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The death drive in tourism studies

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ABSTRACT

The psychoanalytical concept of the death drive postulated by Freud and Lacan refers to a constant force at the junction between life and death, which is not understood in a biological sense of physical demise of the body, nor in opposition to life. Tourist experiences in conflict zones can be more critically understood through the lens of the death drive. Empirical data for this project draws on individual and group interviews undertaken with tourists and tourism industry representatives in Jordan. Findings suggest that by traveling in a conflict area some tourists negotiate embedded family memories and archaic traumas. Accessing the death drive, tourists also assert and disrupt binaries such as fun/fear and life/death.

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Introduction

This article introduces the psychoanalytic concept of the death drive in tourism studies. I argue that tourist experiences in areas of socio-political conflict can be more critically explored by unpacking the uncanny juxtaposition of tourism with the death drive. Introducing the concept in tourism studies contributes to the scarce and “belated dialogue between critical tourism research and psychoanalytic approaches” (Kingsbury & Brunn, 2003, p. 40). Understandings of the death drive within the context of critical tourism research should not be regarded as clinical but conceptual. The death drive is not an essentialist and organicist concept. There is no innate, inborn death drive, rather we humans as cultural and social beings are afflicted with the death drive. In proposing this psychoanalytic concept in tourism studies I mainly turn to Ragland-Sullivan’s (1987, 1992, 1995) and Boothby’s (1991) readings of Freud’s and Lacan’s theories on the death drive. My goal, however, like Kingsbury

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(2005), is not to merely superimpose the death drive on tourism studies, but to call for a genuine engagement with this concept so as to examine and understand, more critically, tourist experiences.

Ragland-Sullivan (1995) in her analysis of Lacan's concept of the death drive asks "why would humans be motivated by death and not life?" (p. 85). In her attempt to answer this seemingly paradoxical question I might find the answer to my own query: how and in what ways is the death drive brought about and accessed, if at all, when travelling in areas of socio-political conflicts? The death drive is not understood in a biological sense of physical demise of the body. It is not in opposition to life. It is at the junction between life and death, as an interrelated compound, at the very heart of life phenomena (Lacan, trans. 1977a). Freud posed the death instinct as a biological reality that served to account for clinical and theoretical observations (Boothby, 1991). Lacan reworked Freud's death instinct as a primordial drive aimed towards the unity of the ego, rather than being aimed against the persistence of the biological organism (Boothby, 1991, p. 71). Employing the death drive, I claim, tourist experiences in conflict zones can be more critically examined.

Data for this project was gathered from 25 international tourists who, like myself, travelled to Jordan in 2010, and from 24 Jordanian tourism industry representatives such as guides, travel company managers and owners. With all participants ethnographic methods of data collection, such as in-depth, semi-structured, individual and group interviews were used, an aspect discussed in more detail in the methods section. Throughout this article 'conflict zone' is used to refer to Jordan not as a country at war, especially considering that it signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1994, but as a sensitive place where the conflicts from neighbouring countries spill over and affect tourism along with other aspects of daily life. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is an Arab country in the southwestern part of Asia, bordered by Syria and Lebanon in the north, Iraq in the east, Saudi Arabia to the southeast, Egypt to the southwest, West Bank and Israel in the west.

The location of Jordan is of strategic importance. Historically it has been at the crossroads between the Arabian Peninsula and Syria. Nowadays, Jordan tries to maintain its stability in a region scarred by conflicts for more than six decades. In the last decade Jordan witnessed the Palestinian uprising in 2000–2001; the war in Afghanistan in 2001; in Iraq in 2003; the suicide bombings on three five-star hotels in the capital Amman in 2005; the 2006 Israeli-Hezbollah war in Lebanon; rocket attacks and gunfire exchanges in October 2009 and August 2010 between Lebanon and Israel; and more minor rocket attacks in April and August 2010 in Jordan. More recently, in 2011 and 2012 Jordan was also part of the Arab Spring, a wave of demonstrations and protests that started in Tunisia in December 2010 when a man burned himself in protest at his treatment by police. The revolts spread into Algeria, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Egypt, Yemen, Bahrain, and Libya.

In spite of the conflicts, tourist arrivals increased in 2005 by an estimated 8% (UNWTO, 2006). The United Nations World Tourism Organisation describes the Middle East as "one of the tourism success stories of the decade so far and leads the growth ranking of arrivals in 2007, with an estimated 16% rise to almost 48 million tourists" (UNWTO, 2008, p. 9). Jordan itself has experienced a steady increase in tourist arrivals from 2,383,400 in 2002 to 3,298,900 in 2007 (Jordan Tourism Board., 2009). In 2011 international tourist arrivals in the Middle East region decreased by 5%, but in 2012 Jordan rebounded with an increase of 5% (UNWTO, 2012). Jordan, therefore, offered a good position to analyse tourist experiences in an area of socio-political conflicts.

In-depth and critical understandings of such tourist experiences can be offered through the psychoanalytical concept of the death drive, as I argue in this article. First, I present theoretical considerations regarding interconnections between tourism, psychoanalysis and the death drive. The qualitative methodological approach used to obtain data relevant to the discussion on psychoanalytical connections in tourism is, afterwards, described. The analysis of the data, then, leads me to argue that when travelling in a conflict area, some tourists may access the death drive while negotiating family memories and archaic traumas. I also consider the ways in which binaries such as fun/fear and life/death are asserted and disrupted in Jordanian tourist spaces.

Introducing the death drive in tourism studies

By and large, tourism studies have left aside psychoanalysis as a form of knowledge to understand and interpret various tourist experiences, especially those involving fantasy, desires, drives and the

unconscious, amongst others. “Engagements with psychoanalysis in tourism research are cursory at best” rightfully asserts [Kingsbury \(2005, p. 118\)](#). The author draws on Lacan’s concepts of *jouissance*, the pleasure principle, the Other, and fantasy to conceptualise the politics of enjoyment in Jamaican tourism. In another project [Kingsbury and Brunn \(2003, 2004\)](#) use Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalytic concepts of symptom, ego, defense, and fantasy to analyse discourses of risk, security and anxiety in U.S. travel magazines in the months following the September 11, 2001 events.

[Blom \(2000\)](#), in an earlier study on tourists flocking to Princess Diana’s grave in Althorp, England, draws on the psychoanalytic concept of catharsis to question whether “morbid tourism [is] an expression of an inner purification, which is associated with the notion developed by Breuer and Freud in psychoanalysis and termed catharsis” (p. 34). Drawing on psychoanalytic sociology, Freudian and Jungian concepts of Id instincts of sex, aggression and Superego are proposed in tourism research to explore deviant tourist behaviour ([Uriely, Ram, & Malach-Pines, 2011](#)). More recently, [Buda and McIntosh \(2013\)](#) utilise the psychoanalytic concept of voyeurism to examine a dark tourism account of one tourist jailed in Iran for three weeks. Interest in the dark sides of tourism has increased in the last decades ([Biran & Hyde, 2013](#); [Buda & Shim, 2014](#); [Lennon & Foley, 2000](#); [Stone & Sharpley, 2008](#); [White & Frew, 2013](#)). The dark aspects of human nature, however, such as the deviant and the irrational have not received the deserved attention in tourism studies, perhaps because the ‘powerful and scary irrationality’ with its “inevitably attractive force ... will always remain out of ‘rational control’ to a certain degree” ([Platenkamp & Botterill, 2013, p. 123](#)). Psychoanalysis with some of its key concepts such as (counter)transference, castration, libido, narcissism, desire, phantasy, and the drives, amongst many others, offer ways to tackle dark and ‘deviant’ aspects, to penetrate and make (even if partial) sense of unconscious irrationalities. ‘The science of the unconscious mind’ as Freud defined psychoanalysis, investigates processes that are almost inaccessible in any other way and has become a distinct scientific discipline—a discipline that is yet to be given a chance in tourism studies ([Kingsbury, 2005](#)).

Freudian proposition: death instinct versus death drive

[Freud \(trans. 1984\)](#) proposed the existence of a death instinct (*Todestrieb*) through the concept of ‘repetition compulsion’ (*Wiederholungszwang*), which represents the tendency to repeat experiences repressed in the unconscious and therefore unpleasant “by means of dreams, memories or enactments in the transference” ([Boothby, 1991, p. 72](#)). [Freud \(trans. 1984\)](#) maintains that “the greater part of what is re-experienced under the compulsion to repeat must cause the ego displeasure since it brings to light activities of repressed instinctual impulses” (p. 308). He goes on to argue that what brings ‘unpleasure’, explained as increase in psychic tension, to one system can bring pleasure, satisfaction, decrease in tension, to another. Thus, his theory on the compulsion to repeat repressed unconscious and unpleasant experiences does not contradict the pleasure principle, which Freud considered to be at the core of the psychic processes. The homeostatic principle of pleasure explains the tendency for equilibrium, harmony and diminution of tension and was thought to be the basic principle of life instincts. In addition to life instincts and *beyond this pleasure principle* another force was discovered, a force towards death, conflict and disintegration—the death instinct.

[Freud \(trans. 1984\)](#) explained the compulsion to repeat experiences that were unpleasant at any time or at any level of the psyche mainly in dreams and in the transference process between analyst and *analysand* (the patient in psychoanalysis). This led him to assert that there is a “‘force at work’” (p. 307 quotation in original) that overrides the fundamental concept of the pleasure principle. This ‘daemonic power’ explains that “everything living dies for internal reasons—becomes inorganic once again – ... ‘the aim of all life is death’ and, looking backwards, that ‘inanimate things existed before living ones’” ([Freud, trans. 1984, p. 311](#) emphasis in original). Unlike repressed wishes, which store pleasurable memories in the unconscious, this repetition compulsion that [Freud \(trans. 1984\)](#) discovered “recalls from past experiences which include no possibility of pleasure, and which can never, even long ago, have brought satisfaction even to instinctual impulses which have since been repressed” (p. 291). This explanation is useful in analysing experiences of tourists connected to war and conflict either through embedded family hi/stories, or through everyday living with neighbouring ongoing turmoil.

Freud's term *Todestrieb* is translated as *death instinct*, and some argue that the word *instinct* is inappropriate since "Freud's notion has very little in common with the patterned, spontaneous behaviour of animals that we think of as 'instinctual'" (Boothby, 1991, p. 229). In its inception psychoanalysis was written mainly in German or French, and in this respect we are reminded of "the proverbial Italian tag *traduttore traditore*" ('translator traitor') (Ragland-Sullivan, 1995, p. 1 emphasis in original). This conveys the idea that the translator could improperly transmit the meaning and spirit of a text from one language into another. The German word *Instinkt* is used to render innate animal responses, the word *Trieb* to convey "an elemental impulse or striving that is radically unspecified with respect to its aims and objects" (Boothby, 1991, p. 229). Thus, the problem of translating Freud's *Todestrieb* as death instinct or death drive poses, to authors, the challenge of interpreting the term conceptually. It is argued that *Todestrieb*—death instinct/drive remains a highly ambiguous and controversial concept not only in Freudian work, but within the whole psychoanalytic community as it exists at the threshold between the psychical and the somatic, the "inarticulate strivings of the body" (Boothby, 1991, p. 102), between life and death.

Freud explained the death instinct as *Thanatos* (*death*) opposing *Eros* (*sex/life*), which "operates from the beginning of life and appears as a 'life instinct' in opposition to the 'death instinct' which was brought into being by the coming to life of inorganic substance" (Freud 1984, p. 334). Freud's ideas on the death instinct are argued to have been embryonic, but "cannot unproblematically be traced back to biological sources" (Boothby, 1991, p. 229). Using the term death instinct for Freud's *Todestrieb* is, therefore, not the best choice. Lacan himself criticizes this usage explaining that "[w]hat Freud calls *Trieb* is quite different from an instinct" (Lacan as cited in Boothby, 1991, p. 29). The Freudian concept of the drive refers to a force, a striving that remains equivocal "bearing within itself a reference to the effects of psychological structures that function independently from any basis in biology" (Boothby, 1991, p. 229). From the very beginning Lacan rendered clearly that the Freudian notion of the death instinct/drive is not grounded in biology "we all know very well that it [death drive] is not a question of biology, and this is what makes this problem a stumbling block for so many of us" (Lacan, 1977a, p. 102). It is this aspect that Lacan stresses. He offers a different interpretation of the death instinct/drive being "the inertia of *jouissance*, which makes a person's love of his or her symptoms greater than any desire to change them" (Ragland-Sullivan, 1995, p. 85).

Lacanian redefinitions—death drive with jouissance

The death drive is arguably the key concept for comprehending the thrust, innovation and unruliness of psychoanalytic knowledge (Boothby, 1991). Lacan radically redefined the death drive introducing the notion of *jouissance*. In his redefinitions Freud's traces of biologism are discarded. Lacan himself advised *jouissance* not be translated as the word has no adequate corresponding term in English. Enjoyment expresses one meaning contained in *jouissance*, that is "enjoyment of rights and property" (Sarup, 1992, p. 98) but it does not convey the sexual pleasures of the French term. *Jouissance* encompasses both sexual and psychic meanings. Pleasure is used to translate the concept of "plaisir" which is different from *jouissance*. Pleasure (*plaisir*) refers mainly to sexual pleasures and "obeys the law of homeostasis whereby through discharge, the psyche seeks the lowest possible level of tension" (Sheridan, 1977, p. x).

While *jouissance* is a multifaceted notion that eludes precise definition and a strong grasp, three perspectives from which to explore this unruly concept are provided (Ragland-Sullivan, 1995). First, *jouissance* in connection to pleasure. From this perspective *jouissance* is understood as excessive, if not paradoxical, pleasure, which can generate divergent and overwhelming feelings of disgust while at the same time being "a source of fascination" (Fink, 1995, p. xii). *Jouissance* goes beyond pleasure (*plaisir*) revealing an "exquisite pain" (Sarup, 1992, p. 99), or a "paradoxical form of pleasure that may be found in suffering" (Dean, 2003, p. 248). This is not to say that *jouissance* is masochism understood as pleasure in pain, *jouissance* represents unconscious pleasures that become pain. When *jouissance* becomes conscious it turns into pleasure (Sarup, 1992). It is contended that "[j]ouissance occurs when physical pain becomes unphysical pleasure ... *Jouissance* like death, represents something whose limits cannot be overcome" (Sarup, 1992, p. 100). To explain *jouissance*, Sarup (1992) gives

the following example: “while listening to music the other day I burst out crying without knowing why. *Jouissance* begins where pleasure ends” (p. 99).

Second, *jouissance* as a set of beliefs and knowledge suppositions effected in the generation of *jouis-sens* signifiers, which refer to a surplus enjoy[*jouis*]-ment[*sens*]. *Jouir de* something, in French, refers to enjoying or profiting from a thing, an object or property, whether owned or not, its usufruct or surplus value (MacCannell, 1992). Enjoyment, as a context specific translation and usage of *jouissance* provides a useful lens to question the critical turn in tourism studies through theorisations of the politics of enjoyment (Kingsbury, 2005). Third, *jouissance* linked to repetition of drives. Lacan argues that which generates pleasure during the first moment turns into displeasure during the second moment of repetition. Thus, repetition turns pleasure into displeasure, which is the loss of pleasure. Pleasure, however, “remains as a fixation, as a trace in memory and gives body to fantasy . . . pleasure is retrieved via repetitions that constitute fantasies of eradicating loss” (Ragland-Sullivan, 1995, p. 89). The aim of repetition is to compensate for that loss, but at the very moment of repetition *jouissance* is lost; trying to recuperate it we only retrieve parts of *jouissance*.

Lacanian repetition represents desire to repeat patterns by which one hopes to achieve *jouissance*. Repeating the known, however, cannot satisfy desire for the new, for change, because “this grounds individuals in something they value above all else: the consistency of the expected” (Ragland-Sullivan, 1995, p. 90). Some people desire new emotions and experiences. Craving for change through the familiar cannot be satisfied, thus some people seek excitement in different locations, in danger-scapes across the world. Travelling to what is perceived as a dangerous place of death and disaster does not allude to seeking one’s own death, but to *confrontation* with one’s own fear of death. Desire to travel to a conflict zone may indicate an unconscious quest for *jouissance* through the death drive, a quest that leads to asserting and disrupting binaries such as life/death and fun/fear.

Lacanian death drive is located at the junction of the three concepts: the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real tied in a Barromean knot. The Real drives us, yet the Real is the terrain of that which cannot be expressed; it is where the drives, especially the death drive reside. It cannot, however, be contended that the death drive belongs solely to the agency of the intangible and inexpressible Real. The three Lacanian orders are not static concepts as “at each moment each may be implicated in the redefinition of the others” (Sarup, 1992, p. 105). The Real cannot exist without the barrier of the Symbolic which represents our desires and feelings through language:

Through the word—already a presence made of absence—absence itself gives itself a name in that moment of origin . . . And from this pair of sounds modulated on presence and absence there is born the world of meaning of a particular language in which the world of things will come to be arranged. (Sarup, 1992, p. 65)

By this I do not mean to focus on the structurality of language as the basis of understanding a world through the structuralist discourse, but to render the idea that the death drive can be expressed at a language (the Symbolic) level. This aspect is discussed later in the article when I analyse tourists negotiating fear of death, family memories and archaic traumas. Accessing the death drive some tourists (seek to) feel fear. Seeking, intentionally or not, to feel fear disrupts the fun/fear and life/death oppositions as attested by some tourists.

In analyses of agoraphobia, fear of crime, fear of violence, researchers have positioned fear as an unwanted feeling, as a ‘pejorative’ emotion generated by “physical vulnerability, powerlessness . . . isolation and loneliness” (Listerborn, 2002, p. 39). Listerborn mentions in passing that “sometimes we experience fear intentionally (for example when we choose to see a “scary” movie)” (Listerborn, 2002, p. 35). Playing with fear (Saville, 2008), playing symbolically with death (Le Breton, 2000) are expressions used to refer to fear as a possible playfully productive emotion. Such stances whereby fear and fun are produced and intimately connected, while accessing the death drive, are analysed later in the article, after discussing methodological implications of data gathering and analysis.

Methods

Empirical data for this article draws on in-depth, semi-structured, both individual and group interviews conducted with tourists and tourism industry representatives in Jordan during June–October

2010. The 25 international tourists I interviewed are the key protagonists. Information collected from 24 Jordanian industry representatives also complements understandings of tourist experiences in conflict zones. Participants for this project were recruited using a combination of techniques such as purposeful sampling, on-site and on-line recruiting, and snowballing. Tourists visiting Jordan during 2010 were contacted on-line on Trip Advisor and Thorn Tree Travel through a short blurb posted on these websites. I also approached tourists on sites such as Bethany Beyond the Jordan, Petra, Wadi Rum and Aqaba. Tourism industry representatives in Jordan were contacted through a network of prior acquaintances who in turn, through snowballing technique, helped me access others working in the private and public tourism sectors. Information gathered through snowball sampling interrelated with in-depth interviewing produces unique types of social, dynamic and political knowledges (Noy, 2008).

In this project, the interviewing language was English as tourists and local Jordanian respondents were able and willing to converse in English, a language which is first neither for me nor for most of the participants. They seemed to have felt at ease speaking to me, a researcher born and raised in a developing, eastern European country. My own positionality in the field as a white, Christian Orthodox, single, young and able-bodied woman in a moderate Muslim country prompted me to be mindful and respectful of the Jordanian cultural context, local habits and traditions, especially that local Jordanian respondents were mostly middle age Muslim men.

Tourists involved in this project come from Australia, New Zealand, U.S., France, India, China, Switzerland, South Korea, and Saudi Arabia, amongst others. Most of them are men between 30–60 years old. I could only recruit seven women travelling in Jordan. These are Dana, Lisa and Elle from Australia travelling with their husbands. Lakshimi and Rene from India, Josie from China, Madge (together with her husband Tom) and their two teenage daughters from the U.S. represent the rest of the women respondents. During my stay in Jordan I met very few women working in the tourism industry and I interviewed three. The spokesperson for the Ministry of Antiquities and Tourism was the only local woman in the industry I interviewed. The other two were foreigners, one from England working for about one year in Jordan, and one from the U.S., living and working in Jordan for more than three decades.

Each individual interview lasted approximately 40–90 minutes, while group interviews were roughly two hours in duration. Three group interviews were organised with tourists in Petra and Wadi Rum desert in Jordan and one with tour guides in Petra. The group interviews facilitated for this research project comprised three to four participants. It was an informed decision to organise smaller and thus more manageable groups as I was aware that topics pertaining to the interconnections between conflict and tourism need to be discussed with sensitivity to difference, power and politics. Discussions with tourists revolved around questions such as: Were you surprised by anything you found in Jordan? Are sites in Jordan familiar with those in your home country or other countries you visited? What do you enjoy/dislike the most in Jordan? Questions connected to feelings of surprise were useful in addressing Freud's argument of quest for novelty, whereas those relating to familiarity pointed to the repetition principle at the heart of the death drive, aspects discussed below in the analysis section. Tour guides were encouraged to share stories of tourists in Jordan in times of turmoil such as the 2005 terrorist attacks at three hotels in Amman, for example.

The aim of these interviews was to unravel experiences in areas in the proximity of an ongoing conflict. The intention was “*not to be representative but to understand how individual people experience and make sense*” of their travels (Valentine, 2005, p. 111 emphasis in original). I tried not to keep a tight rein on the interviewing process as I wanted to allow enough space for the interviewees to explore the topics in as much depth and from as many angles as they pleased. A digital recorder was used during the interviews, confidentiality was assured and participants signed a consent form. The interviews were then transcribed and analysed. In the initial stage of data analysis I selected, focused, and abstracted the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994) while listening to the interviews and reading the transcripts over and over again. Afterwards, keywords such as ‘conflicts’, ‘terrorist attacks’, ‘emotions’, ‘fear’, ‘death’ were identified and data was divided into concepts and categories. As I was processing the data, like Crang (2001) “I kept anticipating some moment of revelation, where the ‘hidden’ meaning in the transcripts would leap at me” (p. 226). Some moments of revelation occurred in the final stage—enfolding the literature whereby research questions were revisited, evaluated and refined in the light of the new insights.

Negotiating family memories and archaic traumas

It's very personal because of the stories of my dad, he did the Algerian War and I can see the result 50 years later. . . . He was 20 years old when he left his [home]country, left the countryside, arrived in another country and was given a gun to save his life. I'm sure that the man who is my dad now is not the same one as before the war. So, I'm sad for them [the Israeli soldiers at the border with Jordan as seen at Bethany Beyond Jordan—The Baptismal Site]. Seeing the weapons, okay, it's not [a big deal]—I'm sad for them because I can't say that most of them have a choice. And it will change their life. I'm very lucky because there's no war in France, what would I do if there was one? But definitely, war changes people, because of what they see, of what they do . . . With my dad it's what he told me. I just asked him one day "Do you become méchant [mean, malicious], bad afterwards?" And he just told me, "Yes, because you have no choice". Fifty years later, he started to talk about it. So he's lived with it, every day. "I'm not for war, I'm sorry" is what I told him. I say, if there's one war one day, I won't go. I'd rather shoot myself than kill anyone. (Gaston, interview, September 19, 2010).

Gaston, a tourist from France in his early 40s, travelled to Jordan in September 2010. I met him while visiting Bethany Beyond Jordan—the Baptismal Site. The site is located about 40 kilometres away from Jordan's capital, Amman, and is on the tourist circuit for its religious but also historical and archaeological importance. The site received its notoriety when the late Pope John Paul II visited it during the bimillenary event of the year 2000 and designated it as the unique place where John baptised Jesus Christ. The site itself is 10 square kilometres and is geostrategically located right on the border between Jordan and Palestine/Israel and is guarded at all times by armed soldiers on both sides.

For Gaston, travelling to a place that embodies parts of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is an opportunity to reflect on and reshape his embedded family memories connected to his father's personal stories from the Algerian War. Ragland-Sullivan (1995) reminds us that the death drive bespeaks the demise of "memories embedded in our flesh through family myths and archaic traumas" (p. 94). His father's decision to start talking about the war after 50 years was poignantly felt by Gaston who, as a result, voices his own determination of shooting himself rather than fighting in a war and killing people. Lacan's paternal metaphor can be quite literally employed to understand Gaston's experience. The Name-of-the-Father (nom du père) at the foundation of the paternal metaphor was put forward by Lacan to explain the role of the father in the Symbolic order, not necessarily biological or de facto father. In his usual fashion Lacan plays with words and sounds 'le nom du père' (the name of the father), le non du père (the no of the father), and les non-dupes errent (the non-dupes err) to explain the father being and having legislative and prohibitive function.

This function is the Law in Lacan's (1977a,b) work, a law that is not judicial legislation but represents a set of fundamental principles at the basis of social interactions. The legislative nature of the father figure imposes constraints, generates lacks and sorrows for Gaston and the rest of the family. It seems as if Gaston accesses the death drive at the Baptismal Site while gazing at the armed soldiers, and feeling sad for them. In that time-space the allegedly malicious soldiers perform the paternal function. The *jouissance* in the sadness and in the paternal metaphor could be further explained "I'm sad for them because I can't say that most of them have a choice. And it will change their life", since military service is compulsory in Israel for both women and men. He reflected on his own and soldiers' feelings through his paternal traumas and vouched not to ever fight any war and kill people. This seemingly voiced *jouissance* of 'rather killing myself' is illustrative of the ways in which the death drive may be operant in a Jordanian tourist locale reminiscent of family traumas. Freudian and Lacanian concepts are intimately linked and "function in dynamic cadence" (Ragland-Sullivan, 1992, p. 10); thus *jouissance*, the name-of-the-father and the death drive are all interconnected. Gaston's 'very personal paternal stories' are re-lived and re-negotiated while accessing the death drive.

In the same vein of 'not being for war' like Gaston, Amir condemns the ongoing conflict surrounding his home country, Saudi Arabia: "we just can't take it. It shouldn't be the nature of the people to be fighting forever. And people are very tired of fighting" (Amir, interview, September 21, 2010). These political archaic traumas are intensely felt by Amir, who expresses his desire to travel to Al-Quds/Jerusalem, one of the contentious aspects in the ongoing regional conflict: "They [Israeli authorities] are not going to let me. My passport is Saudi. I'm a threat to them. They consider me as a threat. I

wish—it's my dream to . . . because it's holy for us Muslims. Very very holy" (Amir, interview, September 1, 2010). Desiring Al-Quds/Jerusalem and the denied access to the 'very very holy city' seem to prompt Amir to access the death drive. His visiting Jordan, travelling closer to the core of the conflict may very well be the work of that 'daemonic force' which increases unpleasure—the death drive.

Political archaic traumas are negotiated by Amru as well, a Jordanian man in his early 30s, a tour guide by profession. He crossed the Jordanian-Iraq border in the wake of the 2003 Iraqi war. He accompanied international journalists into Iraq on a couple of occasions including on the 11th of April 2003, the second day after Bagdad fell in the hands of the U.S.-led "Coalition of the Willing" (Newnham, 2008). As a tour guide/fixer Amru was paid to take journalists into Iraq, and in the conflict zone he reflected on his memories and feelings that made him feel alive.

I am a fan of Paolo Coelho [Brazilian lyricist and novelist] . . . He writes about these things, the fear, it makes you alive sometimes. It is true, like you are in the middle of something or you need . . . I met this girl from Turkey she was a TV presenter . . . Turkish, 24 years [old] stunningly beautiful and she's going there [Iraq] and I asked her 'what are you doing?' I said, joking with her, like "it's okay for me to die but you die 'no'". It was, you know, teasing and she said 'I want to face my fear, fear of death', which is something that I put in mind. And you're always watching feeling this situation like how to control not control but feel the thing and just feel the fear, and deal with it, so I guess this is a personal thing. (Amru, interview, October 2, 2010).

Fear feels dangerous; war, conflict and danger feel like fear. Through fear, danger can be identified, and consequently dangerous things or situations that cause fear can be detected. Fear is embodied: muscles tighten; heart races; pulse quickens; breath shortens; eyes widen; so that "these bodily changes seem to exhaust the feeling of fear" (Prinz, 2008, p. 150). The body can be felt through fear, which awakes senses making Amru feel alive. Emotions are, however, more than physiological manifestations.

Emotions are not easily defined or measured, but they are all pervasive, "heart- and gut-wrenchingly present and personal" (Smith, Davidson, Cameron, & Bondi, 2009, p. 3; see also Buda, d'Hautesserre, & Johnston, 2014; Picard & Robinson, 2012; Shakeela & Weaver, 2012). The context and place in which feelings and emotions arise are crucial. Amru attested that when he travelled to Iraq he feared for his body being infected with "chemicals maybe left from the war. I said we walk on the street and something you never know that there is something that influences your [body]" (Amru, interview, October 2, 2010). The context of the war in Iraq made Amru's fear of death manifest as fear for his body being infested with harmful chemical substances, which resonates with Lacan's (trans. 1977a) argument that "fear of death is psychologically subordinate to the narcissistic fear of damage to one's own body" (p. 28). For Amru, travelling to Iraq also gave him a different understanding of life and death through his feelings of fear.

His travels to Iraq in 2003 seem to have had purificatory effects of a rite of passage in which, I argue, he (un/consciously) sought to purge his own embedded trauma of fear of death. The drive is a constant force (Braunstein, 2003) and at a conscious level Amru decided to act on his drive to face his fear of death in spite of "friends and people around me put[ting] me down sometimes. I mean, they would say 'Are you crazy?' and stuff. But I had this feeling that pushes me and said I wanted to go" (Amru, interview, October 2, 2010). Lacan claims that humans are motivated by the death drive and not driven by the pleasure principle as Freud asserted especially in his earlier writings (Ragland-Sullivan, 1995). Amru's assertions like 'I want to face my fear of death', 'I want to control my fear of death', 'I want to feel fear of death' express a death drive which penetrates the Symbolic and can be communicated in words, which impacts fantasies and images (the Imaginary). Thus, fear of death understood through the psychoanalytic concept of the death drive is an existential, embodied emotion of fear, a fear that shakes bodies, wakes up senses and makes tourists feel alive, a fear that removes us from "the comfort of fixity, which Lacan called 'death'" (Ragland-Sullivan, 1995, p. 167).

Blurred lines: crossing fun/fear and life/death boundaries

I had tourists who came in 2003 when they started the war on Iraq and Iraq is on the border [with Jordan] and there were people here travelling and they said 'you know what it doesn't really scare

us'. . . They always ask 'is it safe to leave the hotel?', 'is it safe to go and walk down in the market?' [In spite of the war] they still want to be here, it's like, you know what, they want to go back to their country and say 'do you know what, I was in that region during the war', but there's still a little bit of fear. There's always fear. (Arfan, interview, October 3, 2010)

The conversation above is part of the interview I had with Arfan, a Jordanian tour guide in his early 30s. He acknowledged tourists' interests in places of conflict, war, (imagined) danger and fear. It seems that in his account, tourists' fear was more an enticement factor than a deterrent, more a 'fun' emotion than a 'negative' one. The death drive can be traced in the fun/fear that Arfan detected in those tourists saying "we are here, we want to see, we want to experience what people do, what people think . . . it [the neighbouring war] doesn't really scare us" (Arfan, interview, October 3, 2010). Arfan interpreted their wish to experience the war as desire for novelty, fun and adventure to collect stories and dangerous places. In this quest to collect dangerous stories and places tourists cross the fun/fear and life/death borders. The Jordanian tour guide continues to explain that "some people are really crazy, one guy said to me 'I wish I can be in Iraq now' (Arfan, interview, October 3, 2010). The death drive, which resists the life/death binary, seems to have penetrated Lacan's Symbolic and Imaginary orders, as a tourist expressed in words his desire for war and conflict. Such desires, wishes and fantasies point to possibly accessing the death drive. The aim of the drive is not to reach a goal and obtain complete satisfaction, but to trace a contour and on the arch of its way back it accomplishes the task, it is like the itinerary one must take to accomplish a mission (Braunstein, 2003).

Desire is intimately connected to the death drive and both represent important ingredients in experiencing tourism at an embodied and emotional level of playing with fear and death (Buda & Shim, 2014). 'Playing with fear' in Jordan, Julian, a Swiss tourist in his 30s, reflected on the "pretty striking" checkpoints at the Baptismal Site. He experiences the fun and fear of the "heightened alert [of the Baptismal Site checkpoints] . . . they signal that something [dangerous] can happen". Likewise, his travels in Jordan are lived through the shared archaic trauma of World War II and the Cold War, as he says "like 20 years ago we had the same thing in Germany, when you approached Checkpoint Charlie" (Julian, interview, September 23, 2010). I asked him whether the complex, unstable and sometimes violent nature of the political situation in the region represents a source of fear or concern. His answer was that he received support from home because "my father travels a lot on business" and "probably from when I was 12, 13 years old I wanted to go to the Middle East" (Julian, interview, September 23, 2010). The compulsion to repeat unpleasurable experiences was initially observed by Freud in children's play. This would happen "for the additional reason that they can master a powerful impression . . . Each fresh repetition seems to strengthen the mastery they are in search of" (Freud, 1974, p. 35). This character trait, Freud (1938, 1974) argues, disappears in adult life as enjoyment is then reached through novelty. Compulsion to repeat unpleasurable childhood memories seem to be motivated by a daemonic power, which is at the heart of Freudian death instinct/drive. Experiencing the heightened alert of the Jordanian checkpoints at the Baptismal Site, Julian not only had the opportunity to reflect on the collective war trauma, but also to experience fun and fear connected to an ongoing conflict. Julian, therefore, may have accessed the death drive and *jouissance* through the felt tension embodied in the checkpoint.

Being stopped at checkpoints on highways in Jordan, seeing armed soldiers or police at certain tourist sites, another tourist in his late 20s, Hyun from South Korea said:

I feel nothing, because I always experience that kind of news in Korea and that news is much bigger news. . . . I always see soldiers on the opposite side of the beach; there are so-called guard posts, like in Jordan. . . . And on coast lines, they always have soldiers, in case of North Korea coming down with the submarines. But no one feels anything about that kind of like military base, because we got used to it, even if there are some gun shots from North Korea. (Hyun, interview, September 16, 2010)

Hyun decided to travel to Jordan in spite of friends and family advising him not to, and also in spite of his own views about the region: "I had some prejudice, like anybody else, that it's the Middle East and it's a very dangerous place, you should not go. [My friends and family told me] never go there! You might get killed [mild laugh] (Hyun, interview, September 16, 2010). Deciding to travel alone, as he

did, to 'a very dangerous country' arguably speaks of a partly unconscious death drive that bursts into the conscious, or in Lacan's Imaginary order. This seems to manifest as fear that makes one feel alive by "trying something new that I cannot try in Korea" (Hyun, interview, September 16, 2010). Hyun had a more "acceptable" and "fun" explanation for travelling to a country in the middle of a conflict area, namely that he wanted to scuba dive in the Red Sea, to go on canyon trips, to experience the desert, which he cannot do in his native South Korea.

Hyun might not be able to engage in such fun activities in Korea, but he surely can in other 'calmer and safer' regions, yet he chose Jordan in spite of warnings from friends, family, and Korea's cautionary government travel warning for Jordan "travel at your own risk" (Hyun, interview, September 16, 2010). Hyun travelled to Jordan as an adventure tourist interested in scuba diving and canyon trips. He adds a nuance of fun and adventure to seeking fear. Apparently, he plays with fear while playing symbolically with death. When I asked Hyun about his views on the neighbouring Israeli-Palestinian conflict spilling over into Jordan, he replied that South Korea was still at war with North Korea even though it seemed to be on halt for the moment.

Hyun never travelled to North Korea even though he would like to, because there is a ban on free travel to the North. Desire for the Other is where desire finds form, desire is "désir de l'Autre (the desire of the Other)" Lacan argued (trans. 1997a, p. 312). Communist North Korea is the Other for democratic South Korea. Through this prism Hyun desires to travel to North Korea and witness the conflict which is presented in daily news in South Korea such as North's nuclear testing, the threat of shootings and submarines invading the South's coastal regions (Hyun, interview, September 16, 2010). The ban on travel to North Korea represents the forbidden desire for Hyun. "Desire by definition marks a structural lack" (Ragland-Sullivan, 1995, p. 156), and the lack is realised in the ban to visit North Korea due to the conflict with South Korea.

Travelling to another destination in the proximity of a conflict such as Jordan speaks of this desire for the forbidden conflict present in the life of Hyun through mass media, soldiers on beaches and the like, but absent through the ban on travel to the other side. In Jordan, Hyun can experience the fun of scuba diving, canyon and desert trips, but also the 'dangerous adventure' of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict which is present-absent in Jordan as the North-South conflict is in South Korea. The fact that he does not cross into Palestine from Jordan to witness the heart of the conflict speaks of the repetition that gives so much comfort. Hyun repeats the scenario of his experience in South Korea of staying on the safer side of the conflict, but fears to transgress it. He fears to challenge the fixity of his life asserting and disrupting at the same time the fun/fear border.

The repetition principle is explained by Freud as 'compulsion to repeat', which in the last phase of his work he understood as more than a clinical phenomenon, but with attributes and characteristics of instincts, as a "manifestation of the death instinct" (Ragland-Sullivan, 1995, p. 68). Freud (trans. 1984) argues "repetition, the re-experiencing of something identical, is clearly in itself a source of pleasure" (p. 308). He also mentions that the main condition for enjoyment is novelty; thus travelling to a country that has similar ways of handling a decades-long conflict speaks of the repetition principle more as an "insistence of the unconscious in the conscious life" (Ragland-Sullivan, 1995, p. 68).

Like Hyun, Lakshimi and Rene two Indian women in their 40s, travelled to the region for the adventure, in their cases the adventure of collecting places of world wonders, such as Petra in Jordan and Alexandria in Egypt. In our interview both of them agreed that the presence of armed soldiers, police and checkpoints in the region was 'normal' for them:

border disputes is something in India we're very familiar with. ... In India also, there are quite a few places you cross the military zone and they say, 'No photography allowed', some tunnels and we'll see soldiers with guns. So, it's quite common, in India too. (Lakshimi, interview, October 2, 2010)

On the one hand it can be argued that Lakshimi's and Rene's experiences in India with military zones, prohibitions, denied access are experienced as a 'normal' part of everyday life. Hence their visit to Jordan offers a repeat of the same 'normalcy' or familiarity. This represents another example whereby death drive may be accessed through compulsion to repeat, explained above. If the death drive is understood to unsettle the life/death boundaries, then Lakshimi and Rene have asserted and disturbed this binary along with the fun/fear one. Living in a country with 'a few places as military

zones' the boundaries of lived normalcy, ordinary, out-of the ordinary and extra-ordinary have been blurred. This may have led to them becoming desensitised to conflict. Consequently, feeling no fear when visiting another conflict zone, or feeling fear as something fun and acceptable, the fun/fear dichotomy is disrupted and the death drive accessed.

On the other hand, as I mentioned above Josie, Lakshmi and Rene are amongst the few women travelling by themselves in the region, whom I interviewed for this project. Other women were from Australia, Dana, Lisa and Elle, mentioned in the methodology section, who travelled to Jordan with their husbands. Another woman, Madge from the United States, travelled with her husband and two adolescent daughters. In this context, one might wonder, like Irigaray (1985, p. 53 *emphasis in original*), "[i]s Working Out the Death Drive Limited to Men Only?" Irigaray's critiquing question provides opportunities for a gendered approach to the death drive in tourism studies. This is, however, beyond the scope of this article. A gendered and feminist critique of the death drive deserves its own manuscript, with its own full theoretical exposition that draws on feminist psychoanalysis, but also on a breadth of gender studies work.

Conclusion

In this article I engaged with the death drive to show how some tourists access it in places (in the proximity) of an ongoing conflict in such ways as to trouble the life/death and fun/fear binaries. Analysing tourist narratives I discussed two points. First, I argued that travelling in a conflict area some tourists seek to negotiate and purge embedded memories and archaic traumas. I examined how family recollections are negotiated and reshaped. Amru's desire to face his fear of death, Amir's sorrow connected to the ongoing regional conflict, or Gaston's reflections on his father's fighting the Algerian War are examples of how the death drive can offer another lens to understanding tourist experiences. Second, I considered the ways in which binaries such as fun/fear and life/death are asserted and disrupted in Jordanian tourist spaces. Julian's, Hyun's, Lakshmi's and Rene's narratives offered a platform to discuss how these boundaries are asserted, resisted and crossed. These tourists travelled to Jordan to scuba dive in the Red Sea, to experience the desert or to collect places of world wonders such as Petra, all fun aspects of holiday enjoyment. Accessing the death drive, fun and enjoyment blurred into fear, and conversely fear meshed into fun. Their experiences showed how the boundaries between fun and fear are asserted, resisted and subverted.

My aim was to provide insights into the rich world of the death drive. The areas of theorisation and debate that this article brought together—tourism and psychoanalysis—are enormous. Partly due to the fact that an article is such a bounded project the examples that I have offered of interconnections between tourism and the death drive could be considered somewhat brief and cursory. Much more detailed work remains to be done especially regarding women's (death) drives. For this Irigaray's, Klein's and Kristeva's works provide rich platforms. Since I could only recruit seven women travelling in Jordan, and three women working in the Jordanian tourism sector, the urgency to challenge the patriarchal order in the death drive seems to be even more poignant. One could further tackle Irigaray's argument that women need to become speaking subjects in their/our own right and re/gain access to their (language for) desire, to *jouissance* and death drive (Burke, 1981; Irigaray, 1991). In Irigarayan psychoanalysis it is argued that women lack the language and/or the words through which devalued or denied experiences could be expressed, such as accessing and working out the death drive. Women's unrepresented death drives does not turn them/us into innocent victims. Arguably, this has the potential to make women destructive not only to men but also to each other "even if they do not have the power to organise this destruction in any institutional way" (Whitford, 1991, p. 12).

Psychoanalysis of and in tourism, offers promising prospects, both methodological and theoretical. One avenue for psychoanalysis in general and drives in particular to make an impact on tourism research is by way of methodological re/considerations. Psychoanalytic methodologies already exert considerable influence on critical social theories such as feminism and poststructuralism, which, to some extent, inform critical approaches in tourism studies. Engaging with psychoanalytic concepts such as (counter)transference, free-associations and active listening (Kingsbury, 2009) during interviews, whether individual or focus groups, or during ethnographic fieldwork could contribute to more

in-depth understandings of methodologies in tourism. Drawing on the drives connected to human subjectivity and agency and “associated with activities that are excessive, repetitive, and potentially destructive” (Kingsbury, 2010, p. 520) psychoanalytic methodologies can be ‘ousted’ from the couch and into tourism fieldwork.

Theoretical contributions of psychoanalytic concepts are arguably enhancing the literatures of “sex tourism, drug tourism, dark tourism, heritage tourism, ecotourism, volunteer tourism, risk and terror in tourism, adventure tourism, sport tourism, as well as backpacking, pilgrimage and sea-sand-sun vacationing” (Uriely et al., 2011, p. 1053). Such literatures could be furthered if interconnections between drives, emotions and affects are unravelled. Affect is a concept of psychoanalytic ancestry as in Freud’s earliest writings on the unconscious, he mentioned “an affective or emotional impulse” (Thien, 2005, p. 451) to explain instincts and drives. Drawing on Freud’s work it is argued that affect is a matrix which contains both feelings and emotions. Compared to drives, affects have more freedom in regards to time, aim and object, and can be attached to ideas, institutions, people, places, and sensations amongst other things. It is argued that affects “pair dangerously close” (Dewsbury, 2009, p. 20) with emotions as they are interrelated. Affect can be ineffable and intangible, but it can also shape-shift into emotions (Davidson, Bondi, & Smith, 2005; Davidson & Milligan, 2004; Dewsbury, 2009; Pile, 2010). When affect remains an invisible presence it overlaps with drives. It is within this connection between emotions, affects and drives that tourist experiences and performances can be further tackled.

The discipline of geography, for example, has experienced a ‘psychoanalytic turn’ (Philo & Parr, 2003; Pile, 1996). For tourism researchers to engage with critical debates in psychoanalysis we need to first move beyond the initial “terse and sweeping criticisms of psychoanalysis [which] have resulted in widespread rejection, denigration, and misconception” (Kingsbury, 2005, p. 117) if a genuine and productive dialogue between tourism and psychoanalysis is to develop. By focusing on the death drive as conceptualised by Freud and Lacan, interpreted by Ragland-Sullivan (1995) and Boothby (1991), my intention was to offer tourism studies a starting point for engagements with the death drive.

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