Introduction: Writings on the Dark Side of Travel

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Writing Dark Travels

Thursday, 11 August 2005. Killing time, I visit the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles. This is coming to the end of a tour of the Arthur Murray dance studios up and down the West Coast. It is a hot break coming at the end of a month's dance fieldwork in Sacramento. Rather than fly back to Belfast from San Francisco, I opted for LAX and bookended my research with a personal journey driving up and down the state. I had gone up through Death Valley where I had solo hiked into the desert and made a souvenir vial of Death Valley sand. Then inland north to get through Yosemite, living in my rental car, sleeping in motels. Back south, I was sampling the dance studios along the coast—waltz in San Francisco, rumba in Hayward, foxtrot in Redwood City, tango in San Jose, salsa in chic Santa Barbara, merengue in Beverley Hills. Along the way, I was taking in the tourist attractions: the boardwalk in Santa Cruz where the movie *Lost Boys* was filmed; Cannery Row, Monterey, described long ago by John Steinbeck; Hearst Castle, which had inspired Orson Welles's *Citizen Kane*.

This was a self-driven pilgrimage of curiosity. It was a pre- and post-fieldwork treat to myself, a personal and intense journey; packed, busy and part celebrity/celebratory. Before flying out, I was on a salsa weekend in Palm Springs, and the Beverley Hills dance studio, Crystal Cathedral for an atheist, and the Museum of Tolerance for a Liberal were on the travel itinerary for Los Angeles. The Museum of Tolerance is a part of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, a monument to the Jewish Nazi hunter and

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Holocaust survivor with the aim of educating to prevent hatred and genocide. Its core is an educational journey through the Holocaust for visitors such as school children, with tests and *vox pop* audience samples. It also opens out debates to include local race riots, racial prejudices and intolerance more generally.

I toured through many of the rooms, following a spiral staircase up and down the building. An old Jewish man shouts at us voyeurs and visitors, herding us through the exhibition rooms. Here a media image, there a group quiz and “What would you do?” test. In one display a vial—uncannily like one of mine—but of crematorium ash from a Polish death camp. Several afternoons a week, a death camp survivor acts as docent and narrates their survival story and holds a Q&A for the Museum audience. I stayed around for this: an old man walked into our classroom, the school children hushed and he told us—first hand, after showing us his heinous tattoo—about his deportation to Auschwitz, how he struggled to stay alive but lost his family before he was liberated by the Soviets and then the Americans, and how he came to live in Los Angeles, working in the restaurant industry, waking most nights from nightmares of his past.

The survivor teased us along his life journey, sometimes reading from his notes, mostly speaking to us, voicing his memories. We lost ourselves following his path, stumbling with him, dumbstruck by the immediacy of the Holocaust horrors. At the end, the school children returned to their present, to their easy embarrassment, and shied away from asking him questions. I took the opportunity and asked him about his religion: gone that a God could allow such inhumanity. I learned that he remarried in the United States and divorced. That he lives in self-exile alongside other silent survivors but for their Museum stints. His politics: Palestinians are Arabs, Arabs killed Americans in 9/11, Muslims are terrorists who should be shown no mercy. “Get rid of them! These are Dark times!”

I recoil at the vitriol spat out by this gentle old man at the end of his testimony. It jars with what he experienced and spoke about, as well as the manner of his earlier delivery. It shook the audience. It confuses me. All of the scripted bonhomie was replaced with hatred and intolerance.

Lennon and Foley (2004: 21) include this Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles in their explication on dark tourism. It is a venue where tourists view and experience artifacts, texts and media representations of dark tourism. Unlike most dark tourist spots—Rojek’s (1999) “fatal attractions”—

Auschwitz (Poland), Checkpoint Charlie (Berlin), the Falls Road (Belfast), the Museum of Tolerance is not built on a site of atrocity (if we except the LA riots of 1992 and the Rodney King beatings). Furthermore, it is a Museum with few original artifacts, relying instead on modern media images and technologies to represent issues to the visitor. For Lennon and Foley it is, nevertheless, still a dark tourism destination despite this lack of self-referentiality. It speaks where Auschwitz camp remains mute, the latter relying on piles of human hair and human material culture to make its impact. It is “dark” in its topic and its lure of the visitor. In this fashion its remit is akin to that of the US Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC, described here by its Director of Public Information:

It’s a counterpoint to all of these other museums and memorials that you see, they all celebrate humans—their technology and art and creativity and we’re saying watch out there is another side to humankind and to what humans are also capable of doing. (Lennon and Foley 2004: 153)

Representations of the dark are the subject of this issue of *Journeys*, a collection of articles devoted to the subject of writers and artists struggling with the dark terrain of journeys—literally walks, dances, pilgrimages and tours, but also dances, fieldwork, and personal recovery. How these pains and trials are represented, and if, indeed, they should be, are in these contents. Primarily, however, this volume takes a cue from the dark tourism/thanatourism literature and debates that can help inform writings/texts on the darker side of travel.

The darker side of travel can refer in part to the contentious “dark tourism” concept first proposed by Lennon and Foley in 2000 in *Dark Tourism: The Attraction of Death and Disaster* (2004). Dark tourism for them is the tourist and industry relating to death, disaster, and atrocity, a kind of secular pilgrimage for the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. It is a new socio-cultural phenomenon: “a product of the circumstances of the late modern world” (2004: 3), “an intimation of post-modernity” (11) even as death becomes a commodity for consumption. For them, places such as Changi Gaol, Singapore; Pearl Harbour, Hawaii; the D-Day beaches and war cemeteries in France, are places associated with epic struggle of the human body and spirit. Included in these locations are

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routes turned into dark tourist attractions, “the commodification of the journey” (165). These can range from Titanic Cruises to the sinking place of the great liner, to live reenactments retracing by presidential limousine the final route through Dallas taken by JFK, or following the last route through Paris taken by Princess Diana in a similar black S-class Mercedes Benz. For Lennon and Foley, this variety of morbid tourist experience shares three contemporary characteristics: first, the place of global communication technologies in creating the initial interest; second, the dark tourism objects “appear to introduce anxiety and doubt about the project of modernity” (11); and third, there is an element of education and commerce/commodification associated with the destination.

Lennon and Foley do not explore the details of these three dark tourism facets. If anything, they shy away from academic debate, writing about the dark tourism “cusp” between modernity and postmodernity (166), and that the features coincide with a late capitalist, late modern and/or postmodern era—“[if] these features amount to late capitalism, or late modernity, then so be it” is their stance (11). More generally, the broad picture is one of sociological impact: the scope of bureaucratic rationality in the order of genocide, an ambivalence to science living in an atomic age of mutually assured destruction.

Certainly, Lennon and Foley articulate the tourists’ attraction to liminal places where life tours death, the living look onto the dead as though each dark tourism Ground Zero—be it Hiroshima or 9/11—is a photo negative on humanity. Tourists have an appetite for horror and death, the “subtle, corrupting fascination” for Auschwitz identified by Steiner (1971: 30) but writ large to a global level. But they, including Rojek, are well criticized by Tony Seaton (2009: 527) who prefers the term *thanatourism* to dark tourism because it incorporates the tourists’ “meditation on death and dying,” the term for *thanatopsis*, a wider but more accurate delimitation. “Dark tourism is the travel dimension of *Thanatopsis*,” Seaton explains. This phenomenon can thus be specifically defined. Seaton elaborates:

Thanatourism is travel to a location wholly, or partially, motivated by the desire for actual or symbolic encounters with death, particularly, but not exclusively, violent death, which may, to a varying degree be activated by the person-specific features of those whose death are its focal objects. (1996: 236)

Thus, for Seaton, thanatourism belongs to the social science sub-discipline thanatology. Furthermore, Seaton (2009: 526) makes the point that our contemporary fascination with fatality is not a new post/modern phenomenon. Rather it has evolved for millennia, specifically out of the Christian cult of death and preoccupation with pain and suffering for our sins. Christian shrines are examples of early dark thanatourism. Moreover, Seaton suggests that European Romanticism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries turned death into an aesthetic and imaginative sensibility (Edmund Burke propounded a sublime aesthetic of wild natural forces). As such, Lennon and Foley's dark tourism was borne on the battlefield tours post-Waterloo and the visits to Pompeii while on the Grand Tour, and not out of the industrial and wholesale mass-slaughters of the two World Wars in the twentieth century.

That dark sites or dark destinations attract tourists is undeniable. Tourism and death are an attractive if unnatural combination, "an odd conjunction" for Seaton (2009: 521), one of surreptitious interest, public controversy, and intellectual curiosity in tourist motivation. Auschwitz Memorial and Museum with its million plus visitors, and the Holocaust and its museumification in the US are an obvious case in point, one that illustrates many issues raised in the papers in this collection. One in particular is the difficulty, not least the appropriacy, of writing and representing such "darkness"—to use a term used by Sharon Hepburn (this issue) to describe the condition of atrocity, horror, evil. Is it possible to articulate or fathom the genocide of millions of Jews in World War II? The Shoah overwhelms our language and media (Rosenfeld 1980); it "negates any form of literature" (Wiesel 1960: 7); it is the end of poetry (Adorno 2003); it is so "unspeakable" that it cannot be trivialized by social theory (Steiner 1967: 163)—though I would suggest that Bauman (1989) and Arendt (1994) make disturbing but important warnings for us about the banality of the Holocaust and its testing connection with Modernity (specifically the modern nation state and new mechanisms for social control).

"The Holocaust for some remains a vacuum that consumes all light intended to illuminate it" (Lennon and Foley 2004: 152). It is darkly fascinating, repulsively attractive for the tourist moths. Perhaps its commoditization is necessary in our post-emotional society in which identification with the suffering and pain of others is becoming so difficult? The danger is that this commoditization erodes the impact of the history of the place.

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Auschwitz is now a physical teaching tool on the Polish curriculum where it is obligatory for all school children to make the pilgrimage to the site and damning pictures of school children eating their packed lunches sitting on the crematoria have been circulated extensively in the public domain. Israeli anthropologist Jackie Feldman (2005) discusses failed tourist expectations in his study of educational visits to Poland for Israeli school children. These part-pilgrimage tours often fail because of a “cognitive dissonance” (Feldman 2005: 228) between the tourists’ expectations and the “authenticity” of the experiences. If the site does not look authentic, or the sensory envelope of the site is not all convincing and embracing, then the tourist experience does not succeed—the school children feel empty, let down, deflated, even betrayed. Similarly, in a recent issue of *Journeys*, anthropologist Nigel Rapport (2008c) uses his walking tour of Auschwitz as a foil with which to connect himself with his readings about the place and its horrors—one of which is a reading of the German Anglophile writer W.G. Sebald (1998) and his meditative travelogue of an English pilgrimage, *The Rings of Saturn*. According to Rapport, there is an individual consciousness to walking journeys, one which develops from the body as movement precipitates identity. “Walking Auschwitz” though, Rapport feels disconnected between the experiences of history, which he wants to connect with, and the tourist role he feels himself acting out. His body movements are out of step; his identity out of context. He becomes the “resentful tourist” (2008c: 37) corralled along a scripted tour. The tour fails because it is like being on a film set or in a theme park—“an emotional abusement park” (Miller 1994). And yet this is hardly surprising given Rapport’s thesis on movement and identity and his embodiment of the tourist visitor: visiting Auschwitz on a group tour, wearing tourist clothes (shorts and rolled up shirt), and marking the “trip” with posed tourist photographs taken outside Birkenau (see Rapport 2008c: 38).

In visiting Holocaust displays or memorials, there is also the danger that their commoditization results in their compartmentalization. The representation of the Holocaust from another time and another country in part consigns it to a historical position. It acts as a deflection move. The Holocaust Museum in Washington can be interpreted to act as a reprieve for the US government in that the portrayal of genocide is distanced to mid-twentieth century Nazi atrocity, rather than the much closer to home genocide of Native American Indians. There is no slavery museum repre-

senting the iniquities and barbarity of that institutionalised slavery. Furthermore, Lennon and Foley (2004: 152) make the valid point that the dark fascination with the Holocaust exposed in a sanitized museum environment is not necessarily the logically appropriate way of warning “mankind.” Is exposure to barbarism the antidote to that barbarism? They quote the travel writer Philip Gourevitch’s (1993: 62) apt interpretation of the Holocaust Museum media show:

One way history is doomed to repetition at the Holocaust museum is that day in and day out, year after year, the videos of the *Einssatzgruppen* murders will play over and over. There, just off the National Mall in Washington, the victims of Nazism will be on view for the American public, stripped, herded into ditches, shot, buried, and then the tape will repeat and they will be herded into the ditches again, shot again, buried again. I cannot comprehend how anyone can enthusiastically present this constant cycle of slaughter, either as a memorial to those whose deaths are exposed or as an edifying spectacle for the millions of visitors a year who will be exposed to them. Didn’t these people suffer enough the first time their lives were taken from them?

Museums such as the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles and the Holocaust Museum in Washington involve survivors in their activities to personalize and dramatize the tourist’s visit experience. The living connection with the past literally brings home the horror and lends authenticity to the uneasy representation of the Holocaust. Berman (1999) notes, though, the different orientations in the exhibitions: American representations are more humanistic in scope, “Americanized” in contrast with the more Zionist, “Israelified” Yad Vashem (the Holocaust Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Authority) living memorial to the Holocaust in Jerusalem. Anthropologists’ reactions to Auschwitz and the Museum of Tolerance show how difficult it is to foster a balanced and respectful but disturbing representation of a darkness without causing offence or failing to elicit the appropriate response from the visitor. Accompanying a class of diverse university students around the Montreal Holocaust Museum with a Holocaust survivor, Rapport again senses a disconnect between tourist and guide, resenting the exclusivity of the darkness of the Holocaust story at the expense of the students’ own trials. “His person and his narrative ... possessed more

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the aura of ritual relic than a truth relevant to the everyday here and now” Rapport (2008a: 161) explains.

In Mestrovic’s (1996) post-emotional condition, where it is difficult to create empathy outside of the immediate family, inured, we feel and react only from ever more risky or “edgier” pursuits (see Lyng [1990], and Bell and Lyall on the “accelerated sublime” [2002]). Only in the hyper do we gain the last of the authentic and come to live in the ecstatic present. In our modern risk society we become junkie zombies acculturated to the extreme—extreme travel pursuit, extreme leisure practice, extreme behavior. This is the subject matter of Graham Huggan’s *Extreme Pursuits: Travel/Writing in an Age of Globalization* (2009) new book about travel writers and their travel writings. In it, Huggan calls on us to expand our notion of the travel and the travel text, specifically that compound “travel writing.” These “travel” texts can include accounts of travel by Holocaust deportation and for migrant labor, and “writing” as film texts, ethnography, and audiovisual media. Entering the thanatourism/dark tourism debates, Huggan points out that whichever name is used, both dark tourism and thanatourism are compromised practices. They reflect a nostalgic authenticity by way of endangerment; in life-threatening times we feel alive with representations of the life-threatening being the next best thing. That feeling of safety from exposure to atrocity elsewhere in time and space, Huggan (2009: 10) warns us, is “an illusory authority.” There seems to be a degree of *Schadenfreude* and *catharsis* sought from extreme travel writing. Huggan’s purpose in his new book is to examine our sociological desires and anxieties, and how they are salved and sorted in contemporary travel writing.

At the core of *Extreme Pursuits* is disaster writing. Like Rapport, Huggan considers Sebald’s haunting writing, also the war reportage of Philip Gourevitch mentioned by Lennon and Foley. The current vogue for disaster tourism is a symptom of our modern reflexive risk society where death and disaster are the norm, the theatricalization of death for the male tourist especially living through a crisis of masculinity. This makes the disaster writing a cautionary literature, a witnessing at a safe distance of other people’s pain. The text becomes a link between travel “too-far” (travel without return or the death of the traveler) and travel “not-far-enough” (a flirtation with death or aspiration of suffering) (Huggan 2009: 115). Whether book and/or film—Jon Krakauer’s *Into the Wild* (1997) reconstruction of Christopher

McCandless's failed Alaskan wilderness quest is one of the book/film text examples used by Huggan (2009: 111–117)—the travel text notes the passive nature of the “writer” as well as the reader. Both are consumers in their respective spaces. Furthermore, readers of Gourevitch's (1998) *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families*—an account of the genocide in Rwanda written from a visit in 1995—will be familiar with how he struggles to imagine, let alone write about, the atrocities committed. How can one imagine the intent behind a genocide, and where does it go once the blood has been mopped up and the corpses rotted into aesthetically tranquil “fallen forms” (Gourevitch 1998: 19)? Gourevitch chooses literary narrative as his representational medium. Pelton, Aral, and Dulles (1998), in their guidebook *The World's Most Dangerous Places*, add graphic cartoons to their word text, by so doing taming and domesticating the violence they represent. This gives the disaster a thrill factor. Sebald (1998), by contrast, punctuates a traditional textual flow with occasional pictures, prints, and photographs to create an atmosphere of gloominess, difference and dereliction. For Huggan (2009: 141), this last travel text is “a narrative of suffering—a martyrology of sorts.” It becomes an outlet for neurosis, a space where all sorts of confusions can be faced: psychological, ontological, representational. Who am I? Where do I belong? Travel and its writing has the potential to create uncertainty but also to cure complacency. But more than anything, like anthropology, it encourages an intersecting of worlds—past and present, living and dead for Huggan (2009: 146) to which we might add in this special issue the self and the other, and the near and the far.

Writing the Dark

August 1995: Exactly ten years earlier and I am in my own dark place. Almost a year into ethnographic fieldwork on the small island of Montserrat in the Eastern Caribbean, and the previously thought extinct volcano that first made the island begins to shake, rumble, and spew on the civilians beneath it. In July, “the Beast,” as many came to refer to the volcano, had come back to life. I left the island to return to St. Andrews, Scotland, where I was completing my doctorate in Social Anthropology. There, I was angry, very angry. Talk about “fire in the mountain.”¹ I felt like punching

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things and people. I felt that I could very easily lash out. The university town was exactly the same as when I'd left it, but I had changed and with my sudden departure from Montserrat, I felt that I was still often mentally and physiologically back on the island. I felt guilt for leaving my friends and colleagues. I wanted to lash out at each comment about how exciting it must have been to have been in a volcanic eruption. And each time the floor shook in my landlady's house from the washer machine going into spin cycle, my heart raced as another tremor disturbed the island (see Skinner 2000).

I knew that I was getting stuck in my isolating experience. And that I was either not able to express "where I was", or that it was not appropriate to do so. I needed to catch up with myself. We talked about this in the University Counseling service for two sessions. The first was a non-judgmental description and explanation of my unexpected return to St. Andrews. In the second session, we talked about counseling techniques. Several years later, I spent some of my own clinical practice as a person-centred counselor working for the same University service. Ten years on and "the ghosts in the head" (Skinner 2008), jumbies for Montserratians, had been laid to rest with a return visit to Montserrat, and a life moved on into a very different research area.

Kali Talil (2010) writes that "trauma is a transformative experience, and those who are transformed can never return to a state of previous innocence." It can prompt change. And it can haunt the changed. Like the anthropologist's split subject position, the traumatized move between worlds and states characterized by some as between the normal and the abnormal. In far more extreme examples, the traumatized remain haunted by their experiences: "After Auschwitz, everything long past brings us back to Auschwitz," laments camp survivor Elie Wiesel (1990: 19). One difficulty with such trauma is that it can become "embodied in the neurophysiology of pain and fear rather than in words and images" (Young 1995: 13). This makes it difficult to define and to work with, as Young (*ibid.*: 283) found in the case of post-traumatic disorder treatment of US Vietnam war veterans, dealing with the "wordless memories" as he put it. Stress levels and neural pathway damage sometimes relate to the politics of trauma more than to the patients, however.

Trauma has also been described manifest as "the fragmentation of the lived body" (Casey 2000: 155), of habitual movements broken into unco-

ordinated parts, divided and lacking integration and coherence. Such bleakness can be countered by positive body memories, by integrating and smoothing—acclimatizing—the trauma patient. For contemporary psychoanalyst Robert Stolorow (1999), the estranged and isolated condition he found himself in took six long years to “journey” through. He likens his personal journey to that of an anthropologist traveling through an alien culture; the absolute and normal, the predictable and comfortable—the sense of being-in-the-world—are all awry and out of kilter while he strays from his normal path. In Farrell’s (1998: xii) terms, he has blundered outside “the magic circle of everyday life.” Stolorow’s phenomenology of trauma is perhaps an extreme version of Giddens’s (1991) disembodied/disembodied reflexive self in Late Modernity, which might be difficult to understand while they inhabit their personal dark continent, though it is possible to access through their writings, creative expressions, blogs, poems, paintings, walkings, journeyings, dancings, and all manner of other narrative practices and self-articulations.

In his diatribe on postmodern ethnography, the Writing Culture School anthropologist Stephen Tyler (1986: 140) describes ethnographic texts as “a meditative vehicle” in the anthropological journey that we write. Here in this Introduction to this special issue we have a personal and professional journey intertwined. For Tyler, though, our writing of reality is an imitation of that reality, a mimesis and poor one at that. Writing—the most powerful means of representation, an ideology of representational signification, and an ideology of power (see Tyler 1986: 131)—might be a magical act, but so too in this *logos* of writing we are strait-jacketed and imprisoned in our linguistic-based symbolic communications (see Bloch [1998] and Jameson [1972]). We are all doubly disabled in trying to understand the Other and then trying to represent them. “Language doesn’t represent but constructs,” Anna Banks (Banks and Banks 1998: 14) points out. This is one of the key challenges for anthropology—“the writing of the human” (Rapport 2008b: 230).

One consolation is that in this orderly composition of writing—“the logical-conceptual order of the text” (Tyler 1986: 132)—can come a therapeutic aesthetic integration of captured experience. In writing we try to gain control of our experiences. We write them together. And we write them out of ourselves. The limits of this writing are obvious (see also Archetti [1994] on the end of our “age of innocence” as text-studying anthropologists).

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Tyler calls on us, then, to “evoke” rather than attempt an impossible “representation.” Sebald, we might say evokes in a haunting fashion. Elsewhere, in *Holidays in Hell* for example, P.J. O’Rourke (2002) uses humor in his riff on the expression “Acceptable level of violence” used to describe the state of Northern Ireland. He, and other travel writers, generally still opt for the descriptive turn in their writing.

Anthropologist James Boon draws a fine distinction between the travelogue and the ethnography orderly compositions mentioned above: they are genres of writing, the former “a kind of writing-as-if-one had ‘been there,’ but briefly, *en passant*”; the latter, “a kind of writing-as-if-one had ‘been there’ longer, dwellingly” (1999: 48). Their rhetorics are to be read with a similar correspondence: “reading-voyage [as] fleet”—travelogue; and “reading-stay [as] participant”—ethnography. The ethnography, however, “genre-ally” has a particular disciplinary-based reading—and writing—community (see Fish 1988).² Among anthropologists writing ethnography, the “1986” “new ethnographic critics” George Marcus and his colleague Michael Fischer (1986) encourage an ever-experimental moment of evocation, illustration, play and dialogics in ethnographic writing. Julie Taylor, to give another example, picks up this challenge and problem with the nature of representation in her ethnography of tango in Argentina, *Paper Tangos* (1998). Concerned to “transmit the bodily knowledge of a dance form,” Taylor (1998: xv) combines text with image, creating a flipbook of tango moves alongside a very moving ethnography. The steps seen correspond to the words read. The result is Taylor (1998: xix) “choreographing [a] paper tango” that pushes the reader to analyze, feel, and see the dance for what it is. Elsewhere Edwin Wilmsen (1999) uses metaphor and poetry in his *Journeys with Flies*, an evocation of life and long-term fieldwork among the tribesfolk of the Kalahari Desert, the fly standing as a metaphor for the ambiguities of life. In other ethnographic experiments, Mol (2002) splits her ethnography of medical diagnosis and treatment of atherosclerosis between a reported style of main text and a parallel academic discussion beneath. The reader heads north or south depending on their motivation. Rapport (1994) zigzags east/west and back again in his writing. Writing about violence in Northern Ireland, the anthropologist Allen Feldman (1991) side-steps the problems with representation by focusing on the interviews he conducted with his body of informants. Fiction and the real are blended with literature, historical archive material and literary theory by

Michael Taussig (1986) in his eclectic study of terror and healing in Columbia, *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man*. There, he uses Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* to draw the reader into "the greatness of the horror," "the mistiness of terror," "the aesthetics of violence", and the imperial, aggrandizing desires and repressions that are found from the heart of Congo and Columbia to the heart of man (Taussig 1986: 10). Evocative (non-representational) faction (literary fiction with historical fact) becomes "impressionistic autoethnography" for Skinner (2003, 2004). These are all techniques for developing the humanism of representation made by writers who are, after all, themselves also "part shareholders in humanity" (James, Hockey, and Dawson 1997: 5). With all this in mind, Paul Stoller (1989, 1997) complicates the problem further with representation by calling for a sensuous anthropology that takes account of the lower senses and so discounts the ocularcentrism of Western perception.

"The inchoate—the dark at the bottom of the stairs—which lies at the centre of human experience", this is the subject of James Fernandez's (1986: xiii) anthropological project. Fernandez (1986: 7) advocates the figurative, to analogy, "rhetorical devices of representation" that we co-intuit. Metaphor, literally translating from the Greek as "change in motion" (ibid.: 37), allows for an expressive culture of rich tropes, ironic word plays and imaginative figures of speech. One can be expansive, elusive and edifying in life and hopefully also in text. Indeed, the cultural crossings and associations studied in trope theory are also at the core of travel writing journeys written about one place for people in another (see Fernandez 1991). However, I also take Judith Adler's (1989: 1383) point that travel and its writing generally serves a metonymic function with the brief encounter summing up "a culture." As Huggan has already shown us, the world is far more mobile now than ever before. Nomad thought of routes rather than roots may be with us, though much travel writing has still to catch up (see also Clifford 1997; Cresswell 2006: 43).

The existential anthropologist Michael Jackson makes a similar point when he compares "storying" and "journeying." Both practices involve crossing, breaching and blurring boundaries. "Storytelling moves us, transports us, carries us away, or helps us to escape the oppressiveness of our real lives" Jackson (2002: 30) opines. This echoes de Certeau's (1984: 115) comment that "every story is a travel story—a spatial practice." This comes out of de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life* where there is the sug-

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gestion that the story is an everyday narrative form which we can assume has a converse position of the trauma as an extraordinary state, one hard to narrate and give form to.

The story is not just about a journey, it also is a journey as emplacement and emplotment combine in the travel writers' narrative, Jackson (2002: 31) continues. Jackson exemplifies this in *Minima Ethnographica: Inter-subjectivity and the Anthropological Project* which opens with the clause "I begin in the middle of a journey" (1998: 1). First Jackson writes the story. Then he analyzes it, making the point later on that storytelling is motivated by a need for self-expression and, further, that life stories are authored in collaboration between teller and listener. In other words, for Jackson (1998: 23), life stories are relational, "authored not by autonomous subjects but by the dynamics of intersubjectivity." When told, they retain elements of that interaction with both actor and sufferer subject positions. When things fall apart, we spin a yarn to bring them together. When trauma intrudes and unsettles our daily habits and self-expectations, we recount and reimagine our situation. Put more graphically:

If one's habitus is destroyed—by war, enforced migration, imposed social change, bereavement, debilitating illness, racist humiliation, unemployment or lack of recognition—then the capacities for acting, building and speaking that were developed in one's first and familiar lifeworld are suddenly invalidated, and this may lead to such a loss of confidence, satisfaction and enjoyment that one may feel that life itself no longer has any meaning, and is not worth living. (Jackson 2008: xxii)

Writing, narrating, storytelling that darkness, suffering, pain, brings it into relief and into some inter-subjective shared light. This activity is one of mastery. It is about giving voice to pain, anger, violence, abuse, the darkness in the human pit. The human subject is a relational subject, for Jackson, requiring an "inter-existence" (1998: 3), inter-locuting to find a voice, needing an object audience when subjected. But there are voices within the self: consciousness is dialogic. In addition to this, Jackson (1998: 2, 3) goes so far as to suggest that the "self has no reality except in relation to others," and that, after Sartre, "inter-existence is given precedence over individual essence." There is certainly an impulse "to connect" in a Forsterian sense, but Jackson's "inter-" is an add-on factor—inter-est, if

you will. The individual is an expressive and performative being whether in solo or in duet.

One assumption here is that journeying and writing is a way of finding oneself, of becoming congruent. This is not necessarily a given. Musgrove (1999) articulates this when he looks at Freud on vacation, at Freud's travel writing texts, and notes that the identity of the journeying subject can be sent into flux and become as unsettled as the mobile body. Border crossings, and wavering between home and away worlds, can precipitate a loss of self (Musgrove 1999: 40), just as it can reinforce the self. They also have the potential to lead to a need to "possess" (colonize, describe, represent) the host environment in an attempt at regaining that sense of settlement whether physically or figuratively. Faced with the monotony of the landscape of the northwest border of South Africa, travel writer Dan Jacobson (*The Electronic Elephant: A South African Journey* [1994]) grows increasingly anxious that the external emptiness before him might reflect his inner emptiness (Klopper 2005: 464). In fact, his travel north acts as a travel back into his past and reactivates difficult memories from his youth: an abandoned building comes to stand for his erased self, a rock sticking out from the *veld* becomes a jagged scab sticking up from his body. It is, as Porter (1991: 13) writes, as though "a foreign country constitutes a gigantic Rorschach test." The foreign plains act as a free association stimulus or projection field for the writer's dissatisfactions and desires.

Play and death are closer to each other than is commonly thought (Urry 2004), as evinced above in the dark tourism/thanatourism examples. So too is the tourism/terrorism distinction as travel and violence become increasingly interwoven—not just as Crick's (1989: 309) "suntanned destroyers of culture" but also in the travel interrogations, indignities and suspicions we have to endure for our safety (Phipps 1999: 75). Taussig (2006), whose work covers most of the themes and issues discussed in this issue—violence, trauma, mimesis, representation, and intertwined personal and professional journeys—has written an academic crossover travel text about visiting *Walter Benjamin's Grave*, with the same title. One section opens, "'I am not making a pilgrimage,' I said to myself when I visited the graveyard at Port Bou in the spring of 2002" (2006: 6). Taussig is uncertain of himself and seems to be trying to convince himself of the uprightness of his activities, as though pilgrimages or dark visits are unseemly involvements for an academic. He continues:

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Indeed I was not even sure I wanted to visit the graveyard. I do not think this was entirely due to fear of cemeteries on my part. Nor was it because I am also attracted to them. It was more because I feel uncomfortable about what I discern as an incipient cult around the site of Benjamin's grave, as if the drama of his death, and of the holocaust, in general, is allowed to appropriate and overshadow the enigmatic power of his writing and the meaning of his life. Put bluntly, the death comes to mean more than the life. (2006: 6)

For Taussig, we are scared but tempted by death. It is the ultimate—excess, end point, edge, and even “authority” for the storyteller. Are we back to dark tourism again, the dirty little secret of the tourism industry, and if so, is it the dark more so than the tourism that is pressing against Taussig's sense of appropriacy?

In a perceptive article on the rhetorics of disaster and the imperative of writing, Michael Bernard-Donals uses the Shoah and museum tours by survivors to explore the limits of writing. He calls for us “to resist the idolatry of representation” (2001: 73), to recognize the limits of writing, in particular the impossibility of writing an event given that we cannot “write as knowledge” (74). Like Tyler, Fernandez, Gourevitch, and museum and tourism studies critics, Bernard-Donals maintains that whether we use literal or figurative language, an event or experience “resists *versimilitude*” (80, author's emphasis). Writing dissolves the experience and becomes an object in itself. Not only do events elude writing, but writing itself is an illusion, a slight of hand. Writing is not a medium that represents. It is more a practice that haunts. Perhaps this goes some way towards explaining the students' disconnect with the docent in the museum? Reading a history of the Holocaust in the intransitive or experiencing the jar between personal testimony and historical fact can disorientate the audience. Bernard-Donals (2001: 85) cites a classroom experiment where the teacher used Art Spiegelman's classic graphic novel *Maus* to engage her compassion-fatigued students, to connect them to issues of minority status, intolerance, and dark acts in the past. The experiment to use a visual text “brought home” the Holocaust history, powerfully utilizing anthropomorphism over text or material culture. On occasion, such writing speaks to me more so than academic descriptive analytical attempts at representation. Bruner's (2005) anthropological examination of the conflicting interpretations of

tourism experiences to the slave trader forts of Ghana—slaves disappearing through “doors of no return”—is less evocative, less touching and hence less “representational” than Wideman’s (1998) creative writing journey through the door—a trauma—a darkness smelling of slavery.

We live in darkness, and, when they drag us up into the courtyard each day, there is no color in the light—it is like silver, glittering spears thrust into our eyes or the glare of hot sand when the sun burns fiercely. My eyes are swollen now, and water spills from them even after I’ve finished crying, but I remember the color of light in the village. (Wideman 1998: 6)

Seven Writings on The Dark Side of Travel

There are seven articles in this special issue of *Journeys*. In their own ways, they all engage with the issues wandered through and wondered about above: the haunting dark, darkness, inchoate inner places, traumatized bodies and brains; mediums of representation and the nature of reading and writing; and travels and tourism, personal and professional journeys taken, often intertwined. These are all writings on the dark side of travel whether on the streets of Belfast, through Sebald’s coastal East Anglia, absorbing the graphic novels on genocide in Bosnia, reading reluctant travel writers’ visits and tours of Rwanda, on Camino pilgrimage through Spain, trekking along the foothills of Nepal, or on dance retreat in the Republic of Ireland. In each, the examples are personal and particular whether the academic ethnographer or travel writer, or the subjects being represented. You might say that there is a “tactile humanism” (Abu-Lughod 1993) about the ethnographic particularism in these writings. There is also a great deal of movement, of journeying be it the content of the text, the form of the writing, the mundivagrantations of the writers.

John Nagle considers Belfast, a city riven by its sectarian conflict. Belfast is an emblem of the Troubles, a people and a place traumatized by continual violence. Tourism has been one path forward out of the locked cycle, a counter-insurgency technique to peace. Yet the schism between Unionist and Nationalist drives well into the debate of what the tourist should see of the city, an illustration of the politicization of representation: protest

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and commemoration murals or industrial heritage, terrorism (dark) tours, or a more positive visit to the Titanic Quarter—itself built upon the name of an infamous shipwreck. Nagle's analysis of the city is by way of Freud, suggesting that IRA bombs traumatized the people, creating a void societal psyche. Tourism is a way of peace-building, but the danger is that the dark tours given by the Black Cabs or the political walks through the Falls Road and Shankill Road continue to contain the city and its people within a traumatic paradigm, one that is *unheimlich* (uncanny) in its juxtaposition of the strange and the familiar, the safe and the dangerous. Here, regeneration is more than just economic.

In the second article, we turn from the collective to the individual with Simon Cooke's examination of the German (travel) writer W.G. Sebald's haunting journey through East Anglia, a book also tackled by Rapport and Gourevitch above. Sebald plays with his narratives, using memory, dream, history, photograph and map to present a landscape full of foreboding. There is a pervasive darkness about his writing. It is everywhere. East Anglia becomes an area of darkness, but it is not an absence or nothingness or act of negation (see also Spurr 1994: 92–94). There is neither a negation nor a darkness as metaphor for the unconscious or uncivilized that you find in the writing of, say, Conrad. Sebald's unsettling work is an example of thanatourism, according to Cooke. Sebald avoids the danger of dropping his writing into an anthem to duty or example of commoditized titillation. Sebald does this by engaging with the text, bringing the reader into this reflexive site of suffering. Sebald ultimately resists the separation between the living and the dead: "the thanatouristic element is self-defeating in his writing" as Cooke argues. The incomprehensible simultaneity of bliss and horror are not restricted to a particular destination. Such sufferings, Cooke points out, have no discrete "place". They are all around us. Death is a part of—and not apart from—all of our journeys.

The graphic travelogue is examined by Tristram Walker in the third article in this volume. Specifically, Walker shows us how "adult comix" graphic novelist and artist Joe Sacco represents his travels in Bosnia and the Palestine. "Shock and draw" is the underground artist's *modus operandi*. But the violence of the cartoon panels is not gratuitous but informed social and political commentary based on firsthand observation. Sacco is a comix journalist who draws himself into his panels. These panels impel the reader/viewer forwards, sketching scenes of trauma that the

reader has to link together. The form of representation is light and hinted at despite the weighty and dark subject matter. The blank gutter between the panels becomes important, a gap in the dark of the boxes, the terror of an unknown scene pending our visual arrival. The captions around the images are scattered about, fragmented, mimicking the scattered refugee families and reinforcing the impression that many events are going on at the same time. Walker concludes that Sacco's work is a witnessing and sharing of trauma that affirms life and hope in the face of bleakness, and reinforces the previous articles' interpretations that these violent streets could be our streets around us.

In article four, Rachel Moffat compares and contrasts two travel writers and their accounts of genocide in Rwanda. Here, we return to literary criticism and the conventional textual medium of representation. Both Philip Gourevitch (see above) and Dervla Murphy are experienced travel writers with different identities and affiliations—the one Jewish, the other Irish—visiting post-genocide Rwanda. Both wrestle with their motivations and representations of their experiences. In *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families: Stories from Rwanda*, Gourevitch (1998) deliberately set out to explore the logic and rationality behind such darkness on the cusp of a new century and millennium. He finds himself disturbed by his own curiosity. There is a moral ambivalence associated with both the writing and the reading of this atrocity, though in writing it there is also the potential to right it and to warn against it happening again. Much of this is captured in his walk at Nyarabuye with a Canadian Colonel: he hears a crunch and sees that the Colonel has accidentally stepped on a skull and broken it. His immediate reaction is to feel anger. This turns to guilt and complicity when he hears another crunch and feels a vibration underfoot as he steps on the remains of another human being. Gourevitch's writing deliberately pulls the reader into the text. He elicits a reaction right from the very start of the book that he deliberately framed about a Shoah-like Holocaust, and deliberately titled after a written plea for help just prior to the bloodletting.

Murphy also takes care not to be seen to exploit a tragedy. Her work, *Visiting Rwanda* (1998), is an accidental narrative as Murphy is forced into reporter mode when her Zaire trekking vacation is curtailed by reports of violence in the areas she was intending to walk through. The reluctant reporter, Murphy did not seek out the accounts and testimonies from

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Rwanda. Sometimes she and her text turn away when Gourevitch felt obliged to account, record and document with gut-wrenching precision. And yet Murphy is able to pick and choose her questions, and so give the reader a more “reader-friendly” travel in comparison with Gourevitch’s probing investigation. Here we see the different travel writers’ gaze on the horror, entertaining the reader but also warning them of the extreme suffering from which they are removed. There is a tactics at play in both the writing and the reading of these extreme travel texts, to return us to Huggan. Is this travel writing a reader’s engagement with our new late/post/hyper modern risk society? Here too we are left with the question of whether or not these travel writers are in fact dark tourists using their accidental or deliberate writings to justify their travels.

Keith Egan, in article five, walks the Camino de Santiago in Spain, joining in and studying the pilgrims.³ His approach is phenomenological, exploring their motivations and how the walk, pedestrianism, with its quiet reflective rhythms, becomes a therapeutic practice—walking therapy, a somatic mode of healing. Control of one’s walk represents a regain of control in one’s life whether wounded by loss—of self, other, or purpose—or suffering from illness or trauma. Sebald recognized this and walked, walked and wrote. In this piece, it is the person suffering and in an existential dark place: the dark terrain they walk through is on the inside rather than on the outer path. The walk is a way of moving out of their present condition, a physical and existential exposure and regaining of closure and coherence in their lifeworld. Many pilgrims have not reached a place in themselves where they can speak of their state. Here the body articulates the unspeakable for them. The Camino becomes a staged narrative practice of healing. And the stories that are told to Egan when the pilgrims do quite literally find their feet are often itineraries on the way, or personal journeys undertaken. John walks in the shadow of his sister who died walking the Camino. He finds his vocabulary after reading her comments in the overnight guest books and talking to other walkers along the way. His is a bereavement journey. Overall, Egan’s study, in which he also walks his own Camino, is a study of metaphorical expression in narrative practice, of personal hope and individual inspiration. Though old, this medieval pilgrimage route is still as supportive as it has always been.

The theme of shades of being is complemented by an article on the shades of darkness by Sharon Hepburn. In our penultimate article, Hep-

burn critiques the dark tourism thesis by painting a nuanced picture. There are shades of darkness that have settled across tourist Nepal. These are not necessarily negative spaces, but they do have an absence in the culture of silence that pervades them. Moreover, tourists enjoying themselves in Nepal are often blind to the darkness—the fear, terror, killing—around them. Thus, it can be said that there is a tourism *in* darkness as well as a tourism *about* darkness. Hepburn adopts this dark tourism continuum, from paler to darker and dark, to characterize tourist and Nepali experiences—or obliviousness as is often the case for the former. Light and darkness are, respectively, concealed and revealed to the tourist. The tourist experience has been booked and paid for, and will be consumed regardless of its context.

The final paper in this issue by Jenny Elliott presents both a medically traumatized state and a personal journey into retreat. This is all in the context of dancing mobile bodies representing the human condition. Elliott works with patients with severe brain trauma. Unlike the dark or pale tourist, these patients do not have the luxury of obliviousness to the dark. They have no escape from their personal traumas. Many are also silent, caught in an unresponsive body. This narrative is especially direct, poignant and evocative. It is an embodied ethnography from a dancer choreographer who has access to her patients' states, uses dance to elicit patient responses, and does this all while also acknowledging her own existential condition and inner journey. Where Egan saw "hope" spring from his pilgrims, Elliott uses "creativity" in its raw and edgy practice to draw expression out from the members of her new dance company. This creativity is harnessed while on retreat through personal poetry, dance and drawing before made public and released with resilience and vigor back in Nagle's broken Belfast in the form of a dance company performance. The two journeys running through Elliott's contribution converge on the stage. There, one of the patients, Micky, briefly escapes himself, standing before the audience before stumbling and losing himself. His stature, however, remains.

In writing on the dark side of travel and trauma, in traveling among the dead, through the dying, and alongside the suffering, the authors in this collection give us a tour of humanity's violence, miserableness and awfulness. They look at those lucky enough just to be fleeting visitors to this extreme world. So too do we get insight into those caught, trapped, or executed there. We explore the ethics and difficulty of representing these

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places, people and events. And finally, from this dark side, we also see the glimmers of great beauty and poignancy in the characterization of suffering (Moffat, Egan, Cooke, Hepburn), and uplifting creativity in the cartoons, the wall murals and the physical sketches of life (Walker, Nagle, Elliott). We all hope that you are disturbed, touched, charmed, unsettled and inspired by these contents.

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Notes

1. Pattullo (2000) uses this expression as the title of her book about the Montserrat volcano crisis. It is also a line from a traditional slave song.
2. See also Wheeler (1986), and Stagl and Pinney (1996) for further discussion on the differences between ethnography and travel writing, and Skinner (2008b) for a rebuttal.
3. See also Coleman and Elsner (2003: 13–15) on pilgrimage as travel writing, a previous topic of this journal.

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