence and a reminder of the possibilities of violence in the present. It brings to mind questions of the nature of the losses incurred in the past, and of the processes of remembering and forgetting deployed in the present. As such, melancholia, return, and risk present themselves as obvious themes through which to approach an understanding of the changing sensibilities of dark travellers. Yet it should be stressed that these are suggested here not as symptoms of a diseased past and a pathological response to it, so much as conceptual metaphors that enable the formulation of questions and lines of enquiry.

The very ambivalence of melancholia makes it a useful concept for approaching understandings of dark travel. This might seem counter-intuitive: melancholia is often associated with stasis, physical as much as mental. Melancholia's reflection of a structure of feeling that corresponds to a shifting and unsettled relationship between subjects in the present and the past, and how the losses of the past are being addressed in the present, dovetails neatly with our approach to colonial/postcolonial violence. There are two broad schools of thought in relation to melancholia that draw upon the psychodynamic theories of Sigmund Freud. The first considers melancholia as reactionary and antithetical to progressive resolution of trauma,<sup>42</sup> a pathological, endless and potentially (self-) destructive form of deferred mourning.<sup>43</sup> The other school of thought develops out of Freud's later writings<sup>44</sup> in which melancholia is reconceptualised as a necessary step in normative psychosexual development. A cultural interpretation of social melancholia considers it to be a characteristic 'structure of feeling' (in Raymond Williams's terms) of post-traumatic societies working through the legacies of a violent past. From this perspective the melancholia of dark travel as performance may as likely be an expression of a reactionary response to the past as it may be progressive. Dark travel may reflect a way in which the losses of the past are

actively reconstituted in ways that naturalize and domesticate colonialism, or they may reflect varieties of mourning work.<sup>45</sup>

The insights provided by the two schools on melancholia are by no means mutually exclusive. Dynamic theories of melancholia provide one way of conceptualizing both the performative work of dark travel (in addressing the historical circumstances of a specific text) and the kind of subject positions implicit within that text's representation of the experience of travel. In particular a focus on melancholia may draw a critical focus on the way different affective codes and regimes of value are brought into play discursively to frame responses to the 'darkness' that individuals encounter in the postcolonial landscapes they traverse.

Bound up with this is the theme of the return of the past. Dark travel sites are spaces in which the past is actively returned to the present in often competing and dissonant ways. And this return is effected by material means. It is important to resist the temptation to deploy the motifs of the return of the repressed and to pathologize this process of return (the pathologization of the past through dark travel is in itself an intriguing research question). Considering the performative nature of dark travel is crucial here: understanding not so much how dark travel reveals the 'truth' of the past and its grip on the present, so much as how the past is rendered as history or memory and how its effects are embodied in subjects and places.

Travel can be understood as a practice or a performance, depending on the level of the individual's engagement, and dark travel may also be usefully considered in these terms. Nevertheless, the focus on the individual and the meaning of their particularized experience tends to elide the commercial imperatives of most travel practices. The manner in which these terms are deployed within different cultural, institutional, and industrial contexts does matter. In particular, dark tourism as a cultural practice posits the locus of morbidity within the space of visitation as opposed to the visitor's consciousness. Moreover the dark tourism site is defined by a bounded temporality: the affective experience is meant to be contained within the space and time of the site. On the other hand, dark tourism studies appear to position tourism as inauthentic; the dark tourist experience is simply a commodity within the marketplace, and dark tourism is voyeuristic and exploitative. Tourism studies tend to focus on the 'tourist' as metonym of commodity culture.<sup>46</sup> Yet researchers like Avital Biran, Yaniv Poria and Gila Oren claim that actual tourist experiences have tended to be ignored: that a conceptual approach has been privileged over an ethnographic and empirical one. Considering the ways in which the past is re-presented, then, is as much a concern for scholars of dark tourism as it is for those concerned with the broader questions of the dark side of travel.

When dark travel presents itself as an antidote to the ennui of dark tourism, and individual subjectivity is privileged over place, the practice becomes a performance, in Adler's terms.<sup>47</sup> According to this performative manifestation of dark travel, one might cultivate a sensibility that is always looking for risk, encountering a place through its dark history, whether that be an explicit feature of the presentation of a site, or a set of personal, researched, or emotional engagements with the hidden or submerged stories of a space. Dark travel as performance therefore implies a certain narrativization of violence and loss, which helps to explain why melancholia is one of the dominant affective tones of this sub-genre.

Travel to and through shadow zones inevitably involves physical and/or psychological risks. Jamaica Kincaid's *A Small Place* (1988) is a key postcolonial travel text in this regard: an excoriating second-person condemnation of the North American or European tourist in Antigua who is haunted by, but oblivious to, the histories of slavery and exploitation: 'you will forget your part in the whole setup, that bureaucracy is one of your inventions, that Gross National Product is one of your inventions, and all the laws that you know mysteriously favor you'.<sup>48</sup> Travellers put themselves in harm's way by entering zones in which the historical animosities and conflicts may still be present, whether or not they are conscious of those inheritances. Or they bring themselves into contact with histories that complicate their own sense of ethnic identity and heritage by visiting sites that bear the vestiges of the actions of their ancestors: either as the perpetrators or victims of colonial violence. Moreover, managing risk is an important feature of the industry that supports tourism. Controlling the narratives associated with particular tourist sites is crucial—what stories can and cannot be told about the location, whose histories invoked—and in this regard the question of risk is always salient. Who determines just how 'dark' a site can be? Who has the authority to determine the identities of the victims and/or perpetrators represented at the site? In what ways are history and heritage subordinated to the necessities of the market? And how do the technologies of representation deployed at any given site influence the ethical and political effectivity of a site and its history?

The pursuit of risk might also be symptomatic of the nostalgia of contemporary travel and tourism. Just as escaping the banality of domestic life is exploited by touristic discourse, dark tourism and travel can be promoted as an alternative to the modern mass tourism market. It would be too simplistic to differentiate 'dark travel' from dark tourism in terms of risk: to propose that dark travel is a kind of antidote to the ennui provoked by the sanitized treatment of death and disaster in many instances of dark tourism. Each representation of dark travel demands a nuanced response to account for its various attractions and values, and the various ways the risks inherent in encountering the past are managed.

Melancholia, return (*revenge*), and risk are three key thematics that we suggest can help us appreciate the cultural work undertaken by dark travel. These themes provoke a range of questions about ways that dark travel mediates the past in dynamic ways. Dark travel gestures towards the instability of colonial regimes. If the violence of colonialism is in part a product of attempts to shore up imperial power in the face of indigenous and external oppositions, then dark travel in some respects pays tribute to the failure of such a mechanism. Furthermore, while dark tourism (as practice and field of scholarship) focuses on the modern travel industry, its culture and practices, and its alignment with the interests of capital and commodity culture, dark travel offers multiple perspectives on the agents and victims of violence within different shadow zones.

### **In the shadow zones**

Charting the nexus between melancholia and risk, nationalism and cosmopolitanism, subjectivity and governance, *Shadow Zones* draws together an interdisciplinary collection of scholarship that examines the practices, performances, and

narratives that shape dark travel in diverse postcolonial spaces. Several of the articles in this special issue were first presented at the University of Melbourne conference 'Travel Ideals: Engaging with Spaces of Mobility' organized by Jacqueline Dutton in July 2012, and have evolved in close collaboration with our aims for this volume—to redefine the frame in which dark travel is positioned. Anthony Carrigan's assessment of recent scholarship on dark tourism published in English reflects this fundamental project of the *Shadow Zones* collection, tracing the rise of the terminology as it has developed in response to commercial demand and intellectual enquiry. As he weighs up the contributions from social sciences and humanities, he sees advantages in considering eclectic models from interdisciplinary perspectives. His article foregrounds the potential for applying a postcolonial tourism framework to the field as scholarship moves beyond quantitative or typological approaches towards qualitative research, invoking the need to clarify ethical and managerial concerns, as well as understanding the psychological and pedagogical effects of dark tourism.

The journey through physical places and cultural practices of dark travel begins with Charles Forsdick's consideration of the contrapuntal nature of memories and memorialization in 'Travel, Slavery, Memory: Thanatourism in the French Atlantic'. Articulating another of the key ambitions of the volume, this article underscores the importance of comparisons across Anglophone and Francophone contexts for testing new forms of colonial/postcolonial analyses. Focusing on slavery memorials and museums in Bordeaux and Nantes, the article positions examples of slave heritage and memory in a wider geocultural frame that includes Haiti, the French Caribbean, and Senegal's Gorée Island. Forsdick's research explores the relationship between the historical, geographical, cultural, and political niche that produces each of these sites of dark travel, and the multiple audiences they aim to address; bridging languages, cultures, classes, and experiences—whether atavistic or lived.

While both local and external consumption play out in the example of French Atlantic slavery, the angle of view is necessarily narrowed in Anoma Pieris's 'Southern Invasions: Post War Tourism in Sri Lanka' which focuses on internal travel cultures enacted within and across spaces ravaged by a quarter-century of civil war. This article performs a powerful retelling of recent Sri Lankan history through the darkened lens of dissonant heritage, juxtaposing the postcolonial predicament against post-war reconciliation, post-disaster reconstruction, population displacement, religious pilgrimage, and secular commemorative practices at massacre sites. Pieris's analysis of travel through these shadow zones demonstrates how choices around memory and erasure correlate to healing or continuing conflict in all of these competing itineraries.

Internal tourism in the wake of conflict is also the subject of Habib Saidi's 'Travelling in the Maze of the Self or Rediscovering Tunisia after the Jasmine Revolution'. In this impressionist piece, the north-south divisions of Sri Lanka are mirrored to an extent in the two Tunisiyas, east and west, as both Sinhala-Buddhist incursions into the Jaffna area of Sri Lanka, and the caravans that criss-cross between Tunisia's touristic coastal stretch and the rural communities inland, traverse economic as well as cultural barriers. Saidi defines this extraordinary performance of self-discovery and reconciliation as 'intro-tourism', introspective travel emerging from

the dark shadows of colonialism and its revolutionary aftermath. Ethical and commercial issues relating to dark travel within these postcolonial states bear little resemblance to those posed in dark tourism research to date.

The first three articles of the volume examine the cultural practices that initiate and perpetuate dark travel across various postcolonial contexts. The three articles that follow draw attention to textual interpretations of these practices, analysing both fictional and non-fictional representations of suffering, loss, violence, and death, to distil the darkness encoded in the narratives. In ‘Home and the “Failed” City in Postcolonial Narratives of “Dark Return”’, Srilata Ravi questions the educational motivations of pilgrimage back ‘home’ for those exiled in more privileged locations, as in the case of Haitian-Canadian writer Dany Laferrière in *L’Énigme du retour* and Malagasy-French author Michèle Rakotoson in *Juillet au pays: Chroniques d’un retour à Madagascar*. In reading the texts’ engagement with identity and alterity, Ravi traces the narrators’ self-framing in familiar yet unrecognizable ‘deathscapes’, their negotiations of grief and guilt in spaces of memory, and their resistance to the role of dark tourist. She problematizes the notion of the ‘failed’ in the narratives, used first to describe the cities of Port au Prince and Antananarivo as irredeemable disasters of development, but eventually becoming a term evoking the authors’ own incapacity to represent these dark places to which they have returned.

Michael Ra-shon Hall’s chosen texts, published as the *Negro Travelers’ Green Book*, are unlike most other narratives of dark travel or tourism, which usually engage with and encourage sensitive and ethical approaches to sites of suffering, in that they are designed to assist the black traveller in avoiding potential suffering inflicted by racially charged experiences of dark travel in the mid-twentieth-century southern United States. In ‘The Negro Traveller’s Guide to a Jim Crow South: Negotiating Racialized Landscapes During a Dark Period in United States Cultural History, 1936–1967’, Hall inverts the traditional dark tourist paradigm, where the first degree of damage is embodied in the site and the visitor experiences a second degree of empathy, to foreground direct threats of darkness, violence, and death for the black tourist. The textual traces that remain become a key to understanding how individual safety and the desire for the civil right to safe passage were mediated and negotiated in the Jim Crow era.

A world away, on a Thai island paradise, the story of a young white American backpacker actively seeking a glamourized, globalized version of that darkness, violence, and death is detailed in Robert Burroughs’s article ‘Weird *Farang* Thing: Dark Tourism in Alex Garland’s *The Beach* (1996)’. Burroughs demonstrates how the author goes beyond the ideals of Thailand’s beautiful beaches and banana pancakes, to explore the darker side of tourism that elides Thailand with Vietnam, mobilizing imagery of the Vietnam War and its participants. From this violent imaginary, protagonist Richard’s narrative springs fully formed, nourished by cinematic glorification, circulating unhindered and sustaining dark tourism in Thailand and elsewhere in south-east Asia.

The final contribution to the volume is a photo-essay by Ross Gibson entitled ‘Wayfaring Strangers: Reflections on an Artistic Investigation of Mood in Online Mapping’, which takes dark travel into a digital dimension. Citing Google Street View as an oddly addictive and dark form of tourism, he explores how images of

sinister spaces linked to the Snowtown murders in South Australia can reflect dark online moods, including voyeurism, disquiet, and uncanniness. His ekphrastic compositions are themselves representations of mobility, travelling through cyber and real space, downloaded, uploaded, and manipulated to indulge the forensic imagination of the artist and the viewer.

The shadow zones through which we travel in this volume offer alternative itineraries of darkness in performance, place, and mood. bell hooks's suggestion that travel is inherently linked to sentiments of fear and terror may seem to conclude that the future of travel itself is dark. But as scholarship develops and practices evolve beyond dark tourism's guilty pleasures and pains, postcolonial travel cultures can only draw benefit from this new mode of thinking through the past, present, and future.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> bell hooks, ‘Representing Whiteness in the Black Imagination’, in Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson and Paula Treichler (eds), *Cultural Studies*, New York: Routledge, 1992, pp 338–346, p 338.
- <sup>2</sup> Francis Galton, *The Art of Travel; or. Shifts and Contrivances Available in Wild Countries*, 1855, Dorothy Middleton (intro.), London: Phoenix Press, 1971, pp 308–309.
- <sup>3</sup> Francis Galton, *Narrative of an Explorer in Tropical South Africa: Being an Account of a Visit to Damaraland in 1851*, 1853, 4th edn, London: Ward Lock and Co, 1891.
- <sup>4</sup> See, for example, Philip G Dwyer and Lyndall Ryan (eds), *Theatres of Violence: Massacre, Mass Killing and Atrocity throughout History*, New York: Berghahn, 2012; and Mark Levene and Penny Roberts (eds), *The Massacre in History*, New York: Berghahn, 1999.
- <sup>5</sup> Fiona Murphy, ‘The House on the Hill: An Analysis of Australia’s Stolen Generations’ Journey into Healing through the Site of Trauma’, in Jonathon Skinner (ed), *Writing on the Dark Side of Travel*, New York: Berghahn, 2012, pp 163–181.
- <sup>6</sup> For a critique of such arguments, see Justin D Edwards and Rune Graulund (eds), *Postcolonial Travel Writing: Critical Explorations*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, pp 1–3.
- <sup>7</sup> Lennon and Foley posit a ‘fundamental shift’ in the way that death, disaster and atrocity have been mobilized by tourism producers in the modern era; this supports their central thesis that “‘dark tourism’ is both a product of the circumstances of the late modern world and a significant influence upon these circumstances’: John Lennon and Malcolm Foley, *Dark Tourism: The Attraction of Death and Disaster*, Andover: Cengage Learning, 2010, p 3.
- <sup>8</sup> There are many examples of this form. As Tim Youngs notes, retracing the ‘footsteps’ of famous travellers is quite common in travel writing at present: Tim Youngs, *The Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, p 184.
- <sup>9</sup> Caryl Phillips, *The Atlantic Sound*, London: Faber, 2000.
- <sup>10</sup> Suneeeta Peres da Costa, *Homework*, New York: Bloomsbury, 1997.
- <sup>11</sup> See, for example, Leanne White and Elspeth Frew (eds), *Dark Tourism and Place Identity: Managing and Interpreting Dark Places*, London: Routledge, 2013; Avital Birna and Kenneth F Hyde (eds), *New Perspectives on Dark Tourism, special issue of International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research* 7(3), 2013.
- <sup>12</sup> Richard Sharpley, ‘Shedding Light on Dark Tourism’, in Richard Sharpley and Philip Stone (eds), *The Darker Side of Travel: The Theory and Practice of Dark Tourism*, Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2009, p 5.
- <sup>13</sup> Lennon and Foley, *Dark Tourism*, pp 3 and 11.
- <sup>14</sup> A V Seaton, ‘War and Thanatourism: Waterloo 1815–1914’, *Annals of Tourism Research* 26(1), 1999, pp 130–158.
- <sup>15</sup> *Champs de bataille de la Marne*, 3 vols, Guides Michelin pour la visite des champs de bataille, Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1917.
- <sup>16</sup> Charles Forsdick, *Travel Writing in French and Francophone Culture: The Persistence of Diversity*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- <sup>17</sup> Charles Forsdick and David Murphy (eds), *Postcolonial Thought in the French-Speaking World*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009.
- <sup>18</sup> Aedin Ni Loingsigh, *Postcolonial Eyes: Intercontinental Travel in Francophone African Literature*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009.
- <sup>19</sup> Charles Forsdick, ‘The Travelling Revolutionary: Translations of Toussaint Louverture’, in Martin Munro and Elizabeth Hackett-Walcott (eds), *Reinterpreting the Haitian Revolution and Its Cultural Aftershocks*, Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2006, pp 150–167.
- <sup>20</sup> Nick Lake, *In Darkness*, London: Bloomsbury, 2012.
- <sup>21</sup> Dominic Thomas, *Black France: Colonialism, Immigration, and Transnationalism*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007.
- <sup>22</sup> Tyler Stovall, *Paris Noir: African Americans in the City of Light*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1996.
- <sup>23</sup> Lydie Moudileno, ‘The Postcolonial Provinces’, *Francosphères* 1(1), 2011, pp 53–68.

- <sup>24</sup> Françoise Lionnet, *Le Su et l'incertain: Cosmopolitiques créoles de l'Océan Indien*, Mauritius: Atelier de l'écriture, 2012.
- <sup>25</sup> Srilata Ravi, *Rainbow Colours: Literary Ethnotopographies of Mauritius*, Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007.
- <sup>26</sup> Héléne Jaccomard, 'Les Raisins de la galère de Tahar Ben Jelloun ou les paradoxes de l'antiracisme', *Essays in French Literature and Culture* 48, 2011, pp 89–111.
- <sup>27</sup> Bonnie Thomas, 'Transgenerational Trauma in Gisèle Pineau's *Chair Piment* and *Mes Quatre Femmes*', *International Journal of Francophone Studies* 13(1), 2010, pp 23–38.
- <sup>28</sup> Jean-Marc Moura, *Littératures francophones et théories postcoloniales*, 2nd edn, Paris: PUF, 2013.
- <sup>29</sup> Marie-Claude Smouts (ed), *La Situation postcoloniale: les postcolonial studies dans le débat français*, Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2007.
- <sup>30</sup> See Janet Roitman (ed), *Racial France*, special issue of *Public Culture* 23(1), 2011.
- <sup>31</sup> Note that at the time of writing, the only book in the French National Library on the subject is published by the French tourism development agency, Atout France: *Le Tourisme de mémoire en France*, 2012.
- <sup>32</sup> Nicki Hitchcott, 'Travels in Inhumanity: Véronique Tadjo's Tourism in Rwanda', *French Cultural Studies* 20, 2009, pp 149–164.
- <sup>33</sup> Vincent Lavoie (ed), *Now: Images of Present Time/Maintenant: Images du temps présent*, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003.
- <sup>34</sup> Jonathan Skinner, 'Writings on the Dark Side of Travel', in Jonathan Skinner (ed), *Writing the Dark Side of Travel*, New York: Berghahn, 2012, pp 1–28, p 12.
- <sup>35</sup> See Philip R Stone, 'A Dark Tourism Spectrum: Towards a Typology of Death and Macabre Related Tourist Sites, Attractions and Exhibitions', *Tourism: An Interdisciplinary International Journal* 54(2), 2006, pp 145–160; William F S Miles, 'Auschwitz: Museum Interpretation and Darker Tourism', *Annals of Tourism Research* 29(4), 2002, pp 1175–1178.
- <sup>36</sup> Michael S Bowman, and Phaedra C Pezzullo, 'What's so "Dark" about "Dark Tourism"? Death, Tours, and Performance', *Tourist Studies* 9(3), 2009, pp 187–202, p 190.
- <sup>37</sup> Lennon and Foley, *Dark Tourism*, p 11
- <sup>38</sup> Bowman and Pezzullo, 'What's so "Dark" about "Dark Tourism"?', p 191.
- <sup>39</sup> For recent work which begins to address such lacunae, see Bowman and Pezzullo, 'What's so "Dark" about "Dark Tourism"?'; and Avital Biran, Yaniv Poria and Gila Oren, 'Sought Experiences at (Dark) Heritage Sites', *Annals of Tourism Research* 38(3), 2011, pp 820–841.
- <sup>40</sup> Judith Adler, 'Travel as Performed Art', *American Journal of Sociology* 94(6), 1989, pp 1366–1391, pp 1367–1368.
- <sup>41</sup> See Senija Causevic and Paul Lynch, 'Phoenix Tourism: Post-Conflict Tourism Role' [sic], *Annals of Tourism Research* 38(3), 2011, pp 780–800.
- <sup>42</sup> Sigmund Freud, 'Mourning and Melancholia', in *On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis: Beyond the Pleasure Principle, the Ego and the Id and Other Works*, 1917, Angela Richards (ed), London: Penguin, 1991, pp 245–268.
- <sup>43</sup> See, for example, Wolf Lepenies, *Melancholy and Society*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992.
- <sup>44</sup> Sigmund Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, 1923, James Strachey (trans and ed), London: Hogarth Press, 1927.
- <sup>45</sup> 'Postcolonial narrative, structured by a tension between the oppressive memory of the past and the liberatory promise of the future, is necessarily involved in a work of mourning. [It invites] us to participate in a ceaseless labor of remembrance, a labor which radically redefines the borders of community by teaching us how to live in memory of both the dead and all those whose living human presence continues to be disavowed by the present world order': Sam Durrant, *Postcolonial Narrative and the Work of Mourning*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004, p 1.
- <sup>46</sup> Consequently, as Biran *et al* argue, most studies have focused on the dark tourism 'product' and how a repressive history has been either misrepresented or occluded. Biran *et al*, 'Sought Experiences at (Dark) Heritage Sites'.
- <sup>47</sup> Adler, 'Travel as Performed Art'.
- <sup>48</sup> Jamaica Kincaid, *A Small Place*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1988.