

## Terror and the Tour: Introduction

Andrew Wilford, Jonathan Skinner, and Paul Antick

'A Russian airliner explodes over the Sinai desert, killing 224 people. The White House and Downing Street believe that agents of the extreme Islamist sect ISIS planted a bomb on it.' So reports Max Hastings for *The Daily Mail* on 7 November 2015. The byline for the article is 'Suddenly, the world's become a frightening place for tourists. But I fear this is just the start'. The article is accompanied by images calculated to pierce through what Susan Moeller (1999) refers to as our 'compassion fatigue'. It also plays to our fears. These are deep seated: not just the fear of the twisting, falling passenger trapped to their airplane seat à la Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, but also the fear of flying—that loss of control and fear of death that the anthropologist Mary Douglas (1994)

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honed in on when car accident death rates are ignored despite being so much more likely. These are not rational but dramatic thoughts within our a-rhythmic metric risk calculus. ‘Tourist terrorism is here to stay’, Hastings (2015) concludes in his article. Indeed conspiracy is now conspicuous with every disaster, catastrophe, near-miss or foiling in the globalisation of ‘nine-eleven-land’.

The connection between tourism and terrorism—each with their extremist ideologies and ludic qualities (cf. Hutnyk 2014)—is not new. Peter Phipps (1999) provocates with equivalences between the two from rhetorics of invasion to goals of invisibility. Self-loathing and a death-drive impulse can also be found in both whether in Las Vegas, on the boulevards of Dallas, or further afield. Whereas anthropologist Malcolm Crick (1989: 309) called tourists ‘suntanned destroyers of culture’, Phipps’s (1999: 74) attention to the relationship between tourism and violence, and the interrelations between tourist and terrorist, leads to the hybrid ‘tourorist’—a foot soldier with a mobility authorised or not. Perhaps this is the modern literal death of Mark Twain’s (1869) Victorian ‘innocents abroad’ literary hypothesis? Ironically, if they are still to be distinguished from each other, they might be described as both being on the lookout for each other: anthropologist Sally Ness (2005) suggests that tourism-terrorism is a locational form of violence that targets unhostile places and those that ‘cannot fight back’ to maximise impact. As such, she (Ness 2005: 119) notes, ‘[t]he place-oriented character of the violence serves to endow its human victims with a heightened innocence, the victims’ involvement being a matter of change to some extent and their death or injury, therefore, all the more gratuitous.’ Generally, both tourists and terrorists seek out the same safe destinations, impotent agents asserting themselves, to include the tourist in Žižek’s (2008: 69) analysis of violence.

This special issue of *Liminalities* is an interdisciplinary multi-media engagement with terror and the tour. It represents the proceedings of a three day colloquium hosted by the University Of Roehampton, London, April 9-11 2015 in association with the Performing Place network at the University of Chichester. The aim was to negotiate the inter- and trans-disciplinary landmarks between the polarities of terror—travel, terrorists—tourists, and touring—terrorising. This was done by developing three working parties of participants, each led by one of the colloquium organisers (Jonathan Skinner, Paul Antick, Andrew Wilford). The ambition was to deliberately twin or juxtapose Romantic and Contemporary discourses, from Jacobin virtue to Jihad tourism and from the Grand Tour to after Ground Zero. We sought contributions from scholars and practitioners, artists and tour guides—those beating new tracks, off-the-beaten track, or that can testify to being beaten in their tracks. Our list of invites and VIPs was extensive: adventurous academics, anarchic anthropologists, avant-garde auteurs, canal-boating campaigners, casual witnesses, causal critics

and cultural plunderers; delinquent dérives, drone pilots and ‘droplifters’ (Goldsmith, 2011: 210), fringe feminists, fanatical flâneurs, guerrilla guides, grand grifters and hostage-holidaymakers; lost souls, noble nomads, the ‘mad, bad and dangerous to know’; ‘lone wolves’, romantic werewolves, ‘pantomime terror’ actors (Hutnyk, 2014), pirates and ‘rogue agents’ of in-tour-vention; rambling revolutionaries, ruddy right-to-roamers, salvagers, seed-bombers, Stuckists, trespass artists, tyrannical ‘tygers’, ‘walking libraries’ (Myers & Heddon, 2012) and wanderers’ shadows. Many of these attended and a wide number are represented below. Not all though; some above dropped in and dropped out of the proceedings, and some are carrying out their sentences elsewhere. Here, though, we are pleased to commend to you, the best of *Terror and The Tour* through three travel party groups: travel party ‘Performing Terror and Staging Tourism’ (tour leader A. Wilford, Chi<sup>2</sup>); travel party ‘Terror, Tours and Travel Texts’ (rapt leader J. Skinner, Roe HEA, City ‘n’ Guilds); and travel party ‘Touring in Ages of Terror: Authenticity, Exotica, Horror & Irony’ (very apt leader Paul Antick).

### **Tour Party: Performing Terror and Staging Tourism (A. Wilford)**

In conceiving *Terror and The Tour* as an inclusive interdisciplinary inquiry there is much to project from here and make use of as a starting point from Rustom Bharucha’s (2015) *Terror and Performance*. Bharucha’s own network of methodologies, ranging from theatre-making in a time of terror through to re-examining the potential of anecdote, is informed by his self-declared ‘predicament of passing for a Muslim in a growing scenario of global terror in which Muslims are stigmatized and demonized’ (2015, 71). Arguing against a series of connotations such as that of terror to terrorism, or performance to performativity, Bharucha identifies the interstitial, the inextricability and interwoven-ness of these discourses in advocacies that as researchers we find so useful:

Forge closer alliances across—and within—each other’s disciplines and practices in order to strategize *which* language is most appropriate for a particular enquiry in a particular context. (2015, 24)

It is in these terms that means of differentiating the complexities of discourse are generated through engagements in the liminal spaces and exchanges between subject fields. Alongside the dangers of conflation and reductive discourse, Bharucha highlights the many cautions that must be taken in avoiding the kinds of dramatising processes that are employed as means of terror event analysis. Just as a theatre that might set out to reflect terror runs the risk of conferring this very affect to/in its audience, representations of the ‘terrorist’ usher in questions of the subjectivities that are brought to delineating this figure. We heed this caution in our representations.

As Deleuze (1967) observes, within any narrative of who did what, where, when and why, are always questions of the interests and values that are served through such a dramatisation. These questions are exhibited in the work of this section. In her “‘Do not run on the platforms ... if you look a bit foreign’”: De/Constructing the Travelling Terrorist Assemblage’, Arianne De Waal provides an analysis of the ‘suspicious person’ that is conferred by every vigilance insistent security announcement. Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari’s (1988) concept of *assemblage*, De Waal’s essay begins with the ‘uncanny doubling’ of image economies in CCTV capture of 7/7 London Bombers and three British schoolgirls travelling to Syria. Proceeding from this comparison, De Waal assembles her inquiry through ‘*lines-of-flight*’ (to coin Deleuze & Guattari’s term) in which spatialisation and racialisation are brought to bear on the ‘becoming-terrorist’ of travelling bodies.

The bodies are stationary—practically immobile—in Michael Peterson’s performance essay ‘Performing The Feeling of Doing: Intimacy, Terror, and Embarrassment’. Here, Peterson examines the synthesis of domestic space with an unsettlingly nuanced performance of torture. This work stems from his *The Feeling of Doing (you have finished/dark room)* project that was performed in part at *Terror and The Tour*. With emphasis on relational participation in co-producing flickering moments of theatre together, a world of make-believe is set against celebrated exposures and performing failure in this element of Peterson’s ongoing practice research.

If theatre proves itself effective transport within an experimental mode of spatio-temporal travel—what in Julia Kristeva’s terms might be considered to ‘not take (a) place’ (1977, 277)—then this is redoubled in notions of transformation. During *Beirut Bodies In Public* in October 2014, a theatre collective assembled by the event’s artist-in-residence participated with members of the public in building cardboard and concrete skyscrapers along Beirut’s Corniche seafront. This act stimulated another series of performances around it: a US contractor appears to visit the site; a media unit appears to arrive providing coverage to the building event; an antagonist takes to a platform and appeals in Arabic to the gathered audience, urging them to help preserve access to the sea-view. The participatory performance offered a fleeting moment of public protest where local socio-ecological concerns were visually and vocally set against accelerated terrors of globalising forces.

Ella Parry-Davies (co-convener of *Beirut: Bodies In Public*), Penny Newell and Merijn Royaards exhibited, screened and presented materials from their travels at *Terror and The Tour*. In their collectively produced series of art pages ‘Walking Into Beirut: an annotation’, the reader is invited into a journey of intricately traced details, connecting flights of dialogue and negotiated routes through the city’s transformations.

Within a hybrid identity of the traveller as tourist and terrorist, Andrew Wilford's video essay, 'From Beirut To Bethlehem (Confessions Of A Tourist)' explores the disjunctive synthesis of un-filmed travel experiences with picture-postcard footage. Inflecting on what Rachel Hall (2015) identifies in the biopolitical performance of 'transparency', the video essay departs from participation in *Beirut: Bodies In Public* and continues to trace sites, recount situations and record situated acts within the guise of a self-declared 'tourist' (Phipps, 1999). Similar ethno-fictions can be found in Phil Smith's work 'Living off the enemy's supply lines: developing 'mis-guidance' in heritage sites through the prism of one performance' (see rival tour party below). His is a celebration of travellers enshrined within his dictum that 'tourists are pilgrims, up for transforming themselves' (2012, 15). His is staged tourism set within a milieu and malaise of 'neo-liberal phantasmagoria' (2015, 48). All is subsumed by/as terror. Smith's advocacy that 'nothing changes until we first realise that we are alone and nothing changes unless we allow that aloneness to change it' (2015, 38) is a clarion call within the 'space war in progress' (2015, 6).

#### **Tour Party: 'Terror, Tours and Travel Texts' (J. Skinner)**

In times of terror we travel, sometimes voluntarily, often not; sometimes existentially and literally in an exploration and settling of our questions of being. This last factor, contributor Keith Egan refers to as an intuitive and improvised itinerary of the self. In his article 'Purgatourism', Egan walks with pilgrims, tourists and guides on their journeys around the site of the Twin Towers in New York, along Spain's medieval Santiago de Compostela, and the Virgin Mary's apparition sites around Medjugorje, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Egan works as an interloper amongst interpreters, as guides such as James and Diego explain their apocalyptically-inspired pilgrimages and why people are attracted to these journeys, this dark travel, that allows them to witness and reflect on tragedy and to work towards personal and spiritual enlightenment. This is facing the terrors of the Other, confronting the agonies of the Self. It is both sacred and profane. For the extended pilgrim is involved in removing oneself from society and undergoing a civil death as they walk away from society. For those visiting New York, the sacred space at the centre of the restless unsleeping city is profound, a dizzying emptiness giving rise to the vertigo of a social disembeddness. The movement, the trial, the journey, the path, The Way is a route to sanctuary via purgatory.

The second article shifts from walking to dancing, from the spiritual to a post-conflict urban dialogue. This piece is set in Derry/Londonderry, a divided city in Northern Ireland where Beatrice Jarvis used site specific performance and dance as vehicles for the individual to express themselves, their politics and frustrations, animosities and harbouring traumas and terrors from The Troubles.

Jarvis gives us her Tour de Force, engaging the community in the construction of a safe, respected collective urban identity. This is expressed visually through artwork movements rather like Arthur Murray's learn-to-dance diagrams, and through interviews and dance practice. Forty bodies dance in a community hall. They enact, embody and exorcise their performing life. They communicate and find ways of relating—embodying place and conversing space. This is an important departure from the City of Derry, a non-dancing, marching city where movement is martialled and politicised and dialogue constrained. At first, groups running across a rehearsal space crash into each other. Rage and anger is expressed. The quick defensiveness that gives on to rebuttal causes more pain. Run again. And again. The rage tires and the contact improvises into a softness. For Jarvis this is more than an artistic contact release, it is a way of dealing with one's terrors. It turns a scary near-miss into something elevated, anaesthetised in its impromptu aesthetics. This appropriation is an art. It uses a choreography of the city to engage the topography of the imagination and allows one to transcend the norm or, as anthropologist Robert Preston (1991) proposes, to see oneself with alternating perspectives. This is a dance dreamscape for peace initiated by Beatrice.

Finally, I, Jonathan Skinner, do attempt to retrace tourists' temporary tracings—their finger graffiti—writ beneath a live volcano. Perhaps it enlivened their relationship on St Valentine's Day 2013? "'Was here": identity traces and digital footprints as survival writing' echoes the *I Was Here* pictured by photo-journalist Ambroise Tézenas (2015). There he expresses the fixation to stare at sites and images of death and disaster, to witness this desolation in person. The piece also riffs off the witnessing by "*I Swear I Saw This*" anthropologist Michael Taussig (2011) who brings some urban shamanism to sketches and artistry. Jen and Marc are tourists who want to leave their mark but as eco-tourists – tourists concerned for the impact of their tourism—they want it to be temporary. But it is lasting as I found visiting their tourist site several years later and seeing their lovemarks. This proto-marking is about their survival—as lovers as much as as tourists. They want to outlast the volcano and its sublime above them. The anthropologist follows them from on land on the island to online on the web, tracing their other digital foot/finger prints. Each TripAdvisor posting, each Facebook upload, is an expression outside of themselves to the world that they are passing and pausing through. Writing about Facebook postings, Danny Miller (2011, 179) notes that 'making a relationship visible also creates that relationship'. We crave visible, external objectifications of ourselves. There is a fear here that if I stop moving and if I stop posting that I shall remain unread, or unloved for dear Marc, or that I cease to exist. We all, then, exhibit some terrors in our movements as tourists and as writers and readers.

**Tour Party: 'Touring in Ages of Terror: Authenticity, Exotica, Horror & Irony' (P. Antick)**

Dorota Golańska draws on the work of Massumi (2002), Haraway (1988), and Deleuze and Guattari (1994) in her essay 'The affective nature of visitors' experiences at dark tourist sites'. Here she assesses in particular the ways in which installation art at the Jewish Museum in Berlin and the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem can function as compelling and disturbing additions to the more conventional techniques of commemoration and historicization that generally determine the presentation of information at such places. As Golańska argues, visitors' understandings of the horrors associated with the Holocaust are not only generated here by facts, figures, and interpretations found on the museums' walls, as one would expect, but also by a series of profoundly affecting aesthetic 'disturbances'. These disturbances generate their own relatively elusive content, the metaphorical value of which extends, thanks to the discursive environment in which they appear, well beyond the physical immediacy of the event itself. These kind of events, and the corporeal 'jolts' they precipitate, thus afford the museum visitor a way of radically re-imagining the ways in which history stories can be told and experienced.

Disturbing—in a different way—the conventions of history writing (and telling) pre-occupies Phil Smith's essay 'Living off the enemy's supply lines: developing 'mis-guidance' in heritage sites through the prism of one performance'. Here Smith considers the epistemological value of guided tours that he and his colleagues have personally been involved in staging. Specifically the ways in which the quasi-situationist strategies Smith and his colleagues devised simultaneously enabled attendees to become complicit in: the subversion of the codes through which the conventional guided tour is generally constituted; the creation of an opportunity to reflect on the relatively arbitrary nature of the guided tour itself; and, more critically perhaps, the production of history. The comedic tactics that Smith identifies in relation to his own practice as a 'mis-guide' are echoed in Paul Antick's absurdist, quasi-documentary film 'Three Places I Never Went To When I Was Alive'. Here Antick tells a story about a people trafficker's futile search in Hungary and Greece for a refugee called Raqqa Ali. Partly filmed on the popular holiday island of Kos, one of the initial points of entry for refugees attempting to access the European Union, Antick's film concentrates in part on the 'shameful' pleasures to be found in transformed touristic environments like this one. A pleasure zone where the symbolic mess engendered by the apparently immiscible combination of catastrophe and leisure produce in Antick's film a disturbing and chaotic kind of realism. Liminality, difference and the Other come to the fore in this film just as

much as the previous terror and the tour articles and participatory pieces. We hope then that readers of *Liminalities* will enjoy them, be enthused, bemused and defused by them.

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