

Chapter 12

Urban Regeneration and Rural Neglect: The Pall of Dark Tourism in Cambodia



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Abstract Between 1975 and 1979 upwards of two million men, women, and children died in the Cambodia genocide. Decades after the cessation of direct violence, the question of reconciliation in Cambodia remains fraught, in part because of competing claims over the meaning of reconciliation; and also because of the ‘authorship’ of Cambodia’s past. Coincident with the contestation over the meaning and memory, there has been an effort to promote the genocide as an investment strategy, that is, to cultivate the growing number of ‘dark tourists’ wanting to visit sites associated with the genocide. Simply put, to not forget, in this context, is to profit. In this chapter, I consider both the positive and negative aspects of the marketing and memorialization of the Cambodian genocide from the standpoint of urban regeneration. The genocide was largely rural in practice, as urban areas were depopulated, with men, women, and children forced onto agricultural cooperatives. Sites of remembrance, however, are largely urban-based. The promotion of dark tourism in Cambodia, ironically, potentially facilitates urban regeneration to the neglect of rural areas. This has profound implications, both for the authorship and interpretation of the genocide and for the survivors.

Keywords Dark tourism · Collective memory · Cultural heritage · Genocide · Phnom Penh · Cambodia

12.1 Introduction

The Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK; also known as the Khmer Rouge) is considered one of the most brutal and oppressive regimes of the twentieth century. Between April 17, 1975 and January 7, 1979, the CPK carried out a program of mass violence in Democratic Kampuchea (as Cambodia was renamed) that resulted in the death of approximately two million people (Vickery 1988; Kiernan 1990; Heuveline 1998). Upwards of one million men, women, and children died from direct violence:

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torture, murder, and execution. The remainder died from starvation-related causes, lack of medical care, and exhaustion (Kiernan 1996; Tyner 2017a).

Decades after the cessation of direct violence, the question of reconciliation in Cambodia remains fraught, in part because of competing claims over the meaning of reconciliation; and also because of the ‘authorship’ of Cambodia’s past (Ledgerwood 1997; Williams 2004; Chandler 2008; Hughes 2008; Sion 2011; Brown and Millington 2015). Coincident with the contestation over the meaning and memory, there has been an effort to promote the genocide as an investment strategy, that is, to cultivate the growing number of ‘dark tourists’ wanting to visit sites associated with the genocide. Simply put, to not forget, in this context, is to profit. In this chapter, I consider the dissonance that arises between the marketing and memorialization of the Cambodian genocide from the standpoint of urban regeneration. The genocide was largely rural in practice, as urban areas were depopulated, with men, women, and children forced onto agricultural cooperatives. Sites of remembrance, notably the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum (shown in Fig. 12.1), are largely urban-based. The promotion of dark tourism in Cambodia, ironically, potentially facilitates urban regeneration to the neglect of rural areas. This has profound implications, both for the authorship and interpretation of the genocide and for the survivors.



Fig. 12.1 The site of former S-21 Security Center now functions as the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum (photography by James A. Tyner)

12.2 Urban Regeneration, and Cultural Heritage, and Dark Tourism

Recent years have witnessed a flurry of attention directed toward the regeneration of post-conflict cities (Hocking 2011; King and Flynn 2012; O’Dowd and Komarova 2011; 2013; Ramsey 2013; Martinović and Ifko 2018). To this end, tourism, especially (dark) heritage tourism, “can be the catalyst of radical changes in the economy, morale and appearance of a city in transition” (Owen 1990, 194). As Della Lucia et al. (2017, 180) explain, tourism may act as a lever of urban regeneration with the potential to capitalize on urban heritage to contribute both to communities’ development and well-being in terms of employment, accessibility, knowledge and social innovation, and higher quality public spaces. Indeed, the instrumental use of heritage in urban regeneration is a global phenomenon, often linked into both strategies seeking to develop the so-called cultural industries and a process of ‘place-making’, the latter a term variously used by urban designers and planners in establishing attractive physical locales as part of the backdrop of successful social space and, more critically, to be synonymous with place-branding (Pendlebury and Porfyriou 2017, 429).

Conceptually, however, the elision of cultural heritage and urban regeneration is fraught with difficulty, in part owing to the contested understanding of both terms. On the one hand, the term ‘regeneration’ is often used as a near synonym for economic development, and yet, there are often “different motivations and stimulations for changing place through a process of regeneration” beyond capital accumulation (Pendlebury and Porfyriou 2017, 429). On the other hand, as Hardy (1988, 333) writes, conceptual difficulties surround the “understanding of the meaning of *heritage* itself.” For example, in common usage, the term refers to those things—artefacts, ruins, cultural traditions—that are inherited from the past; however, heritage is also understood as “a value-loaded concept, embracing (and often obscuring) differences of interpretation” (Hardy 1998, 333). To this end, contestations arise over the ‘authenticity’ of heritage, a contest that frequently plays out over the urban landscape.

Given that monuments, memorials, and museums, for example, are important symbolic sites in the articulation of urban space, the decision to commemorate or even to obliterate a site is frequently made by individuals and institutions of some importance. Often, and especially for those in the heritage industry, “truth is revealed by experts, aesthetes and professionals to produce an authenticated past” (Watson and Waterton 2010, 85). Indeed, many prominent memorials, monuments, and museums constitute official or state-sanctioned actions designed to promote a particular vision of the past in an attempt to provide legitimacy for present and future rule. This is often associated with efforts to formally designate certain places as ‘heritage’ sites, that is, those deemed worthy of preservation (Harrison 2013). Through this process, consequently, an *authorized discourse* which reproduces its concerns, priorities, and content also emerges (Watson and Waterton 2010, 85–86). Here, the concept of an ‘authorized heritage discourse’ calls attention to the power and performativity of narratives. Smith (2006, 58) explains:

There is a hegemonic ‘authorized heritage discourse’, which is reliant on the power/knowledge claims of technical and aesthetic experts, and institutionalized in state cultural agencies and amenities societies. This discourse takes its cue from the grand narratives of nation and class ... privileges monumentality and scale, innate artefact/site significance tied to time depth ... social consensus and nation building... to establish claims about itself that make it real [which] ... disconnects the idea of heritage from the present and present-day values and aspirations so that it becomes something confined to ‘the past’.

One of the most intriguing aspects of heritage studies “has been a focus on heritage sites with a controversial history including locations of war, atrocity, and horror” (Hartmann 2018, 377). In other words, attention increasingly centers on the ‘dark tourism’ industry and the concomitant promotion of grief, misery, and death as part of a culture’s heritage (Lennon and Foley 2000; Bowman and Pezzullo 2010; Ashworth and Isaac 2015; Buda 2015; Hartmann 2014; Light 2017). As such, scholars—but also urban planners, museum staff, and myriad other stakeholders—are grappling with the “dissonant heritage” that appears when human suffering is promoted as a means of capital accumulation, that is, the pain of the past is promoted for profits in the present.

In the remainder of this chapter, I argue that a crucial form of dissonant heritage exists between the material legacies of mass violence as exemplified by state-sanctioned memorials that, on the one hand, cater to a largely Western clientele of ‘dark tourists’ and, on the other hand, hidden landscapes of past violence that are lived in the everyday by survivors and descendants of mass violence. Specifically, I highlight the disconnect that exists between the authorized heritage discourse of Cambodia’s dark tourism industry and the materiality reality of the genocide itself. Simply put, the promotion of the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum in Cambodia’s capital city Phnom Penh—as an ‘authentic’ site of atrocity—overshadows the geographic scope of the genocide itself. Thus, while dark tourism may contribute to the urban regeneration of Phnom Penh, other, more rural sites of atrocity remain ‘unmarked’ and ‘unremarked’ on the landscape (Steinberg and Taylor 2003; Edensor 2005, 2008; DeSilvey 2007; Tyner et al. 2012, 2014; Colls 2015; Tyner 2018).

12.3 Authorized Heritage Discourses and the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum

In January 1979, Vietnamese Colonel Mai Lam traveled throughout Eastern Europe in search of inspiration. Weeks earlier, troops of the Vietnamese Seventh Division and Khmer Rouge defectors crossed the border into Democratic Kampuchea, routed the Khmer Rouge forces, sending the remnants of the Communist Party of Kampuchea into hiding along the Thai border. Now, Mai Lam, who served also as the director of the recently built Museum of American War Crimes in Ho Chi Minh City, was to establish a new museum (Chandler 1999).

The military victory over their former ally and challenging neighbor to the east presented a political problem for the Vietnamese government, in that the military

actions of the Vietnamese was perceived by many members of the international community, including the United States, as an invading force. It was imperative for the Vietnamese, and the subsequent People's Republic of Kampuchea government installed by the Vietnamese, to legitimate their actions. Ideological glitches marked also Vietnam's global political optics in that, ostensibly, one communist government overthrew another communist government. Potential justifications for the ouster of the CPK could potentially backfire and call to question Vietnam's own system of government. It was necessary to distance Vietnamese communism from Khmer communism. Thus, when two photojournalists accompanying the Vietnamese army stumbled across a former school converted into a secret detention and torture center, the Vietnamese saw their opportunity (Sánchez-Biosca 2015, 104).

A solution appeared as Vietnamese troops occupied Phnom Penh and, until recently, the heart of the CPK's state apparatus. In the days following the defeat of the Khmer Rouge, two Vietnamese photojournalists were walking through Phnom Penh when the smell of decomposing bodies drew them toward a former school. There, the photojournalists discovered the bodies of several recently murdered men, with some bodies stilled chained to iron beds in rooms that once had been classrooms. Over the next several days, as the Vietnamese and their Cambodian assistants searched the former school, they recovered thousands of documents: mug-shot photographs and undeveloped negatives; thousands of written confessions, hundreds of cadre notebooks; numerous DK publications, and myriad instruments of torture and detainment. The Vietnamese had uncovered S-21, one of approximately 200 security-centers established by the Khmer Rouge throughout Democratic Kampuchea.

Leadership of the PRK immediately saw a political opportunity at S-21. According to Hughes (2003, 26), the long-term "national and international legitimacy of the People's Republic of Kampuchea hinged on the exposure of the violent excesses of Pol Pot ... and the continued production of a coherent memory of the past, that is, of liberation and reconstruction at the hands of a benevolent fraternal state." In the Vietnamese effort to build Cambodia's collective memory of its recent, violent past, S-21 was to shoulder the heavy lifting. Simply put, providing evidence to the outside world that the invasion by the Vietnamese army was indeed a liberation was the primary concern of those who designed Tuol Sleng as a museum (Ledgerwood 1997, 87).

Thus, Mai Lam visited former Nazi concentration camps and extermination camps, in an attempt to recreate S-21 as an 'Asian Auschwitz' and returned to Phnom Penh "with a display tailored to attract international sympathy in a time of isolation and to legitimize the new authorities, depicted as good Marxist-Leninists who had saved the Khmer people from the 'fascist' clique of Democratic Kampuchea" (Benzaquen 2014, 793; Ledgerwood 1997; Williams 2004). From the beginning, Vietnamese officials designed Tuol Sleng "to provoke outrage through a primarily sensory experience rather than to enlighten" (Benzaquen 2014, 792). As Sánchez-Biosca (2015, 107) explains, the Vietnamese strategy consisted of displaying an improvised archive of objects, fetishes and representations with which they hoped to present the Khmer Rouge as a gang of criminals who had committed genocide on their own people.

Simply put, as Sánchez-Biosca (2015, 107) writes, it was “a strategy of offending the eye and scandalizing the spirit.”

Much has been written on the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum (see Ledgerwood 1997; Williams 2004; Hughes 2008; Sion 2011; Benzaquen 2014; Tyner 2014; Brown and Millington 2015; Sirik and Tyner 2016). The power of Tuol Sleng, as a memorial site, lies in its purported authenticity. As a museum, S-21 was kept largely intact with only minor modifications to the compound made. Surrounded by a corrugated tin fence topped with coils of barbed wire, Tuol Sleng consists of four three-story concrete buildings arranged in a U-shape pattern around a grassy courtyard dotted with palm trees. There is little textual material; most photographs and exhibits are unmarked. Such a minimalist approach was (and is) deliberate. At one level, the museum seemingly provides an ‘authentic’ experience, one where visitors can enter into cells or interrogation rooms *just as the rooms were* when prisoners were actually detained and tortured. The intent is clear: to signify that these crimes took place.

Guttormsen and Fageraas (2011, 449–450) suggest that “heritage as cultural capital becomes symbolic capital when master narratives, images and monuments are used in the construction of ... a national ... identity and for branding products, places and peoples.” Tuol Sleng, as a materialized, authorized discourse, capitalizes on the site’s authenticity—it is, after all, the actual building in which prisoners were detained, tortured, and often forced to confess prior to their execution. However, as an authentic site, S-21 is very much a ‘dead’ space. As Chhabra (2005, 65) explains, “authenticity is often staged and commodified to meet the needs of the tourist,” and in fact, S-21 has been highly commodified to serve alternative purposes (Tyner 2018).

The initial establishment of the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum in Phnom Penh was initiated not to promote economic development through tourism or even to promote national reconciliation but rather primarily for political purposes. This is a key point when tracing the history of the memorialization of genocide and mass violence throughout Cambodia. As Light (2017, 283) explains, tourism at places of death and suffering can overlap with, reinforce or collide with the use of those places for broader political projects and agendas. Thus, although Mai Lam and his colleagues gave a nod to the Cambodian people, they (apparently) designed the museum primarily for foreign consumption, modeled after Holocaust sites, including Auschwitz (Ledgerwood 1997, 89). It is fitting that Mai Lam drew inspiration from Auschwitz. Auschwitz, as Mandel (2001, 203) writes, has come to represent the Holocaust for contemporary imagination. She (203–204) explains, “When we say ‘Auschwitz,’ we do not mean the concentration camp in occupied Poland, or we do not mean merely that; we also refer to the vast network of bureaucracy, regional and personal politics, personal and impersonal betrayals and hatreds, German nationalist and racist presumptions that found expression in National Socialism and a leader in Hitler, the scapegoat mentality and delusional ideology produced by a centuries-old anti-Semitism—in short, the immense, cumulative, complex, profound, prosaic, stunning, and disturbingly banal process that produced what is known as the Holocaust.”

What do tourists understand when confronted with Tuol Sleng; and especially when Tuol Sleng is portrayed as the ‘Asian Auschwitz’? The formal establishment of the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum set the memory-work of the Cambodian genocide

on a path it has hardly strayed. From its opening to the present day, the intended audience of Tuol Sleng has been an international audience, initially for political purposes and more recently as an economic resource. Accordingly, the museum was, from its inception, designed to promote a particular narrative of the past, a past based not on the historiography of Democratic Kampuchea but instead of a homogenized appropriation of Holocaust-related sites. As Ledgerwood (1997, 87) explains, providing evidence to the outside world that the invasion by the Vietnamese army was an act of ‘liberation’ was the primary concern of those who designed Tuol Sleng as a museum. Indeed, a report from the Ministry of Culture, Information and Propaganda dated October 1980 stated that the aim of the museum was “to show the international guests the cruel torture committed by the traitors to the Khmer people” (Benzaquen 2014, 791).

In an ironic twist, however, the promotion of Tuol Sleng as the locus of the Cambodia genocide belies the reality of the genocide itself. Under the Khmer Rouge, towns and cities were forcibly evacuated, as the men, women, and children were displaced into agricultural collectives and myriad work-camps dispersed throughout the country. It is to this disconnect between the promotion of Tuol Sleng in Phnom Penh and the materiality of rural-based mass violence I now turn.

12.4 The Hidden Sites of Mass Violence

Once in power, the senior leadership of the Khmer Rouge premised that economic success—and, by extension, political success—depended on its agricultural sector. As explained in its ‘Four-Year Plan’, developed between July 21 and August 2, 1976, the CPK identified two economic objectives. The first was “to serve the people’s livelihood, and to raise the people’s standard of living quickly, both in terms of supplies and in terms of other material goods” (Communist Party of Kampuchea 1988a, 51). This was to be accomplished through the satisfaction of a second objective, namely to “seek, gather, save, and increase capital from agriculture, aiming to rapidly expand our agriculture, our industry, and our defense” (Communist Party of Kampuchea 1988a, 51). Therefore, to achieve *industrial* self-sufficiency—including both light and heavy industry—the CPK decreed that they would “only have to earn [foreign] capital from agriculture” (Communist Party of Kampuchea 1988a, 96).

For the CPK, agriculture—but especially rice—was determined to be the country’s comparative advantage (Tyner 2017b). During a speech delivered in June 1976 at an assembly of cadres of the Western Zone, the speaker (most likely Pol Pot) discussed the importance of rapid agricultural development. The speaker explains “National construction proceeds along the lines laid down by the Party. The important point of this is building up our agriculture, which is backward, into modern agriculture within ten to fifteen years” (Communist Party of Kampuchea 1988b, 27). This point is developed in greater length in the Four-Year Plan, whereby it is noted that Democratic Kampuchea is replete with “such things as land, livestock, natural resources, water sources such as lakes, rivers and ponds” and that these “natural characteristics have

given us great advantages compared with China, Vietnam, or Africa. Compared to Korea, we also have positive qualities” (Communist Party of Kampuchea 1988a, 46). Paramount among these, of course, was agriculture. From a competitive standpoint, rice was the clear choice. And while other agricultural products were identified, including rubber, corn, beans, fish, and forest products, these were largely gratis.

To facilitate the rapid expansion of rice production, senior leaders of the Khmer Rouge initiated hundreds of irrigation projects throughout the countryside. These, in turn, were supported by myriad work-camps, as the populace was forced to clear forests, dig canals, build dikes, and excavate reservoirs. In total, over 7,000 km of irrigation channels and upwards of 350 reservoirs were constructed in under four years (Tyner et al. 2018). Significantly, the material remains of these projects remain on the landscape but are largely unknown or unrecognized to outsiders. These sites remain hidden in plain sight and yet retain an enduring day-to-day presence, both for those old enough to have lived through the violence and for those who continue to earn their livings on and around these sites of brutality, for many of the reservoirs, dams, and canals constructed with forced labor continue to function. Farmers still obtain water from these structures; and fisher-folk continue to catch fish in the reservoirs. The presence of these material sites contributes to the ongoing writing and rewriting of Cambodia’s historical geography, in that their material afterlife remain as constant reminders of the country’s violent past (Tyner 2017a). Here, we understand that the landscape of the Cambodian genocide is the world as it is known to those who dwell therein, who inhabit its places and journey along the paths connecting them (Ingold 1993, 156; Sirik 2016).

Remarkably, many of these paths lie beyond the walls of Tuol Sleng, but often circle back and intersect with Tuol Sleng in important ways. S-21 was never autonomous from the rest of Democratic Kampuchea. Workers and soldiers, that is, those men, women, and children detained and tortured at S-21, were arrested from across Democratic Kampuchea. In this way, hundreds—if not thousands—of villages and communes were attached viscerally, through the embodied detainees, with S-21. One such site is the Trapeang Thma Dam and Reservoir. Located in Phnom Srok District, Banteay Meanchey Province, during the Khmer Rouge regime cadres of Region 5 of the Northwest Zone administered the site. According to Pann Chhuong, a former Khmer Rouge cadre who served as Deputy Chief of Region 5, a Khmer Rouge official named Val (alias Aok Haun) wanted initially to build a road to Thailand. It is possible that these transportation systems were preferred as a more effective means to transport rice and other resources. Perhaps also these indicate a desire to increase international trade with Thailand. Pann Chhuong recalls that during the early months of 1977 work-teams began clearing forests in anticipation of road construction. At the same time, cadre also undertook surveys for the formulation of plans to develop a rail line. In the end, however, senior officials suspended both of these projects, as they determined that a network of irrigation projects was more important (OCIJ 2010, 86). Consequently, Val undertook the supervision, management, and construction of the dam and reservoir at Trapeang Thma. Other individuals responsible for the management of the project included Hat (member of the Phnom Srok District

Committee), Man Chun (alias Hoeung; Secretary of Region 5), and Muol Sambat (alias Ta Nhim; Secretary of the Northwest Zone).

The Trapeang Thma project was widely seen as a key milestone in the development of CPK water management practice. Once completed, the main dam—located some 50 km northwest of the town of Sisophon—was approximately 10 m wide at the top, 18 m wide at the base, and between three to five meters in height; it formed a reservoir approximately 70 km² in size (OCIJ 2010, 86). Khmer Rouge cadres held an inauguration ceremony in December 1977, with several high-ranking officials, including Pol Pot and a delegation from China in attendance. As described in an official CPK publication, the dam composed part of a nation-wide labor offensive whereby workers “sacrificed everything for maximum rice production” (OCIJ 2010, 86). Survivors recall that Khmer Rouge musical troupes performed at the ceremony, that cows and pigs were cooked, and that everyone had much to eat.

The official Khmer Rouge remembrance of the ceremony belies the horrific conditions endured by those who labored to build the dam and reservoir. Countless people died. People were bitten by poisonous snakes and succumbed to a host of diseases, including malaria, dysentery, and hermeralopia. Hermeralopia is an ailment also known as ‘day blindness’; it refers to an inability to see during the day time. Those suffering from the disease were not excused from work; rather, they were required to help pass buckets of dirt from the excavation site, much as volunteer fire-brigades once shuttled water. Most witnesses remember that hunger and thirst were always present (OCIJ 2010, 89). To supplement these meager rations, many former workers describe having to scavenge for food, for example catching frogs or gathering wild mushrooms. Workers were subject to swift punishment and execution for any number of fractions—including the scavenging for food. Soeu Saut recalls how Khmer Rouge cadres discovered a worker to have caught a rat to eat and quickly executed the person. Indeed, cadre often killed outright persons found guilty of moral offences and other perceived infractions against the Party. Reports of sexual and gender-based violence also exist. Witnesses recall, for example, “pregnant women being beaten, killed and thrown into the reservoir basin, as the CPK cadre would say that ‘the dam would hold firmly only if pregnant women were killed and placed at the sluice gate’” (OCIJ 2010, 90).

The Trapeang Thma Dam—and hundreds of other structures—remains on the landscape and, in many respects, assumes a prominent place in the lives of many Cambodians. Banteay Meanchey Province currently is home to over 55,000 households, for a population in excess of 250,000 persons. Upwards of 55,000 people live and work in the immediate vicinity of the dam, residing in an estimated 99 villages. Currently, many of the secondary canals built during the Khmer Rouge-era have fallen into disrepair; however, the overall scheme remains in use. Farmers in the neighboring villages cultivate rice on fields located south, east, and north of the reservoir. During the rainy season, roughly between June and December, the reservoir fills with water and rice is cultivated in the flooded areas. During the dry season, irrigation allows farmers to utilize a smaller area to the east for rice cultivation. In addition, for many local residents, the reservoir provides the main source of water,

protein, and income (Loeung et al. 2015). Many households, for example, supplement their diet and income through fishing, the gathering of aquatic plants, and the collection of water snakes.

Today, Trapeang Thma is also a nature preserve and thus receives international tourists, including, no doubt, many who visit the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum. However, the foreign visitors who hire paddleboats or purchase food are unaware that the surrounding rice fields and intricate system of bunds, dikes, and canals constitute a landscape of genocidal violence. Visitors are unaware that the Khmer Rouge detained and tortured at S-21 many of the men and women responsible for the building of Trapeang Thma Dam, including Val, Hat, and Man Chun.

The myriad infrastructure projects, such as the Trapeang Thma Dam and Reservoir initiated by the Khmer Rouge problematize the presumption that a site only becomes fully authentic when marked (Tyner 2018). Indeed, while many of these structures have been rehabilitated, they largely retain the same functions as they did during the Khmer Rouge regime. Consequently, the daily act of farming, or fishing, or gathering water provides a tangible link between the past and the present. In this way, the remnants of Khmer Rouge infrastructure develop remain palpable on the landscape even as the dominance of Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum casts a pall on these sites of past atrocities. Neither marked nor memorialized, these structures are ‘hidden in plain sight’, their past visible only to those who experienced first-hand the horrific conditions occasioned by the Khmer Rouge. Efforts are underway to document these experiences, of past-and-present workings on the landscape. The Documentation Center of Cambodia, for example, has conducted thousands of interviews, both with Khmer Rouge cadre and non-Khmer Rouge survivors. Other non-profit organizations, such as Youth for Peace, have facilitated survivors to reflect upon their experiences as a means of conveying their memories to the next generation (Tyner 2017a, 2018).

12.5 Conclusions

Called to play a more established international role, the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum must adjust to standards of worldwide memorial institutions (Benzaquen 2014). Indeed, the museum must respond to the expectations of foreign visitors accustomed to a certain form and style of ‘atrocities’ sites. However, and regardless of changes both substantive and cosmetic to Tuol Sleng, for the vast majority of international tourists the site remains one of only two officially recognized and ‘authentic’ locations that constitute the Cambodian genocide (Hughes 2008). To this end, Tuol Sleng performs a function not dissimilar from Auschwitz, in that the former Khmer Rouge security-center, paired with the ‘Killing Fields’ at Cheoung Ek, has become the iconic signifier of the Cambodian genocide. However, the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum marks but one of myriad sites associated with the Cambodian genocide. The material ruins of Democratic Kampuchea remain ever-present, both in the memories and in post-memories of the survivors and their descendants. Many of these ruins also

remain viable and continue to serve their original functions. They are, effectively, living landscapes; and herein lies the problem. Much like Auschwitz, the Cambodian genocide extends beyond the walls of Tuol Sleng and includes thousands of kilometers of irrigation canals, hundreds of reservoirs, hundreds of security centers, and countless cooperatives and work-camps. Some of these sites retain a physical presence; many do not.

Moving forward, the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum will invariably occupy a central position in Cambodia's tourist industry. As such, the potential economic benefits accruing from the promotion of the museum as a key destination for 'dark' tourists will remain ever-present. However, the centrality of Tuol Sleng means also that other, rural-based sites will remain neglected. This, in-and-of itself poses additional dissonance. On the one hand, it is positive, in that the pain and suffering of those who endured the genocide is not commodified; but, on the other hand, there is the danger that their stories remain muted and whatever benefits might accrue from tourism will bypass them entirely.

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