

Post-modernity and the Exceptionalism of the Present in Dark Tourism

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ABSTRACT

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