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Geographies of affect in places of death and disaster: Tohoku, Japan, after 3.11

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PROPOSITIONS BELONGING TO THE PHD THESIS

**GEOGRAPHIES OF AFFECT IN PLACES OF
DEATH AND DISASTER:
TOHOKU, JAPAN, AFTER 3.11**

ANNACLAUDIA MARTINI

1. Dark tourism is not only motivated by morbid curiosity and voyeurism, but can be a powerful means for physical, economic and psychological recovery (this thesis).
2. Whether or not academics believe that emotions and affects can be considered autonomous, they are always experienced relationally and in connection to the body and its responses (Anderson 2014).
3. In the shift in the field of humanities from bodies as objects to bodies as processes, affect is something that perhaps escapes or remains in excess of the practices of the 'speaking subject'. This means that some established methods for studying bodies may not do justice to, or, may exclude processes which might be characterized as less visible to the particular technologies of observation, seeing and listening, and particularly the reliance of many of our qualitative methodologies on language and sight (Blackman & Venn, 2010).
4. In a way, the 3.11 disaster had unexpected consequences. Tohoku, one of the least visited regions of Japan before the disaster, in 2017 registered about 945,560 foreign visitors, up about 90% from 2010 (Japan Reconstruction Agency).

5. The media narratives built around the tsunami's debris construct an affective performance in which the 'voyage' of the 3.11 debris becomes an allegory of the journey towards recovery undertaken by Japan after 2011 (this thesis).
6. The sublime encapsulates a historical connection between dark tourism and affect (this thesis).
7. Three common but fake news about the 3.11 disaster:
 1. Fukushima is radioactive and dangerous (Vice, Netflix).
 2. Building higher seawalls will prevent similar disasters happening again (the Japanese Government)
 3. The Miracle Pine is the only tree that survived the tsunami in Rikuzentakata (every newspaper reporting on Rikuzentakata).
8. And one (allegedly and surprisingly) true:

Tashirojima, also known as 'Cat Island' because of the massive presence of cats, was the first stretch of land hit by the tsunami. However, there were no victims. The inhabitants claim that it was because of the cats, as they felt the tsunami coming and ran uphill. Seeing the cats flee, the island's population followed, and they all survived (according to the inhabitants of Tashirojima).