'Ghosts of Memory' - The Heritage and Haunting of Industrial Ruins

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旅に出て、感じ、考える——世界の見方はひとつではない。

DARK tourism JAPAN
ダークツーリズム・ジャパン
Light and shadow on industrial heritage

産業遺産の光と影

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達也「死を巡る旅」インタビュー／ロシア「もうひとつの未来」
橋から眺める遊良藻川下流部。遠くに遊良藻遊水池第3調節池にある第3排水門が見える。

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Light and Shadow on Industrial Heritage
‘Ghosts of Memory’: The Heritage and Haunting of Industrial Ruins

Philip R. Stone

During the past thirty years or so, the West has witnessed an economic reformation, as it moves from heavy industry and manufacturing to services and the ‘experience economy’. Consequently, derelict factories, foundries, warehouses and workshops now litter the Western post-industrial landscape. Yet these places are the stuff of social memory where ghosts of the past are bound up with the politics of remembering history. With an increasingly demand to visit such venues, touristic rituals to abandoned industrial sites evoke broader contradictory tensions of modern desires for harmony and transgression. Industrial ruins, therefore, become part of our monumental ‘memoryscape’ where mediatized spaces present disruptive ghosts which haunt visitors with vague intimations of a manufactured, ordered and glorious hegemonic past.

Industrial ruins are marginal sites that are haunted by the neglected, the disposed, and of the repressed. Decaying buildings both reveal and snuff out successive histories as factory ruins bear remnants of different people, processes, and products. Within industrial ruins, memory is narrated through complex intersections of the past and the present and industrial heritage becomes a matrix of memory of how things were and how things have become. Industrial ruins serve as warnings from history of economic perils and political fragility. They are full of juxtapositions, clutter, and obstacles, where the familiar and uncanny collide. It is here that industrial ruins occupy a liminal state of indeterminacy: the economic past is not quite erased and industrial ghosts have not yet been consigned to obliteration. Of course, industrial heritage ghosts are not supernatural apparitions that cry in dismal wailing or hideous ghouls employed by Hollywoodized fiction. Rather, ‘industrial ghosts’ evoke the past and induce identification from visitors they ‘haunt’, as contemporary sensibilities are disrupted and conjecture caajoled. It is this disorder that allows haunting to take place as industrial ruins exorcise Western manufacturing history.

Industrial ruins are becoming part of the prevailing experience economy and, as such, are nodal points of history and transition. Located at the interstices of modernity, they mark passages of time and measure our progress as well as our decline. With modern attempts to cleanse our past, to banish ambiguity, and to regulate the memory of space, industrial ruins are perpetual places of change which are always disturbed by disorder and inexplicable things. Time cannot simply be mapped onto industrial ruins, nor are they over-narrated heritage and ceremonial spaces. Instead, industrial ruins are empty meeting grounds that can haunt the contemporary visitor as we are forced to confront previous industrial dominion and hegemony, but also celebrate the mysteries and surprising associations of the past within the present.

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