

## Speaking of Genocide: Lithuanian 'Occupation' Museums and Foucault's Discursive Formation

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**Abstract :** Tourism visits to sites associated to varying degrees with death and dying have for some time inspired academic debate and research into what has come to be popularly described as 'dark tourism'. Research to date has been based on the mobilisation of various social scientific methodologies to understand issues such as the motivations of visitors to consume dark tourism experiences and visitor interpretations of the various narratives that are part of the consumption experience. This thesis offers an alternative conceptual perspective for carrying out research into dark tourism by presenting a discourse analysis of Lithuanian occupation-themed museums using Foucault's concept of 'discursive formation' from 'Archaeology of Knowledge'. A constructivist methodology is therefore applied to locate the rhetorical representations of Lithuanian and Jewish subject positions and to identify the objects of discourse that are produced in five museums that interpret a historical era defined by occupation, the persecution of people and genocide. The discourses and consequent cultural function of these museums are examined, and the key finding of the research proposes that they authorise a particular Lithuanian individualism which marginalises the Jewish subject position and its related objects of discourse into abstraction. The thesis suggests that these museums create the possibility to undermine the ontological stability of Holocaust and the Jewish-Lithuanian subject which is produced as an anomalous, 'non-Lithuanian' cultural reference point. As with any Foucauldian archaeological research, it cannot be offered as something that is 'complete' since it captures only a partial field, or snapshot of knowledge, bound to a specific temporal and spatial context. The discourses that have been identified are perhaps part of a more elusive 'positivity' which is salient across a number of cultural and political surfaces which are ripe for a similar analytical approach in future. It is hoped that the study will motivate others to follow a discourse-analytical approach to research in order to further understand the critical role of museums in public culture when it comes to shaping knowledge about 'inconvenient' pasts.

**Keywords :** genocide heritage, foucault, Lithuanian tourism, discursive formatoin

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