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Gothic Tourism

Berlin, May 2012: At the Brandenburg Gate, on Unter den Linden, stand an array of “crate slugs”: street theatre characters. Two tall, handsome men, mounted on the aforesaid crates, work as a double act, playing a Soviet soldier and an American soldier. They are by far the most popular of the ‘characters’; tourists flock to be photographed standing between them. The actor-soldiers recall one aspect of the past of the Brandenburg Gate – its function as part of the divide between the former GDR and West Germany. By their very presence, the soldiers play out the conversion of the site into one of tourist consumption, offering a handshake which, captured in a photograph, will become a souvenir of contact with the site.

Berlin is a city filled with memorialisation of its tumultuous past and in constant debate about the nature of that memorialisation. Just to the West of the Gate is the Platz des 18. März, renamed in 2000 to commemorate the events of the 1848 Revolution and the first democratic parliamentary elections in the GDR in 1990. A few minutes walk from the Brandenburg Gate is the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe. Near there is the Checkpoint Charlie Museum. In a city so loaded with cultural significance and heavy with memory, the other wandering “statues” - Mickey Mouse and Freddy Krueger - strike a strange note. Mickey is not quite his usual jaunty self, and Freddy Krueger seems positively embarrassed. The discomfort of Freddy Krueger is revealing. It reflects his awareness of the fact that his presence is out of sync with modern day sensibilities. The consensus (including the vote of Freddy himself) is that he shouldn't be there, that his presence is unwelcome - both because of the history of Berlin and because of subsequent choices made in relation to the memorialisation of these events. He undercuts the celebration of the victory of Western capitalism which for many inheres in these very acts of tourism. Freddy here is either an empty sign or an unwilling symbol.

Gothic tourism is rarely as bald and unimaginative (not to mention misplaced) as the wandering Freddy Krueger at the Brandenburg Gate. It has proliferated in recent years and covers a range of practices. Some countries have very little (or nothing) in the way of Gothic tourism; other countries rely heavily on it. Inglis and Holmes in their article "Highland and other haunts - Ghosts in Scottish Tourism" point out that ghost tourism has been a part of Scottish tourism for the best part of 200 years and that "the spectral now figures as a crucial form of selling the country to a global audience." ((Inglis and Holmes 2003:56)) Whereas Gothic tourism in Scotland raises few public debates apart from those on good taste, Gothic tourism elsewhere may be much more problematic. Dracula tourism in Romania, for instance, has sparked both lively cultural debate and political protest. The country's official English language tourist guide **Discover Romania** seeks to minimize the Dracula phenomenon, and its reference to "Stocker" on page 4 is perhaps an example of a deliberate misspelling. Whereas the government brochure claims "Stocker's fictional work takes advantage of the complexity of the multiple aspects which define the Romanian identity" many Romanians feel that Dracula tourism trivializes the country's rich and complex history and displaces other attempts at constructing Romanian identity in the international world. As the novelist Ioana Baetica, in an article in the *New Internationalist*, complains: "When wandering through Europe I am always astounded to learn what my fellow citizens in an ever more united continent know about Romania. First, Count Dracula" (Baetica 2004).

Duncan Light, in a fascinating article on the history of Dracula Tourism in Romania points out that it has been contentious for the last fifty years. He notes that during the Communist era the tourist board was told to develop an American market for Americans but found Dracula Tourism problematic as it "focused attention on something that was the very antithesis of the socialist project." (Light 2007: 756) The national tourism office tried to counter fiction with history, launching a "Dracula: Legend and Truth" tour which operated till 1989. (Light 2007: 757). Dracula tourism in Romania is still a matter of contention. The accelerated pace of Dracula tourism is a cultural phenomenon which is not only a product of the country's developing capitalist economy but also expresses some of the problems associated with the new capitalist economics. The most celebrated recent battle over Dracula Tourism took place over the projected Dracula Theme Park described by Fred Botting (Botting

2008: 3) as an example of “Disneygothic”. Plans were finally shelved in 2005 after wide-scale resistance from many quarters, including nationalists and environmentalists. As Light notes: “Dracula tourism can be identified as a site of struggle between the West’s assertion of Romania as Other and the country’s efforts to define itself in its own way and on its own terms.” (Light 2007: 761)

These examples have much to tell us about modern tourism, and the place and politics of Gothic tourism in contemporary culture. First, although frequently sharing a concern with something which could broadly be labelled as History (castles, dungeons, the history of torture, etc.) heritage tourism and Gothic tourism are frequently at odds. Indeed McEvoy (2010) argues that in London, Gothic tourism arises because of the absence of valuable heritage in parts of the city which are nevertheless felt to have cultural capital (in this case Southwark). Second, the Gothic, as the stuff of nightmares (like Freddy Krueger) is required to remain within its own fictionalization and not intrude onto ground which has become consecrated to the reality of disaster. Gothic tourism and the ‘Memoryscape’ (a term devised by Edensor in 1997 and defined by Light as “a piece of urban space organized around social remembering through the assemblage of key iconographic forms.” (Light 2000:165)) sit uneasily side by side. This raises some bizarrely split-personality tourism in some places. The Eastern State Penitentiary, Pennsylvania, wears one official tourist mode for most of the year, but, because of its need for funds, is seasonally Gothicized in the form of “Terror Behind the Walls”, a Halloween attraction advertised as “A Massive Haunted House in a Real Prison”. Management discomfort can be seen through the almost schizophrenic nature of its website. “Terror Behind the Walls” has its own sub-section and is adorned with pictures of young actors wearing the make-up of disfigurement. The photography on display here is very different from the rest of the site’s house style, as displayed in the “professional and historic photographs provided by Eastern State Penitentiary”, which is predominantly that of architectural photography, focussing on line, and characterized by a subdued sense of colour - and an absence of human bodies.

Third, as may be seen in the case of Romania’s Dracula tourism, it helps that Gothic tourism be somehow consonant with or arising from the cultural interests or traditions of the place where it arises. Thus, Scotland’s Gothic tourism arises from a national

tradition rich with ghost stories and other Gothic writing; Inglis and Holmes, drawing on the research of John and Margaret Gold (1995), point out that nineteenth-century tourists often “held in their hands guidebooks and other materials that were composed by copywriters imitating the style of Scott” (Inglis and Holmes 2003: 56). Likewise, London’s Gothic tourism takes place in a city that has been relentlessly Gothicized in literature and film. Romania’s Gothic tourism by contrast results from the re-hashing of folk legend and history by an Irish writer in a Western European literary tradition. As Light (2007) points out, *Dracula* was not even translated into Romanian until 1990.

The examples given above serve to highlight some of the main differences between Gothic tourism and other kinds of tourism. Whilst other modes of tourism, particularly heritage tourism, arise from and because of a particular site, Gothic tourism often involves a distancing from the actual site and/or encourages imaginative creation of other places and characters. Gothic tourism often, not always, involves a superimposition, an overlay – a wandering Freddie Krueger, a fake dungeon, for example, or an ability to ‘see’ ghosts. Gothic tourism takes its brief not from history so much as from fiction, or more properly, fictionalization: from the set of discourses and the tropes that the Gothic scholar recognizes as Gothic. Although in terms of an essay within Gothic Studies this sounds like something of a tautology, it is a point worth making and is one which many in Tourist Studies have fallen foul of, failing to identify the congruence of a set of often heavily stylized features, and the cultural expectations, in terms of audience/consumer response, that might accompany them. In other words, Gothic tourism is a very different kind of tourism. It stems from fictionalization and has a sense of its own origin within a specific cultural discourse. It has very different attitudes to the concept of place, to the idea of performance, and to its audience, the tourists themselves. Furthermore, though this hardly needs saying, its sense of affect is radically different from other kinds of tourism.

The term “Gothic tourism” is not one that has general critical acceptance; it is not a niche area of research with a string of cultural commentators to its name. In the field of Tourist Studies though there are a few researchers who have addressed the area, it is generally because of their interest in fields which, for the moment, overlap - for example an interest in Scotland’s or Romania’s tourism, or, with the phenomenon

classified in Tourist Studies as “dark tourism” (Lennon and Foley 2007) which also includes disaster tourism and thanatourism. In terms of Literary Studies there are as yet no scholarly works dedicated to the subject of Gothic tourism although various aspects of Gothic tourism have been touched on by a variety of writers. Catherine Spooner (2006) writes on contemporary Goth tourism to Whitby, and on Gothic consumption in contemporary culture more generally; Armit (2010), in her introduction to her study of twentieth-century Gothic, discusses the relation between Walpole’s Strawberry Hill and Alton Towers; McEvoy investigates London’s Tourist Gothic (2010); considers the phenomenon of performed architectures both in the eighteenth century and in contemporary examples of Gothic tourism (2011); and looks at Blackpool’s seasonal Gothicization in an essay on contemporary British festivals (2012).

Gothic tourism is not merely a contemporary phenomenon but has been around for as long as literary Gothic. Indeed there is a good case for thinking of early literary Gothic, with its depictions of abbeys and castles, of ruins and wild landscapes, as a kind of vicarious tourism. Certainly literary Gothic was born in an age of tourism, at a time when domestic tourism was becoming increasingly affordable for and popular with a middle-class public. Walpole, Beckford and Radcliffe were all keen tourists and the two latter published celebrated tourist writing. Significantly, when Radcliffe’s *A Journey made in the Summer of 1794* was published in 1795, reviewers in the *Analytical Review* and the *Critical Review* declared that its landscape descriptions were much better suited to this context than those in Radcliffe’s novels.

Not only can it be argued that the Gothic novel is, as it were, a touristic genre, but it is also significant that actual Gothic tourism was instigated by some of the early Gothic writers, Walpole and Beckford. Both built their own Gothic castles: Walpole, Strawberry Hill and Beckford, Fonthill. Walpole’s Strawberry Hill was open to visitors. Beckford’s Fonthill too was intended as a destination for cultured visitors (though with Beckford’s distaste for plebeian and bourgeois culture it was never likely to become a ticketed attraction in the way that Strawberry Hill was). Both buildings were types of aesthetic experiment: “fantasy architectures” “architecture theatricalized, or, made into masquerade”. (McEvoy 2010: 145) They “break generic boundaries” (McEvoy 2011: 190), putting, as it were, the visitor in the position of the

protagonist of a novel, and realizing the space of Gothic fiction in architectural reality. These characteristics of the performed Gothic house can be found today in a variety of forms of modern Gothic tourism, whether Dennis Severs' House in Spitalfields, the Dungeons attractions, or a building such as Samlesbury Hall, Lancashire, which is due to become a "bleak house" in December 2012 (after having been given a "spooky seasonal makeover to transform it into 'Charles Dickens' Haunted Mansion").

Gothic tourism was not only invented by the practitioners of literary Gothic, however. It also came into being in the metropolises of London and Paris in the wake of new or newly-improved technologies – magic lantern shows, wax works – and to cater for a leisure-hungry urban audience. As E.J. Clery points out in *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction* (1995), Gothic arose and prospered in late eighteenth-century consumer culture precisely because that culture had ceased to believe in ghosts. "Freed from the service of doctrinal proof, the ghost was to be caught up in the machine of the economy; it was available to be processed, reproduced, packaged, marketed and distributed by the engines of cultural production" (Clery 1995: 17). Gothic Tourism is part of this packaging and marketing of ghosts. Significantly, Clery begins her study by looking at the phenomenon of the Cock Lane ghost and the "crowds who rush to Cock Lane to witness the haunting" (Clery 1995: 17). The exemplary moment in Clery's account of the rise of Gothic is one of what could be called proto-Gothic tourism, where a "ghost" performs for the amusement and astonishment of an audience which is in large part composed of those with a "hedonistic acceptance of ghosts as a fiction" (Clery 1995: 17-18).

Late eighteenth-century Gothic tourism as a properly commercial prospect is to be found in such phenomena as Robertson's Phantasmagoria, as played in Paris and London, and Madame Tussauds. Robertson's Phantasmagoria, like Strawberry Hill and Fonthill, was both dependent on a physical site and reframed it, or mocked it up. David Jones in *Gothic Machine* (2011) argues, from an examination of the plans of the original building, that although the Paris Phantasmagoria seemed to be taking place in a crypt, it was in fact located in what had been the convent's refectory. The Phantasmagoria borrowed from the highly popular Gothic fiction of its time; it played out Gothic tropes – strange disembodied music, unknown portraits, the journey

through the dark, strange signs, the experience of the crypt – and recreated the rhythms of Gothic fiction – its short staccato stabs of fear and periods of drawn-out suspense – in real time. The Phantasmagoria specifically aimed not just to create a Gothic atmosphere but to produce Gothic affect – fear, surprise, horror.

Contemporary Gothic tourism

Until recently in the UK, Gothic tended to be the province of major cities (Edinburgh, London), but now its domain is widening. Derby markets itself as one of the UK's most haunted cities (largely due to the influence of Richard Felix, who, as Carrie Clanton points out, went from Derby's head of tourism to historical investigator on TV's *Most Haunted*). A Zombie Manor House is to be found in Warrington and a Zombie Bootcamp in Droitwich. Rural areas too are hosting Gothic tourist attractions. This has long been the case in the US, with the genre of the Haunted Hayride, but a relative novelty in the UK. Recently advertized attractions include the US-influenced: HEX IN THE HARVEST ('An ill wind is blowing in the corn...'), and various Gothic camping experiences. Ghost walks are now ubiquitous; there is hardly a small town which does not have one - even if only seasonal or occasional. Bath runs ghost tours every Thursday, Friday and Saturday night all year round, awarding a "Bravery Certificate (suitable for 7- 15 years)." Exeter's Red Coat Guided Tour "Spooks & Broomsticks" is guided by a volunteer and run by the city council. Copy for the Haunted and Hidden Bristol tour gives a good idea of the variety of fare on offer at such events: "Hear about Clifton's ghostly Dwarf Highwayman See Bristol's famous Haunted Cinema Visit a 16th Century Haunted House Hear about a Church and it's (sic) ghostly Monk See where a Cook chased a Ghost! Visit Tv and Film locations and many fun & interesting sites!!!"

The patterns of Gothic tourism are, unsurprisingly, those of bourgeois consumption. The majority of attractions fit neatly either into a working-day schedule or into the hours of evening leisure. Evening events, such as the sleepover in Bodmin Jail, or Warwick Castle's Dungeons After Dark usually come with a meal deal. Jamaica Inn's Ghost Hunt events include "2 course carvery with vegetarian option". Ghost Hunting companies even come with their own Mission Statements ("We aim to

continue delivering a quality service that will ensure that we remain the market leader in public, private and corporate ghost investigations.”) Contemporary Gothic tourism exists in varying degrees of profitability. Many ghost tours are run with barely any profit motivation, led by volunteers or part-time enthusiasts. Gothic tourism can, however, be very big business. The UK-based Merlin Entertainments Group (the world’s second largest operator of parks and attractions) which manages and owns the Sea Life Centres, Legoland, and the London Eye, has a substantial Gothic end to its range, including Madame Tussauds and the Dungeons attractions (London, Edinburgh, York, Hamburg, Blackpool, Warwick Castle, Amsterdam) and Alton Towers, most of which is, or is supposed to be, family-friendly. Merlin also do a nice sideline in what might be called Gothic accessorization. At the Chessington World of Adventures, as well as visit the Sea Life centre and view the wild animals, visitors can “soar on the Vampire rollercoaster through Transylvania”.

Contemporary Gothic tourism exists in a plethora of forms and indeed, as Catherine Spooner points out, in a paper on Whitby’s Gothic tourism, may be found fighting it out in one place. Spooner discusses the novel *Dracula*’s modelling of “two forms of Gothic tourism: a vulgar one associated with consumption of food, souvenirs and sensational ghost stories, and a genteel one in which landscape and local colour are appreciated alongside literary associations” (Spooner: 2012). She goes on to argue that there is a similar opposition of tourist modes in Whitby today, concluding that “the twin drives of commodified heritage and subcultural carnival function to create a space in which Gothic is celebrated as both mainstream leisure and alternative pleasure.” (Spooner: 2012)

In recent years the phenomenon of performed architecture has taken a new direction in the form of the Scare Attraction. The creators of Scare Attractions (known as Haunted Attractions in the US) are often not only adept at marketing and sophisticated in contemporary media practice, but also highly literate as regards Gothic Studies, thus I leave the definition of the form to AtmosFEAR: “Scare attractions are live theatrical experiences in which an audience moves through a themed environment populated by sets, props, special effects and, usually, live scareactors.” The scare attraction differentiates itself from much other contemporary Gothic tourism (and the performed house of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries) by the extent to which it is driven not just by Gothic atmosphere and the

realization of Gothic tropes but by a much more substantial degree of narrativization. (“A narrative drives the audience through the experience as they encounter visual, tactile and sound effects intended to scare them” write AtmosFEAR.) The scare attraction plants its consumers within its fictions, often giving them a role to play, or sometimes (in the case of Zombie scenarios, for example, where it is possible to move from victim to persecutor) more than one role. The role of persecuted protagonist, or one of a group of persecuted protagonists, is especially popular. The vocabulary relating to such mock-ups and performances has changed since the late eighteenth century and a term deriving from theatre, “immersive”, is that which is often used nowadays. This is significant. Remediation, of course, has been important in the history of Gothic tourism, and the level and rate of remediation is particularly marked in contemporary Gothic tourism: AtmosFEAR’s website, describing a subgenre, EXScream, claims that it “brings to life the horrors of videogames, movies and novels”. However, it is the relationship with theatricality or live performance that is most integral to much contemporary Gothic tourism – and not just to scare attractions.

London’s Necrobus is a London double-decker, which is painted not red but black and decorated inside with plush curtains, and dim table-top lamps with dangly shades. Its tongue-in-cheek back-story is that it was one of a supposed funeral fleet. The Necrobus – punningly referred to as London Ghost Bus Tours on its website– is a witty and enjoyable affair which cleverly points up its differences from other modes of tourism. As the bus went along the Embankment on one of the few sunny evenings of July 2012, and as its passengers were about to take in one of London’s finest views, the guide announced that the blinds were to go down, pointing out that this was “part of the sight-seeing tour where you don’t see the sights”. The Necrobus has a keen sense of the history of ghost watching as an entertainment form. The bus drives past Cock Lane and the guide with pleasure recounts the story of “Scratching Fanny the Cock Lane Ghost” and her exposure as a fake. Like many other instances of contemporary Gothic tourism, the Necrobus, is canny in its ability to work across media. The guide addresses tourists directly but also directs their attention to the CCTV, through which he presents himself, at certain moments, as if in a film. He speaks into the CCTV, his head angled in order best to obtain certain zoom-ed in shots, or distortions – recreating before the tourists’ eyes, the kind of images familiar

from Gothic film and tv, within a black and white video effect reminiscent of the grainy hand-held realism of the *Blair Witch Project*. Significantly the recourse to technology is not to high technology, but to audience competence in terms of reading technology. Tourists are required to employ dual perspective and to understand both modes of presentation – real-life encounter and stylized video presentation – simultaneously. The mainstay of the Necrobus, however, is the actors. Its mode of tourism is paramountly performative. As one of its “testi-moan-ials” points out, it is a “full on theatrical experience... not just another tourist trap”. The ‘guide’ employs skills of audience interaction, of witty rejoinder, of a compere thinking on his feet. Mr Hinge, when he comes on board, is more fully character-possessed. Much of the thrill of the tour is derived from being within a live performance, which cleverly alternates between different styles and different degrees of audience interaction.

The principle of performance is central to contemporary Gothic tourism, even if only in the form, as in innumerable scare attractions or the “Scream” section of London’s Madame Tussauds, of made-up figures, lurching from the dark, or suddenly screaming. As a US haunted attraction website puts it: “even with all the money spent on amazing sets and animatronics, the most effective way to create one of the country’s best haunted house events is to put more effort into character development and acting.” Part of the attraction at least, lies in our understanding of theatre as a form. In a way that wasn’t true in the eighteenth century, theatre today is a kind of ancient technology, a medium of the past. As such it functions in much Gothic tourism not only as means but content.

Gothic Tourists

On ghost tours I have been on, I am frequently surprised by how many of the tourists are local people, those who work and/or live in the area. They are on the ghost tour as a specific kind of entertainment, because they want to experience a certain kind of performance. More than this, they expect, and presumably want, to perform themselves. Kristine Keller points out, in an online essay which focuses on ghost

tours in the USA, that ghost walks are “immersive” and the tourists “participants in a dramatic experience”. (Keller 2010:2) Its form is a substantial part of the attraction of the tour for many: the tour not only draws our attention to the past but also mirrors some of the forgotten forms of pedestrianism of the past. Following a bizarrely dressed actor, ritually processing through streets, the tourists on a ghost walk are performing. The tourists on the Necrobus too perform; they participate in a mock séance and some are drawn into dialogue with the guide or Mr Hinge. When Mr Hinge runs in horror from the bus he deliberately draws the attention of passers-by, who inevitably turn to look at the tourists. (This is also excellent site-specific advertising.)

Gothic tourism since its very beginning has been, in a way that no other genre could be: Gothic in real time and with the consumer’s body at the centre of the experience. Gothic tourism specializes in the body, whether in the form of the uncannily life-like waxwork undergoing tortures (as in Madame Tussauds, or The Clink, or numerous dungeon attractions), or in the more wholesale embodiment of the Gothic consumer him or herself. The centrality of the consumer’s body is particularly marked in contemporary Gothic tourism. Whether pumped up with adrenaline in a scare attraction, or roller-coasting at Alton Towers, or being splattered with mock blood, the tourist’s body is central to the experience. On the Necrobus, although the guide keeps his respectful distance, the unhinged Mr Hinge, sits amongst the audience and constantly tests the limits of personal space – cowering and cringing in the gangway, diving under seats, brandishing “blood-stained” tissues into people’s faces. Towards the end of the tour everyone is invited to hold hands with the people around them for the mock séance.

Looking at the Gothic tourist lends a new perspective on the consumption of Gothic in the modern world – and also on our ideas of affect in relation to Gothic. As Light comments in an article which examines tourist behaviour in contemporary Dracula tourism to Romania: “During their visit to Transylvania, these tourists were engaged in much more than mindless hedonism or passive sightseeing. Instead they enacted a wide range of complex and creative embodied performances... Central to the whole

experience was the role of the imagination” (Light 2009: 254). Gothic tourists are indeed embodied creatures. They expect to encounter place as performance – and often to perform within it. The experience of the Gothic tourist (barring solitary pilgrimages to such Gothic destinations as Whitby) in contrast to many other modes of Gothic consumption tends to be communal, and the tourists closely-bonded. On the Necrobus, seats face each other and groups of tourists are telling ghost stories even before the bus starts. Whether it be Gothic camping, Ghost tourism or Zombie events, tourists tend to travel with friends and/or family. Relations with ghosts and monsters, despite the occasional fainting incident or panic attack in a Hay Ride Halloween, are predicated on enjoyment and pleasurable thrills.

Conclusion

Philip Stone in an article entitled ‘It’s a Bloody Guide’: Fun, Fear and a Lighter Side of Dark Tourism at the Dungeon Visitor Attractions, UK’ turns to the terminology of Performance Studies and the concept of “staged authenticity” (Stone 2009: 181). What is notable about Gothic tourism, however, is its staged inauthenticity - and this proves the blindspot of many critics. Carrie Clanton, in an article which focuses on ghost walks in Brighton and Derby, Warwick Castle and Mary King’s Close in Edinburgh, argues that “ghosts are utilised in a secular way by the British tourist and heritage industries, supporting claims of historical authenticity and the right to heritage status”. (Clanton 2007; 1). However, not only are the relations between heritage and the Gothic much more complicated than this would suggest, but also much Gothic tourism lays no claim to any idea of authenticity whatsoever, apart from the authenticity of the audience/spectator contract. In somewhat similar vein, Inglis and Holmes argue that “the ghost no longer frightens people *away*... Instead, the industry pledges the present of the specter as a way of luring tourists and their spending-power *in* to a particular locale” (Inglis and Holmes 2003:57) Again this involves a certain misunderstanding of the nature of Gothic tourism. Most Gothic tourism doesn’t pledge ghosts (though it will pledge scares and atmosphere). On the Necrobus the only person to ask “When do we see the ghosts?” was a five-year old boy.

Gothic Tourism usually has a somewhat complicated relation to heritage tourism in the modern world. In Britain at least, it intertwines interestingly with the whole heritage industry, pointing up the choices, lacks and problems of the latter (particularly the lack of bodies and dirt) and serving to articulate some of the discrepancy between heritage and inheritance. Gothic Tourism often testifies to a felt sense of cultural, rather than architectural, heritage and in the cases of such attractions as the Dungeons, or the Necrobus, it may provide a kind of running commentary on some of the popular cultural directions of the last 250 years.

Gothic Tourism has been around for as long as literary Gothic and is born of the same consumer culture. It takes its cues from fiction and can be impressively transmedial. Central to Gothic Tourism is the principle of overlay or supplementation of place. It is to a large extent a performance industry. Although it is unlikely ever to win any grants for Cultural Tourism in the EU, its techniques, form and subject matter are often surprisingly close to those of more respected theatre. The study of Gothic Tourism can help illuminate some of the blind-spots in Gothic Studies, and in no respect is this more so than in the study of its consumer: the Gothic tourists. Directing the spotlight at the Gothic Tourist, provides a unique opportunity for the study of Gothic affect, and a Gothic mode which is communal, immersive and performative.

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