

Introduction to Collective Memory And Tourism: Globalizing Transmission Through Localized Experience

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The articles in this issue highlight the relationship between collective memory and tourism. In what ways are practices of collective remembering implicated with those of tourism? Where do collective memory scholarship and tourism studies meet? How might the two interdisciplinary academic fields be shaped through each other's concepts? We suggest that experiencing the collective past is integral to specific forms of tourism, particularly what is called 'heritage tourism'. So, too, are certain kinds of public practices of collective remembering increasingly connected with the tourism industry. In the absence of, or complementary to, financial support for the historic preservation efforts, the entrepreneurial approach to collective past turns objects of such memory into tourist attractions to keep them economically viable. Thinking about collective remembering in relation to tourism directs our analytical focus to the authority of experiencing the past in a specific tourist place in the present. It centres our attention on what is involved in making this experience possible.

How heritage plays a role as means of preserving the collective past varies according to the context. In some parts of the West, as Urry (1990: 104) comments, 'it seems that a new museum opens every week or so'. These conservation efforts seem to be spearheaded by nostalgia for fast-vanishing ways of life and the public places they sustained (Lowenthal 1985). Augé (1995) provides an insight into this longing for the past. Much of our public life today, he suggests, revolves around motorways, airports or shopping centres – nondescript spaces that tend to individuate people and discourage attachment to place. In contrast, the public places we are trying

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to preserve encourage sociality and people's identity with that social life so that conditions are created for collective memories to become embedded in these places. Preservation of this heritage results in the creation of what could be called 'cultural spaces of memory' where visitors seek to experience 'life as it was' for those people who lived and worked in them. These new interests in heritage and preservation are also adding to the challenges facing museums and their role in this process (Macdonald and Fyfe 1996).

The context of remembering is very different where state formation, state collapse, war, ethnic conflict, regime change and tyranny have ravaged people's lives and ruptured their sense of collectivity, identity and continuity. This is particularly the case in colonial and postcolonial situations such as, for example, in Africa (Werbner 1998) and Indonesia (Zurbuchen 2005) where official, state heritage preservation threatens to bury the traces of terror. Here, popular memories based on personal testimonies of violence and physical traces of these acts are registered and preserved in an effort to hold on to group identity and continue the struggle for future accountability. These memories are able to become embedded through what Nora (1989) calls 'sites of memory', that is, physical places and objects which become available for visitors to experience and remember the past. As the current debates among the Holocaust scholars suggest, transforming sites of terror into tourist sites raises a new set of issues around the questions of who should remember, how, and for what purpose (Cole 1999; Pollock 2003; Wyschogrod 1998). So, too, do tourism scholars struggle with how to understand the role of heritage tourism in this process (Jamal and Kim 2005).

In heritage tourism, experience is understood as a combination of two factors. There is a desire to be in a cultural environment distanced and different in place and time from what one has at home (MacCannell 1989). There are also global matrices of tourism enterprises whose purpose is to promote these expectations and create environments that make it possible for these desires to be turned into experience. Such environments are particular kinds of social spaces within which cultural objects from the past are preserved and exhibited, and life as it was, or is thought to have been, is re-created for the visitors to experience (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998). The scope of these objects is a mix of physical relics, structures and whole parts of towns or regions that speak to some cultural practice from the past, as well

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as aspects of lived culture that can be seen as distinctive, such as arts and crafts (Ashworth and Tunbridge 1990). These objects represent a kind of materiality onto which collective memories are projected and within which they become sedimented, so that together, these objects and their narratives come to constitute a place of memory where the past is articulated as an experience of the reconstruction of collective life that has gone by (Halbwachs 1992). This articulates collective memory – also referred to as public memory, cultural memory, group memory, social memory, historical memory or popular memory – as a mode of experience for an individual who is able to share memories of the ways of life of others. Such memories are experienced through ritual practices that are necessarily social (Connerton 1989) in specific places and landscapes that allow for memories to be organized and later recalled in relation to the specific objects and practices in that place (Casey 1987).

While representations of the past circulate globally through mass media and tourist promotional material, their experience through tourism is local in the sense of being in a particular place where one is able to feel and cognize life as it was. There is an on-going discussion about the authenticity of these experiences and whether or not ‘authentic’ experience really is what tourists desire. Wang (2000: 46–71) usefully suggests that while individual tourists may have varying expectations, tourism is above all a social experience. Questioning the historical accuracy of objects and the authenticity of enactments of cultural practices from the past is relevant in as much as such questioning is able to contribute to the ability of cultural places of memory and their interpreters to re-create the experience of social life as it is imagined to have been by different collectivities.

It would therefore be fruitful to focus our research agenda on the following: processes through which specific collectivities identify with a particular imaginary of the past; conditions that prompt such collectivities to be formed; different agents and the institutions representing them who become involved in the preservation of elements of the past and the formulation of cultural spaces of memory; production of experience in such spaces; and instances that aim to disturb such memories. The articles in this issue begin to address some of these concerns.

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Collectivities of Memory

Collective memory is a mode of experience of being able to share memories of events, places and ways of life within collectivities with which we in some way identify (Zerubavel 2003). This form of identity is articulated through a shared past and a continuous process of reconstructing of a common narrative in relation to which we define ourselves as members of such collectivities. Conscious identity-building and the forging of collective imaginaries between people who do not know each other were perhaps most typical of nationalism, made possible through the spread of print, transportation and commerce (Anderson 1991). These technological and economic developments provided new media through which geographical boundaries were able to be transcended so that collective imaginaries could be disseminated to large numbers of people. The process of constructing collectivities of remembrance today is shaped by a variety of influences, among them globally disseminated news, print and television images, films, novels and narratives of events (Levy and Sznajder 2002; Plate 2006). In some contexts, it is also shaped through the common struggle for specific ethical or moral issues (Strange 2004) or through the search for roots and origins (Basu 2001; Feldman 2007). All these factors allow people to imagine themselves as a collectivity by creating awareness in each person that there are others who identify themselves in relation to particular ideas and realities in a similar way.

'Of Golden Anniversaries and Bicentennials' by Cheryl Finley examines African-American roots tourism to Ghana. African Americans are a collectivity whose descendents were, starting in the early 1500s, forcefully removed from their home environments by the European colonial powers and sold into slavery on the North American continent. One of the official landmarks of their long struggle for freedom and equality is the signing of a document by the government of the United States of America in 1807 which prohibited the transatlantic slave trade. Ghanaians, on their part, gained their independence from the last colonizer, the British, in 1957. The intellectual and political elites of the two collectivities have forged close ties during their respective struggles in the 1950s and 1960s, each learning from the experience of the other while also searching for their respective grounds to articulate their own identities. Finley deliberates on Ghana's initiative to use the occasion of

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the year 2007 as an opportunity to strengthen the ties between the African diaspora and Ghanaians. This initiative, the Joseph Project, is based on a series of roots tourism activities, symbolically articulated around the biblical figure of Joseph, who was sold to slavery but was able to rise above the captivity and return home to help his people envision a better future for their homeland.

Finley's article draws attention to the role of large-scale public events in global processes of constructing collectivities of memory and shaping collective identities. Such events require extensive economic investments, tend to involve local, state and international cooperation, often have underlying political agendas, and need to be planned and advertised well in advance (see Roche 2000). These events are seen as opportunities for collectivities to position their cultural spaces of memory prominently on the global tourist map. They are organized with the goal of attracting large numbers of people from around the world. The use of symbolism is central to their success in that these events are designed to communicate with potential audiences. Symbols enable these audiences to effectively identify with the meaning of the event. This symbolic communication prompts us to think about the choice and the nature of representations of the past for the purpose of such events and their possible long-term consequences for the collectivities to which they pertain.

Construction of Shared Past

Collectivities of memory have an origin in a particular time and set of circumstances. Their narrative and objective forms, as much as practices that accompany them, stimulate collective identity formation and create institutional ways through which collective memories become organized (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). How traditions and narratives that support collective identities are formed and how they turn into particular social practices remains a perennial question for students of collective memory as much as for tourism scholars. What kinds of conditions stimulate the formation of collective memory which finds its expression in heritage tourism? How do specific memories and the stories that support them become organized into an all-encompassing, grand narrative, an overarching explanation of how a particular collectivity came about and

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continues to be? Such narratives are supported through documentation of objects, places and events. How are these supporting elements accumulated? Under what conditions does this process develop? How do such narratives become connected to specific mnemonic practices? How are they legitimized and included in the conventions of social and cultural life that tourism sustains?

'Kilts *Versus* Breeches' by the historian Eric Zuelow examines the case of Scottish national memory. Scottishness today means a combination of what was once thought separate, Highland and Lowland Scotland. Moreover, the distinctiveness of what it means to be Scottish has come to be represented by the kilt – a short, pleated skirt with stripes of different colours and widths crossing at right angles – worn exclusively by men of the Scottish Highlands. This aspect of explicitly Highland culture began to have a strong influence on the formation of Scottish national memory as a whole following the royal visit of the English monarch King George IV to Edinburgh in 1822. Zuelow highlights that the visit was supported by the local elites and intelligentsia who chose the Highland clothing and its tartan cloth to be able to show to the king that Scotland was a culture with a distinctive heritage. The elites widely publicised the event, were able to attract to the site a large number of visitors, and continued the discourse after the visit.

Zuelow, importantly, argues that the publicity given to the event and the sheer numbers of people who experienced it constituted memories that could be shared through generations. But it is the continuous process of debating the aspects of this event and the on-going discussions over what it means to be Scottish that keep Scottish collective memory in the public sphere and therefore contribute to its continuous transmission. This article opens up a number of questions related to the practices of transmission of memories that go beyond those practices commonly studied, such as commemorations, museum displays or interpretations at tourist sites. We are prompted, instead, to think about the role of educated elites, public intellectuals, schools, research centres, scholars, mass media, interest groups and other actors involved in keeping collective memories in the public sphere globally and ensuring that they can be experienced through tourism locally.

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Agents of Memory

The process through which individuals organize themselves as a collectivity of memory is driven and propelled by a wide variety of actors. These actors can be positioned locally or globally. Their activities may be state-funded or supported through private contributions. Their organizational structure varies from commercial to nonprofit, professional to volunteer, institutionalized to spontaneous. These 'agents of memory' (Vinitzky-Seroussi 2002) take the lead in complex decisions about what is to be forgotten and what must be remembered. They are involved in decision-making about who is to remember and how. How do particular agents of memory come to shape the way we experience the past through tourism? What kinds of cultural and social dynamics underlie the processes through which certain types of actors come to play a role in how collective memory is presented through tourism? What are the various capacities with which these actors operate? What kind of symbolic, economic, social and cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984) do these actors employ in their shaping of the past? What are their motivations for taking an active role in this process? How does tourism enable their roles to endure or change through time?

'Witch City and Mnemonic Tourism' by Aaron Nugua considers the historical event known as the Salem Witch Trials. In 1692, people in Salem, a town in the northeastern United States, persecuted their neighbours for practising witchcraft. Today, memories of the Salem witch trials capture US popular imagination at different levels of symbolic meanings. At some level, the trials represent religious, cultural and political intolerance, expressed through films, plays, memorials and commemorations. At a different level, witches, their paraphernalia and the activities thought to be associated with them are a part of US folklore, celebrated during the festival of Hallowe'en. Nugua brings to our attention the various parties involved in the process of remembering the Salem witch trials: the local elites; others who feel that their views are not represented; different collectivities who project various values on these trials; regular tourists who just want to experience 'Witch City'; and the tourism industry which is promoting Salem's legacy of witchcraft and the trials.

In the struggle to have control over representations of collective memory, the process of heritage tourism development often has an impetus of its own. As scholars of tourism have emphasized, agents of memory

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involved with the tourism industry appropriate historical events for the purpose of attributing to a destination a distinct cultural character (Ashworth and Tunbridge 1990; Hollinshead 1998). Through this process Salem, a town which would otherwise be just like any other US town, has been developed into what is known in tourism as a 'themed environment'. This is a type of cultural space within which particular memories are able to be imagined, brought to life, and experienced by tourists. What is it about such a themed environment that enables memories to be experienced?

Cultural Landscapes of Memory

The philosopher Edward Casey (1987) has perhaps best articulated how we remember as individuals within a social environment. To be in place, he writes, means to be situated and oriented in terms of where we are in the world and what kind of memories can be attached to the objects we see around us. To be situated in place means to be sheltered, held and contained by a boundary which encloses us so that our awareness is not dispersed in time or beyond the horizons of that place. A place that allows us to be held within it acts as a grid with points of attachment onto which particular memories can be connected. The act of attaching a particular kind of image or narrative to a particular object transforms the experience of imagining that narrative into the experience of reliving the story. In tourism, such places are cultural environments created through the effort to preserve particular objects and arrange them in place in such a way as to invite particular memories and discourage others. The experience of being in such a place can subsequently be revisited in one's mind through a narrative order that follows the recalling of the order of objects in that place.

'Holocaust Tourism in Berlin' by Andrew Gross looks into the public practice of remembering the event thought to be by many beyond representation, an event of such proportions that no language is able to describe it. And yet, the event, most agree, must never be forgotten. As scholars continue to debate how to remember the Holocaust now that the witnesses are slowly passing away and how to memorialize the sites of death that testify to its unspeakable terror, Gross challenges us with the following argument. A new architectural design of Holocaust memorials is emerging. This design has a universalizing form that allows such a

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memorial to be positioned in any social space anywhere around the globe. He compares the Holocaust memorial in Washington D.C., a city continents removed from the sites that bear the testimony to the Holocaust, with another very much like it, similarly positioned not in a space where terror was once committed, but within the tourist space of Berlin. Gross argues that these memorials draw attention to themselves as symbols of traumatic memory and of the past that can only be known through experience. They are conceived aesthetically and architecturally so as to be able to activate in visitors their own individual, bodily experiences of the memory of trauma lived by others. They are designed to induce in visitors their own individual feeling and experience of being witness to the traumatic experience of others.

The case of the Holocaust memorials as discussed by Gross highlights how the emphasis on tourist experience in these places of collective memory brings together a number of factors: current intensive interest in remembering and preserving; standardization of designs and patterns employed in the creation of such cultural landscapes of memory; international expertise able to produce such spaces; and the focus on tourism as a medium through which a continuous flow of visitors can be insured. At a time when the living witnesses to these events are slowly disappearing, the memory of the event itself is taking on new dimensions through tourism. These are at once universalizing and personal in that they aim to create a standardized form that lends itself to being experienced in particular, individual ways.

Creating the Experience

How are experiences formed? Expectations that visitors bring to the cultural places of memory are shaped through a shared past and articulated through a common narrative and particular symbolic expressions. Cultural places of memory are particular kinds of environments within which specific objects are arranged to make them conducive to visitors' awareness of experience of a particular narrative. The ways in which these objects and their narratives are exhibited, displayed, enacted and otherwise interpreted facilitate a relation, a link between the tourists and that which is being remembered (Bruner 2005; Casey 1987; Edensor 1998; Kirshenblatt-

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Gimblett 1998). How are these relations between place, narrative and performance set in motion so that they may form tourist experiences? Can we understand in more detail how this process of creating experiences is constructed and how it comes about?

'Christian Pilgrimage Groups in Jerusalem' by Vida Bajc discusses how the events associated with the life of Jesus some two thousand years ago are remembered through Christian pilgrimage to Jerusalem where pilgrims seek cultural places of memory that are able to bring to life the biblical narratives. For the pilgrims to experience the biblical story in these places, the day-to-day life of Jerusalem has to be bracketed out from the awareness of the pilgrims and pushed into the background. Bajc demonstrates how this separation between the every day life in Jerusalem and the pilgrims' experience of the city's biblical past is achieved in the context of organized pilgrimage. On Christian tours, a Jewish-Israeli guide and a spiritual leader jointly create the conditions that enable the life of Jesus to be experienced. This is achieved through meta-framing, a process through which the guide and the cleric shift the pilgrims' awareness away from their surrounding and focus the pilgrims' attention on specific narratives in particular places. The meta-framing of the past is chronological in that the past that the pilgrims experience is arranged as a linear succession of historical events. This meta-framing of the past is also spatial in that it is experienced by following this chronological order through a succession of particular sites. In this way, Christian pilgrims experience the life of Jesus as a chronological succession of events in particular places.

This contribution brings to the forefront that the experience of heritage through tourism is a form of transmission of collective memories in which time and place are conjoined through meta-framing practices. Chronological conception of time frames the events in a linear way from the origins towards the future; from where a collectivity began its existence towards where this collectivity is headed in times to come. References to historical places are built into this time frame. This makes it possible for the time frame to be extended into cultural spaces of memory and the heritage objects within them. Within the frame and through the medium of a performative encounter, tourists are able to experience the connection between memory and place. The meta logic of framing creates the conditions wherein the tourists are able to make sense of what they are experiencing in relation to this frame. The frame provides the reference for the interpretation of tourist experiences.

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Counter-acts of Memory

Organization of collective memory and its transmission practices, as well as their institutionalization within the tourism industry, can shape collective memory in some lasting ways. In the highly competitive economy of ever changing tourist tastes and expectations, and through an industry that creates economic dependency, heritage is valuable because it can easily be branded (Ashworth and Tunbridge 1990). Heritage is a medium through which cultural and historical particularity and distinctiveness can be constructed, and then attributed to a particular place and its people as distinctive from all others. These places and their collectivities become remembered as such through global dissemination of tourist promotional literature and local meta-framing practices of experience at particular sites. Collective memories and the sites in which they are rooted, however, are very often sources of contention, power struggles and competing interests. Memories can be abused, repressed, made forgotten, misinterpreted, ignored, or otherwise left outside the transmission practices of the tourism industry. How do these dynamics come to light in an industry based on image and branding?

'Remembering Bali as Paradise' by Clare Fischer discusses an attempt at restoration of collective memory following the bombing of a tourist space on the famed Indonesian island of Bali in 2002. Because of its peculiar cultural appeal to Western tourists, Bali has been turned into a living museum; an exhibition of dances, arts, theatre performances and religious rituals for the ever growing numbers of tourists. This created and maintained an image of Bali as a violence-free community of ever welcoming locals with exotic ways of life. The bombing of a tourist club splintered this image and cracked open the unhealed wounds that had been hiding behind the constructed Balinese tourist identity. Fischer takes the case of two official, globally mediated public ceremonies, organized for the purposes of local recovery and restoration of Bali's memory in the global tourism industry. She shows how these ceremonies actually further exposed the rifts between those involved in how Bali is to be remembered through the tourism industry.

Fischer's article prompts us to consider the close relationship between violence and tourist places of collective remembering. Violence tends to inspire remembering through tourism. Battlefield sites, war memorials

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and monuments, cemeteries, death camps, museums housing war artefacts, and other violence-related heritage markers comprise perhaps the largest type of tourist attractions (Smith 1998). Sites of death inflicted through other types of violence, such as crime scenes and natural or manmade disasters, also become places where visitors gather and perform individual, unstructured acts of remembrance. These practices are now receiving scholarly attention under the rubric of 'dark tourism' (Lennon and Foley 2000).

Acts of violence, however, can also be committed to interrupt, stop or change the course of remembering through tourism (Sönmez 1998). Perhaps we may call these instances 'counter-acts of memory', violent interruptions of the tourist flow and its meta-framing practices that forcefully inflict memories in sudden, instantaneous and immensely powerful and painful ways. They impose themselves directly and with force on all others who survive them, inflicting bodily, psychological and aesthetic pain through destruction. They erase for that tragic, violent moment all other memories and impose themselves in ways so as not to be easily forgotten. They saturate the landscape and its people with the experience of terror, making it difficult for the locals to reassemble their splintered collective memory and put the tourist destination as it was previously remembered back into the tourist awareness. Violent counter-acts of memory draw attention to themselves as events that impose collective memories upon tourist destinations by imprinting destruction upon cultural landscapes of memory and their forms of memory dissemination.

By Way of Conclusion

The notion of collective memory rests on the recognition that mind, body and the social and physical environment are intimately and inextricably connected so that whereas we remember as individuals, what and how we remember is shaped by the social space around us. Remembering a particular past is therefore a social process in which we are involved in the present moment. This process is aided by the heritage industry and its close relationship to the globalizing phenomenon of tourism through which relics and practices preserved from life in the past can become economically viable in the present so that their survival may be enabled

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for the future. The sense of continuity in place and time that framing practices in heritage tourism enable us to experience, together with the sense of identity they are able to generate, positions the authority of experience at the centre of our research interest. All involved are aware that remembering the past through the tourist experience in the present is a powerful force through which the present of a particular collectivity is justified and its future envisioned. We should pay closer attention to how heritage tourism creates knowledge based on experiencing the past, how this practice helps to articulate historical consciousness through time, and what kinds of conflict and struggle this dynamic entails.

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