

Dark Tourism and Fukushima

A MULTI-MODAL ANALYSIS OF THE REPRESENTATION OF
DARK TOURISM TO FUKUSHIMA

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Introduction

“Experience this rare tour that you can't find anywhere else in the world”¹

The quote above seems like a regular advertisement for plenty of touristic attractions. But the attraction in this case is anything but regular. The advertisement promotes a tour around the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. The plant was the site of a nuclear disaster in March 2011, as the result of an earthquake combined with a tsunami. The area directly around the power plant is forbidden due to the high radiation. Still, this doesn't stop tourists from visiting. The death and large scale destruction make it a site of *dark tourism*.

In this thesis I will be focusing on *how dark tourism is represented on websites that advertise touristic tours featuring the Fukushima Exclusion Zone*. Two websites will be analysed and interpreted: the tour as advertised by Voyagin and the *Fukuichi Kanko Project*, organised by a collective of invested parties. To analyse these websites, I will be using the method as formulated by Pauwels. The introduction will answer the following subjects:

1. Motivation: Why did I choose this subject and what is its scientific relevance?
2. Status Quaestionis: which fields of research are important, what's the current status of the field and which definitions are used?
3. Main question and sub questions and motivations for these.
4. Method: multimodal framework, why is this the right model to use?
5. The outline of research, what encompasses it?

1. Motivation

Tourism to nuclear sites has fascinated me since high school. Why would someone risk their health for a trip? It turns out that scientists have been asking themselves the same question. One of them is Jayne Krisjanous. She wrote 'An Exploratory Multimodal Discourse Analysis of Dark Tourism Websites' (2016), in which she states that “there is a relative lack of research on the nature of websites in dark tourism, particularly from the perspective of how a venture communicates these spaces as contested and how resources are used to construct and communicate meaning.”² Websites

¹ S.n.; Hirai (s.a.) (27-10-2016).

² Krisjanous (2016): 2.

that sell and promote dark tourism are, according to Krisjanous, not yet extensively researched. Especially not with a focus on how they communicate and construct meaning and what regard they give to the space that is subject to dark tourism. In 2014, Heuermann and Chhabra did a study on American sites of dark tourism, where they focused on authenticity.³ Krisjanous endeavoured to expand on that by conducting a multimodal analysis of several websites that promoted tours to sites that are considered dark. The lack of research on dark tourism is compounded by the fact that the disaster of Fukushima happened in 2011, so it is a relatively new location for dark tourism to exploit as well. As such, research on this particular location is fairly limited.

2. Status Quaestionis

The fields of research are mainly cultural studies, tourism, management, communication. Cultural studies, especially the researchers focusing on tourism, have taken interest in the subject of dark tourism. Their output ranges from broad general research to define dark tourism or inquiries into the motivations of tourists, to a more focused research on the impact of the disaster for specific geographic groups of tourists. Research on tourism towards Japan since the nuclear disaster concentrates mostly around other Asian countries and their image of Japan, like Taiwan,⁴ and Korea.⁵ Research on Japan and dark tourism mostly revolves around Hiroshima and Nagasaki.⁶ Scholars from the field of Communication Sciences has looked into multimodal research like Gunter Kress or Luc Pauwels.

The definition of dark tourism is subject to research in various studies and is still not unanimously decided on. People have always been intrigued by the concept of tragedy and disaster, as various studies demonstrate. The terms *dark tourism* and *thanatourism* are used to describe the practice of visiting locations where death and disaster have taken place. Concentration camps, sites of terrorist attacks, but also nuclear disaster sites are a case in point.⁷ Dark tourism has been discussed by multiple researchers. John Lennon and Malcom Foley argue, for instance, that there has been a shift in the way death and disaster are handled by those who offer touristic experiences. They want to move from a focus on modern pilgrimage sites to a word that encompasses more than that, dark tourism. Due to technological changes in the way people consume media and the accessibility to

³ Heuermann; Chhabra (2014).

⁴ Handler (2016).

⁵ Kim and Park (2016).

⁶ Yoshida; Bui; Lee (2016).

⁷ Podoshen (2013): 264.

information, sites of disaster and trauma are also represented differently.⁸ Philip Stone refers to dark tourism as an “act of travel to tourist sites associated with death, suffering or the seemingly macabre.”⁹ Philip Stone contributes to this idea again in ‘A dark tourism spectrum: Towards a typology of death and macabre related tourist sites, attractions and exhibitions’. He proposes that attractions vary from “lightest” to “darkest”. There is a difference between sites that are “associated with death and suffering, and sites that are of death and suffering.”¹⁰ This rings true in the article ‘Dark Tourism and Significant Other Death: Towards a Model of Mortality Mediation’ (2012), where Stone claims again that the dark tourism seen today represents certain kinds of death, not just death itself.¹¹ Tony Walter states that places that express dark tourism are a mediator between the dead and the living.¹² Stone on the other hand, suggests that dark tourism gives the visitor a chance “to contemplate death of the Self through gazing upon the Significant Other Dead”.¹³ The tourist can think about the chances of something similar happening to them (the Self), or how insignificant their own death will be in relation to the death they are in contact with (the Significant Other Dead). Stone builds on that in his later work, “at least for some people for some of the time at some sites, are not so much about consuming narratives of death, but, rather, of contemplating life and living in the face of inevitable mortality.”¹⁴ A touristic site becomes a narrative, for the visitor, which is personal and different for everyone, but also for those who provide the tourist experience.

Philip Stone writes: “Narratives about both the long and recent dead are imparted at dark tourism sites through formal interpretation. The dead are communicated and socially filtered through tourism information and (re)presentations as well as marketing descriptions.”¹⁵ He suggests that the following narratives can be practiced in the context of dark tourism sites: education, providing context to the historical events or educating on the consequences;¹⁶ entertainment, with tourists visiting dark tourism sites, usually as part of their leisure trip, often enjoying the presentation of the experience;¹⁷ haunting (memories), the haunting feelings that linger in places where extraordinary deaths have occurred appeal to the imagination;¹⁸ memorialization, remembering

⁸ Lennon; Foley (2010): 3.

⁹ Stone (2006): 146.

¹⁰ Stone (2006): 151.

¹¹ Stone (2012): 1566.

¹² Walter (2009): 52.

¹³ Stone (2011): 25.

¹⁴ Stone (2012): 1566.

¹⁵ Stone (2012): 1576.

¹⁶ Stone (2012): 1577.

¹⁷ Stone (2012): 1578.

¹⁸ Stone (2012): 1579.

those who have suffered and died;¹⁹ moral instruction, the sites, to varying degrees, offer through being exposed to Significant Other Death, an opportunity to construct morality out of meaning;²⁰ and finally memento mori, by which the tourist is reminded of their own mortality by the represented death.²¹ When a site fits the criteria of one narrative, it doesn't mean that they can't fit another one as well. Education and entertainment are closely intertwined and can amplify the message sent. Krisjanous adopts Digance's (2003) definition of dark tourism and focuses on contested places in pilgrimage. Krisjanous argues that "the nature of contest in dark tourism shares many of the reasons attributed to a site being contested in cultural or heritage tourism."²² This definition is not entirely useful for this thesis, because it only speaks of dark tourism in relationship to pilgrimage. In doing so, other motives for dark tourism are now being ignored.

Considering all the above, I will be using Stone's 2012 definition of dark tourism: spaces that focus on the relationship between tourism and mortality, while at the same time tries to improve our understanding of the world and interpreting specific phenomena (like death) at the individual and societal level.²³

In short, dark tourism is about visiting and creating touristic experiences centred on death and suffering. Not every site is the same and every location tells a different story. Hence Stone's spectrum from "lightest" to "darkest" tourism. The narrative changes along with the location as well with those who create the narrative. What is the prevalent narrative in the tours around Fukushima? Can they be categorized in the spectrum Stone provided? What narratives are being presented? And how?

3. Research question

This thesis will revolve around the following question: *how is dark tourism represented on websites that advertise touristic tours featuring the Fukushima Exclusion Zone?* As stated before, the tours towards the Fukushima Exclusion Zone are a relatively new venue for tour operators to advertise, which makes an new and interesting line of business. Websites are likely, for foreign and especially western tourists, the first source of information.

¹⁹ Stone (2013): 1579-1580. It's important to note that memory is created first-hand and remembrance is second-hand and more about commemorating.

²⁰ Stone (2012): 1580-1581.

²¹ Stone (2012): 1581.

²² Krisjanous (2016): 3.

²³ Stone (2012): 1568.

4. Method

As Krisjanous also analysed multiple websites that promote dark tourism, I will be using the same method as she did. Multimodal analysis is particularly useful for websites, as “[w]riting and image and colour lend themselves to doing different kinds of semiotic work; each has its distinct potentials for meaning”.²⁴ The meaning of the combined phenomena (image, music etc.) amounts to more than these separate phenomena alone. The intermediality present in websites is not being neglected this way.

A useful application of this method is explained by Luc Pauwels (2012). In ‘A Multimodal Framework for Analyzing Websites as Cultural Expressions’ he shows how this framework can be applied. The framework of website signifiers contains six phases to move from interpreting “salient aspects to more implicit meanings.”²⁵ This means a deeper understanding of the website can be reached by analysing less obvious aspects. In a multimodal analysis it’s important to keep both the researcher’s as the maker’s subjectivity in mind when interpreting the different modes and designs.

The first step is *Preservation of First Impressions and Reactions*. In this step the researcher captures their first impression and “look and feel” of the website. This precedes the actual analysis and relies heavily on the instinctual responses of the researcher. This means that other scientists could get different results in this phase because of different connotations and habitats.²⁶

The second step is an *Inventory of Salient Features sand Topics*. Here the researcher makes an inventory of the websites features and attributes, as well as an inventory of the main categories and topics. It is also important to note what is “meaningfully absent”, what should be on the website to make it more effective but seems to be missing. This is what Pauwels calls a “negative” analysis.²⁷

The third step contains an *In-depth Analysis of Content and Formal Choices* and exists out of three phases. This is, without a doubt, the biggest part of the analysis. The goal is to “look at the potential information that resides in the separate modes (intra-modal analysis) and then look at the complex forms of interplay between the different modes (cross-modal analysis).”²⁸ First the researcher examines the different modes separately and then analyses the sum of these modes as a whole in order to determine their relationship to each other. The first phase is the *Intra-Modal*

²⁴ Kress (2010): 1.

²⁵ Pauwels (2012): 247.

²⁶ Pauwels (2012): 253.

²⁷ Pauwels (2012): 253.

²⁸ Pauwels (2012): 253.

Analysis (fixed/static and moving/dynamic elements). There are various signifiers that the analyst can take into consideration. Firstly, potential culturally specific meanings are analysed by verbal/written signifiers that reside in the written content. Typographic signifiers focus on visual properties of the text, such as font choice. Visual representational types and signifiers look at the images on the webpage. The researcher has to pay attention to what is and how it is depicted.²⁹ Sonic types and signifiers focus on all auditory aspects on the websites, like songs, vocal sounds which are non-verbal, non-vocal sounds like car breaks.³⁰ When looking at the layout and design signifiers, the function of the website is made clear. The lay-out is designed to attract the reader, but it is important to note that it will be more revealing about the culture of the immediate sender(s) when they are responsible for the choices.³¹ The second part consists of an *Analysis of Cross-Modal Interplay*. It pays “attention to the forms of interplay between linguistics, visual, auditory, spatial and time-based elements.”³² Research should focus on relations between written parts and visuals, relations between sound and visuals and all possible interaction between typography.³³ The third phase is an *In-depth “Inverted” Analysis: Significantly Missing or Incomplete Content, Arguments and Formal Choices*. This is basically the same as phase two, but then focused on the elements that seem to be significantly missing. This can help to uncover cultural taboos or sensitive issues.

The fourth step is *Embedded Point(s) of View or ‘Voice’ and Implied Audience(s) and Purpose*. Here, the researcher determines which point of view is the most dominant and uses the different aspects of the website to aid them in this “(visual, textual, design elements like templates etc.)”³⁴ The implied audience can be found in the same way and is divided in primary and secondary audience(s). The main purpose can be explicitly stated, but also indirectly through “expected visitor/user behaviour.”³⁵ This step may involve more interpretation, as a lot of “sub-textual” reading has to be done.³⁶

The fifth step is *Analysis of Information Organization and Spatial Priming Strategies*. The website will be analysed on “the structural and navigational options and constraints [...] of websites, as well as their priming strategies and outer-directed features with respect to steering preferred readings and conduct, and exercising control”.³⁷ The structure can be analysed through the menus, internal

²⁹ Pauwels (2012): 254-255.

³⁰ Pauwels (2012): 255.

³¹ Pauwels (2012): 255-256.

³² Pauwels (2012): 256.

³³ Pauwels (2012): 256.

³⁴ Pauwels (2012): 257.

³⁵ Pauwels (2012): 257.

³⁶ Pauwels (2012): 257.

³⁷ Pauwels (2012): 258. Changes made by Rubin Renker.

links and navigational tools for instance, to determine the hierarchy. The easier accessible (amount of clicks to reach a page) something is, the better the spatial priming and thus the more important it is.³⁸

The sixth and final step is *Contextual Analysis, Provenance and Inference*. I have chosen not to use this part, because the things discussed and analysed here also are subject in the previous phases.

5. Outline

International Business Times states that the tours currently organized are voluntarily ran by residents. The Fukushima Daiichi power plant is not yet an official tour site. It may take a while because the Fukuichi Kanko Project, a plan to make the plant officially accessible to the public in 2036, has stranded for now.³⁹ The Strait Times reports on March the sixth of 2016 that any tours taking place now are not going to the site itself, but travel around the border of the exclusion site. Due to the high level of radiation, it's not safe to venture too close to or for too long at the Daiichi nuclear power plant. The amount of guided tours in the surrounding area is therefore limited. The article also mentions ten volunteers who provide tours. It also claims that more than 2000 visitors came to see the aftermath of the tsunami in 2011.⁴⁰

Regarding the chosen websites: there is a limited number of websites in English that promote tours featuring the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. Something to take into account is that tours might be offered in other languages, since multiple news sources mention a group of voluntary tour guides.⁴¹ One website is part of a large tour operator, Voyagin. This organisation promises to show tourists an authentic view of Asia and organises a big arrangement of different tours throughout Asia. A tour to Fukushima, around the Exclusion Zone, is one of the tours they're offering. The concept of Voyagin is that residents of Asia become hosts and organize their own tours. This is also the case with the tour that visits the Fukushima Daiichi power plant. The host in question speaks both Japanese and English.

The second website is about the *Fukuichi Kanko Project*.⁴² They advocate to turn the disaster site into a touristic destination in 2036, centred on education. The group of artists, writers, journalists and researchers provided suggestions and plans to make this happen. This dissertation is interested

³⁸ Pauwels (2012): 258.

³⁹ Justice (10 March, 2016).

⁴⁰ S.n. (7 March, 2016).

⁴¹ Ito (6 March, 2016); S.n. (7 March, 2016).

⁴² Azuma (s.a.).

in the contrast between the two websites. What, if any, are the differences in the way a corporate organization focuses on a narrative, compared to a non-profit organization?

Chapter 1: Voyagin to Fukushima

Voyagin seems to appeal to tourists from all over the world. The website provides different language settings; Japanese, Chinese (traditional and simplified), English, Indonesian and French. The site features more currencies to pay with than languages: twenty in total. I will only be looking at the English website with the prices in euros.

1. Preservation of First Impressions and Reactions

When first visiting the website of *Voyagin*, I went directly to the page that promotes tours around the Fukushima Power Plant. At the first glance, it seems like a nice professional tour operator, due to the consistent use of a neat template, that can be found at the other pages of the website as well. The text appears organised and complete of information. The progression of the text appears logical as well, going from the most important information first to more and specific details later.

The pictures, presented in a slideshow, are a bit vague, however. It isn't clear what they are trying to sell by showing *these* particular pictures. The colours are muted, showing lots of greys, and, for the uninformed reader could just as well be any old industrial town where the weather isn't too great, with a lot of nature surrounding it.

2. Inventory of Salient Features and Topics

The different webpages conform to the same layout. The pages that offer an experience have a fixed and slight translucent bar on top of the page. It has the orange logo of the website in the upper left corner. Clicking on it will direct you back to the main page. A search bar is placed to the right of it. The right corner shows, from left to right, the language and currency setting, a help button and a login button. A horizontal line runs underneath this all, showing the different decisions of the visitor of the website. In the case of the tour to the Fukushima Daiichi Power Plant it says: Top > Japan > Tours and Activities in Japan > Fukushima > Private Guided Tours > See Fukushima Daiichi Power Plant with your own eyes. The last one is the title of the actual page as well.

The background header is an image that applies to the promoted activity, which is also the last image in the slideshow. In this case: a fence with barbed wire with the power plant behind it. The image is darkened and partially cut off. On the left and right of this image, there are black areas. Underneath it, where the main body of the text is, there is a white background. The centre piece,

what the visitor of the website sees first, is a slideshow of four images (description follows). It is also shown through something that resembles a sticker that this tour is “Voyagin Certified”, meaning that the organization approves of this activity and that this is really aligned with Voyagin. Underneath the slideshow, tags are shown by which the tour can be found through the search engine on the website or to find similar experiences on this website. On the right side of this, a table is shown where you can book your trip directly. Pick the date and the amount of people accompanying the visitor and press “Book It!”. The price is immediately visible as well: starting at 445 euros per person.

The actual text is divided in different segments: a short overview, highlights (list with bullet points), description and meeting point. Important information and what people need to bring with them follow, but isn’t completely written out over the entire central bar. Then in a grey area, the host is introduced, where they tell a bit about themselves and their motives. It also shows which languages the host speaks and a button to contact them. The host for the Daiichi tour is Yuta and speaks both Japanese and English. The visitor of the website can click on a “read more”-button for more information about the host.

The main text ends after that. The bottom of the pages shows recommendations to other experiences. The grey footer has a lot of information in white, a phone number, tours, tickets and restaurants divided by country and then by region, a bar with practical information, like an FAQ and “about us”. The visitor can also change the currency settings and language settings. It has a Top 10 of things to do and activities and buttons that direct to partners.

Sound is noticeably absent. There is no background sound, be it vocal or just sounds. The fact that the only pictures shown are on top of the page is also noteworthy. It seems like there are little to no photographs of the power plant itself or of tourists partaking in the tour.

3. In-depth Analysis of Content and Formal Choices

3. a. Intra-modal Analysis (*fixed/static and moving/dynamic elements*)

When looking at the **verbal/written signifiers**, a few things stand out: the way the website puts the emphasis on a unique experience, the focus on safety, and the date. There are multiple examples to be found that are attempting to convince the visitor of the website to take these tours. The main rhetoric used is the emphasis on an unique experience. The first is already found in the title: “See Fukushima Daiichi Power Plant with your own eyes”. This is something you can’t just experience through media, you *have* to be there in person. “One-of-a-kind and completely safe tour”, “Experience this rare tour that you can't find anywhere else in the world”, “The tour I offer to you is

truly unique. I can provide something you can never see outside than Fukushima.” This tour, the visitor can only do this in Fukushima, and nowhere else. And it’s stressed, over and over again. There are other selling points as well, but not as recurring as the first: “Enjoy the view from the only survived fishing boat from Tomioka town”. The phrase is built on the assumption that Tomioka town was a fishers town with numerous boats to provide for their livelihood. The reader may not know if this is true and the text itself doesn’t provide any evidence to support this assumption. Then there is the phrase: “Catch a fish in front of Daiichi and examine how contaminated it is.” This sentence is the one that struck me the most. This fish is caught only for the tourists to show off the high radiation in the sea surrounding the power plant. It seems so sensational and seem to serve no other purpose than to shock. It may be educational, the host stated that he gives this tour to raise awareness about the consequences of disasters of this magnitude: “And maybe, that is what we want you to bring back to your country as a memory and talk about with your family or friends, figure out how not to let this kind of disaster happen again anywhere in the world.” But it seems to play a relatively small part in the advertisement.

The page states over and over again how the tour is safe. And for those who are anxious about the risks extra precautions have been taken. The entire section of “Important Information” is about safety. That they only visit places where radiation is at an acceptable point and how it compares to radiation in big cities like Tokyo or when flying with an airplane. They provide Geiger counters so tourists can see that the radiation is within acceptable limits, and provide Tyvek suits for people who don’t completely trust the situation. There is also a mention about the safety of the boat: the captain is described as experienced and skilled and the boat provides life jackets in case of an emergency. The operator also thought of those who suffer from seasickness, as pills against the ailment are available. Radiation at sea is also lower than on land since the water is one of the best shielding materials against radiation, according to Voyagin.

The way the webpage talks about the disaster stands out, they refer to it by date: “3/11 happened.” Later again, the host talks about 3/11, “But, 3.11 changed everything”, and the personal impact it had on him. It looks the same as when western, and especially American media talk about another disastrous event: 9/11. Referring to a disaster by date, instead of the thing that happened, is telling. People remember it by the date. This means that the disaster that happened on 11 March is of big importance to the Japanese people.

Next are the **typographic signifiers**. It’s very clear that the webpage adheres to a certain style that is consistent throughout the entire website. So no matter the subject of the experience, the style stays

the same. This means that when people look for mass graves, they will be greeted by the same font choices and colour schemes as when they are looking for a visit to a traditional teahouse and accompanying ceremony. The page uses the same font, Source Sans Pro, throughout every section of the website. It's simple and straightforward, pleasant and easy to read. There are little to no decorations. Emphasis on different parts of text is done by an increase of size, colour or bolding the text. The regular text is just black, while titles are orange in congruence with the company logo. There is also white text on a dark background to make it more readable instead of just leaving it black.

The only thing written differently is the logo of Voyagin, it's slightly curved and the space between the letters is bigger. It's orange, curved and has a lot more decoration, with the 'y' and 'g' extending into a curved line, underlining the name. The font appears to be the same or similar to that of the main text, however.

Visual representational types and signifiers limit themselves to the images used on the webpage. There are only four photographs, presented in a slide show. The common denominator between them is that they are all projected on a computer screen and have the same projected properties: a square that is slightly shorter than broad. They're sharp enough for the small frame in which it is presented on the website, but doesn't hold up when zooming in for more specific details.

The first image depicts a town, possibly Iwaki city. It seems like it's taken at the middle of a crossroad. On the left, and in the middle above the road, various signs are shown. The texts are all in Japanese, except for the speed limit using Arabic numerals. There are cherry trees on the right, right after their blossoming peak, but it seems cloudy and not very warm. The colours of the picture make me suspect that it's autumn and it's slowly getting more glum. There are no people in the picture, the entire street is abandoned. It seems that the houses on both sides of the road are just residential houses. It's hard to say if the street would have been busier before the disaster. Without knowledge of the Japanese language, or a translation in the by-liner, it is challenging to determine the function of this particular road and why this one is chosen as representative of the Fukushima area.

The second picture is hard to describe, it seems like a walkway or the top of a roof or the inside of a house with the outer walls of the house having completely vanished. There are remains of a white tiled floor and underneath that lies stone or concrete. On the far side of the object, it seems like there is a small wall, behind which is a road, suggested by the roof of a car. Behind that is another wall, black, made up out of different cylindrical shapes. Then a white building, it seems to be commercial but it isn't clear for which sector. The weather is still clouded and glum. The electricity

poles, which are positioned from the left to the right of the picture are the only identifiable objects on this picture. That and the couple of bare trees on the right. Again, there are no people in this picture.

The third picture shows an overview of a valley. On the left side industrial buildings are shown in the distance. This could very well be the nuclear reactor plant. A plume of white smoke is coming from one of the stacks. It also shows the sea on the left side, but a lot of fields fill the rest of the picture. Considering the green structures/vehicles that are shown, it's safe to assume that this land is (or was) used for agriculture. This is supported when looking at the way the roads divide the land. On the right side in the back, there is a hill. It seems like the photographer was standing on a similar hill when taking this picture. On the right there are also some unidentifiable structures, which could be storage. A tree is visible on the border of the left side of the frame. Again it's cloudy, gloomy and desolated.

The last picture is taken from behind a wired fence. The angle is slightly up, so the buildings of the power plant on the picture are partially behind the fence. There are several buildings and structures. A line of trees separates the forefront of the area behind the fence and the bigger buildings behind that treeline. There is a big red/white crane on the right, but in front of it is a big white structure (a crane or an electricity pole). The picture shows a pristine white building on the left. In front of that building stands a blue/white building and a grey cylindrical structure. The clouds are very visible on the picture and there are no people in this picture either.

The overall conclusion could be either that the photographer didn't really know how to capture images that would support the message that Voyagin is trying to send, or that it could happen anywhere. The pictures show no easily identifiable markers to know what kind of location the visitor is looking at. It's empty and grim, but how this is important isn't made clear.

Sonic types and signifiers are completely absent, so I will continue with the **layout and design signifiers**. The website uses one template for all their pages. It's hard to say whether the webpage is designed specifically for Voyagin or that it's a premade template that multiple websites use. The structure is very rigid. The visitor can walk only one path and that is reading the text or buy a tour. The path mostly goes from the top to the bottom while the most important information is high up. The interface to buy a ticket on the right has four spaces to fill before the visitor can press on "book it". People can share this page by Google+, Twitter, Facebook or add it to their wish list (which is linked to the Voyagin-account of the visitor).

3. b. Analysis of Cross-Modal Interplay

It is peculiar that the visuals of the webpage seem to be subservient to the written aspect of the site. The images shown are vague and only serve as an atmospheric impression at most. The images don't show why the visitor of the website should do this particular tour, while the text emphasizes on that multiple times.

The interplay between the other aspects of the page seem small. The text is meant to convince the visitor to buy a tour, which can also be done on the same page. Everything seems to be organised to be as straightforward and simple as possible. The higher up the information is placed the more important it is. This clashes with the shown images, since they don't seem to provide any meaning besides emptiness. But emptiness is hard to judge when the visitor can't make out what exactly they're looking at. The only thing the visitor can make out is that the weather was bad when taking these pictures.

3. c. In-depth "Inverted" Analysis: Significantly Missing or Incomplete Content, Arguments and Formal Choices

A few things seem to be missing, sound most of all, since it's part of the analysis but completely absent on the website. What also seems to be missing is a play in fonts. Usually web designers choose a different font for lead text so it compliments or contrasts the core text. The choice has been made to not do that for this website.

It is also curious that the host is talking about spreading awareness to those who didn't take this tour, suggesting that this tour also has an educational aspect. This is nowhere supported in the other text or images.

4. Embedded Point(s) of View or "Voice" and Implied Audience(s) and Purposes

Voyagin is the organiser of the tours and experiences this website provides. This tour operator organises a large arrangement of tours throughout Asia while promising to show tourists an authentic view of Asia. *Voyagin* uses residents of the continent to organize their own tours. By using guides from the area they are from and are familiar with, *Voyagin* hopes to help tourists "to uncover true authenticity in a foreign destination."⁴³

⁴³ S.n.; Hirai (s.a.).

When looking at the language settings, it seems like the intended audience is part of the group that speaks the one or more of the languages Voyagin provides: Japanese, Chinese (traditional and simplified), English, Indonesian and French.

The goal is ultimately to sell these tours. The people who partake in the tour will get in return a unique experience around a historical location, in which history is still ongoing (as radiation is still a threat). The goal of the host and the goal of the tour operator could be different. From the part that the host had written, one could surmise that he wanted to tell the story of what happened and what the consequences are for those who live there. He has a focus on commemoration and awareness. Another goal Voyagin is trying to accomplish, is to find new hosts with unique experiences. Multiple times they ask the visitor if they want to sign up as a host.

5. Analysis of Dynamic Information Organization and Spatial Priming Strategies

This tour is, from the homepage, hard to reach if the visitor doesn't know what they're looking for. First they have to select the country they're visiting, then the region and then they get an overview of experiences in that region. The region isn't shown as one of the most popular six destinations, so the visitor has to go through a menu to reach the region of Fukushima. And even then, the tour is one of the last shown. When the visitor knows that they want to see the nuclear disaster site, heads to Google and types in something along the lines of 'tourist tours nuclear site Fukushima', the specific page can be found on the first page of results.

Chapter 2: Imagining the future with the Fukuichi Kanko Project

The Fukuichi Kanko Project (FKP) does not promote tours to the exclusion site at the time of writing this thesis. The project is meant to make the site accessible in 2036 for the main public and to educate them about the dangers of nuclear power. Right now, opposition has stopped the organisation from advancing their plans.⁴⁴

1. Preservation of First Impressions and Reactions

While the website has multiple language settings, I will only be looking at the English parts of the webpage. It stands out that the main text is translated into English, but the buttons on top of the page are not. This made it seem like it's translated for those outside of Japan who want to know what the FKP is about, but it is not intended for them. Did they merely forget to translate it or is the text really not for foreign visitors? What also stands out is that it seems like a monolithic chunk of text.

2. Inventory of Salient Features and Topics

The header is slightly translucent and dynamic, meaning it will scroll along with the reader, always staying in view. The text of the header is almost entirely in Japanese, despite the language settings being set to English. Translated, the title on the left says: "Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Plant Tourism Development Plan", underneath it "Consider Fukushima after 25 years". The buttons next to it say, from left to right: Recent News, Report, Reference Material, Published Media, Sponsorship/Corporation and above each other: About this project and Membership. The name of the project is translated, as well as the part where the visitor can choose the language setting. There are buttons to share this page on Twitter, Facebook and Google+. Underneath it in yellow is a bar where an amount of money is displayed, but hasn't been updated since the 5th of March 2014. It looks like the funds collected for the relief efforts after the quake. Almost all text in this header is blue, except for those with a blue background, which are white.

The main page has a centre area with a white background. The English title is black, underlined with blue. A bigger title text, in Japanese (again: Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Plant Tourism Development plan), is blue and the main text is black. Behind the centre area is a blue background

⁴⁴ Justice (10 March, 2016).

with diagonal stripes in it. The text is an exposition of the motivations for the Fukuichi Kanko Project. There are no breaks in the text. It's closed off with the signature of Hiroki Azuma, the CEO of the Genron Corporation.

What follows is a break in the lay-out. The most prominent people who are part of the project are introduced in "Key Members of the Fukuichi Kanko Project". The webpage shows eight pictures, two by two. The picture on the left side, the name and their occupation in black with a yellow background on the right and beneath that a short introduction about who they are in blue letters with a white background. Seven of them have a Twitter-button underneath their picture.

Then there's another break in the layout. "Staff of the Fukuichi Kanko Project:" follows. This part shows five names after each other and their function. The rest of this block of text is about Genron, which is a social platform in Tokyo to publish periodicals and to hold talks and lectures. Their activities consist of operating the Genron Café, publishing and managing the Genron Supporters.⁴⁵ Their main focus after 2011 became Fukushima. At the complete bottom of the page the visitor can read that the webpage is copyrighted by Genron as well.

The text talks about plans to turn the Fukushima disaster site in a tourist destination, but the visitor cannot find any information about how the project wants to accomplish that. Or an overview of talks that are being organized. The FKP wrote a book on their plans but it is only accessible in Japanese. Sonic signifiers are completely absent. Nor are there visuals on how they see the future of Fukushima.

3. In-depth Analysis of Content and Formal Choices

3. a. Intra-modal Analysis (*fixed/static and moving/dynamic elements*)

The **verbal/written signifiers** show a focus on looking forward while at the same time remembering what happened to Fukushima. The word "future" is used five times. The main message of the text can be found in the following sentence: "The driving idea of this project is to begin investigating now the ways in which the Fukushima Daiichi disaster site in 2036 should gather individuals, build facilities, and display and convey messages, while also placing the reconstruction of disaster-stricken areas at the core of its vision"⁴⁶ The FKP wants to make the disaster site accessible for tourists, while still giving attention to the regions around it and to educate future generations about nuclear energy.

⁴⁵ S.n. (s.a.) 'About Genron'.

⁴⁶ Azuma (s.a.).

Their desire to remember and educate is explained and stressed multiple times throughout the text. Even though “memories of the disaster and the resulting pollution are still fresh”, the FKP thinks it’s important to already start thinking of the future. Because “we cannot allow ourselves to forget about the scale of this disaster” and “We must teach future generations of this error”. The plea-like nature of the text is clear. The FKP is afraid that if Japan doesn’t plan ahead, they will be unprepared for the tourists that will inevitably come: “in the future, “tourists” will come to the disaster site.” The FKP believes that turning the disaster site into a touristic location will give Japan a way to “true recovery”. FKP goes even further and state that “The prefecture of Fukushima, and Japan as a whole, cannot move forward without taking on the responsibility of the error that has commonly come to simply be referred to as “Fukushima.””, meaning that there will be no progression from the disaster, emotionally, if they don’t do something about education and keeping the memory alive.

The FKP claims to go against the main attitude of the country in dealing with trauma, because the FKP believes that people have the feeling that “turning the site of the nuclear disaster into a tourist destination would be unthinkable, improper.” This is emphasized when the FKP refers to how the people of Japan felt about resurrecting a memorial for the bomb that devastated on Hiroshima: “there was a strong desire among Hiroshima residents that the Dome be demolished, as it brought back horrible memories of the dropping of the atomic bomb.” The government is, according to the KFP, adopting that same attitude: “The administration of present-day Japan is giving no thought to this kind of issue.” It seems like the general opinion is to ignore and forget and FKP does not agree with this.

That the FKP wants to open Fukushima 25 years after the disaster is no coincidence. At first consideration, the reader might think that’s just how long decontamination takes. But in fact, the disaster at Chernobyl happened in 1986, which is 25 years before the disaster at Fukushima. And Chernobyl is attracting more and more tourists. The statement of 25 years also implies that another disaster could happen in that time. “However, the future will inevitably come. And 25 years is not a short amount of time.” This almost sounds like a warning.

As for **typographic signifiers**, the font used is Meiryo or MS PGothic. “Meiryo is a modern sans serif Japanese typeface developed by Microsoft to offer an optimal on screen reading experience and exceptional quality in print.”⁴⁷ It’s simple and straightforward and easy to read. This font is the same font used when looking at the Japanese version of the text. The spaces between the lines is not

⁴⁷ S.n. (s.a.) ‘Meiryo’.

consistent. The main text is, but the introduction of the key-members and staff goes from smaller to bigger, back to smaller spaces between the lines.

It is interesting to see that **visual representational types and signifiers** are all focused on portraits of the key-members. Judging by the composition, the fact that they all have a microphone or are talking, one can assume that the pictures were taken during a talk or lecture. The bodies are centred in the middle of the frame and are turned either to the left or right diagonal. Their heads usually face the same direction, but sometimes look more directly at the camera. The background is more or less the same and seem to be the side of a whiteboard.

On this website **sonic types and signifiers** are completely absent. So next are the **layout and design signifiers**. A few things stand out when looking at these, like the moving header (dynamic). The non-translated buttons redirect all to the same newsfeed for a magazine. The last button translates the main site back to Japanese. There are two other pages in English, they link to the books written by the FKP about their subject: 'Chernobyl Dark Tourism Guide: Shisouchizu beta vol. 4-1' and 'Tourizing Fukushima: The Fukuichi Kanko Project (Shisouchizu beta vol. 4-2)'. The pages contain an extensive review of the content of the books, in English, as the books are only available in Japanese.

3. b. Analysis of Cross-Modal Interplay

It is noteworthy that the visuals on the webpage have nothing to do with what is written. The portraits are meant to give the people behind the Project a face, but do nothing to further their message about making Fukushima a tourist destination. The main text is the most important and is all centred together. All other modes are second to that.

3. c. In-depth 'negative' analysis

There is a definite lack of interactive parts on the website. It only consist of one page with text and information about two books they have written. It just goes straight down without any illustrative support.

4. Embedded Point(s) of View or 'Voice' and Implied Audience(s) And Purposes

The point of view in this case is quite clear. The CEO of Genron Corporation is speaking on behalf of the people who are part of the Fukuichi Kanko Project. The text is speaking for all of them. When a text is representative for a group, it's hard to determine if all people agree with what is written. The CEO will stand behind the text, because he signed it. Genron is a corporation concerned with the future of Japan and offers a platform for those who might not be heard by the government, "an alternative space for political, cultural and critical discourses, and to envision the new shape of contemporary Japanese culture."⁴⁸ This is not the same as Genron NPO, which is another organisation where "Japanese intellectuals who were dissatisfied with the Japanese media, and called into question the authenticity of the voices of the general public."⁴⁹ This organisation is focused a lot more on international relations and how they reflect on the internal affairs of Japan.⁵⁰

Western readers are *not* the implied audience, the navigation of the website proves that immediately. The audience the FKP had in mind are Japanese residents who are interested in the future of Fukushima. It is meant to convince the reader to help and spread awareness. The tone of the text is very consistent. The reason the text is available in English is either for those who are interested in the FKP as contextual information, to know the field of debate when dealing with the consequences of the disaster. Journalists and researchers are probably the people who read this text in English. The goal remains the same: the more people know about the FKP, the more they will talk about it and the more they will think on the subject. The FKP then hopes that those people are agreeable to their message and support their cause.

5. Analysis of Information Organization and Spatial Priming Strategies

It is curious that this webpage can only be found through Google. At least for those who don't know Japanese. The main website is a newsfeed with links to articles the Genron Corporation has written, this feed is solely in Japanese. Almost all buttons on the headline direct towards that same newsfeed and directly to the top. So it's not like the visitor is getting redirected towards a specific part in that newsfeed. The pages written in English direct the visitor towards the two books on the subject of the Fukuichi Kanko Project, with an extensive summary of their contents. The books are only available in Japanese. This part is also not a web shop, but just a summary of the text. Clicking the image will

⁴⁸ S.n. (s.a.) 'About Genron'.

⁴⁹ S.n. (s.a.) 'About the Genron NPO'.

⁵⁰ S.n. (s.a.) 'About the Genron NPO'.

direct the visitor to a web shop where one can buy the books. This web shop is part of the main website of Genron.

Chapter 3: Comparison

In this chapter I compare the two websites analysed in the previous chapters. Both the webpages of Voyagin and the Fukuichi Kanko Project have resulted in interesting insights. The comparison will be structured around the same analysis model. This way the different topics will be compared to their respective counterparts.

1. Preservation of First Impressions and Reactions

When comparing the first impressions that I had when I came across these two websites, the difference is striking. The webpage of Voyagin is inviting and professional, whereas the English FKP-page seems to be an afterthought. The block of text isn't really inviting and the untranslated buttons on the page are curious. Did they just forget to translate it or is the text really not for foreign visitors?

When looking at the result of Krisjanous inventory of first impressions, they stated that the darker the tourism became, the more grave and serious the tone of the website. Websites on the lighter side of the dark tourism spectrum would promise entertainment or "the experience of being 'terrified'."⁵¹ The webpages of Voyagin and FKP are both not very strict and formal, but also not overtly entertaining or shocking. It would seem that they exist somewhere in between, which could mean that the disaster site exists somewhere in the middle of the scale according to those who made the pages, even though Krisjanous, Yankovska and Hannam consider nuclear disaster sites as "dark"⁵². Krisjanous also noted that websites often "aimed to satisfy multiple goals simultaneously".⁵³ Such as doing transactions, giving information about the visit and educate. The Voyagin page does exactly that, while the FKP only seems to be informing and educating.

2. Inventory of Salient Features and Topics

It is curious to note that both websites have their logo in the top-left corner, as well as a slightly translucent horizontal bar that stays at the top of the screen when the visitors scrolls down. The big difference however, is that Voyagin is consistent their translations and made sure that the interface remains accessible, regardless of the chosen language option. With the website of the FKP this is not the case. Both have social media buttons, so they both desire more exposure and sharing these

⁵¹ Krisjanous (2016): 6.

⁵² Krisjanous (2016): 5-6.

⁵³ Krisjanous (2016): 7.

pages on social media would help with that. The webpages use a similar lay-out, with single columns and a straightforward presentation. Krisjanous only explains how they approached this part of the analysis and continues to talk about their findings in phase three.⁵⁴

3. In-depth Analysis of Content and Formal Choices

3. a. Intra-modal Analysis (*fixed/static and moving/dynamic elements*)

When comparing the **verbal/written signifiers**, both Voyagin and FKP write about the disaster in a certain way. Voyagin chooses to talk about it by “3/11” and FKP settles for “Fukushima”. Both make the event more abstract by using a single phrase. They don’t do it the same way, implying that the Japanese people are not united in the way they talk about the disaster. Granted is, though, that the event made a deep and lasting impact on the Japanese people. One could say that the first, 3/11, uses parallels with 9/11 and the second with “Chernobyl”. When people talk about the nuclear disaster that happened in 1986 in Ukraine, they only use the name of the power plant. Fukushima is the name of the region, but the full name of the power plant is the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, so in a way it’s similar.

What also can be noted is that the tone and messages of both websites are entirely different. The Voyagin website wants to sell their tours and focuses on a unique experience and repeatedly affirms the reader of the safety of partaking the tour. FKP looks to the future, they want to convince the reader of something too, but it isn’t focused around selling tours, but to think about how to deal with the trauma when it is safe to venture to the power plant itself.

Both mention memory but the emphasis it receives is different. Memorizing and remembering what happened is for the FKP one of the main topics of the text. The host of the Voyagin-tour talks about it too, but only in the conclusion of his own story. He wants the tourists to learn something from the experience. The voice of the host is contradictory to that of Voyagin, it seems.

Krisjanous concluded that lighter sites suggested “that some information could only be gained through consumption of the onsite experience.”⁵⁵ This is exactly what Voyagin does, considering the “last remaining fishing boat” and the emphasis on a unique experience. The catching of the fish and examination of radiation even goes as far as “audience participation”.⁵⁶ The tourists can see what is happening to the environment without risking the same fate as the fish or the people that needed to

⁵⁴ Krisjanous (2016): 7.

⁵⁵ Krisjanous (2016): 7.

⁵⁶ Krisjanous (2016): 7.

evacuate their homes due to the high levels of radiation. Krisjanous also noted that many websites have visiting etiquettes displayed on their website.⁵⁷ Voyagin has some clothing guidelines, like the websites on the lighter side of the spectrum. FKP has not yet established etiquettes since there is no tour to partake in yet.

The **typographic signifiers** share some similarities. The pages both use a font that is easy to read and stylistically simple. It seems like the Voyagin-webpage is more consistent in their layout and uses colour to indicate different parts. The FKP-webpage seems to do this less. The FKP does use a special font designed for both Japanese typography and Roman typography. But it is also easy to read and stylistically simple.

Krisjanous found that darker sites used formal and solid fonts to convey respect to the happenings they represented. The background was often dark or muted. Lighter sides often used a lot of colour, playful fonts and animated backgrounds.⁵⁸ Again both Voyagin and FKP seems to exist in between. Voyagin uses a template, so this difference could be dismissed as a constraint of the format the website uses. The FKP doesn't have such an excuse. A cultural difference could be an explanation or indifference/ignorance to the connotations of the typography signifiers.

The **visual representational types and signifiers** are in both cases not very strong. Voyagin uses pictures that are unclear in their meaning and usefulness and FKP uses portraits to introduce their key-members. Voyagin could use these pictures as addition to their message, but it comes across like they didn't know how to capture that in a picture. It seems like FKP doesn't want to use the portraits as a complimentary tool for their message, at most they use it to humanize their movement to show that these are real people supporting the message.

It's curious to see that Krisjanous noted that along the entire spectrum of dark tourism, a lot of images were used. Krisjanous states that "Examples such as this demonstrate how cross-modal interplay can be used, where visual and often graphic imagery powerfully support or enforce adjacent narrative."⁵⁹ Both Voyagin as FKP are not doing this. Voyagin does check off the list Krisjanous made for photographs for darker sites of tourism: "For the darker sites, photographic images often included landscape and buildings, with a mix of somber-colored contemporary shots

⁵⁷ Krisjanous (2016): 7.

⁵⁸ Krisjanous (2016): 7.

⁵⁹ Krisjanous (2016): 8.

and historic black-and-white images if historic events could be captured at that time.”⁶⁰ Voyagin included landscapes and buildings and a mix of somber-colored contemporary shots. They miss the black-and-white images because the historic event took place in the time of digital colour photography. The FKP uses no pictures to support or enforce their adjacent narrative.

The **sonic types and signifiers** are absent in both webpages. The **layout and design signifiers** prove again that the Voyagin website is a lot more consistent in their design and layout than the FKP. Voyagin uses the same layout for every experience, most important information first with the place to buy the experience immediately next to it. Their priorities are clear. The introduction of the host is less important than the selling points of the tour. The FKP uses this page (both in Japanese and English) and the two pages with the English description of the books with this layout. All the other pages that the page links to have a different design and layout. The newsfeed is a widget for android that is not part of this website but an external piece of software that Genron Corporations uses.

The big number of webpages analysed by Krisjanous allowed for big differences in the layout and design signifiers, making it hard to draw conclusive arguments. Krisjanous states that darker sites uses a lot of information but surrounded by plenty of white to draw attention to it, using monochromatic or sepia tones to express a temporal breach. Whereas lighter sites use more eclectic and cluttered information to denote playfulness or informality.⁶¹ Looking at the FKP, the information is definitely cluttered, but I wouldn't suggest that the way they present their information make it look as if it was a lighter shade of dark tourism. Their message is a formal one and they reinforce their accountability by presenting their names underneath the written text. The Voyagin page is less formal, but a lot more professional, ensuring that their message is taken a lot more serious.

3. b. Analysis of Cross-Modal Interplay

The interplay of the Voyagin webpage seems to serve the goal of enticing the visitor of the page to book the tour. The higher the information is placed, the more important it is and the layout is made to look simple and straightforward. The visitor won't get the idea that they don't know where to look for certain information. The FKP webpage on the other hand, doesn't serve such an obvious goal. The hierarchy of signifiers on this page are a lot clearer. The text seems to be the most important part and all other aspects are inferior to that.

⁶⁰ Krisjanous (2016): 8.

⁶¹ Krisjanous (2016): 8.

As Krisjanous analysed the cross-modal interplay, their focus was mainly on “resources associated with transactions and other commercial aspects”.⁶² Voyagin only sells the tour, whereas FKP, through the Genron corporation, sells books (after the visitor looks hard for it), this clashes with the findings of Krisjanous: “many of the darker sites offered only educational material”.⁶³ Lighter sites of dark tourism also sold souvenirs and mementos, suggesting that selling these kind of things can denote a slant towards commodification.”⁶⁴

3. c. In-depth ‘negative’ analysis

Both webpages lack sonic types and signifiers, but that is not too odd. Most websites don’t use anything sonic and most users think automated sonic types are highly irritating. But Krisjanous found that actually a lot of websites used some sort of auditory support. There is a lot of difference in the kinds they used, but they were there nevertheless.⁶⁵

Both also seem to be lacking in complimentary or contrasting images to support their messages. Both websites want to be easily readable and forgo a play with typography. The simplicity could very easily charm the reader, but could also be seen as uncreative and unimaginative. Krisjanous decided to forgo this part of the analysis, but thought it could be fruitful “especially for further identifying possible issues of contest that are either overlooked or intentionally avoided by the source.”⁶⁶

4. Embedded Point(s) of View or ‘Voice’ and Implied Audience(s) And Purposes

Both Voyagin and the Fukuichi Kanko Project have a dominant voice. The Voyagin website is maintained by the staff that works for Voyagin. Their goal is to sell unique experiences to tourists. The host who gives the tour has some say in what they put in the description of the tour, but it is minimal and seems to be mostly focused on his own introduction.

The FKP is a group of people associated with the Genron Corporation, so they are all concerned with the future of Japan. The CEO of Genron signed this text, so what is written will be mostly his voice. Others seem to agree with him, however, otherwise they wouldn’t lend their name and picture to be associated with it. Their implied audience is harder to determine, but when looking at the interface, it doesn’t seem to be the Western visitors. Considering the tone and the overall look of the

⁶² Krisjanous (2016): 8.

⁶³ Krisjanous (2016): 8.

⁶⁴ Krisjanous (2016): 8.

⁶⁵ Krisjanous (2016): 8.

⁶⁶ Krisjanous (2016): 8.

website, it seems to be more focused on informing those who are interested, with a slight emphasis on Japanese people. A visitor will likely only come by this website if they are actively looking for it.

There are many different ways in which websites present their voice, Krisjanous noted that victims of disaster were often given a place in the narrative to show or tell about their experiences through by memoirs (voiced or written).⁶⁷ Voyagin adheres to this in a small way by using a host that was local to the region. The meltdown happened an hour and a half away from his home. Based on the analysed page, it is unclear whether FKP wants to do the same. Krisjanous doesn't speak about the implied audiences or goals of the pages. Which is a pity because many interesting things can be found about that.

5. Analysis of Information Organization and Spatial Priming Strategies

Both pages are quite easy to find if someone knows what they are looking for. If not, both pages seem to be hidden deep within the structures of their respective websites/organisations. The links on the FKP all direct to the same newsfeed, despite all the buttons having different names. The Voyagin tour can be found more easily when the visitor goes looking for a certain region.

Krisjanous pays no attention to the information organization and spatial priming strategies, but does note that sometimes websites allowed visitors to co-create a narrative through customer reviews or the use of User Generated Content. This is not the case for both Voyagin and FKP, but Krisjanous also notes that websites that use these options are fairly limited.⁶⁸

6. Conclusion

The fact that often the results of the Voyagin and Fukuichi Kanko Project are not confirming to Krisjanous analysis made me believe that Krisjanous didn't take professionalism into account when making their observations. A light shade of dark tourism site with a professional looking website will be taken more seriously than a darker shade site that has had the same webpage for the last ten years. So informal and unprofessional are not the same thing. Just as formal and professional are not the same thing. The FKP is quite formal, but not very professional, so that website doesn't hit the same markers as Krisjanous observed. The Voyagin website is quite informal, but a very professional platform and thus hits both on the lighter and darker markers of dark tourism.

⁶⁷ Krisjanous (2016): 8.

⁶⁸ Krisjanous (2016): 8.

I'm wondering if the way the site of dark tourism is represented is also of influence onto *how* dark the tourism is considered. There is a trauma in Japan few Japanese are willing to talk about. To make the tours to it lighter, make it more excusable for those who give the tours to do this. Voyagin makes the webpage look considerably light, noting their tone, their lay-out and emphasis on the unique experience. But when taking the pictures and the way they talk about the date itself in account, the event turns a lot more serious. The host that wants the tourists to learn something from it, abides to the more serious tone of the darker shade. The Fukuichi Kanko Project uses mostly text to convey their message, which is a serious one. They don't want repetition in the future and they want people to think about how to deal with this kind of trauma, speaking out against the apparent taboo on the disaster that rules among the Japanese people. The other signifiers are inferior to their message, but do signify meaning for those who visit. People who don't speak Japanese could feel like they don't belong in the discussion, which might be true, but understanding begins with information. Japanese people are being redirected to the same page over and over again, while the buttons call it something else. This doesn't help the credibility of the FKP.

What is also curious to see is that Krisjanous didn't abide to the analysis framework very consistently, leaving out parts that were either too much work or where the differences between the websites were big in number. Making the conclusion not as complete as it could have been. It is more an emphasis on how the methodology answered the questions in the run of the text and how the methodology was useful to that.

Conclusions

1. Answering the main question

To refresh the reader, the main question was: *How is dark tourism represented on websites that advertise touristic tours featuring the Fukushima Exclusion Zone?* To answer this question I've looked at two websites that are interested in giving tours featuring the Fukushima Exclusion Zone.

The Voyagin-site promotes a tour that tourists “have to see with their own eyes”, where they travel by the last surviving fishing ship and where they catch a fish to see how contaminated it is. Entertainment seems to be the grand narrative here. There might be room for education when reading what the host has to say, but it seems a minor concern. The multimodal analysis supports that conclusion.

The Fukuichi Kanko Project does not promote a tour, but proposes a way to deal with the disaster site in the future, when it is safe for tourists to venture there. Education and memorizing what happened there are the grand narrative in this case. The multimodal analysis came to some conflicting results in this case. The bright page and the clustered information make it seem like a webpage on the lighter side of dark tourism, while their message is contradictory to that.

This has led me to the following question: is the spectrum of which Stone speaks not also dependent on how the sites are being represented in the media? The way both websites refer to the disaster as either “3/11” or as “Fukushima” show that the event caused trauma for the people of Japan. The FKP explicitly states this as well when they talk about the inactivity of the government, the regular people who consider it “improper” and the fact that their plans have been closed down for now by opposition. All these things make the location darker on the spectrum of dark tourism, even though the webpages do in some aspect make that clear and in other not. And does by making the websites lighter than other dark tourism websites, perhaps brighten the shade of dark tourism? Perhaps, but there is currently no way to check that. We should wait and see what happens in 25 years when the site is declared safe for tourists.

2. Evaluation of method

There is no regard for the quality of the website. Whether a website is made by professionals or not will influence the opinion of the visitor of the website. It is different when someone looks at a page that doesn't work properly, hasn't seen an update for five years and has an inconsistent style or

when someone looks at a page where all the hyperlinks work, the images are recent and professionally taken and the layout and text have a consistent style. Furthermore, the method Pauwels explained, did give a good insight in all the different aspects and how they could work together.

As for interpretation by Krisjanous, it was a good template of signifiers that could play a role when considering the underlying motivations, but did little for judging the analysed websites in this thesis. It only made clear that the results of Krisjanous are not as straightforward as they made it seem.

3. Recommendations

For further research I would recommend to look into trauma and the Japanese people as a whole. The Japanese people have difficulty in dealing with trauma, according to various news sources and the Fukuiichi Kanko Project. How does the government treat this disaster, what are their plans? How does the media talk about it, if at all? How does the Fukushima nuclear disaster and how people treat it relate to the trauma of Hiroshima and Nagasaki?

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