DARK HERITAGE TOURISM IN THE IBERIAN PENINSULA, BY SARA CERQUEIRA PASCOAL, LAURA TALLONE AND MARCO FURTADO (ED.)

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The most visceral and common questions that arise when considering reflections on dark tourism are usually aimed at: what are the motivations that lead human beings to spend leisure time visiting destinations where pain and death are the protagonists, what are the destinations and heritage assets that can be classified within this type of tourism, and where are the ethical and moral limits to the commercialisation of trauma, grief and tragedy. These are some common questions that appear in some chapters, such as the one by Sílvia Quinteiro, María José Marques and Marco Sousa Santos, but they may in fact be extrapolated to the entire publication. However, the most interesting thing is not that these questions are raised, but whether or not they are answered. In the specialised literature only approximations can be found, but in the monograph we are reviewing we will find answers, albeit in a territorial key, that is to say, for the context of the Iberian Peninsula. In the following lines we will present some of these answers in the form of conclusions.

Dark tourism is one of the fastest growing sub-sectors of the smokeless industry in recent years. Its creation is relatively recent. Specifically since 1993, when Rojek (1993) pointed out the importance of the term "black spot". Of course, we are referring to its creation from an academic and research point of view, as visits to places where pain, grief, trauma and/or death have been present since the beginning of tourism as an economic

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activity, as well as in proto-tourism, that is, in the journeys and trips that human beings have made throughout history for religious, military, migratory and other reasons. However, studies on dark tourism have been dominated by the Anglo-Saxon academic environment. Authors such as Ashworth (1996), Foley and Lennon (1996), Seaton (1996) or Tarlow (2005) have been the references for professionals in the tourism and heritage sector, as well as for researchers in these fields.

It is at this point where we find a first conclusion of the importance of the book *Dark Heritage Tourism in the Iberian Peninsula*, edited by Sara Cerqueira Pascoal, Laura Tallone and Marco Furtado. As reflected by some of the authors of the chapters in this book, such as Rita Baleiro and Adriana Coelho-Florent, studies, research and publications on dark tourism in the Iberian Peninsula are very limited, if not scarce. This monograph can be considered one of the first publications aimed at making visible the reality of this subsector in the peninsular territory. A truly necessary work, since practical experiences abound in the peninsular territory, although their visibility, the development of research projects, studies of supply and demand, etc., are not so frequent.

For a second conclusion, the questions now are: How do we deal with dark tourism in Portugal and Spain? What are its characteristics? Throughout the different chapters, dark tourism is developed around axes such as memorialisation; the creation of monuments; educational possibilities; the management of pain; trauma and death in a debate between respect, ethics and commercialisation; or the possibilities of product creation. The Spanish Civil War and Franco's dictatorship, the repression of the Salazar government, the colonial past and slavery, natural disasters at sea, and visits to cemeteries are the most common case studies for the analysis of dark tourism in our territories.

As a third conclusion, this book attempts to give voice to the question: what is dark tourism for? That is, is it an element of commercialisation and consumption or, on the contrary, for reconciliation with the memories that keep the trauma alive in the present. It is

here that the ethical and moral side of the development of dark tourism comes into play. Every heritage property has multiple narratives. The process of interpreting these and the narratives deliberately passed on to the public - and to tourism - is a delicate matter and a responsibility. As the editors of the publication remind us in the introduction, malpractice in this sub-sector can lead to the trivialisation of the past and of its traumatic memory. This is precisely one of the pillars of dark tourism in the 21st century. The current news about the new dark tourism spaces[2] , together with the rise of this typology on the part of supply and demand, make us increasingly aware that this typology is closer to the amusement park in which a dystopian atmosphere is generated (Pimentel & Marques, 2022) than to the promotion of socially responsible individuals and democratic societies.

The texts in this publication hint at this idea of responsibility. The activation of dark tourism is not without an element of "dissonant heritage" (Tunbridge and Ashworth, 1996). This makes it a source of tension when it comes to its interpretation and the message it conveys. Hegemonic and subaltern discourses share the stage, claiming their historical, political, territorial, educational or socio-educational narratives, that is, dark tourism in the Iberian Peninsula has the capacity to generate dialogue, negotiation and exchange of visions; an aspect foregrounded, for example, in the chapter by Sara Pascoal, Laura Tallone and Marco Furtado on the case of the Peniche prison, whose future was decided between the transformation of the place into a space of memory or into an infrastructure for the service sector: a hotel. The dialogue between history and tourism clashed with memory and the latent trauma of civil society.

This brings us to another of the problems of dark tourism, as Víctor Calderón specifies: discerning which products and destinations correspond to dark tourism, whether or not it is a subcategory of cultural tourism, and whether or not this sub-sector even exists.

[2] The range of tourist products on offer includes visits to the most dangerous favelas in Brazil, the most dilapidated neighbourhoods in India, the places where the Covid-19 pandemic originated and killed thousands of people, or tours to visit the current scenes of destruction from the war in Ukraine.

This publication resolves this dilemma by pointing out that dark tourism involves visiting battlefields, cemeteries, concentration camps, prisons, crime scenes, natural disasters, paranormal phenomena, and so on. So far, there is not much of a clear distinction between this tourism and other forms of cultural tourism, since any heritage asset and the history that accompanies it can have a "dark" narrative. What differentiates dark tourism is that the ultimate purpose of the visit is to relate to trauma, pain, grief and/or death. Following on from this idea, in the motivation with the sordid and the morbid, dark tourism, as Stone (2006) pointed out, possesses a spectrum of intensity of darkness, for example, visiting an inquisition museum is not the same as visiting a Salazar or Franco-era prison. This leads us to answer the last question in the affirmative: dark tourism exists, and like any typology of contemporary tourism, it does so in an interrelated way with other categories and socio-economic sectors.

This leads to our fourth conclusion. In the publication under review, the destinations and resources that are apparently the most developed are those related to cemeteries, social tragedies, natural disasters, our colonial past, and the dictatorships suffered for 40 years in both Portugal and Spain. However, the novelty of this book is that rather than showing the destinations of dark tourism: prisons, natural disasters, war conflicts, battlefields, etc.; what it shows is who produced them, i.e. ideology, conquest, repression, punishment, "stupidity"[3], etc.

If we look closely, something that unites Spain and Portugal and, perhaps, unites dark tourism of the Iberian Peninsula are "memories related to places associated with dictatorships [that] have often given rise to collective feelings of shame" (Calderón Fajardo, p. 4). This is one of the keys to this book. Tourism is not only an economic activity, but, following Vera (1997), it is a social action with the potential to generate economic activities.

[3] The adjective is used in the same sense as in Ricardo Oliveira's analysis of the memory of the tragedy of the Meco beach.

In their chapter, Rita Baleiro and Adriana Coelho-Florent point out along these lines that "tourism is a social phenomenon". The potential of dark tourism can be seen throughout the different chapters of the book, where the capacity it has to generate diverse narratives, the impact on the territory (just remember battle spaces such as those of the Spanish Civil War), and the involvement of civil society may be appreciated. In some cases, dark tourism can be a tool for revitalising the territory. We would only have to think of Empty Spain, and how itineraries such as those of the Devastated Regions in the province of Guadalajara can be territorial axes in tourism, recovery of heritage and memory, and cultural and territorial sustainability aligned.

For authors such as Seaton (1996) and Tarlow (2005), the motivations pulling tourists towards dark destinations are related to the contemplation of death, the understanding of past events, complacency, nostalgia, injustices, etc., but also morbidity, voyeurism or a feeling of superiority, what Korstanje (2017) calls *thanacapitalism*, i.e. a hegemonic vision based on purchasing power dominated by market dynamics.

In relation to Williams (2007, p. 102), who argues that prison museums are the antithesis of "the happiest place on earth", some authors consider that they can be more than a morbid theme park. The question is whether dark tourism can really offer a positive view, that is, whether it can be linked to the idea of "leisure". In chapters such as the one by Sara Pascoal, Laura Tallone and Marco Furtado, the museographic part is aimed at generating comprehensible and attractive stories or interactive experiences with which visitors can identify in order to educate and inspire empathy. The ultimate goal, as they indicate, "offers a set of individual memories that can express public recognition of historical injustices, as well as break historical silences (Souza, 2021)" (p. 71), that is, and in the words of these authors as well, in some concrete cases, especially those directly related to a latent traumatic memory with the intention of serving for a "never again".

The fifth conclusion relates to the debate on the creation of monuments and memorials. In the book, another element that appears in association with dark tourism is the memorial monument. Memorials are the links reflecting the relationship between past, trauma and society. They make it possible to bear witness to a painful event, to materialise the immateriality of memory, and to make it visible in a continuous present. However, we must not lose sight of the fact that these forms of memorialisation are tangible utopias that expire with the passage of time.

For Lefebre (1970, p. 28), monuments are transcultural and transfunctional tombs that project a vision of the world, almost idyllic, utopian; and at the same time they exercise a duality of counter-values and repression. They are the seat of representation of whoever creates them or manages to exercise symbolic hegemony over them. Something that appeared in the texts of Ana Filipa Silva, Bárbara de Sá, Inês Rainho Fonseca, Maria Inês Pinto and Ricardo Oliveira. This colonising aspect of space and memories also affects the visitor and the tourist, who must play the role of spectator and, at the same time, empathise with the tragedy of the Other.

It is here that we offer our final conclusion, which ties in directly with the vision of Sílvia Quinteiro, Maria José Marques and Marco Sousa Santos. The authors appeal to the roots of dark tourism in the theories on the sublime of Edmund Burke, who developed sublimity as the source of aesthetic feeling and from which the taste for ruin, melancholy, spirituality and the deep feelings of the soul of complex definition are derived. It is in the darkness and the tremor produced by the hidden feelings of the human being that the sublime becomes a dimension of terror and empathy towards the suffering of others. The sublime, like awe and empathy, is the visitor's ally when it comes to consuming dark tourism, when this sensation is lost is where thanacapitalism comes in, or, in other words, the risk of insensitivity: normalising violence; turning trauma into a capitalist consumer product, that is, disposable; or trivialising trauma through technology (social networks, taking selfies, etc.).

For Vitor Teixeira "Harshness, inhumanity, social indifference, suffering and many other words come to mind" when we talk about dark tourism, in this case materialised in the figure of the carquejeira. Perhaps we should not speak of dark tourism, but of uncomfortable tourism, as we speak of uncomfortable *heritage* (*dissonant heritage,* #BlackLivesMatter). What is clear is that in Spain and Portugal, part of our dark tourism has a vindictive, nostalgic and living sense in the collective memory. That is why we should encourage more publications like this one, which are a breath of fresh air for a sector that is still under construction in our territories.

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