War Stories: How Do Hostel Owners Shape the Narrative of the 1992-1995 Bosnian Conflict?

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Abstract

This thesis explores how tourism, and particularly dark tourism studies can be used to investigate international relations theories and practices on the micro-level. Looking at how Bosnian 'war tours,' as run by hostel owners, shape the narrative surrounding the Bosnian conflict of 1992-5, it will explore how they challenge grand narratives such as ethnic conflict theory, the othering of unfamiliar cultures and traditions and the idea of a benevolent international community. Using theories of hermeneutic phenomenology each tour is taken as a unique experience but, as will be shown, can assist in the process of forming a more comprehensive picture to demonstrate that international relations does not simply happen at the geo-political macro- level.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor Xymena Kurowska for guiding me through this process and always having an answer for the doubts I had. I am also grateful to all the people I interviewed and spent time with during my fieldwork, the hostel owners who let me participate in their tours and write about them and the guests who, at times, made me forget that I wasn't on holiday at all. Finally, I would like to thank Tea Thaning, Shelby Magid and Elizabeth Crawford for all their love and support. Mafaz Syrus, you were a distraction.

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Introduction

For many the memories of the 1992-1995 conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), a war which is variously referred to as a conflict for independence, an actualisation of internal civil tensions or an invasion depending upon whom you ask, remain fresh.[1] With the passing of time however, this personal memory of conflict begins to fade, shifting from the individual to the semantic, a shared and less definite knowledge, a piece of information rather than an actual experience. So is the case for today's 'backpacker generation' who pass through the nation staying in hostels, amongst the 'locals,' in order to gain a true sense of both Bosnia and its history.[2] Mostly in their late teens and early to mid-twenties, these people have no first-hand knowledge of this conflict, either experiential or observational, being either too young or not yet born. Any information is then, for the vast majority, learnt knowledge, if it exists at all. In my fieldwork it became clear that knowledge of the conflict was uneven, some knew more than others but all confessed to not be especially familiar with the particulars. All said they had never learnt about it in school, some had learnt a little in passing and a few had covered elements in university. What is clear, however, is that the vast majority of the backpacker generation have not been directly educated in the particulars of the conflict, not only this, they knew little to nothing of the nation or the people themselves. The knowledge they learn in BiH can then prove foundational.

Over the course of their travels backpackers have many opportunities to learn more about the conflict, be it through reading inscriptions on one of the many memorials across the country, through visiting museums or flicking through guidebooks, the backpacker's bible and thus a key source of information.[3] They likewise turn to their hosts, the hostel owners, the 'real people' of Bosnia, asking about personal experiences in an environment less intimidating and more forgiving

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[1] Dubravko Lovrenovic. "Bosnia and Herzegovina as the Stage of Three Parallel and Conflicted Memories" *European Review* 24(4) (2016): 481.

[2] Tomas Pernecky and Tazim Jamal "(Hermeneutic) Phenomenology in Tourism Studies" *Annals of Tourism Research* 37(4) (2010): 1066.

[3] Victor Alneng. "What the Fuck is a Vietnam?" *Critique of Anthropology* 22(4) (2002): 470.

than a museum or other public spaces. Such practice has become so commonplace that, as one hostlier put it, 'I decided if I was going to be asked so many questions I would charge money for it,' a view echoed by many within the industry. Perhaps part of a jovial sales pitch rather than absolute fact, the reality remains, backpackers nowadays can and do take these tours in large numbers, seeking out a slice of 'the real' Bosnia as told by 'real' people.[4]

It is commonplace to find 'war tours' directly linked to, or run by, hostel owners within BiH. The tours claim to relay to participants what 'real life' effects the conflict has left on both them and the nation, in part satisfying the curiosity of the backpacker generation for stories and histories of the conflict of 1992-95. At least within this demographic, the hostel owners/tour operators provide a key source of information on the conflict, acting in a quasi-teacher roll. It is the strategies and impacts of these lessons/tours which this study shall investigate,[5] questioning as to whether tours increase global understanding at a micro-level. Focus shall be placed upon the process of knowledge accumulation and interpersonal understanding, looking at whether in-nation experiences contribute to knowledge enrichment in the minds of the international backpacking audience. In investigating interpersonal understanding and how this is formulated, this thesis will interrogate post-colonialist ideas of narrative control,[6] looking at how concepts of 'glocality' are used by both operator and participant in order to enhance mutual understanding and ensure a more interactive role between knowledge producer and receiver.[7] As these tours are situated within

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[4] It is unclear whether the formation of hostel 'war tours' was either supply or demand lead. Whilst all guides said they had had government training and were state accredited, all said this had come after they began running their tours and as such, they had incorporated in certain parts of the state narrative but that the tours they ran were of their own creation.
Tim Edensor. "Staging Tourism: Tourists as Performers" *Annals of Tourism Research* 27(2) (2000): 324.

[5] Whilst not as institutionalised as Beckerman's study of co-educational Israeli-Palestinian schools, the practices of tour guides within Bosnia are remarkably similar, striving to address potential conflicting or emotive narratives without becoming confrontational, the guides adapt mediatory strategies not dissimilar to those found by Beckerman within the classroom environment.
Zvi Beckerman. "The Complexities of Teaching Historical Conflictual Narratives in Integrated Palestinian-Jewish Schools in Israel" *International Review of Education* 55(2) (2009): 235-250.

[6] Dell Upton. "'Authentic' Anxieties" in *Consuming Tradition, Manufacturing Heritage* Nezar AlSayyad (ed.) (London, Routledge, 2001): 300.

[7] Nezar AlSayyad. "Global Norms and Urban Forms in the Age of Tourism: Manufacturing Heritage, Consuming Tradition" in *Consuming Tradition, Manufacturing Heritage* Nezar AlSayyad (ed.) (London, Routledge, 2001): 17; Keith Hollinshead. "Tourism, Hybridity, and Ambiguity: The Relevance of Bhabha's 'Third Space' Cultures" *Journal of Leisure Research* 30(1) (1998): 1-31.

a firmly international context which blurs the boundaries between 'self' and 'other', their study is important to the field of international relations as it investigates how IR can be pushed to the boundaries to be played out on the micro-level.[8]

I am using my role as both researcher and participant to my advantage in writing and researching this piece, able to gain an insight into my subjects and subject matter beyond the 'failure' of the 'god-like' scholar who sets themselves apart from their research and the effects it has upon them.[9] Over the course of my research I met many people who left many impressions upon me and it is in light of these impressions that I wish to review this quote:

'This plaque is to commemorate the nine French soldiers who gave their lives for peace'

Such a plaque, found before passport control at Sarajevo international airport is, on many levels, innocuous, a memorial to the dead, not unlike many others found both across Bosnia and the world at large. On my first visit this is precisely how I saw the plaque, as just another memorial to the dead. Passing through passport control by the end of my trip however, the plaque had gained new significance and meaning to me, a meaning that had been awoken as a result of my time spent among my research subjects.[10] I found myself sceptical at such a statement that these men died 'for peace' as a result of the arguments presented by my guides. They questioned their audiences as to whether one could say that peace was what the citizens of Sarajevo or Bosnia were granted during the time UN Peacekeepers occupied the region, who presented the realities of experiencing shelling day in day out, losing loved ones and friends and their powerlessness in the face of such attacks. It was as a result of participating in the tours that my scepticism towards the plaque had

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[8] This is particularly telling as the tours lack local significance, aimed almost solely at the international market in an attempt to translate local experience to a global audience.
Hamzah Muzaini, Peggy Teo and Brenda S. A. Yeoh. "Imitations of Postmodernity in Dark Tourism: The Fate of History at Fort Siloso, Singapore" *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 5(1) (2007): 31.
[9] Gillian Rose. "Situating knowledges: positionality, reflexivities and other tactics" *Progress in Human Geography* 21(3) (1997): 308.
[10] Kim V. L. England. "Getting Personal: Reflexivity, Positionality, and Feminist Research" *Professional Geographer* 46(1) (1994): 82

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grown. The tour operators had assisted in contextualising and enriching my knowledge of the conflict to become something greater than an historical event and something closer to a personalised experience. In the process of this personal contextualisation guides often challenged standardised notions of the self/other as well as dominant narratives surrounding the conflict and the international community's response to it. This challenges many macro-level ideas found within international relations such as the notion of an 'ethnic conflict' or benevolent international community as these ideas were micro-contextualised and debunked and it is this phenomenon in particular which this thesis seeks to investigate.

Using theories of hermeneutic phenomenology to investigate the impact and construction of tour narratives I will section my investigations into two primary areas: use of narrative and use of supporting meta-data, that is information outside of the narrative used to illustrate the narrative itself. Hermeneutic phenomenology, particularly within tourism studies, sets out to explore all events as unique, capable only of speaking for themselves and truly understandable only to those who experienced them. In doing so it attempts to find connection between unique experiences without trying to remove the individual from this formulation.[11] Every phenomenon is different and it is because of this that they require investigation. The specific areas of meta-data I will investigate will focus primarily upon use of surroundings and props as tools to assist in the telling and fleshing out of the narrative by adding complimentary tangible details. The investigation of narrative focuses upon use of humour and confession as ways of giving the narratives greater impact, looking to how something is said is often more important than the what. These sections will constitute the body of the piece to form an attempt at a coherent picture of the impact such tours leave on participants and the ways in which they shape the ongoing, ever evolving narrative regarding the conflict of 1992-1995. These observations assist in making sense of how

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[11] Pernecky and Jamal. "(Hermeneutic) Phenomenology in Tourism Studies": 1055-1075.

transnational interpersonal exchange, as evidenced by the information sharing present within the tours can act as a transformative force for participants and producers alike, transforming international relations from the macro- to the micro-level.

Chapter One – Tourism and International Relations: A Theoretical Framework

As this study moves across disciplines, there is no specific discipline which takes a lead role in directing the research or witting of this thesis. As such, both a review of the literature and the design of the project itself uses a multiplicity of adjacent fields to create an apparatus suitable for investigating how tourism and more specifically the tours themselves, can be used to assess how international relations play out on the micro-level through looking at how interpersonal relationships can be used to increase transcultural understanding.

1.1 Academic Discourse

Situated at an interdisciplinary crossroad this study will incorporate a myriad of disciplines to assist in making sense of the tours, their delivery and their impact. Whilst most closely related to the emerging field of international political sociology this project goes beyond the scope of sociology itself to situate the tours and the practices found within them. An obvious starting point is the literature surrounding the phenomenon of 'dark tourism,'[12] elsewhere referred to as thanatourism[13] which investigates how sites, primarily associated with death, become tourist 'attractions.'[14] The discipline has expanded, growing in complexity to the point where we categorise beyond dark tourism to 'darker tourism.'[15] Such a distinction is drawn between memorial sites and locations at which the referent atrocity actually occurred, which supposedly bestows upon the site a 'locational

[12] John J. Lennon and Malcolm Foley. "Interpretation of the Unimaginable: The US Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C., and "Dark Tourism"" *Journal of Travel Research* 38 (1999): 46-50.

[13] Avital Biran, Yaniv Poria and Gila Oren. "Sought Experiences at (Dark) Heritage Sites" *Annals of Tourism Research* 38(3) (2011): 820-841.

[14] Philip Stone and Richard Sharpley "Consuming Dark Tourism: A Thantological Perspective" *Annals of Tourism Research* 35(2) (2008): 574-595.

[15] William F. S Miles. "Auschwitz: Museum Interpretation and Darker Tourism" *Annals of Tourism Research* 29(4) (2002): 1176.

authenticity that its counterpoint [dark tourism] does not.'[16] The subjects of my investigation are these 'darker tourism' locations as tours and tour guides incorporate the visible landscape to assist in the telling of their stories, enriching their narratives with this 'locational authenticity'.[17] Such studies surrounding the production of dark tourist activities and sites will assist in situating the tours and demonstrate the applicability of the moniker to them. From there, an investigation regarding more general touristic practices, particularly in regards to tour delivery and reception is required to examine the phenomenological implications of both practice and studies thereof.

Whilst useful to the study of the tours themselves, tourism literature also assists in grounding this investigation within the field of International Relations. Works such as Debbie Lisle's *Holidays in the Danger Zone* demonstrate how practices of tourism have become entangled with both the practice and study of International Relations as tourism's international bent, and particularly the morbid focus of those interested in 'war tours,' cannot be separated from investigations of international reactions and responses to conflict. [18] Often studies related to tourism shift focus from macro-level, top down approaches to international relations towards an investigation of the micro-level, looking at how interpersonal connections formed over the course of touristic practices can function to either refute or support grand theories on a human level.[19] Tourism helps to make sense of how transnational interpersonal exchange, as evidenced through the information sharing present within the tours, can act as a transformative force for both participants and producers, thus transforming international relations from the macro- to the micro-level.

Whilst not related to tourism studies, Lee Ann Fujii's work *Killing Neighbours – Webs of Violence in Rwanda* is an explicitly micro-led investigation into ethnic conflict theories which refutes ideas that

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[16] ibid.
[17] ibid.
[18] Debbie Lisle. Holidays in the Danger Zone. (Saint Paul, Minnesota University Press, 2016)
[19] Hollinshead. "Tourism, Hybridity, and Ambiguity": 1-31.

in times of conflict, individual subjectivity is superseded by catch-all identities such as ethnicity.[20] Investigations such as this demonstrate the applicability of micro-level studies towards theories of international relations and in particular, outsider perceptions of the Bosnian conflict, rejecting grand narratives in favour of investigations of personal relationships in order to gain a clearer picture of in-nation attitudes. By investigating how Bosnian guides insert their personal subjectivity into narratives which are used for commercial, didactic purposes, this investigation will look to how interpreters of the conflict, shape international knowledge and perception. These investigations of guide behaviour and narrative will be framed within two different categories; the use of meta-data, that is information outside of the oral narrative itself used to shape participant understanding; and the use of the narrative itself, what is being said and the ways in which it is being said, as formative to participant experience and perception.

From its beginnings and the focus upon sites of organised mass death such as Auschwitz[21] or the torture chambers of the former Cambodian regime,[22] the field of dark tourism has reached further out. From the ethical implications for participants,[23] providers[24] and researchers[25] alike, to the competition and tension of narratives[26] and the potential impacts of commercialisation of death as both positive and negative.[27] Mostly however, the common theme one finds in academic works related to dark tourism is that of its subjectivity, the place of the individual within reactions to the

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[20] Lee Ann Fujii. *Killing Neighbours: Webs of Violence in Rwanda*. (London, Cornell University Press, 2009)

[21] Jenny Edkins. "Authenticity and Memory at Dachau" *Cultural Values* 5(4) (2001): 405-420.

[22] Joan C. Henderson. "War as a Tourist Attraction: The Case of Vietnam" *International Journal of Tourism Research* 2 (2000): 269-280.

[23] Debbie Lisle. "Gazing at Ground Zero: Tourism, Voyeurism and Spectacle" *Journal for Cultural Research* 8(1) (2004): 3-21; Johnathan Skinner. "Introduction" In *Writing the Dark Side of Travel* Johnathan Skinner (ed.) (Oxford, Berghahn Books, 2012): 1-29.

[24] Nathan K. Austin. "Managing Heritage Attractions: Marketing Challenges at Sensitive Historical Sites" *International Journal of Tourism Research* 4 (2002): 447-457.

[25] Manfred Rolfes. "Poverty tourism: theoretical reflections and empirical findings regarding and extraordinary form of tourism" *GeoJournal* 75(5) (2010): 421-442.

[26] Keith Hollinshead. "Tourism as Public Culture: Horne's Ideological Commentary on the Legerdemain of Tourism" *International Journal of Tourism Research* 1 (1999): 267-292.

[27] Emile Aussems. "Cross-community Tourism in Bosnia and Herzegovina: a Path to Reconciliation?," *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 14(3) (2016): 240-254.

phenomenon and the inability to speak as one human voice regarding this 'morbid' practice.[28] Such an idea is key in relation to my methodological framework, based around hermeneutic phenomenology as every experience is to be regarded as equally valuable and of equal interest of study. Therefore, whilst the piece hopes to create a clarify an overview of practices within Bosnian 'war tours' it makes no claims to speak for them all.

As previously mentioned, dark tourism and its study falls into the larger category of tourism studies, a subset of sociology. The discipline incorporates elements of geography, psychology and economics to gain a sense of what makes tourists, tourism and its providers tick. More precisely, I looked to discussions around the implications of commodifying[29] cultural practice,[30] tradition[31] and personal memories.[32] Such investigations look to the ethical dilemmas associated with creating a system in which one pays for, or asks for payment to learn of someone's personal history, where war becomes an advertisement and a leisure activity.[33] A focus rests on whether processes of commercialisation detracts from the subject matter to the point at which the product no longer resembles that which is claims to represent.[34] In keeping with this theme of commodification I also looked to debates surrounding the education/authenticity-entertainment paradigm and practices of 'edutainment.' Such debates centre on whether one should decrease levels of 'authenticity' at a site for the purposes of giving a greater general picture, making the site itself more accessible to a greater number of people.[35] They also incorporate more extreme claims of covering up and shielding certain narratives[36] if they are not deemed appropriate by higher powers,

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28 Thomas Blom "Morbid Tourism – a postmodern market niche with an example from Althorp" *Norwegian Journal of Geography* 54 (2000): 29-36.

29 Noel B. Salazar. "Imaged or Imagined? Cultural Representations and the "Tourismification" of Peoples and Places" *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines* 49(193/4) (2009): 49-71.

30 Adam R. Kaul. "The Limits of Commodification in Traditional Irish Music Sessions" *The Journal of Royal Anthropological Institute* 13(3) (2007): 703-719.

31 Hilary du Cros and Bob McKercher. *Cultural Tourism: Second Edition* (London, Routledge, 2015)

32 Alneng. "What the Fuck is a Vietnam?": 461-489.

33 Erika M. Robb. "Violence and Recreation: vacationing in the Realm of Dark Tourism" *Anthropology and Humanism* 34(1): 51-60; Rolfes. "Poverty tourism": 421-442.

34 Bianca Freire-Medeiros. "The favela and its touristic transits" *Geoforum* 40 (2009): 580-588.

35 Lisle. "Gazing at Ground Zero": 3-21.

36 Anthony Charlesworth. "Contesting places of memory: the case of Auschwitz" *Environment and Planning* 12 (1994): 579-593.

be this the government,[37] or site interpreters themselves.[38] It is this potential omission and narrative subjectivity/competition[39] of historical sites which was of particular interest to me as, for the most part, my subject-participants were reliant upon the voice of a single interpreter, that of the tour guide, to provide the narrative for them.[40]

As previously stated, the intersection between geography and memory is of great importance to the tour narratives and such study is crystallised in investigations of memorialisation. Memorialisation, whilst dealing with physical and tangible depictions of memory[41] bears salience to this study as it investigates how certain places are imbued with historical significance and whether this is a natural[42] or artificial process.[43] Natural memorialisation is commonly regarded as low impact/invisible memorialisation, where sights are not obviously marked out as places of memory, but are regarded as such by those in the know.[44] Artificial sites, in contrast, contain a tangible element in the form of a physical memorial are accessible to those outside of the knowledge in-group.[45] Studies of both natural and artificial memorialisation sites deal with the (potential) need for interpretation at these sites[46] and the ways in which the same location can be used to different ends depending on viewpoint, be it personal[47] or institutional.[48] Emphasis is placed upon the various ways in which events are memorialised and how this affects both their

[37] Lauren A. Rivera. "Managing "Spoiled" National Identity: War, Tourism and Memory in Croatia" *American Sociological Review* 73(4) (2008): 613-634.
[38] Carolyn Strange, and Michael Kempa. "Shades of Dark Tourism: Alcatraz and Robben Island" *Annals of Tourism Research* 30(2) (2003): 386-405.
[39] Rivera. "Managing "Spoiled" National Identity": 613-634.
[40] Walter W. Menninger. "Memory and History: What Can You Believe?" *Archival Issues* 21(2) (1996): 97-106.
[41] Moaz Azaryahu and Aharon Kellerman. "Symbolic Places of National History and Revival: A Study in Zionist Mythical Geography" *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 24(1) (1999): 109-123.
[42] Owen J. Dwyer. "Symbolic accretion and commemoration" *Social and Cultural Geography* 5(3) (2004): 419-435.
[43] Moaz Azaryahu. "RePlacing Memory: the reorientation of Buchenwald" *cultural geographies* 10 (2003):1-20.
[44] James A. Tyner, et al. "Memory and the everyday landscape of violence in post-genocide Cambodia" *Social and Cultural Geography* 13(8) (2012): 853-871.
[45] Owen T. Dwyer and Derek H. Alderman "Memorial landscapes: analytic questions and metaphors" *GeoJournal* 73(3) (2008): 165-178.
[46] Aussems. "Cross-community Tourism in Bosnia and Herzegovina": 240-254.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Dwyer and Alderman "Memorial landscapes": 165-178.

interpretation[49] and reception[50] by producers and audiences,[51] showing the importance of personal subjectivity within the context of memorialisation and likewise, within the tour narratives[52] as interpretation of the site cannot be separated from the site itself.[53]

1.2 Methodology

Initial methodological inspiration was drawn from practices of oral history associated with the recordings of personal narratives and testimonies to form part of a wider narrative of a historical event.[54] Oral history, once discredited, has undergone a change in perception as sections of academia shift towards focussing upon the individual and the importance of personal discourses[55] within academic 'grand narratives,' an approach of particular attraction to me as I assess how personal narratives and experiences of war are interwoven into larger discourses. Whilst useful for directing my research, the practice is subsumed by discourses related to hermeneutic phenomenology, which, as I shall explain, offer greater scope for incorporation of interdisciplinary methodological practices in keeping with the subject of this paper.

In its investigation of the experiential as unique, hermeneutic phenomenology provides an excellent basis from which to study the tours. It is responsive to questions of how and why participants react to certain experiences as individuals rather than seeking to generalise to the point at which the individual is removed from processes of investigation. As Pernecky and Jamal argue, hermeneutic phenomenology is not about producing an account of what we see but rather about

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[49] Steve Hill and Ted T. Cable. "The Concept of Authenticity: Implications for Interpretation" *Journal of Interpretation Research* 11(1) (2006): 55-66.

[50] Christina Schwenkel. "Recombinant History: Transnational Practices of Memory and Knowledge Production in Contemporary Vietnam" *Cultural Anthropology* 21(1) (2006): 3-30.

[51] Dwyer and Alderman "Memorial landscapes": 165-178.

[52] Doug Knapp. "The Development of Semantic Memories Through Interpretation" *Journal of Interpretation* 11(2) (2006): 21-38.

[53] Austin. "Managing Heritage Attractions": 452.

[54] Valerie Yow. *Recording Oral History* (Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 2005)

[55] John Bodnar. "Power and Memory in Oral History: Workers and Managers at Studebaker" *The Journal of American History* 75(4) (1989): 1201-1221.

shifting focus to how we see objects and their meanings.[56] Such a framework allows for greater contextualisation of these tours within multiple settings and is key to explaining my research puzzle which seeks to investigate how tourism can be used to investigate international relations at the micro-level through the investigation of interpersonal relationships.

Although traditionally used to investigate narrative and text, hermeneutics for this thesis, has application outside of the strictly verbal sense, investigating not only what is being said and how it is being said, but how it is contextualised and situated. In doing so, this thesis will investigate not only the oral data produced by the narratives but the meta-data behind it, that is the locations and objects used to contextualise and situate the narrative itself. Although no textual analysis is absolute or all-encompassing, evaluation of aspects outside of dialogue, in this case, the space in which the story is told as well as props and objects used, are key to understanding how a narrative is crafted in a larger space and context than that of the purely oral element.[57] As Azaryahu argues, within Western tradition, place is seen as central to authenticity as it provides a 'tangible link to the past.'[58] In ignoring such a process of cultural socialisation, any investigation into narratives surrounding the conflict would omit a large chunk of what makes such narratives so appealing to backpackers. Not only do the tours supposedly tell a *real* story of *real* people, but they tell it in the place it *really happened*. Such *in situ* narrations are reflective of Bakhtin's theory of the chronotope and the ability of narratives to transcend time and space with physical elements, such as place and objects, providing the tools for doing so.

The backpacker as a unit of analysis represents an important frame within the formation of both the thesis and the research itself. A self-selecting and often, self-identifying group, the backpacker

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[56] Pernecky and Jamal. "(Hermeneutic) Phenomenology": 1056.
[57] Knapp. "The Development of Semantic Memories": 24.
[58] Moaz Azaryahu and Kenneth E. Foote. "Historical spaces as narrative medium: on the configuration of spatial narratives of time at historical sites" *GeoJournal* 73(3) (2008): 179.

is simultaneously regarded as both outside of and a constituent part of mass tourism.[59] This outsiderness is found to be self-identifying as backpackers reject the moniker of 'tourist' because of its supposed superficiality.[60] Mass tourism, the argument goes, does not build the connections to cultures and peoples that backpackers seek out, instead allowing only for interaction at a 'front of house,' depthless level.[61] The literature surrounding backpacking instead argues that they, as a sub-unit of tourism, seek out a deeper understanding of both the places and the people they meet and that in seeking out these deeper understandings they are more receptive to the interpersonal connections that are to be investigated.[62]

1.3 Data Collection

In staying and spending time with 'backpackers' the research design of this thesis was shaped, looking at what backpackers talked about both in relation to their general experiences, why they had taken the tours, and what they had taken from them. In staying in the hostels, taking part in the tours, and exploring the area alongside backpackers, and whilst explicit in my position as a researcher, because I was as interested in the tours and the cities as my subjects, I interacted not as apart from, but as one of them. As a result of my situation as part of the backpacker generation and experience, I was placed in a position from which to investigate how this subjectivity, both experiential and observational could be used in order to gain a sense of how tourism assisted in the formation of intercultural understanding.

Field research, conducted over a ten-day period in April 2017, took three separate, though interlinked forms; that of informal initial meetings with participants, discussing what they were

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[59] Chaim Noy. "This Trip Really Changed Me: Backpackers' Narratives of Self-Change" *Annals of Tourism Research* 31(1) (2004): 79.
[60] Tim Edensor. "Performing tourism, staging tourism" *Tourist Studies* 1(1) (2001): 74.
[61] John Urry. *The Tourist Gaze* (London, Sage Publications, 1990)
[62] Noy. "This Trip Really Changed Me": 93.

doing in Bosnia and why they had chosen to come here, participating in tours alongside them and finally, conducting informal interviews after the tours' conclusions, looking at what participants felt they had gained from them and what aspects and elements of the tour had left the greatest effect upon them.

Research was conducted across four hostels in Bosnia, three in Sarajevo and one in Mostar. All hostels advertised and ran 'war tours,' promising to teach participants about the 1992-5 conflict, often highlighting that the guide themselves had personal experience of said conflict. Two of the tours in Sarajevo were short, half day walking tours of the city which discussed the effects of the conflict on the city but also stressed its historical nature. Whilst conceding that the effects of the war were still being felt, the main concluding message was always to look to Bosnia's future, rather than its past. The other Sarajevo tour took participants to the various front lines of sieging and besieged forces, showing participants the differences between them and how easily evidence of the conflict could still be found today. Marketed as the 'original front line tour' the guide made sure to tell participants that such a tour was unique in the access it granted them to the real encampments of the conflict and that no other tour offered as much authenticity as this did. The final tour, conducted in Mostar and its environs, stressed that its purpose was to show participants as much of the real Bosnia as possible, that they would be told a lot about the war but that it would not be the entirety of the tours focus as there was far more to Bosnia than that of a conflict narrative.

Chapter Two – Bosnia and The Tours

Although over twenty years have passed since the end of the conflict for many, the memories are still fresh. New information about events, actions and results of the war are revealed year on year, and so to remark that the war is truly over is not as definitive a statement as would first appear.[63] As such, the narratives surrounding the conflict are being constantly remodelled and reshaped to adapt to new developments. It is likewise important to here note that there is no singular narrative of the conflict but instead a multitude of competing, convergent and contradictory narratives[64] as individuals weave their own experiences into a network of memories. Whilst some narratives may have more 'truth' than others, none are without value[65] as each contributes to forming the complex interweaving of personal memory that results in the creation of a collective, semantic memory.[66] Which in turn crystallises into a narrative some will come to regard as 'history.'[67] This is not, however, to claim that history is in and of itself a definitive account of 'what really happened,' it can be as subjective as memory itself.[68] The practice of history formation however, has often been ascribed with the notion of 'truth finding' and so, socially a historical narrative is granted greater respect than that of the personal memory.[69]

Bosnia currently lacks this *definitive* historical narrative for a number of reasons, not least the Dayton based governing system, which has formalised differentiation within the state,[70] allowing

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[63] Cornelia Sorabji. "Managing memories in post-war Sarajevo: individuals, bad memories, and new wars" *Journal Royal Anthropology Institute* 12 (2006): 1.

[64] Lovrenovic's piece succinctly explains how, from an institutional level, such narratives can coexist simultaneously Lovrenovic. "Bosnia and Herzegovina as the Stage of Three Parallel and Conflicted Memories": 484.

[65] Sarah Gensburger. "Halbwachs' studies in collective memory: A founding text for contemporary 'memory studies'?" *Journal of Classical Sociology* 16(4) (2016): 402.

[66] Nigel C. Hunt *Memory, War and Trauma.* (Cambridge. Cambridge University Press, 2010): 105.

[67] Azaryahu. "RePlacing Memory":1-20.

[68] Francesca Cappelletto. "Long-Term Memory of Extreme Events: From Autobiography to History" *J. Roy Anthropology Institute* 9 (2003): 241-260.

[69] Kevin Birth. "The Immanent Past: Culture and Psyche at the Juncture of Memory and History" *Ethos* 34(2) (2006): 169-191.

[70] Chaim Kaufmann. "Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Wars" *International Security* 20(4) (1996): 136-175.

for the mutual, institutional co-existence of competing narratives.[71] It is elsewhere argued that there is a cyclical process in history formation and memorial awareness, as a result, the Bosnian conflict is on the cusp of Pennebaker and Gonzales' 20-30-year cycle to enter into public consciousness.[72] For these reasons among many others, there is a lack of clarity and a dearth in public, international knowledge of what happened in the conflict beyond the standardised war-death-destruction narrative used to summarise conflict to an international audience.[73] Not only do participants in the tours lack knowledge of the conflict, the majority also confessed to lacking any knowledge of Bosnia or Bosnians themselves. Without historical grounding, narratives shaped by tour guides within their tour have the potential to become formative, not only to perceptions of the conflict but sof the country as a whole.[74] These interactions with 'natives' thus stimulate a dialogue of internationally based awareness as participants come to learn something of a previously unknown nation.[75] The tours create relationships, no matter how fleeting, which have a lasting and permanent effect, contributing to bringing about cultural awareness to a previously uninformed audience.[76] This is not to argue however, that this growing awareness is one-sided, all guides stated, either within their tours or in semi-formalised discussions prior to the tours as to how talking with backpackers had increased their understanding of 'other cultures', with one saying of the participants, 'you bring the world to me.'

With their power to craft international-interpersonal relationships in the opinions of the backpacker subject participant, the tours and the information presented within them has the

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[71] Lovrenovic. "Bosnia and Herzegovina": 484.

[72] James W. Pennebaker and Amy L. Gonzales. "Making History: Social and Psychological Processes Underlying Collective Memory" in Boyer, Pascal and James V. Wertsch. (eds.) *Memory in Mind and Culture* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009): 185.

[73] Abdel Karim Samara. "The Media's Depiction of War and Media Wars" *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics & Culture*" 10(2) (2003): 33-38.

[74] Singular touristic experiences have the power to stand in for the whole nation as tourism is the primary tool for outsiders to access and come to know a nation.
Hollinshead. "Tourism as Public Culture": 271.

[75] Erik Cohen. "Authenticity and Commoditisation in Tourism" *Annals of Tourism Research* 15 (1988): 377.

[76] Judith Adler. "Travel as Performed Art" *American Journal of Sociology* 94(6) (1989): 1370.

potential to bring about shared global cultural awareness[77] by creating a dialogue, no matter how structured or formalised between participants in order to blur the 'self-other' divide.[78] As Cohen highlights, 'tourism typically involves some encounter with the "Other"' but the meaningfulness of this interaction is dependent on the receptivity of both host and participant, with some participants garnering more from their experiences than others.[79] The backpacker as a tourist type,[80] is generally perceived within tourism literature to be that receptive participant, ready and eager to interact with 'natives' in order to really 'understand.'[81]

Some argue that this 'understanding' is actually rooted in a more selfish aim of self-realisation[82] as opposed to cultural receptivity, as evidenced by tourists' discussions of how their experiences have changed them[83] but I seek to counter such a narrative. I do not refute that the experiences garnered on the tours has the potential to change,[84] but endeavour to add a greater level of depth to the argument. Tourists, much like researchers within the frames of auto-ethnography,[85] are affected and altered by their experiences, but like the researcher, this does not lead to disassociation from the Other in order to focus upon the self, but instead, a greater level of understanding between the two.[86] I would argue, as Wintersteiner and Wohlmuther do, that touristic activities are a site in which to negotiate and contextualise the self within a wider global context,[87] not as a selfish action, but as part of increased awareness, as the status of the Other is given shape, passing from the unknown to the known.

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[77] Though idealistic in nature, this search for cultural understanding was cited by backpackers as something they were looking for, unclear in its precise nature, they attributed many of the decisions they made to the desire to understand more about the cultures of the world.
[78] Edensor. "Performing tourism": 59-81.
[79] Cohen. "Authenticity and Commoditisation in Tourism": 377.
[80] Edensor. "Performing tourism": 60.
[81] Darya Maoz. "Backpackers' Motivations: The Role of Culture and Nationality" *Annals of Tourism Research* 34(1) (2007): 122-140.
[82] Philip Stone. "Dark Tourism and Significant Other Death" *Annals of Tourism Research* 39(3) (2012): 1565-1587.
[83] Noy. "This Trip Really Changed Me": 79.
[84] Adler. "Travel as Performed Art": 1366-1391.
[85] Ibid.
[86]Edensor. "Performing tourism": 76.
[87] Werner Wintersteiner and Cordula Wohlmuther. "Peace Sensitive Tourism: How Tourism Can Contribute to Peace" in Wohlmuther, Cordula and Werner Wintersteiner. (eds.) *International Handbook on Tourism and Peace* (Klagenfurt: Drava 2014): 31 – 61.

Such a process of Other reconstitution is undergone through the formation of a shared memory link. Although the physical experience, or a complete knowledge of the personal experience of another cannot be transferred, in recounting a narrative of memory, one creates a link between teller and listener.[88] The result of such a link is the establishment of a shared and connective memory bond, an 'intersubjective memory system' as both share in the experience, not of the event itself, but the narrative of it.[89] The formation of this 'intersubjective memory system' is reliant upon the transfer of personal episodic memory into a semantic consciousness. Building from Cappelletto's definition, the term 'episodic memory' is used to denote unique and personal memories, and how these episodes have been internalised by each individual.[90] Whereas 'semantic memory' refers to the process whereby episodic memories are combined and shared in the creation of a more generalised and thus, relatable memory whereby what is stressed is not personal experience, but a general knowledge of events.[91]

In contrast, the phrase 'collective memory,' whilst disputed in terms of fixed definition within the field, will be used with greater precision to denote only those cases to which it applies, that of the internalisation, by fellow event experiencers/community members of the narratives of others to the point at which personal narrative and community narrative of an event becomes indistinguishable.[92] Although constantly changing, and relationally based, such narratives hold power as a result of their collective nature, shaped by repetition and rearticulation.[93] In the case of the Bosnian conflict, as with other traumatic events,[94] this often entails the conflation of the stories

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[88] Michalinos Zembylas and Zvi Bekerman. "Education and the Dangerous Memories of Historical Trauma: Narratives of Pain, Narratives of Hope" *Curriculum Inquiry* 38(2) (2008): 132.

[89] Aleida Assmann. "Transformations between History and Memory" *Social Research* 75(1) (2008): 50.

[90] Cappelletto. "Long-Term Memory of Extreme Events": 242.

[91] In the course of this thesis, and unless specified, the term semantic memory will be used interchangeably with shared memory. Ibid.

[92] Maurice Halbwachs. "Individual Psychology and Collective Psychology" *American Sociological Review* 3(5) (1938): 622.

[93] Gensburger. "Halbwachs' studies in collective memory": 396-413.

[94] Sarah De Nardi. "Who were the enemies? The spatial practices of belonging and exclusion in Second World War Italy,' in *Memory, Place and Identity*, edited by Danielle Drozdzewski et al. (New York: Routledge, 2016): 107.

of close friends and family members with one's own personal narrative to the point at which the difference is imperceptible and such a practice is common within the narratives of the guides who use the experiences of family and friends to enrich their narratives beyond singular experience.

Whilst the subject of the tours offered is, in and of itself extreme - that of memories of conflict - its relatability is not diminished because of this. There are multiple studies within dark tourism addressing the relatability of these dark narratives and how they can be accommodated to those situated outside of the experience.[95] Such issues regarding relatability are particularly prominent within discussions of how to memorialise and interpret Holocaust sites such as Birkenau[96] and Auschwitz.[97] Discussions often revolve around the tension created by how and to who memorialisation efforts are targeted as space is divided between education and remembrance.[98]

Site interpreters are required to navigate these difficulties in order to create narratives that are satisfactory to both those who did and those who did not experience the site events,[99] meaning that sites often contain, at the very least, a duality of purpose to make them accessible on multiple levels.[100] As studies of the Dachau visitor book demonstrate, this duality does not detract from the ability of visitors to experience and appreciate the site and many write of the profound affect their visit has had on them.[101] Just because a site is 'dark' or has multiple interpretations, it does not prevent it from being made accessible to those outside of its experience when sufficient thought is given to its interpretation.[102] Where Holocaust sites differ from the locations visited by the tours

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[95] Stone and Sharpley "Consuming Dark Tourism": 574-595; Aussems. "Cross-community Tourism": 241.
[96] Philip Stone. "A Dark Tourism Spectrum: Towards a Typology of Death and Macabre Related Tourist Sites, Attractions and Exhibitions" *Tourism* 54(2) (2006): 145-160.
[97] Miles. "Auschwitz: Museum Interpretation and Darker Tourism": 1175-1178.
[98] Edkins. "Authenticity and Memory at Dachau": 405
[99] Austin. "Managing Heritage Attractions": 448.
[100] John Beech. "The enigma of holocaust sites as tourist attractions – the case of Buchenwald" *Managing Leisure* 5 (2000): 40.
[101] Edkins. "Authenticity and Memory at Dachau": 411-3.
[102] Craig A. Wight. "Philosophical and methodological praxes in dark tourism: Controversy, contention and the evolving paradigm" *Journal of Vacation Marketing* 12(2) (2005): 128.

however, is in their formalised dedication as spaces of remembrance, the question is, whether such paradigms can be applied to whole cityscapes or even countries, as is the case within BiH.[103]

I argue that although not as institutionalised in their status as sites of remembrance, through interpretation by guides, the city- and landscapes of Bosnia are imbued with the significance found at locations such as Auschwitz and Birkenau as places of suffering and darkness to be related to the audience. Tour locations are bestowed with meaning by the guides, becoming 'stages of memory' and are thus given significance through narrative.[104] Taking for example, the case of Vrbanja Bridge in Sarajevo, the bridge itself is unassuming, a standardised concrete and tarmac structure but is enriched through the narrative bestowed upon it by the guide.[105] Better known as the Romeo and Juliet Bridge, Vrbanja is the site at which Sarajevo's 'Romeo and Juliet,' a mixed ethnicity couple, Bosko and Admira, died after being shot trying to make their way out of the besieged city to the US where they would be free. Bosko, a Serb, was made aware of a ceasefire to be held on the 18th of May which would allow them to cross the bridge safely and exit the city. Knowledge of this 'ceasefire' however, had not been shared amongst all the besiegers and the couple died crossing the bridge, their bodies only collected 8 days later as the two sides argued over responsibility for the pair.

What the guide emphasised within his narrative however, was not the experience of war, nor the supposed 'rarity' of their inter-ethnic union,[106] but rather, the love the two shared. Time and again, what was repeated was information about the love between the two, how they died as a result of this love, and would do anything because of it. A point was also made for participants to disregard

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[103] Susan Forde. "The bridge on the Neretva: Stari Most as a stage of memory in post-conflict Mostar, Bosnia-Herzegovina" *Cooperation and Conflict* 5(4) (2016): 468.
[104] ibid.
[105] Lia Dong Shimada. "Heralding Jericho: narratives of remembrance, reclamation and Republican identity in Belfast, Northern Ireland,' in *Memory, Place and Identity* Danielle Drozdzewski et al. (eds.) (New York: Routledge, 2016): 131.
[106] The refutation of 'ethnic' divisions within Bosnia was likewise a common theme as guides rejected the standardised ethnic conflict paradigm, arguing that it was not ethnicities, but political manoeuvring which eventually resulted in the conflict.

the ethnic labels, a label which, as on all other tours, was rejected by the guide, both as a categorisation of peoples and motive for the conflict. In emphasising their love, rather than death or supposed ethnic division, the guide sought to universalise and familiarise the narrative, asking the audience to think of loved ones and our relationships rather than the war itself. Such practise is reflective of the postmodern desire, supposedly present within this form of tourism, to introduce a level of familiarity which allows the participant to be there not just 'physically but also psychologically there'.[107]

The narrative also served to dispute ideas of 'ethnic conflict' as an explanation for the violence within Bosnia.[108] Theories of ethnic conflict stipulate that combatants and their reasons for fighting are drawn upon ethnic lines and divisions and that ethnic tensions are a primary motivating factor for conflict.[109] What this guide, as all others did within their narratives, was dispute such a theory. The story of Bosko and Admira was just one example of the many 'inter-ethnic' marriages that had occurred and continue to occur across Bosnia. Any idea that Bosnians could and should be divided along ethnic lines was repeatedly dismissed by all guides with many stating that although they did have an ethnic identity, be it Bosniak or Croat, that this was not how they identified, that such a categorisation was too narrow and too divisive. Instead they recommended participants not seek out someone's ethnic origins as the labels served only to obscure the individual behind them. Whilst oblique in its refutation of othering and ethnic identities, such a practise is more widely emblematic of practices found across the tour as guides and participants worked together to break down self-other divides by instead finding common ground and understanding. What was shown to be of importance both by guides and their narratives, was not the ethnic identity but the people themselves.

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[107] Muzaini, Teo and Yeoh. "Imitations of Postmodernity in Dark Tourism": 31.
[108] Petr Cermak. "Reintegration of Local Communities Divided by Ethnic Conflict: Ethnically Mixed Municipalities in the Western Balkans" *Croatian Political Science Review* 53(4) (2016): 191-229.
[109] Fredrick Barth. *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organisation of Culture Difference*. (Bergen, Universitetsforlaget, 1969): 9-38.

In such a way, locations, even if not directly obvious as sites of conflict, are imbued with both significance and familiarity. Location is used to contextualise a narrative, to make it both tangible and applicable to the audience in order to add a sense of reality to their understanding, something which is further enforced by where emphasis is placed within a narrative. In the following chapters these practices of use of meta-data and narrative construction shall be further explored in order to gain a sense of exactly how both guides and participants use the tours to situate themselves as part of a global world, bringing the local to the international in order to situate a personal or even national collective consciousness as part of a wider global shared memory.

Chapter Three – Meta-Data

Any investigation into the narrative of the tours would be incomplete without investigations of its meta-data. As De Nardi argues, narrative cannot be separated from the location and setting in which it is told thus any investigations of narrative are heavily reliant upon their contextualisation.[110] In looking at the meta-data one is able to gain deeper insight into how and why certain stories are told, looking to factors beyond the words to enrich the narrative. Meta-data is used to form connection between participants and the guide as well as to contextualise what is being said in order to increase clarity and intercultural understanding as knowledge enrichment contributes to a process of de-othering. Whilst location is important in this narrative enrichment, so too are props and other devices. Objects, as will be discussed, offer participants a level of tangibility which narrative alone cannot provide, helping to ground and affirm narrative so participants can form physical links between what is being said and what they are shown. Both object and place are key to contextualising narrative, assisting participants in understanding what it is that their guides are saying and how this relates to the world at large and it these connections which the following section shall now explore.

3.1 - Space

As Blom argues, space is key to the framing of narrative due to its potential symbolic value.[111] It possesses an isomorphic quality by which visitors come to regard the whole nation based on the snapshot they granted and as such, every use of place by a guide has great significance as a result of its potential to stand for the entire nation.[112] Place, even the public, has the potential to become

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[110] Nardi. "Who were the enemies": 107

[111] Blom. "Morbid Tourism": 32

[112] Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson. "Beyond "Culture": Space, Identity and the Politics of Difference" in Gupta, Akhil. And James Ferguson. *Culture, Power, Place* (Durham, Duke University Press, 1997): 34.

commodified within a narrative in order to give it significance and value to the participant.[113] When in spaces such as memorials or grand buildings the audience is already aware of a level of significance as a result of socialisation,[114] but this is not the case for all locations and some more reliant upon interpretation than others in order to garner significance.[115] In cases such as these, particularly for buildings that form part of a generalised cityscape, the role of interpreter is crucial.[116] By creating a spatial narrative, interpreters establish a level of dependency between themselves and participants, forming a connection. A connection which is given significance as a result of power hierarchies where the knowledge producer, in this case the interpreter, is granted status over the listener as a result of the information they possess.[117]

In this interpretive hierarchy, the line between other and self is blurred through the creation of a dependency link, establishing a connection between the two as participants come to regard their guide, not as the unknown other but instead a fleshed out individual.[118] To return to the idea of commodification, this link also forms part of a supply/demand connection in which, as a result of their status as guide, there is an expectance of knowledge in which the participant wishes to partake. It is important for the guide to have this knowledge if they are to solidify their position and meet the expectations of the participant. Without it, there would be a lack of respect for the hierarchy and a rejection of the connection based on this knowledge quest. The tours solidify an image of the nation within the minds of the participants with location being used as both frame and focus of this knowledge. Place, and its interpretation, is key to tour narratives, which, by

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[113] As tours take place in public spaces, there is nothing about the location itself which holds or possess monetary value, only in being visited as part of the tour do these sites gain commercial value, commodified by their inclusion.
Blom. "Morbid Tourism": 32

[114] Dwyer. "Symbolic accretion": 431; Azaryahu and Foote. "Historical spaces as narrative medium": 179

[115] Jennifer Iles. "Exploring Landscapes after Battle: Tourists at Home on the Old Front Lines" in *Writing the Dark Side of Travel* Johnathan Skinner (ed.) (Oxford, Berghahn Books, 2012): 183

[116] Azaryahu. "RePlacing Memory":2

[117] Alla A. Kornienko. Anatoly V. Kornienko, Olga B. Fofanov and Maxim B. Chubik "*The nature of knowledge power in communicative information societies*" Procedia 166 (2015): 595-600.

[118] Such understanding arises out of acts of narrating the self to others, creating understanding as the unknown is replaced, if not with the known, then at very least, the knowable.
Anne Tonnaer et al. "Performing cross-cultural understanding in Pacific Tourism" *La Ricerca Folklorica* 61 (2010): 3

extension, helps form connections between participant and guide, blurring the self-other divide by creating shared understanding through collective knowledge.[119]

The primary role of place within narrative, certainly with regard to narratives of conflict, is to create a sense of grounding for participants particularly when a narrative contains such unfamiliar experiences. In this way, place can combat unfamiliarity by adding a sense of the tangible to a narrative.[120] One can read or be told that the national library of Bosnia and Herzegovina was raised to the ground but such a piece of information remains abstract and de-contextualised, as one has no real sense of the physicality. When told this outside of the library however, as participants in one tour are, the guide allows the audience to visualise this destruction. The rebuilt library is striking but there is an element of newness to it, which, with the tour narrative, becomes clearer. The library does not look this good because it has been renovated, but completely rebuilt. The tour encircles the building to gain a sense of how large a space was destroyed before standing back to view it in its entirety. Such destruction, whilst still difficult to comprehend, garners a greater level of tangibility by being narrated *in situ*.[121] By using place to contextualise narrative, guides increase audience understanding by providing a 'stage of memory' which pushes personal memory towards understood experience.[122]

When at the library the guide recalls a story of how he scavenged the rubble, looking for fragments of manuscripts, contextualising this memory. Such an event is shown to bear significance beyond the destruction of the library, as its ruin represents not just the destruction of a historic building,

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[119] This connectivity, as Wintersteiner and Wohlmuther explain is key to establishing intercultural confidence which, over the passage of touristic experience leads to the creation of intercultural communication and understanding. Wintersteiner and Wohlmuther. "Introduction": 13
[120] Danielle Drozdzewski et al. "The significance of memory in the present," in *Memory, Place and Identity*, edited by Danielle Drozdzewski et al. (New York: Routledge, 2016): 3
[121] Moaz "RePlacing Memory": 2
[122] Forde. "The bridge on the Neretva": 467-483.

but the attempted destruction of Bosnian history and culture.[123] The guide's story of searching for fragments becomes something greater, an attempt at saving the history of Bosnia itself. The memory of that search in turn becomes not personal, episodic memory, but instead a collective memory of all Bosnian's seeking to reclaim their heritage after its destruction by aggressive forces.[124] In telling the story *in situ* participants gain not only a greater understanding of the event itself, but of its significance for the memory and collective identity of the nation. They themselves may not be able to share in this collective memory, but, in listening to the narrative of the guide, they provide the platform for the creation of a shared memory in which they learn, not of an individual's experience, but of that of a whole nation's.

Place is also used within narratives to create 'authenticity,' which, as Rolfes and Schwenkel both argue, is a key requirement for backpackers to validate any experience they undergo.[125] In order for an experience to have validity, there must be at least a belief in authenticity, even if the environment is in some way artificial or unrealistic.[126] As long as guides enforce and tourists believe in, the authenticity of a location, it is imbued with greater significance.[127] Authenticity of place becomes a key factor in the believability of a narrative. If one sees shrapnel holes in a building, an easy task within Bosnia, one is more likely to believe in the war narrative as one is presented with supporting 'evidence.' As one guide narrated the story of his mother's journey to work and how she dodged artillery fire, he ushered participants along the route, pointing out shrapnel holes as evidence of the danger she faced. In this presentation of 'evidence' the narrative was invested with a level of authenticity and believability, particularly as participants walk the same path as his mother, encouraged to imagine what such an experience must have felt like. As Edkins argues, this

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[123] Libraries and other historic sites are argued to be the foundations of national identity and so their destruction is interpreted as an attack not on a building, but on identity itself.
Lovrenovic, Ivan. "The hatred of memory" *Washington Post* May 28 1994.
[124] Hariz Halilovich. "Reclaiming erased lives: archives, records and memories in post-war Bosnia and the Bosnian diaspora" *Archival Science* 14 (2014): 231-247.
[125] Rolfes. "Poverty tourism": 422; Schwenkel. "Recombinant History": 3-30.
[126] Wintersteiner and Wohlmuther. "Peace Sensitive Tourism": 36
[127] Noy. "This Trip Really Changed Me": 85

imbibes the site with greater power, transforming it from the geographic to the personal[128] and creating the 'fateful moment' Noy argues to be key to immortalising an experience in the minds of a backpacker.[129] Not only are participants hearing the story of one woman's life during the siege, they, like those who participate in tunnel tours in Cambodia, are 'living' it, as temporal barriers between past and present, experienced and narrated, fade.[130]

Perhaps the most extreme example of this quest for authenticity is found in the 'frontline tour.' Participants travel the course of 'real' siege lines, from relief line all the way to the front with narrative intensity increasing the closer participants get. The first three stops, whilst moving, are unremarkable, a concrete platform, an empty house, an embankment. The tour, in these locations, is more focused on narrative, informing participants in order to give them some contextual grounding for what they are soon to experience. At stop four, however, this pedagogic bent shifts towards the experiential as participants are ushered into the forest. The guide lifts up a branch, instructing participants to follow his every footstep as they walk on an unmarked path deeper into the forest.

Prior to this, there had been a brief stop as the guide directed attention towards a red sign emblazoned with a skull and cross bones stating 'DANGER – MINES.' This, participants were told, was one of thousands of active minefields, minefields that were still a source of danger to Bosnians across the country. This information was then brought into harsh reality for participants as they passed through the forest and the guide asked them to stop and gather round a pile of rocks, lifting off the cap stone to reveal a piece of heavy artillery. It was, the guide said, still live, just like so much hardware across the nation. The group was safe as he was careful and knew the path but, many Bosnians have not been so lucky. Although the interaction between participants

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128 Edkins. "Authenticity and Memory": 416.
129 Noy. "This Trip Really Changed Me": 75
130 Alneng. "What the Fuck is a Vietnam?": 474.

and the land mine was artificially established as part of a structured tour, there was no real depletion of experiential reality for participants as their fear, much like the fear of the guide himself, was real. Both guide and participant were united in a common feeling which transcended any need for experiential knowledge of what such a weapon could do in favour of a shared feeling of trepidation at its potential.[131] In this moment the danger of death by unexploded ordinance became a fact which participants were not simple aware of in the abstract sense, but physically conscious of as the potential experience of Bosnians was transported to the lived experience of participants.[132]

Authenticity is here, not simply important for believability, it has also been shown to contribute to the distribution of a narrative, particularly in cases of the shocking or the extreme.[133] The 'authentic' element to narrative and its setting makes it easier for participants to retell a story as they directly connect an account with a physical location.[134] To have been somewhere and say 'this is what really happened here' gives their retelling the same level of validity and impact as the guide's narrative had for them as they absorb this experience.[135] What the participant has undergone in being physically present and learning about what happened reflects a change undergone within their own personal self-history/memory. They become the interpreter of the location for others, basing their claims as legitimate interpreters upon the authenticity of the site as created by the guide. As Noy argues, because what participants go on to tell others is a 'real story,' which they themselves, in some small way, also experienced, they are more likely to spread and have their story 'believed' as it has a personal connection, no longer the experience of another person, but of the participant themselves.[136]

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[131] Arguably such a practice satisfies Stone and Sharpley's arguments that tourists participate in dark tourism to gain a greater sense of their own mortality, but here participants had no prior knowledge of what they would see so, such an argument, seems spurious. Perhaps an awareness of one's mortality may arise from tour experiences, but to say this is a motivating factor does not match with what participants themselves said.
[132] Cohen. "Authenticity and Commoditisation": 377
[133] Cappelletto. "Long-Term Memory of Extreme Events": 254.
[134] Dwyer and Alderman "Memorial landscapes": 166.
[135] Noy. "This Trip Really Changed Me": 82
[136] ibid.

In instilling a sense of the real within the participant the guide increase the chances of narrative spread among backpackers, thus increasing the potential participation in such tours. As a result of their 'cliquey' nature the experience of these tours becomes part of the standardised backpacker experience and if one has not participated, one is not part of the elite group.[137] Although this has the potential to lead to a homogenisation of narrative across the tours as a result of audience expectation,[138] at their current point, and because of the depth of unique personal experiences, backpackers still tend to seek out a multiplicity of tours. Participants discuss the uniqueness of personal memory and their interest in seeing 'how the war was different for everyone.' Rather than leading to a homogenisation of discourse, what makes the tours appealing, is there uniquely personal nature with the focus placed upon how the individual situates themselves within the wider historical context.

As well as its ability to authenticate a narrative, place can also be used as a dramatic device to increase its memorability; place is not always the focus of a narrative but rather the background to contextualise it.[139] Narrative impact and interest is key to ensure attention is maintained by the audience and often guides will use place in a sensationalist sense to enforce the point they are making. Such usage of place was particularly common within the full day tour of Mostar and its surroundings. Location was used to question the audience, their knowledge, and to promote interaction between them and the host. The guide made repeated use of misdirection in reference to places and buildings throughout the tour, both cementing his status within the knowledge hierarchy, but also introducing a level of humour and audience interaction.

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[137] Edensor. "Performing tourism": 74

[138] Such expectations are particularly common in areas of the world which are 'well broadcast' and that tourists already claim to have a knowledge of. This is also the case when they look for generalised experiences such as poverty or squalor. Where Bosnia differs is in the lack of prior knowledge held by participants and their deliberate search for unique knowledge over the generalised experience.
Rolfes. "Poverty tourism": 422

[139] Forde. "The bridge on the Neretva": 477

Pointing to one building with a prominent minaret the guide asked 'what is that building?' The question worked on two levels, initially functioning as a tension softener, the answer was obvious - a mosque - the guide was simply testing participants on their knowledge of Islamic culture, sussing them out. Instantly such a feeling of comfort was dispelled as the host laughed loudly, proclaiming the building to be a bank, a fact that became obvious as the bus drew closer. This incongruity and uncertainty, said to be 'typical of Bosnia' was to set the tone for the greater part of the day. Every question henceforth was treated with a level of scepticism which was encouraged by the guide, asking participants to question any and every narrative presented to them. In the creation of this investigative streak audience interaction was developed, both between participants and between the guide. Such a practice encouraged questions and created a dialogue and a level of comradery as opposed to a purely instructional excursion, thereby creating that much sought after 'real' experience and comprehension of the 'other.'[140]

Over the course of the Mostar tour, place was also used to build connections between host and participants as both revelled in the majesty of their surroundings. This shared appreciation was heavily referenced throughout the day; 'get ready for it… the most beautiful thing you have ever seen,' 'Bosnia is so annoyingly beautiful no?' 'the most beautiful sight and… it's in Bosnia.' Such statements were often posed as questions or required a level of agreement from participants who enthusiastically confirmed them, either orally or through action. Time spent in taking photos was never curtailed by the guide, who in many cases pointed out his favourite shot, telling participants to have their cameras ready at particular points throughout the day. Such guide led direction is indicative of the hidden artificiality present within tourism practices as participants are instructed by the guide as to how to form their narratives, either verbally or physically.[141] Whilst there is a

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[140] Tonnaer et al. "Performing cross-cultural understanding": 3
[141] Hollinshead. "Tourism as Public Culture": 300

shared appreciation of the scenery, in directing attention, the guide demonstrates a mastery over the narrative and the tension present between spontaneity, the participants often decided when to take a photograph, and the orchestrated nature of the tours, the guide would direct them to the best possible shot. Such actions demonstrate the tours to be mutually constituted with control lying in the hands of the individual and how they create their own tour narrative, though perhaps reliant on direction, no two tour experiences are exactly alike.

The practice of taking photos acted to affirm the guide's opinions as all revelled in their surroundings and shared in the performance of tourism,[142] taking photos as expected but without a diminishment of the enthusiasm in doing so.[143] Such a practice gained greater significance with the closing words of the tour and the explanation of the history of the peoples who now occupy the Bosnian territory. Today's citizens are said to be descended from the Bogomili, an ancient nomadic pagan tribe whose purest form of worship was that of revelling in the majesty of nature. All Bosnians, our host argued, were descended from these nature worshipper, none of today's ethnic or religious groups represented the genesis of Bosnia, it was, instead, those people who revelled in the majesty of nature, just as the participants had today. What united both Bosnians and the backpackers, was there shared love of nature and the beauty of the world. The backpackers, he argued, were the modern nomads, not dissimilar from Bosnians themselves as all had the same aims, to keep searching and revelling in the beauty of nature. Such a link functions to erase the self-other divide by creating a unifying characteristic, denying the possibility of difference as participants had been enacting this practice not only all day, but over the course of their travels. To deny this connection to nature and thus, this shared human experience would be tantamount to denial of the self.

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[142] Edensor. "Staging Tourism": 326

[143] Tonnaer et al. "Performing cross-cultural understanding": 4

Throughout the tours place is used to unify participant, guide, and Bosnians past and present. In being where things 'really happened' the participant becomes rooted to the situation, grounded in both their knowledge and their experience so that any information they receive is contextualised and made 'authentic' by their surroundings, introducing the episodic memories of others into the episodic memory of the self. The experiences of the Other are bestowed upon the self through a process of socialisation to the point at which it becomes a shared experience, thus breaking down the self/other division through the establishment of interpersonal relationships.

3.2 – Objects

Much like use of location, objects can be used to enrich and diversity the experiences undergone within the tours, as well as adding depth and tangibility to narrative. Objects, much like location, transport participants towards the experiential as narrated lives are given concrete shape.[144]

One of the most prominent applications of props was found in the usage of photographs as supplementary material to contextualise the scale of destruction. In one tour of Sarajevo the guide made heavy use of photographs to show participants exactly what impact shelling had had on a landscape which, in the twenty years prior to the conflict, had been largely reconstructed, erasing the majority of visible signs of conflict.[145] This was the case for the National Parliament and two multi-storey blocks situated across from it. In this location a single stop was used to illustrate multiple sites of destruction, indicative not only of the power, but also range of destruction to be found across the city.[146] Though the destruction of the two locations did not occur simultaneously, such a blurring of time periods assisted in the conveyance of maximum narrative information

[144] Edkins. "Authenticity and Memory": 405

[145] Conflicts, it has been argued, can become invisible once physical signs are removed. This phenomenon is observed in studies of Croatia, where, because of the lack physical evidence of conflict, the state tourist board has effectively removed recent conflict from the state authorised history of the nation.
Rivera "Managing "Spoiled" National Identity": 613-634.

[146] Azaryahu and Foote. "Historical spaces as narrative medium": 184.

without excessive devotion of time in explaining precise individualities between the two cases. In this case what matters is not precise details but rather, knowledge that the destruction *did* occur.

Although a plaque on Parliament thanks the government of Norway for funding the building's restoration, it is hard, or near impossible for participants to imagine what this must have entailed. Photos are shown of the structures ablaze and in various states of collapse with one participant remarking, 'looks like a demolition time lapse.' Without the photographs the audience would still know what it is they had been told, but would lack the context of what this actually meant. Photographs help to create an artificial location at which the tourist may 'gaze'[147] in order to widen their understanding by transcending temporal circumstances and introducing a visual past element into present experience. In showing the photographs, the guide is able to blur the boundary from personal experience towards a shared knowledge of events, transporting the destruction of parliament from the personal to the collective.[148]

This intersection of place and object as narrative support was to be found elsewhere across the tours through use of personal items to assist audiences in garnering a sense of what the conflict meant to the guides themselves. Although a commodification of memory and the personal, this does not diminish the value of the object itself as it is still representative, for the teller at least, of a personal memory, it is just one that is shared with a greater audience, increasing its transnational presence.[149] When standing outside the national post office, being told of how, during the 44-month siege the building was non-operational, the guide pulled out a Red Cross Letter to show how Bosnians managed to communicate. The Red Cross, he said, were the only postal system the Bosnian people had, the only way they could communicate with relatives outside of the city.

[147] Urry. *The Tourist Gaze*: 3-6.
[148] Assmann. "Transformations between History and Memory": 50
[149] Schwenkel. "Recombinant History": 21-2.

Sometimes these letters (singular A5 sheets of paper) could take days, sometimes weeks to reach their destination. Participants were asked to imagine this in light of their smartphones, 'Can you imagine' our guide asked 'not getting a reply for three weeks, knowing nothing for three weeks at a time when nowadays we don't go three minutes without texting someone.' In such a scenario the guide does not draw a direct link between the experiences of participants and that of Sarajevans during the siege, but instead asks participants to imagine what that would feel like to them when placed within a contemporary context.[150] As it is the feeling, rather than the experience itself which the guide wishes to convey, such a strategy is highly effective as it draws on known sensations to make sense of the unknown, creating a semantic memory in the minds of participants.[151]

Sometimes however, this ability to convert the unknown to the known does not appear possible for guides as the events and experiences are simply too shocking or too personal to relate but instead, can only be recounted.[152] So is the case when one guide recounts the story of how he, as a young boy, was almost shot by a sniper. According to his narrative he avoided death only because his father shielded him from the gunfire, being hit instead. His father survived and had the bullet removed, a bullet which, the guide claimed, he keeps on him to this day, producing a shell casing on a necklace from under his shirt. The shell casing acted to verify his story, here was proof of the event. Participants already knew their guide had grown up during the siege, had seen the shrapnel holes on the walls of his home and were now presented with this, a piece of shrapnel which had contributed to the grim statistics of the siege, where 14,000 died and 50,000 were injured. These people however, were made out not to be numbers, but real people, with real lives, just like the guide's father. He had been shot not because of his politics, ethnicity or military position but

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[150] As Pierre Nora argues, the modern world is forgetful, unable to visualise a world outside its own and so, in invoking the contemporary to visualise the past, guides allow for the creation of a connection where otherwise, the modern audience would, supposedly, struggle.
Pierre Nora. "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire" *Representations* 26 (1989): 8
[151] Dalia Gavriely-Nuri. "Collective Memory as a metaphor: The case of speeches by Israeli prime ministers 2001-2009" *Memory Studies* 7(1) (2014): 49
[152] Robert N. Kraft. "Archival Memory: Representations of the Holocaust in Oral Testimony" *Poetics Today* 27(2) (2006): 311-330.

because he was trying to defend his son. The story, whilst extremely shocking, was intended to humanise those who had suffered, making participants think not of statistics, but, as the hackneyed phrase goes, of the people behind them as conflict was reduced and transported from the geo-political to the personal, as was the case for the guide and his father.[153]

This is not to say however, that this is the only impression left on participants. As hermeneutic phenomenology teaches us, every experience is individual and will be internalised in different ways as a result of this.[154] Such a reality is apparent when looking at a discussion between participants after the tour's conclusion. The conversation was sparked up by one man who remarked that the story relating to the necklace seemed 'like bullshit' and that the guide was 'fucked up.' There was a slight murmur of agreement in relation to the second half of his utterance, the suffering caused as a result of his experiences had left a profound mark, making it somewhat uncomfortable to be in his presence as a result of his mixture of paranoia, melancholy and intensity. Another participant interjected at this point saying 'I'm sure you would be too if you'd lived through that' reflecting the partial internalisation of the guide's narrative through their empathy.[155] The man conceded to such a point, saying he had been trying to lighten the mood after such an experience but still doubted the story of the bullet.

The participant argued that there were empty shell casings lying all around the city, that participants had seen many of them throughout the tour, with the guide actively encouraging the search at points. Though easy to find, participants were reluctant to take shell casings with them, citing a discomfort at making souvenirs of the implements of war and a limit to their voyeurism.[156] In the eyes of this participant, the bullet necklace lacks a level of authenticity but does not detract from

[153] Nardi. "Who were the enemies?": 107.
[154] James E. Young. "Between History and Memory" The Voice of the Eyewitness" in Douglass, Ana. And Thomas A. Vogler. (eds.) *Witness and Memory* (London, Routledge, 2003): 282.
[155] Miles. "Auschwitz": 1176.
[156] Lisle. "Gazing at Ground Zero": 16

the message of the story. There is an appreciation of its purpose as a dramatic device and as a way of bringing in an element of the tangible.[157] In the eyes of both this man and the group as a whole, what mattered was not whether each individual element was 'authentic' or not but merely that it assisted in the telling of the story.[158] The narrative itself had been transported from the authentic to the 'hyperreal' to the point at which reality no longer mattered in the face of believability.[159]

Just as what participants see and do can help to solidify a narrative, so too can the food they eat. In the Mostar tour, food plays an integral role within the narrative, being used to form relationships and connections, build inter-personal and cultural understanding and educate participants in Bosnian traditions.[160] In the medieval village of Pocitelj, which, the guide states, was mostly abandoned over the course of the war, only the elderly have returned. This majority Bosniak village is situated in a now Croat dominated area of Bosnia which has, the guide argues, made it difficult for people to return, difficult to find jobs and difficult to feel safe in the area. Some however, are defiant he says, and have returned to their homes because that is what this village is, their home and they will not be forced from it again. It is one such woman the tour visits.[161] Before entering her home participants are told of the first time a tour ever entered, how this woman rescued them from a terrible storm, gave them shelter, dried their clothes and fed them.[162] This, participants were told, was typical of Bosnian hospitality, this need to help others, to go the extra mile and ask for nothing in return. This woman, the guide argued, was a true Bosnian and in entering into her home participants were to get a taste of the true Bosnia.[163] This woman had been promoted, by the tour's

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[157] This sacrifice of authenticity for narrative coherence is found in Edkins' discussion of the 'creation' of the Dachau memorial site which, whilst not true to life, is still regarded as such because of the strength of its presentational narrative.
Edkins. "Authenticity and Memory at Dachau": 405-420.
[158] Deepak Chhabra. Robert Healy and Erin Sills. "Staged Authenticity and Heritage Tourism" *Annals of Tourism Research* 30(3) (2003): 703.
[159] Schwenkel. "Recombinant History": 11
[160] Rivera. "Managing "Spoiled" National Identity": 615
[161] Hariz Halilovich. "Beyond the sadness: Memories and homecomings among survivors of 'ethnic cleansing' in a Bosnian village" *Memory Studies* 4(1) (2011): 42-52.
[162] Such a space functions as an example of Edensor's 'heterogeneous places' whereby it can be both private space but also capable of transformation into a commercialised location without threatening the other identity.
Edensor. "Staging Tourism": 326
[163] Hollinshead. "Tourism as Public Culture": 271

narrative, to represent the whole nation. Knowing that participants lack the ability, time or perhaps inclination to interact with the majority of the native population,[164] this woman and her home were to be used to as a stand in for the whole nation and what was learnt here would be what was learnt about the nation as a whole.[165] Certainly this was the feeling from participants who later remarked about how kind and how welcoming Bosnians (and not just the host) were. They had internalised the guide's narrative to the point where it became their formative impression of the entire nation.

This is not to argue however, that there was not an obvious level of artificiality present within the visit. The entire period spent there was part of a great performance between guide, host and participant. Time spent within the confines of the home was spent with participants transformed from viewers to actors, directed by their guide into playing an appropriate and authentic Bosnian role.[166] Before drinking real Bosnian coffee, that had been ground and specially brewed by the host, participants are told the tale of how Bosnian coffee is unique in the world, how exactly it should be served and that soon, they too would learn the correct way of drinking it. When the coffee is served they are asked to undergo a process, breathing the smell in deep, inspecting and admiring the colour, remarking at its uniqueness, murmuring enjoyment and agreement with the words of the guide, doing as their director instructs, adhering *in extremis* to Edensor's proposition of tourists as performers.[167] Finally, they are instructed as to exactly how to drink the coffee, their every action managed by an Other, both artificial but, as the guide argues, completely true to Bosnian tradition.

The final act in this production is the loudest, participants are told to dip their sugar cube into the coffee and slurp loudly as a mark of their respect and enjoyment, an action greeted with delight

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[164] Adler. "Travel as Performed Art": 1370
[165] Tonnaer et al. "Performing cross-cultural understanding": 3
[166] Edensor. "Performing tourism": 70
[167] Edensor. "Staging Tourism": 326

and laughter by the elderly host. The whole process of coffee drinking is almost farcical at times, but though highly ludic, it is also, allegedly, entirely realistic.[168] Tradition has become performative to the point of hyperreality but it is a hyperreality encouraged and embraced by both guide and host dispelling audience and theorist fears that just because something has an element of fun or even the commercial to it, this does not make it traditional.[169] Tradition, in this context, is shown to be alive and active, not a perfect formulation but instead something that only becomes real through practice and participation,[170] it cannot be learnt but instead experienced. The coffee drinking ceremony, whilst fantastical is still considered traditional by both guide and participant as what is important is not the seriousness of the situation but instead the experience itself. Much like the tours and the way a shared memory is formed, what is important is not the actual information, but the experience itself.[171] Tourists, prior to the experience, were told of how Bosnians enjoyed their coffee, the guide it seems, is there only to guide them in correct practice, ensuring the most authentic experience possible.

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[168] ibid.: 334
[169] Kaul. "The Limits of Commodification": 713.
[170] Tonnaer et al. "Performing cross-cultural understanding": 5
[171] Adler. "Travel as Performed Art": 1369

Chapter Four – Narrative

What is often important within narrative constructions is not what, but the way in which it something is being said. Narrative techniques such as the use of confession or humour act to form bonds, establishing connection and the formation of a dialogue between subjects as opposed to a monologist narrative construction. Through the construction and establishment of relationships between speaker and listener, narrative, as will be evidenced, gains greater impact as participants are able to situate themselves within a dialogue, creating the personal bonds which, as have been previously investigated, are key to retaining narrative impact. This narrative formation builds connections between guide and participant so as to blur the self-other divide and create a shared transnational experience which transcends country based distinctions in order to form a shared and collective memory.

4.1 Humour

Humour is referenced as a key tool in the narrative arsenal of tour guides both within the literature and by the guides themselves.[172] Humour's primary purpose for most tours seems to be to set participants at ease.[173] Humour, and particularly dark humour, is used as a way to break down the divide between speaker and listener as all shared within a joke. The Mostari guide lost no opportunity to make a joke, either in relation to himself, Bosnians, the tour, backpackers or specific participants. In creating an atmosphere in which participants were comfortable in interacting with the guide, any narrative presented became more didactic and thus more capable of personal internalisation.[174] Backpackers were able to participate in the tour and insert themselves into the

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[172] Tonnaer et al. "Performing cross-cultural understanding": 7
[173] Anja Pabel and Philip L. Pearce "Highlighting the benefits of tourism humour: The view of tourists" *Tourism Management Perspectives* 16 (2015): 357
[174] Adler. "Travel as Performed Art": 1375-6

narrative, thereby making it both more memorable and accessible.[175] Commonality between participants and guide was established through humour creating an informal atmosphere that allowed for questioning and interaction without fear of offence, impropriety or ignorance. With humour being used to break down the self-other divide, a dynamic interaction network was formulated in which no question was taboo and both sides learnt from and interacted with each other.[176]

This use of humour to remove taboo was also found within other tours. In other cases, it was not necessarily used to completely eradicate the guide/participant divide but to demonstrate that no subject can place itself above mockery. Black humour in relation to atrocities and hardships was often referenced as a coping mechanism and a way of reorienting memories from the harmful towards an almost ludic status. Whilst this humour found various articulations throughout one tour, it was crystallised in the later stages at the Corned Beef monument. The sculpture, a giant can of corned beef, similar to the kind given to Sarajevan's during the siege by the international community, functions as both a sign of gratitude and dissatisfaction. The corned beef was widely regarded as inedible, as the guide said, 'even cats and dogs rejected it' and yet it has now become the Sarajevan symbol for the international aid received during the conflict and a celebration of that aid.

The joke goes that in siege time such products were celebrated, despite their wholly unappetising nature and that international donors were seen as heroes. The irony remains however, that this was not a celebration of the good, but of bad, and that these tins represented a grim hope and slice of relief during the 44-month period. Now however, after the siege has ended, the cans, like the monument itself, have lost some of their sparkle, and Bosnians are finally able to voice their

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[175] Knapp. "The Development of Semantic Memories": 23
[176] Noy. "This Trip Really Changed Me": 84.

dissatisfaction with the international community. How could it be that one celebrated a can of beef you would not feed to a dog on the street? Such use of dark humour creates questions for the audience, asking them to consider the role of the international community within the conflict, its status as saviour in spite of the aid actually offered and to reposition their reflective gaze, not towards Bosnia, but towards the world at large.[177] They are asked to think of the citizens of Sarajevo as real people forced to eat the inedible and be thankful for it.

The idea forces participants to think beyond the principle that because the international community is giving aid to a particular region, it is doing good there and acts, as Sheftel argues, as a counter-memory to the international community.[178] Dark humour is here used to challenge international norms that all aid is good aid, that recipients should be meek and grateful in their reception of it and that the international community can erase complicity through the donation of food packages. What, our guide states, the tins represented, was hope for the end of the siege, an end that seemingly never came and yet 'we were grateful all the same.' Even those who give aid are, in some part, responsible for what goes on in the recipient country and participants would do well to remember this. Dark humour is here used to draw attention to a complex ethical issue in context,[179] as the participant gaze is turned inwards towards self (and national) reflection with the realities of experience are presented to the audience before they are asked to question as to why this situation occurred.[180] Dark humour is used to introduce issues in such a way as to not scare participants away, instead opening them up to the possibility of finding a joy, no matter how dark, in any situation and how even the hardest of experiences can become bearable within the confines of the human spirit.

[177] Alex Gillespie. "Tourist Photography and the Reverse Gaze" *Ethos* 34(3) (2006): 347
[178] By counter-memory, Sheftel argues that the monument functions to challenge dominant international discourses regarding not only their own actions, but the responses to articulations of the Bosnian people themselves.
Anna Sheftel, "Monuments to the international community, from the grateful citizens of Sarajevo: Dark humour as counter-memory in post-conflict Bosnia-Herzegovina" *Memory Studies* 5(2) (2011): 145-164.
[179] Ermina Martini and Majaana Jauhola. "Journeys in Aidland: An Autobiographic Exploration of Resistance to Development Aid" *Journal of Narrative Politics* 1(1) (2014): 84.
[180] Gillespie. "Tourist Photography and the Reverse Gaze": 348

This focus on the responsibility/complicity of the international community because of the way in which they provided hope to citizens is echoed across all the tours with each guide stating that, despite everything, they had trusted that the world 'would not abandon them,' that the conflict would be solved and that 'they were not alone.' Many participants discuss their feelings of complicity or guilt in what happened in Bosnia, wishing that they had 'stopped it' or that their guides had not had to go through it. Whilst such sentiment can be thought of as 'recreational grief' or false humility,[181] in conversations after the tours there is widespread discussion and consensus between participants of a shared guilt as a result of their nationality. There is genuine amazement towards the 'strength' of Bosnians and the guides in light of what participants have learnt, with many expressing they did not think they could have been 'as strong.' Whilst some scholars dismiss this as sycophantic empathy[182] there is a reality that these tours do affect their participants and it would be wrong to dismiss this as mere sycophancy. While guides stress that participants should not feel guilty or bad for what happened to the Bosnian people, particularly as most were not yet born, such sentiment is not echoed within participant discourse after the tours. The practise is emblematic of collective memory formation. Whilst guides hope to transfer their episodic memories across to the semantic consciousness of the backpackers, they also face the challenge of addressing the personal collective memory positioning of the backpackers themselves.[183] In laying blame on the international community, this awakens within the international backpackers a form of collective guilt, not as a result of their own actions but from the actions of their society. The experience of the tours by participants cannot be separated from their international positioning and whilst taking part in the tours may offer a repositioning of participants within a global framework, it does not entirely remove them from their own societal collective memory paradigm.

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[181] Robb. "Violence and Recreation": 54.

[182] Stone and Sharpley "Consuming Dark Tourism": 579

[183] Christina Schwenkel. "Youth Culture and Fading Memories of War in Hanoi, Vietnam" in Kathleen M. Adams and Kathleen A. Gillogy (eds) *Everyday Life in Southeast Asia* (Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 2011): 128

This is not to say however, that all invocations of the international community by the guides are negative. As one guide noted, backpackers 'bring the world' to him, helping him to learn more about the world and discover new things every day. Backpacking and his life as a hostelier are presented in a positive light as a way for him to enrich himself, a sentiment likewise echoed by the tour participants. What the tours establish then, is not a unidirectional flow of information based on the education of participants in the memories and knowledge of the tour guide, but instead a process of shared identity formation and information exchange. Such strategies also act to help tackle fears of uni-directional memory commodification,[184] with participants also imparting knowledge to the guides, the tours no longer represent an observational spectacle where participants pay money in order to access the 'tragic memories' of guides. Instead a point is made by both guide and participants that they want to form interpersonal relationships in order to understand more about each other to gain a sense of what the people of a nation are like. Although money is involved, this is not money for memories, but rather for the experience the guide provides. Just like any other tour, participants expect to pay money and any personal memories shared are simply an added bonus rather than the expected major focus as both guides and participants share the personal between each other.

4.2 Confession

This multi-directional interaction could also be found within other aspects of guide-participant interaction with confession being used to gain trust as confessions flowed in both directions. In providing a receptive platform to such confessions listeners, support Hunt's paradigm of the 'appropriate listener,' who in listening correctly ensures narratives are absorbed and understood

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[184] Such fears as to commodification of the personal are found across studies of tourism, particularly within discussions regarding personal creativity and identification.
Kaul. "The Limits of Commodification in Traditional Irish Music Sessions": 703-719.

and that narrators are comfortable in their telling.[185] Such practices build an emotional link between persons, blurring division in favour of interpersonal exchange. A common confessional narrative by guides was that of self-doubt, particularly as to the benefits of operating such tours, for the nation as a whole, for backpackers and most importantly, because of the heavy reliance on personal narratives, for their own mental health. Such confessions created an ethical dilemma for participants, asking them to question their own actions and their repercussions, awakening a deeper tourist consciousness. A practice which, Kim and Butler argue, is more likely to occur at dark tourist sites as a result of the ethical conflicts involved in observing and taking entertainment value from the controversial.[186] Though the dialogue between guide and participant assists in the moulding of this consciousness, it is given life as a result of the tourists' very participation, the dialogue goes some way towards shaping it, but, the argument goes, for the vast majority, such consciousness was awakened the moment at which tourists decided to take part in the tours.

Tour guides never blamed participants themselves for this ethical dilemma, instead referring to it as an internalised self-doubt which required the help of participants to address. Participants were, in these moments, asked to subordinate their participant role to become that of tour co-creator with their reactions and answers, it was implied, being used to help shape future tours. The most common response to this was the creation of an empathy link with participants stressing that, what should be most important was the mental and physical health of the guide, that they were grateful for the experience provided to them but that if the guide was uncomfortable or did not want to continue, that they would be happy to stop the tour. The guide, for participants, was not a surface provider of touristic experience but instead, a human being just as they were. In moments such as this, the self-other boundary was completely erased, superseded by an empathetic connection with

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185 Hunt. *Memory, War and Trauma*: 3
186 Sangkyun Kim and Gareth Butler. "Local community perspectives toward dark tourism development: The case of Snowtown, South Australia" *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 13(1) (2015): 78

confessional narratives being used to establish both trust and connection between participant and guide to the point at which any status based division were imperceptible.

Such confessional moments however, were often found towards the end of the tour, after a relationship had been built between guide and participant and often after discussions by guides themselves of the personal benefits such tours provided. Earlier in the course one tour, the guide, who would later go on to express his doubts as to the value of the tour, spent a large section discussing what personal benefits he felt the running of the tours had brought him. Having spent a number of years in Sweden and receiving therapy there, a therapy he said had saved his life, the guide remarked that in spite of all this, he still 'kept screaming' out his story, desperate for someone to understand. This use of 'screaming' as a way to describe the narration of personal experience was repeated again and again, emblematic of the trauma suffered, such heavy repetition served to enforce the idea of suffering and the internalised pain as a result of the conflict. It should here be noted however, that the phrase was never actually screamed, that the guide's tone, whilst mobile and emotive, did not explicitly alter in verbalising this 'screaming.' The screaming, just like the suffering itself, had been internalised by the guide to the point at which, unless listeners were obliquely told, they would be unable to perceive it.

In discussing his verbalisation of his experiences over the years, the guide argued that the Swedes did not understand, that they were too comfortable, too disassociated to truly appreciate what he was telling them to the point where he gave up 'screaming.' It was in the tours he said, when he resumed 'screaming,' where he had found a receptive audience, backpackers he said, 'got it.' Backpackers, he argued, because of their willingness to listen, to take on and internalise the experiences of others, were the people who had come closest, if not to truly understanding, then to truly listening. The arguments he put forward present the backpacker as an ideal listener, a platform from which, as Brison argues, trauma sufferers can construct a narrative which, if listened

to sensitively, can prove therapeutic.[187] The backpacker, within this scenario is given validation of their participation within the tour as it is personally helpful to the guide. Such prior affirmation is later relied upon by participants when the confession of doubt occurs, whilst they offer up empathy and the willingness to discuss the guides fears, because of previous discussions, they have been absolved of personal guilt. Their participation within the tours is not what is being questioned by the guide, it is an internal struggle which, as a result of their favourable position, participants can address as they have already been told of the value the guide places upon their participation.

Although this uncertainty towards the production and repetition of the tours themselves comes towards the end, it is never the final message. All make clear the historical foundations of their tours, that, though the effects may still be being felt, the conflict is very much rooted in Bosnia's past and that as a nation, they are making progress to move on. It is a message that all guides ask participants to spread, urging them to go back to friends, family and other backpackers and tell the world that the war is over, that there is no longer any reason to be afraid. The tours themselves are proof of this, they function like tourist activities in any other city; people pay money to be shown around by a local, gaining that all important 'local insight' into where they are visiting, the only thing that differs is what stories are being told. The guides stress that, just with any other city, nation or place, Bosnia has a history and that what participants heard on their tour was simply that, the history of the city, though it may be more extreme, or 'darker' than an average city tour, in reality it is not any different. All cities across Europe have experienced conflict at one point in time or other, the difference here is simply that the conflict was more recent. Just as the Roman Empire or the Black Death have become history, disconnected from the real people and events through the passage of time, so too, the guides argue, will the Bosnian conflict. The point now is that participants recognise that what they have learnt on the tours is history, yes, it is highly

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187 Susan J. Brison. "Trauma Narratives and the Remaking of the Self" in Bal, Mieke, Johnathan Crewe and Leo Spitzer (eds.) *Acts of Memory Cultural Recall in the Present* (London, University Press of New England, 1999): 39-54.

personal and has ongoing repercussions, but so too do all past events. In participating in these tours participants have yes gained a richer understanding of the conflict and its personal effects but they have also learnt about a slice of history, how memory, with the passage of time, becomes history and how places, sometimes in spite of their histories, continue to move on, just as time itself does.

Conclusion

In looking to investigate how studies of tourism can be used to understand practices of international relations on the micro-level, this thesis looked to the practices of both tour guides and participants as they formed interpersonal bonds to increase transcultural understanding. The backpacker as an individual provided a rich subject from which to investigate such practices as a result of their supposedly heightened receptivity and awareness to other cultures.[188] Backpackers, it was argued, were the 'tourist type' most open to breaching the self-other divide and getting a sense of different cultures.[189] They, as a group, were most interested in seeking out these other cultures to the point at which this search has become one of the defining motifs of the backpacker themselves. Though self-selecting, both as a group and an ideology, the backpacker and their travels function towards a microcosmic understanding of how international relations can play out at the human level with backpackers forming relationships not simply between themselves, but also their hosts and the people of other cultures.

The tours too, filter into this microcosm by providing the platform from which to assess these interactions. They have been shown to go far beyond the merely educational, assisting in creating an environment which fosters dialogue and discourse to form an intercultural exchange. Whilst the tours do educate participants, this education goes beyond the mere recounting of facts, taking participants closer to the experiential and, if not the known, then at least the understood. In telling stories *in situ* and using 'real' objects the narratives gain personal and physical significance so that they can be contextualised at a later stage with the self then inserted into the narrative. Whilst the narrative itself still remains in effect the property of the guide, in situating the participant within their narratives, either physically or emotionally, the narratives gain greater significance, not just

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[188] Noy. "This Trip Really Changed Me": 78-102.
[189] Edensor. "Performing tourism": 60

for the teller, but the listener as well. All of this contributes to the establishment perhaps not of a collective memory, as the guides themselves often recount, but of a shared memory based on mutual experience. Whilst backpackers will never *truly* know the Bosnian conflict of 1992-5 in listening to and often, enacting the narratives of the guides, they do approach a point at which they can, at least, be seen to understand.

This understanding, whilst small scale is emblematic of a larger sphere of micro-practice in which everyday interaction leads to the formation of interpersonal, transcultural bonds, challenging ideas of grand scale international relations in favour of person to person interaction. Whilst international relations theory and practice will continue to operate on grand inter-governmental and trans-global levels, investigations such as this demonstrate that international relations holds scope well beyond the institutional level. Reaching down to the levels of interpersonal contact one is still able to assess theories, such as that of the disruption of the self-other divide and the formation of historical narrative, but is not limited by the generalisation necessary to make a theory universally acceptable. International relations do not just happen at the geo-political macro-level, instead it is a process of every day interaction between individuals, each unique but each contributing to the formulation of a shared global, collective consciousness.

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