

Visiting the Ruins of Detroit: Exploitation or Cultural Tourism?

Elizabeth Scarbrough
lizscar@uw.edu

Are Detroit ruin tours a form of morally permissible cultural tourism, or do these tours amount to a form of exploitation? To answer this question I compare Detroit ruin tours with “slum tours,” guided tours of slums in the world’s major cities. I argue that exploitation of the sort we find in slum tourism also exists, to a lesser extent, in Detroit ruin tours. To show this I detail two different accounts of exploitation and argue that Ruth Sample’s account best captures what is most morally problematic with slum tours and ruin tours. I then identify the similarities and differences between slum tours and ruin tours, and provide suggestions for how ruin tours could be retooled to avoid some (but not all) of the worries of exploitation. Finally, I suggest that with the proper framing Detroiters could embrace photographic tours as a new form of cultural tourism.

1 INTRODUCTION

Although the heyday of popular attention to ruins occurred during the eighteenth century's obsession with the picturesque, ruin contemplation began before the eighteenth century and continues to this day. In the past few years there has been a surge of "ruinlust,"¹ especially in Detroit, Michigan. Photographers and photojournalists have flocked to Detroit's modern ruins; many have labeled the resulting photographs as "ruin porn."² Whereas the predominant medium of the eighteenth century picturesque was painting, the medium of this contemporary ruin porn is photographic. As a consequence unofficial and official ruin tours, which aim to provide opportunities for photographs, have become increasingly popular.³ In an article for the *New York Times Magazine*, Mark Binielli describes unofficial ruin tours:

One afternoon at the ruins of the 3.5-million-square-foot Packard Plant, I ran into a family from Paris. The daughter said she read about the building in *Lonely Planet*; her father had a camcorder hanging around his neck. Another time, while conducting my own tour for a guest, a group of German college students drove up. When queried as to the appeal of Detroit, one of them gleefully exclaimed, "I came to see the end of the world!"⁴

Some enterprising Detroiters have capitalized on this "ruin porn" movement by setting up their own tours. Jesse Welter, a 42-year-old Detroit native, has been making a living by taking people inside these decrepit structures. His "urban exploration" tours are illegal (because tourists are encouraged to trespass), but popular. However, many Detroiters are uncomfortable with these burgeoning businesses. "The decay is not cool, not arty-farty," Jean Vortkamp, a community activist and onetime mayoral candidate, told the *LA Times*. "I see the lady with bags and three layers of clothes on, and then I see a group of white young people climb out of their dad's cars with cameras that are worth so much."⁵ Although many Detroiters see the tours as exploitative, hence the moniker "ruin porn," the tours have only increased since Detroit filed for bankruptcy. In a city where 44 percent of the inhabitants are below the poverty line, ruin tours seem to offer a lucrative business opportunity. Why, then, do so many of the city's inhabitants cry foul?

Are Detroit ruin tours a form of morally permissible cultural tourism, or do these tours amount to a form of exploitation? To answer this question I will compare Detroit ruin tours with "slum tours," guided tours of slums and ghettos in the world's major cities. I will argue that exploitation of the sort we find in slum tourism also exists, to

a lesser extent, in Detroit ruin tours. To show this I will detail two different accounts of exploitation and argue that Ruth Sample's account best captures what is most morally problematic with slum tours and ruin tours. I will then identify the similarities and differences between slum tours and ruin tours, and provide suggestions for how ruin tours could be retooled to avoid some (but not all) of the worries of exploitation. Finally, I will suggest that with the proper framing Detroiters could embrace photographic tours as a new form of cultural tourism.

1.2 *Preliminaries*

This topic is difficult to discuss for two reasons: (1) there is no preexisting philosophical literature specifically on ruin tours; and (2) much of what has been written conflates distinct issues. I try to disambiguate different aspects of the criticisms and complaints. To start, there is a triadic relationship between tour operator, tourist, and the people / buildings being viewed. Many of the criticisms of tourism conflate these various roles and relationships amongst them. Claims of exploitation can be levied against the tour operator: does s/he exploit the tourist? The poor? The tourist and the poor? The locus of moral concern might also be placed on the tourists and their gaze. How much power does the tour operator have in constructing the experience of the tourist? We have to admit that even when a tour operator acts in good faith, a tourist may still have morally objectionable attitudes toward the places they are touring and the people they are encountering.⁶ Tour operators can shape the tourists' experience, but they cannot dictate their emotions and attitudes in relation to the tour's subject. Because I do believe that tour operators can alter the experience of the tourist, I will focus the bulk of my comments on organized, guided tours (rather than self-guided tours).

This picture is further complicated when we talk about ruin tours specifically. Writers and bloggers have conflated criticisms of the aesthetic appreciation of ruins with criticisms of the aesthetic appreciation of photographs of ruins. Certainly the experience of ruins *qua* ruins is very different from the experience of photographs of ruins.⁷ Throughout this paper I will try to disentangle these criticisms, noting when a criticism seems more appropriately limited to a particular aesthetic concern.

2 POVERTY TOURS

2.1 *Description of Poverty Tours*

Poverty tours are also referred to as slum tourism, negative tourism, or “poorism.”

While many believe the tours to be a recent phenomenon, Dr. Malte Steinbrink of the University of Osnabrück in Germany believes they started 150 years ago in Victorian London, where the upper classes toured the East End.⁸ Self-directed slum tours were also popular in 19th-century New York City’s Hell’s Kitchen, Five Points, Bowery, and waterfront districts.⁹ Contemporary slum tourism began in Brazil in the 1990s, with tours of Rio de Janeiro’s largest *favela* (or slum). Of these contemporary slum tours the largest are in Mumbai, Rio de Janeiro, and townships of Cape Town and Johannesburg, South Africa¹⁰; but tours also exist in New York City, Belfast, and Rotterdam.¹¹ The most vocal poverty tour operator might be Chris Way, co-founder of Mumbai’s *Reality Tours and Travel*.¹² (See Fig. 2b) During peak seasons he gives up to five tours a day; his tours are listed in the *Lonely Planet*, *Rough*, *Frommer’s*, and *Insight* travel guides.

Poverty tours capitalize on tourists’ desires to see the “authentic city.”¹³ Poverty tours are not usually conducted in cities without other types of tourism because they rely on a preexisting tourist industry. Poverty tour business structures are diverse: sometimes the tours emphasize community benefits (e.g., funding programs in the area), sometimes not. Sometimes community members run the tours, other companies recruit outsider to be their guides. All of this is to say that tours have varying degrees of interaction with the local communities. A popular tour in New Delhi allows tourists to talk to homeless children addicted to Eraz-Ex (white correction fluid), and donates all proceeds of the tour to drug addiction rehabilitation efforts.¹⁴ Often guides on these tours ask participants to refrain from photographing the locals encountered on their tour.¹⁵ Most, if not all, of the tours discussed in the literature are paid tours. Those tours that do not charge an upfront fee ask for donations at the end of the tour. Additionally, while many tours are created, run, and managed by members of the community that they tour, these tours are never created by the poorest of the poor, who tend to not have the skills or capital to become serious market participants.

2.2 Criticisms of Poverty Tours

In this section (2.2), I will review criticisms of poverty tourism, dividing non-consequentialist from consequentialist complaints. In the next section (2.3), I will argue that the non-consequentialist concerns of exploitation are much harder to address and rectify.

Critics charge that slum tourism is a form of voyeurism.¹⁶ Critics claim that the tours are designed to allow Westerners or the bourgeois to feel better about their lives by gawking at the poor. This (gawkerish) attitude is felt by those being observed on the tour. Harold Goodwin, director of the International Centre for Responsible Tourism at England's Leeds Metropolitan University, retells the story of a woman in a township tour in South Africa who said, "They treat me like an animal, as if they're on safari."¹⁷ Many poverty tourists want to see people "in the wild" and are often disappointed if they do not interact with people that they deem poor enough.¹⁸ Tour operators capitalize on this desire to see people "in the wild" by naming their tours "Urban Safaris." (See Fig. 2a)

Not only do community members (such as the township woman quoted above) dislike the way tourists view them, they also worry that these tours misrepresent their townships to the outside world. Since those being tour have little political capital, the tourists are often the ones telling and retelling their stories. The worry is if they approach to tour with this gawkerish attitude, the tales they tell later of those they encounter will be equally denigrating. In sum, worries about voyeurism come in two flavors: first, critics claim that the voyeurs are exhibiting a disrespectful attitude toward the object of their gaze; and second, locals worry that the voyeurs will further represent the locals in derogatory and untrue ways.

The two most common consequentialist concerns are, first, that poverty tours do not benefit the poor; and second, that the tours draw money away from organizations that could help the poor. Critics cite that there is no clear link between the tours and poverty alleviation (i.e., no empirical research has found such a link). Further, the tours take money away from NGOs, which arguably are more effective at addressing systematic problems in the region. For example, while poverty tours have flashy websites and great marketing teams, area NGOs do not have money for fancy marketing strategies. Both of

these criticisms presuppose that the only way exploitation could be justified is if it were outweighed by the benefits the poor receive. Thus, even if (morally problematic) voyeurism existed, it would be allowed, even welcomed, if the community received enough benefits from the voyeurism.

Prasad, a trader in Dharavi (a slum in Mumbai) says, “It [the tourism] doesn’t help me at all. We see foreigners several times a week. Sometimes they come and talk to us, some offer us a bit of cash, but we don’t get anything from these tours.”¹⁹ As Prasad illuminates, many complain that the tours reaffirm the status quo; tours fail to address, much less change, the system that led to the poverty. So while individuals might receive some “hand-outs,” the tourism does little to address the systemic problems in the area. In another illustrative example, there are currently poverty tours in Kibera, a slum in Nairobi, Kenya. According to the World Bank, Kenya isn’t a poor country; it is classified as a middle-income nation. Lack of funds did not cause Kibera’s situation, income inequality, voting along ethnic lines, and the lack of political representation for the urban poor, did.²⁰ While a proponent of slum tours could argue that awareness of slum conditions is an important first step toward social change, most of the patrons of slum tours have previous awareness of such conditions. And, as stated previously, there is no evidence to support that idea that these tours have spurred these tourists into action.

2.3 *Exploitation: Theory and Practice*

Accounts of exploitation are varied in the ethical literature, but I will address two such accounts by Alan Wertheimer and Ruth Sample, who respectively argue that (a) exploitation is paying a non-standard price, and (b) exploitation is a form of degradation. I choose these two accounts as representing differing strands of exploitation theory; Alan Wertheimer provides a market-based account (consequentialist), while Ruth Sample provides a non-market based account (non-consequentialist).

Wertheimer’s *Exploitation* has been called the fullest non-Marxist account on exploitation to date.²¹ Marx argues that exploitation is one of the hallmarks of capitalists societies that results from coerced, unequal exchange of labor. Wertheimer, unlike Marx, believes that coercion is not a necessary condition for exploitation.²² In fact, both of the accounts of exploitation I will discuss here acknowledge cases of mutually beneficial

exploitation. The paradigmatic case of mutually beneficial exploitation is where a wealthy company sets up a factory in a foreign country in order to take advantage of cheap labor. Nike, for example, benefits from the cheap labor in the Philippines, while workers in the Philippines (arguably) benefit since low wage jobs are better than no jobs at all. Wertheimer asserts that exploitation occurs when someone buys something at a non-standard price.²³ Applying this account to Nike, Wertheimer would assert that Nike exploits its foreign employees by paying a non-standard price for their labor. But, as Wertheimer notes, in many cases no standard price exists. What would be the standard price for a poverty tour? In cases where there is no standard price Wertheimer refers to the notion of a hypothetical market:

The notion of a hypothetical market price—the price that would be generated by a competitive market—does provide a plausible conception of a fair transaction at least for a certain range of cases.²⁴

A competitive market price, whether real or hypothetical, is a price where neither party takes “special unfair advantage” of particular defects in reasoning or vulnerabilities of the other party’s situation, and where “the specific parties to this particular transaction do not receive greater value than they would receive if they did not encounter each other.”²⁵

Wertheimer’s account encounters difficulties when applied to cases of personal exploitation. Ruth Sample details a possible case of interpersonal exploitation in which a man and woman are discussing whether to marry and have children. Both partners want children but the man asserts he will not do any of the childcare or housework. Instead, he says he will provide for the children financially (and selectively engage with the children as it suits him). The woman decides she would rather have children under these conditions than seek a new spouse or not have children at all—preferences that the man knows and exploits. Under Wertheimer’s account, how do we account for such exploitation? Such arrangements, it could be argued, are the standard price for having children in many societies. Wertheimer’s account, therefore, turns on a failure to adhere to the convention of a market price, but says nothing about whether or not that price is fair.

If we apply Wertheimer’s account to poverty tourism, we find that there are few cases of a standard market price. Even if a market price existed, we might still inquire into its

fairness. Further, poverty tours are an example where those being toured (those who live in the slums) are not engaging in this market relationship at all. If the market relationship exists, it exists between the tourist and the tour company. Part of the ethical problem is that those being toured are left out of the equation; those living in the slums have little say. They have not been given the chance to consent or dissent to the tour. Poverty tours seem to be an obvious case where two parties (the tourist and tour operator) take advantage of a third party's vulnerabilities. So perhaps taking advantage of vulnerabilities performs the ethical work here, not paying a non standard price.²⁶ In what follows I will discuss the moral importance of vulnerability in terms of failing to respect what is necessary for someone to flourish.

Ruth Sample's non-consequentialist account asserts that exploitation is a failure to respect the inherent value in a person or thing.²⁷ This lack of respect can be cashed out in terms of degradation. If exploitation is the failure to respect, then exploitation can occur even when all parties are better off (all things considered).²⁸ According to Sample, there are three ways we may be involved in degradation:

1. We can fail to respect a person by neglecting what is necessary for that person's well-being or flourishing;
2. We can fail to respect by taking advantage of an injustice done to him; and
3. We can fail to respect by commoditizing an aspect of that person's being that ought not be commoditized.²⁹

Our duty of non-exploitation is not a failure to advance the morally worthy aims of others (an imperfect duty for Kant). Rather, it is a failure to treat others as ends in themselves (a perfect duty). Vulnerability, according to Sample, is need—specifically what is needed to survive or flourish. She states:

Thus Exploitation as Degradation is connected to vulnerability because vulnerability is typically (if not always) at the root of exploitation. When we exploit others, we make use of their genuine need for the sake of advantage in ways that fail to respect them.³⁰

“Basic human needs” could be spelled out in a number of interesting and productive ways: as Rawls's primary goods³¹, as Nussbaum's requisites for human flourishing³², or as Sen's prerequisites for freedom.³³ By giving money to a poverty tour instead of to a

charity aimed at alleviation of poverty (or charities designed to increase political representation of the poor, etc.) we seem to be exhibiting a lack of concern for what it takes for people in these communities to flourish.³⁴

Sample's second form of exploitation involves taking advantage of injustices that leave people in need of these basic goods. Thus, one way in which we exploit others is by using the vulnerability, and therefore treating them disrespectfully. Poor people are especially vulnerable in poverty tourism because they lack the social and political capital to dissent from this arrangement.

Sample sees her third form of exploitation, inappropriate commodification, as the most controversial. I see this suggestion as the most helpful in explaining the badness of poverty tours. Inappropriate commodification is "at the heart of many claims of exploitation. Some transactions seem to fail to respect the value inherent in a person because they ask that person to trade something that, it seems, he ought not to trade."³⁵ The notion of inappropriate commodification could be applied to making something beautiful (or fun) that ought not be made beautiful (or fun). In the case of poverty tourism we could inappropriately find delight in touring and witnessing the struggles of others (e.g., "Isn't it quaint that she walks all that way for water?"). Or we could make something beautiful that ought not be made beautiful (e.g., "I got a really beautiful photo of that child with the distended belly in that orphanage.").³⁶ A poverty tour can be seen to ask locals to trade their self-respect and privacy for a (possible) financial benefit.³⁷

We can extrapolate from Sample's account and that poverty tours run by "natives," those that return profit to local communities are *not* inherently exploitative if the person organizing the tour is doing everything in his or her power to respect and promote the flourishing of others.³⁸ However, that seems in tension with Sample's third type of exploitation: commodifying an aspect of a person's being that ought not be commodified. Let me explain. The example Sample gives is the case of an African-American waiter at a country club who puts up with being called "boy" and other racist insults from his customers. If the waiter truly needs the job, Sample believes this to be a case of exploitation. If the country club is paying the waiter four times the market rate and "exploiting" his greed, however, it is a different case. According to Sample, if greed is a vulnerabil-

ity, this may be exploitation. If greed is not a vulnerability, it probably is not exploitation. Not only is this an odd claim, I believe this solution is at odds with Sample's third kind of exploitation. If the exploiters are treating as a fungible good something that ought not be fungible, then no amount of money can compensate for the disrespect. If the country club is treating someone's respect for their racial identity as a fungible good and it should not be treated as such, the greed of the victim is not morally salient.

While I think Sample's account of exploitation provides the best description of exploitation, I think her account could be taken a bit further. In the case of the waiter, Sample has the resources to insist that whether or not the waiter takes the job out of greed, the employer is exploiting him. Under the first account of exploitation (neglecting what is necessary for him to flourish), we can say that the social basis of self-respect (a Rawlsian primary good) is necessary for human flourishing, and any waiter expected to accept disrespectful speech is not getting his social basis for self-respect met. The country club is exploiting the waiter insofar as they are ignoring what he needs to flourish. Sample's second type of exploitation (taking advantage of an injustice done to him) also supports a finding of exploitation. We can say that the country club, if it knows of its members' disrespectful conduct, exploits the history of slavery and discrimination (the injustice) by hiring the waiter to serve under such conditions. Finally, as stated previously, we can assert under Sample's third account of exploitation (improper commodification) that the country club is commodifying the waiter's racial identity (paying him more to put up with the insults), or commodifying his self-respect. It can easily be argued that these qualify as non-fungible goods. Poverty tourism involves all three types of exploitation. When we view the less fortunate as we would animals in a zoo,³⁹ we do not provide a social basis for self-respect; we take advantage of injustices done to these people; and we treat them as objects to be observed rather than persons worthy of respect.

2.4 Positive Aspects of Poverty Tours (The road to hell is paved with...)

Poverty tour advocates have begun to speak up, typically taking aim at consequentialist exploitation concerns. Many of these rebuttals take the form of "some benefits are better than no benefits," and "nothing that is mutually beneficial can be exploitative." Poverty tour advocates claim that tours inspire an entrepreneurial spirit among people who have few other business prospects. However, time has shown that middle class outsiders with

the necessary investment capital usually run these tours. Poverty tour proponents also claim that, while no solid data show that tours alleviate poverty, providing jobs for local community members has to count for something. As stated earlier, some tours do employ local people to help run them. Further, many tour operators take concerns about exploitation very seriously, donating a portion of profits to local charities. Reality Tours (cited earlier) donates forty percent of its net profits to the charity it created. In 2009 that amounted to US\$23,000, which poverty tour advocates argue is more than the slums would have seen otherwise.⁴⁰ Tours whose profits funnel back into the communities might deflect worries about voyeurism. However, money alone cannot eliminate all concerns about exploitation.

In response to non-consequentialist concerns about exploitation (i.e., the tours are tantamount to voyeuristic exploitation) poverty tour advocates say that tours change people's attitudes toward poverty. For example, *GeoJournal* reports that people who take these tours have a more favorable attitude toward the area afterwards.⁴¹ Tour operators hope to show that poor areas are rich with heritage and that the economically poor are not culturally poor. Poverty tours can expose people to the tangible and intangible heritage of an impoverished region, thereby enabling tourists to appropriately value what they did not value previously. Some poverty tour guides say they are “trying to dispel the myth that people there sit around doing nothing, that they’re criminals.”⁴² Poverty tour advocates further claim that viewing poverty conditions first-hand can trigger moral indignation, possibly spurring the tourist to action (however, there is only anecdotal evidence of this happening).

3 DETRIOT RUIN TOURS

3.1 *Description of Detroit Ruin Tours*

Detroit ruin tours primarily serve as an opportunity for tourists to take photographs, rather than to learn about the history and current conditions of Detroit.⁴³ These photographs have certain features in common. In one of the most famous articles on the Detroit ruin porn movement, “Detroitism,” John Patrick Leary describes the key features of ruin porn as:

the exuberant connoisseurship of dereliction; the unembarrassed rejoicing at the ‘excitement’ of it all, hastily balanced by the liberal posturing of the sympathy

for a ‘man-made Katrina;’ and most importantly, the absence of people other than... ‘street zombies.’ The city is a shell, and so are the people who occasionally stumble into the photographer’s viewfinder.⁴⁴

Leary’s contemporary version of *ruinlust* differs from its eighteenth century ancestor in that many in the general public are critical of its gaze.

If you go on one of Jesse Welter’s Detroit ruin tours, you will leave at 7 a.m. to avoid both police and native Detroit ruin-porn naysayers. His \$45 tour will last around three hours, during which you’ll visit some of Detroit’s most famous ruins: The Packard Automotive Plant, the Michigan Central Train Station, and the East Grand Boulevard Methodist Church.⁴⁵ His tours can be booked via his Facebook page⁴⁶, and are billed as photographic (his company is now named Parker Creative Photography: Photographic Services). He also runs photographic workshops under the company name Motor City Photo Workshops (MCPW). MCPW’s motto is “Beautifying Blight.”⁴⁷ Welter will also take you to the ruin of St. Agnes’s church, where you will see scrawled on the church wall: “Go Home Jesse ... We HATE you and your tour bus.”

Detroiter think Welter is exploiting the city’s ruins for monetary gain; others disagree. Bryan Verhelle, a blogger on *Guernica*, says, “By the way, I hear Greece is complaining that tourists are flocking to the Acropolis.” *Lonely Planet*⁴⁸ and other guides have benefited from ruin porn, why shouldn’t individuals?

3.2 Ethical Criticism

Ethical criticisms aimed at poverty tourism are also levied against Detroit ruin tours. Specifically, critics charge such tourism is (1) morally problematic voyeurism, and (2) unhelpful in the fight against poverty.

Comments criticizing photographs of Detroit’s ruin tours on the basis of voyeurism are ubiquitous in the blogosphere. But one obvious question to ask is: who, exactly, is being exploited? The subject of ruin porn (both the photographs and the tours) is not persons but buildings. Surely the buildings are not being exploited! Perhaps the objects of exploitation are the Detroiters no longer able to afford their homes, the Detroiters who have moved from middle-class to lower class, or the Detroiters who suffer by living

amongst dilapidated structures. One could argue that photographs of derelict buildings serve as a window into the poverty, oppression, and disenfranchisement of Detroit's residents. As the criticism goes, these people should be allowed to suffer in private, without others aestheticizing their grief.

But, on this interpretation, the very people supposedly being exploited in Detroit ruin tour and photographs are absent; they are, in fact, *noticeably* absent from the photographs. As Leary correctly observes, one of the central features of ruin porn is "the absence of people other than... 'street zombies.'"⁴⁹ Not only are the purportedly exploited *not* portrayed in ruin porn, neither are their direct artifacts (e.g., their houses or belongings). The subject of these tours and photographs are train stations, automotive plants, and arts centers, not single- or multi-family residences. Don Hammond writes,

Comparatively little 'ruin porn' focuses on the vast amounts of now-decrepit single-family wood frame homes that were erected quickly and cheaply in the early decades of the last century to house the throngs of manufacturing workers in Detroit. Neighborhood after neighborhood in Detroit is filled with these buildings, but they have far less romance about them because they were never remarkable structures in the first place. **They're not ruined icons of a once-golden era.**⁵⁰

In Detroit, the most photographed ruined buildings are the United Artist Theater (See Fig. 4) and the Michigan Central Train Station (See Figs. 3 and 5). Both are buildings that were well constructed, and beautiful in their prime. Again, Hammond,

There is a crucial point that should be acknowledged in all of this, and it has to do with the fundamental architectural qualities of the once-grand and now crumbling buildings that form the real heart of Detroit's 'ruin porn.' I suspect that what makes these contemporary images interesting to most people is that they show structures that were designed and built with a level of craft and materials that are more or less unthinkable today.⁵¹

It is this push and pull between the grand and the decaying that I believe is most visually arresting. This is why images of the Beaux Arts train station are more prevalent than images of decaying, shoddily made, mid-century single-family houses, of which Detroit has thousands. This is also why ruin tours focus on grand, large structures rather than single family homes.

Although the force of the voyeurism criticism is greater when the photographic safari's subject is a person, it is nonetheless reasonable to suppose that ruin porn viewers over-distance themselves to the circumstances portrayed in their tour. There is a type of "otherizing" in all forms of *ruinlust* because we are often looking at the remains of lost or fallen civilizations. This otherizing is magnified when we look at the ruins of our own civilization because we distance something that should be quite close to us (because, in one sense, it *is*). The fact that the images never have people in them is yet another way the photographers distance the audience from the moral issue at hand. And while the otherizing criticism seems most true of viewing carefully cropped ruin photographs, but also true of ruin tours. On Welter's guided tours, tourists avoid interacting with Detroiters, and thus receive a carefully "cropped" tour of Detroit.

This leads to my second (consequentialist) criticism. These tours generally neither help the poor nor address the systems that created the poverty. People are inclined to purchase equipment to take pictures of the ruins, but not to give money to help local Detroiters. *Vice* magazine stated this criticism more bluntly: "you can't toss a chunk of Fordite without hitting some schmuck with a camera worth more than your house."⁵² Obviously, self-guided tours (using guidebooks such as *Lonely Planet*) add nothing to the economy besides the ancillary benefits of having visitors in your city (e.g., hotel bookings, dining out, etc.).

The pre-existing guided ruin tours also distance the tourist from the site, which is especially morally problematic when the site is a part of the tourist's own contemporary society. As Leary states, "this is not Rome or Greece, vanished civilizations; these ruins are our own, and the society they indict is ours as well. As a purely aesthetic object, even with the best intentions, ruin photography cannot help but exploit a city's misery."⁵³ With ancient sites, such as Pompeii, we cannot help but distance ourselves because we see them as culturally connected to ancient civilizations. Contemporary photographs from tours depict our own civilization, which we have a present stake in and power over. When the ruin / photograph portrays an ancient civilization, we view the photograph as part of a historical record of poverty, war or decline. But ruin tours / photographs of contemporary society seem to obfuscate the moral problem at hand. According to Andrew Sargus Klein on *Splicetoday*: "Poverty, systemic failures of government—

and any sense of progress—all of this overshadowed by the photogenic qualities of a good slant of sunlight cutting through the lobby of an abandoned public library.”⁵⁴ In this sense, these ruin tours are similar to poorism. Both interacting with children living in poverty and taking photographs of ruins removes ourselves from the problem. Tourists, by their very nature, are outsiders. There will always be a tension between tourists and natives. But there are better and worse tours, better and worse attitudes tourist can have toward the cities they tour.

A related concern is that contemporary ruin tours misrepresent the people from the region to the outside world. The most well-known book of Detroit ruin porn is *The Ruins of Detroit*, by Yves Marchand and Romain Meffre. In an interview with *The Observer*, Meffre states:

As Europeans, we were looking with an outsider’s eye, which made downtown Detroit seem even more strange and dramatic. We are not used to seeing empty buildings left intact. In the Vanity ballroom alone, we saw four giant art deco chandeliers, beautiful objects, each one unique. It was almost unbelievable that they would still be there. It is as if America has no sense of its own architectural history and culture.⁵⁵

Meffre reinforces the worry of misrepresentation by suggesting that the tourists and artists who visit Detroit believe the locals are too stupid to understand their own cultural heritage, too boorish to appreciate the value these building have. Meffre remain the cultural outsider, viewing Detroit and Detroiters with an arrogant, disrespectful attitude.

Critics of ruin tours and the resultant ruin porn believe these tours, like poverty tours, siphon money from organizations that would help the region. They claim that when people value Detroit for ruin porn, they see all of Detroit as a ruin, and therefore see the city as beyond hope – a waste of resources. According to Matthew Newton,

What’s problematic about [Detroit ruin tourism] is that it does little but gawk at the city and people in distress. In other words, it actually contributes to the problem by fueling the notion that Detroit (and depressed cities like it) are beyond help. The glut of disaster porn photography currently cycling on the Internet has outsiders convinced Detroit is a post-apocalyptic wasteland, devoid of hope or humanity.⁵⁶

When we call Detroit a ruin, we are saying that Detroit is beyond help. Some have said this attitude is racially motivated; others say that Detroit just fell prey to deindustrialization, mismanagement, globalization, and the like. Willy Staley captures the latter notion

with precision: “Now, after six decades of hucksterish boosterism – stadiums, casinos, Renaissance Centers! – Detroit has finally decided that it will have no massive reboot. The city is packing it in by tearing down thousands of vestiges of its old self, its gangrenous appendages that need to be amputated. It has finally come to terms with what it has become.”⁵⁷ In other words, in lacking the will to reboot, people accuse Detroit of allowing itself to decay. Consequently, the city is being seen as one big ruin. Leary, in “Detroitism,” calls this the metonym use of ruin porn. The photographs, these critics suppose, stand-in for Detroit, and do so poorly. I think this criticism applies more to ruin photographs than to ruin tours, although the criticism is levied against both. Even if the tours are carefully constructed so that the tourists see little else of Detroit and Detroiters, they are still in the city and will (even if inadvertently) encounter bustling businesses, restaurants, museums, and artist communities (such as the Heidelberg Project⁵⁸).

We can apply the theories of exploitation I discussed earlier to Detroit ruin tourism. Might the Detroiters who dislike Welter and his tours claim he charges a non-standard price for his tours, thus exploiting them (Wertheimer)? No. No standard price exists, and even if we refer to a hypothetical market, the idea of how much the tour costs fails to get to the heart of the matter.

I think Sample’s account of exploitation best explains concerns about Detroit ruin tourism. These tours, and the tourists who take them, might treat people (or perhaps even the buildings) with less respect than they deserve. Sample discusses Raz’s account of value, which claims three stages of proper engagement with value:

1. Have appropriate intentional states with respect to something of value;
2. Avoid destroying and/or try to preserve the valuable thing;
3. Fully engage only by appreciating and responding to its value.⁵⁹

Raz’s “engagement with value” theory clearly applies to people, but also applies to works of art. Raz asserts that people are the ultimate sources of value, being the only things that are ends-in-themselves. However, he also claims works of art have value; they command our respect because engaging with art is important for beings like us. In the case of Detroit ruin tourism, we may have obligations to engage with Detroiters, treating them with due respect, but we might have obligations to the buildings as well.

Raz's strong claim is that we must avoid destroying items of value (and perhaps we have obligations to preserve them). We can fully engage with these buildings only after we understand their value. As the tours stand now, the buildings are presented as objects of photographic curiosity—decontextualized from art historical narrative, or any meaningful narrative about Detroit's decline.⁶⁰ Perhaps in order to respect the buildings we must see them as part of an historical narrative and refrain from damaging them further.

3.3 *Positive Spin on Ruin Tours?*

As seen in the previous section, ruin tours face many of the same criticisms as poverty tours. They also share the same benefits. First, ruin tours spur entrepreneurial business. Right now many tourists are using guidebooks to visit the ruins without a guide. This presents opportunities for the unemployed in Detroit to start legal photographic tours.

Second, these tours might lead to ancillary benefits. For example, neighborhood restaurants might benefit from increased foot traffic. Detroit, however, lacks a pre-existing tourist infrastructure.⁶¹ Not many Americans travel to Detroit solely to spend time on a river cruise, or to visit a casino. Yet thousands are visiting Detroit to take pictures of urban decay. Ruin tours could be an attraction that would draw people to Detroit.

Third, the tours can help outsiders see that Detroit, in its entirety, is not a ruin. As with poorism, how outsiders view the “slums” and people living therein solely through narratives fails to tell the whole story. For example, in the *Vice Magazine* article, “Something, Something, Something, Detroit: Lazy Journalist Loves Pictures of Abandoned Stuff,” Thomas Morton discusses how carefully framed and cropped most of these images are. Under one photo of a field, he writes the following caption, “Climbing a hill-
ock for a better view of the grassy wastes surrounding Jane Cooper Elementary School. If you move the camera just a few inches to the left you'll get a bustling, well-maintained food-packaging plant in frame, so be careful to crop that shit out.”⁶² In another example, Morton tells us that Michigan Central station is across the street from Detroit's most popular BBQ joint. (See Fig. 5) A socially responsible tour could help counteract the metonymic use of the ruin porn photographs. Tours might make people re-evaluate the city, and perhaps could re-frame some of the racist narratives about Detroit's decline.

Ruin porn is not presently counteracting the narrative that Detroit is beyond repair. By focusing on tourism, Detroiters could help to rewrite that narrative. When Detroiters object to ruin porn, I think they are truly objecting to outsiders believing Detroit as a whole is a ruin. Leary correctly points out the metonymic use of ruin porn, and Detroiters rightly object to the metonym.⁶³

4 WHAT SHOULD BE DONE

4.1 *Retooling the Ruin Tours of Detroit*

Detroit ruin tours face the same ethical worries about exploitation as slum tours face. Some of these worries are mitigated by the fact that in ruin tours the tourists engage with buildings, not people. Yet, people nonetheless feel exploited when their neighborhoods are the subject of ruin tours. Consequentialist theories of exploitation focus our attention in the wrong place. Wertheimer's market-driven account cannot account for the moral badness of voyeurism. If we are producing the best possible circumstances with our tourism, and we still make people feel like zoo animals, then according to Wertheimer, there is no exploitation present. His account also fails to address residents' worries about misrepresentation. Misrepresentation has nothing to do with market relations. And, as previously stated, those being wronged are not even part of the market relationship. Sample's account of exploitation as degradation seems accurate, but it doesn't go far enough.

In light of our worries about exploitation, how might we retool Detroit ruin tours? When it comes to ethical tourism, we do not have to start from scratch. The Cape Town Declaration (2002), defines responsible tourism as having the following features:

1. Minimizes negative economic, environmental, and social impacts;
2. Generates greater economic benefits for local people, enhances the well-being of host communities, and improves working conditions and access to the industry;
3. Involves local people in decisions that affect their lives and life chances;
4. Makes positive contributions to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage, to the maintenance of the world's diversity;
5. Provides more enjoyable experiences for tourist through more meaningful connections with local residents, and a greater understanding of local cultural, social, and environmental issues;
6. Provides access for physically challenged people; and
7. Is culturally sensitive, engenders respect between tourist and host, and builds local pride and confidence.⁶⁴

This detailed list contains features that vary widely in the ease with which they can be implemented in ruin tourism. Consider, for example, feature one, which requires that responsible tourism have positive economic and social impact. While Detroit ruin tourism has some positive economic impacts, it has not produced positive social impacts. To produce these impacts, we would need to change the voyeuristic nature of the current tours. We might, for example, cast local Detroiters from different backgrounds to act as tour guides. This change would also help satisfy other features of the Cape Town Declaration. Local guides could transport tourists to the ruins, contextualizing the neighborhood and buildings along the way. Locals could talk not only about the art historical traditions to which these buildings belonged, but also to the reasons for economic decline. The resultant job opportunities for Detroiters would go toward satisfying the second requirement (creating economic benefits for local people) and the third (involving local people in decisions that affect their lives). By contextualizing ruined buildings in the right way, Detroiters can show pride in their cultural heritage and start to rewrite the narrative of their city, fighting against the metonymic use of Detroit ruin porn and addressing feature seven (engendering respect between tourist and host and building local pride).

Raz believes that while we ultimately owe people respect, we too should show respect to works of art, or in this case, works of architecture. To respect these buildings, Raz tells us we must understand them and, at a minimum, not destroy them. Currently, the Detroit ruin tours do not meet either requisite. However, if tours were guided by informed Detroiters, tourists would have a better chance of understanding the buildings and their value; it would help them to understand why they shouldn't trespass and degrade the buildings any further.⁶⁵

Involving local people in Detroit ruin tourism will be a difficult task. The first step is trust building. Having community members teach tourists about their cultural heritage could help local's sense of power, thus counteracting the past exploitation. In Sample's sense, it could help provide the much needed basis for self-respect needed for human flourishing. It would also put the power in the hands of locals to write appropriate narratives about their lives that gets uptake in a wider community. Carole Hay has argued that oppressed people have an obligation to fight this oppression. She grounds this duty by

asserting that oppression can undermine our rational natures. In order to protect our rationality (which is, for Kant, our very humanity) we must rise up against oppression—either externally or internally.⁶⁶ This would be an external way for those in Detroit to resist their disenfranchisement.

And how might we apply this account to ruin porn photographs? I have three interrelated suggestions. First, the vehicles of photographic ruin porn (coffee table books, blogs, websites and the like) should do a better job of framing the photographs within a larger narrative of Detroit's decline. While the two prominent coffee table books on Detroit ruin porn have essays introducing the photographs, the essays present a really simplistic narrative and more framing could be done. Second, there is no reason that collections of the photographs should not include some photos of people, the city, and the ruins relations to the people and the city. (See Fig. 5) These images would present much needed counter-narratives and are visually arresting in their own right. Third, we should emphasize the difference between artistic photographs and photojournalism. It would be unethical of photojournalists to Photoshop out people from photos of the ruins, but it seems well within artistic license. If we emphasizes that the photos are artworks and not photojournalism (even if the pictures look the same), this might combat the metonymic use of the images.

5 CONCLUSION

The primary difference between ruin tours and poorism is that people go on ruin tours to engage with beautiful decaying buildings, not people. And while this might allay our exploitation worries a bit, worries remain. Perhaps ruin tours have more in common with poverty tours than originally thought. But as with poverty tours, there are positive things to say about ruin tours. Our worries can be mitigated based on how the tours are run. Locals should have a chance to represent themselves and help create narratives about Detroit. Ruin tours should be operated and run by local Detroiters, who could fight against the metonymic use of Detroit ruin porn. Profits from these tours could be used to assist Detroiters. Donating a percentage of proceeds to preservation of historic buildings and job training seems like not only a smart move but ethically desirable. Finally, tour companies and operators should be concerned to address worries about vo-

yearism. If these worries are adequately addressed on the front end, Detroiters might be happier about the resultant photographs and tours.

¹ "Ruinlust," taken from the German "*ruinenlust*," is a term first used in English (I believe) by Rose Macaulay in *Pleasure of Ruins* (1953).

²Ruin porn now has its own rather informative Wikipedia page:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ruins_photography. To see Getty Images of Detroit ruin porn, please visit: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/12/30/detroit-ruins_n_4519731.html.

³ The link between ruin appreciation and tourism is not accidental. The eighteenth century's interest in ruins was triggered by the new practice of the "Grand Tour." Those noblemen with enough money to tour Greece and Italy returned with stories of beautiful ruins.

⁴Mark Binelli, "How Detroit Became the World Capital of Staring at Abandoned Old Buildings," *New York Times Magazine*, November 9, 2012.

⁵ Alana Semuels, "Detroit's Abandoned Buildings Draw Tourists Instead of Developers," *LA Times*, December 25, 2013.

⁶ Some think that one cannot be morally criticized for one's attitude alone, only for expressing that attitude. On the other hand, Angela Smith persuasively argues in "Guilty Thoughts" that one can be morally blameworthy for unexpressed attitudes or thoughts. While outside the scope of this paper, I tend to agree with her assessment. Angela Smith, "Guilty Thoughts," in Carla Bagnoli (ed.) *Morality and the Emotions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 235-256.

⁷ Ruin appreciation is decidedly different than appreciation of photographs. In appreciating ruins, we are valuing the mark nature has on large scale artifacts. As such, I see ruins as "hybrid" objects: objects that are both artifactual and natural. As artifacts, we might appreciate them similarly to how we appreciate architecture. According to Jenefer Robinson, "The appreciation of architecture relies on *moving* through spaces, *touching* surfaces, *listening* to sounds reverberating (or not), *smelling* materials and the captive air, and *feeling* with one's body the ambiances of the places created." (Jenefer Robinson, "Simulation and architecture," posted May 23, 2010, on <http://isparchitecture.wordpress.com/2010/05/23/simulation-and-architecture/>.) As part of nature, we might employ aesthetic models of appreciation suited to natural beauty. As hybrid objects, the aesthetic foci of ruins often exists in the interesting and unplanned interplay between the artifactual and the natural. For example, in a ruin, a support beam that was once hidden from view might now be exposed to the viewer. Or we might see nature slowly overwhelming a grand structure, as is the case with some temples at Angkor Wat. However, non-ruinated, merely shoddy structures which, by virtue of their faulty construction, show their support structures or are badly situated with the landscape are not seen as beautiful. The ruin *reveals*, whereas the shoddy structure merely *shows*. By contrast, the type of aesthetic appreciation we employ when engaging with photographs is more akin to traditional models of art appreciation.

⁸ These tours provide the origin of the term "slumming." For an academic account of this phenomenon, see Ellen Ross (ed.) *Slum Travelers: Ladies and London Poverty, 1860-1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

⁹ Such tours were often self-directed using guidebooks. Later in the century, Jacob Riis' photographic book of slum pictures, *How the Other Half Lives*, shocked readers and was a catalyst for societal reforms. Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives: Studies among the Tenements of New York* (Whitefish, Montana: Kessinger Publishing, 2004).

¹⁰ Between one-fifth and one-quarter of all tourists who visit South Africa take a slum tour. This is the equivalent to 300-400,000 tourists a year. James Melik, "Slum tourism: Patronizing or Social Enlightenment?" *BBC World*, September 24, 2012.

¹¹ Recent tours have also sprung up in Kenya and Uganda. See Murithi Mutiga, "Ending 'Poorism' in Kenya," *New York Times*, October 29, 2014.

¹² <http://www.realitytoursandtravel.com/>

¹³ Tourists say they want to see something different from what they see in their own, everyday lives, which in most cases is either over-the-top opulence (e.g., Versailles) or abject poverty, as found in these poverty tours. Much tourism revolves around the "authenticity" of such places. The authenticity of such tourist attractions is an interesting subject, but is outside the scope of this paper.

¹⁴ Amelia Gentleman, "Slum tours: a day trip too far?" *The Guardian*, May 6, 2006.

¹⁵ This seems especially true of the poverty tours that engage with children. Tours of slums with many children are unfortunately ubiquitous in developing countries. In South East Asia orphanage tours have become such a problem that government funded mass media campaigns have been launched with the goal of eradicate this sort of tourism. For example, the Cambodian government produces posters that ask people to refrain from participating in tours of orphanages. One particularly arresting poster reads, "Children are not tourist attractions: think before visiting an orphanage."

See: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/morganhartley/2013/05/24/cambodias-booming-new-industry-orphanage-tourism/>

¹⁶ Voyeurism is a non-consequentialist concern insofar as the moral badness of the act cannot be spelled out in terms of benefits, burdens, or the maximization of either.

¹⁷ Margaret Loftus, "Slum Tours: Real or Real Tacky?" *National Geographic Traveler*. March, 2009.

¹⁸ Amelia Gentleman, "Slum tours: a day trip too far?" *The Guardian*, May 6, 2006. Some tours do a better job of managing worries of voyeurism than others. I will describe how they do so in section four.

¹⁹ James Melik, "Slum Tourism: Patronizing or Social Enlightenment?" *BBC World*, September 24, 2012.

²⁰ Murithi Mutiga, "Ending 'Poorism' in Kenya", *New York Times*, October 29, 2014.

²¹ Ruth J. Sample, *Exploitation: What It Is and Why It's Wrong* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003), p. 17.

²² For Wertheimer, neither are harm, unequal distribution of goods, or unequal bargaining power are necessary for exploitation.

²³ There are (American and British) legal precedents for characterizing exploitation in this way. One such case involved a rent-to-own scheme for a television where the prosecutor successfully argued that paying this non-standard price was a form of exploitation (Murphy v. McNamara, 416 A.2d 170, 36 Conn. Supp. 183 [1979]).

²⁴ Alan Wertheimer, *Exploitation* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996) p. 230.

²⁵ Wertheimer, *Exploitation*, p. 232.

²⁶ Robert Goodin offers an explicitly consequentialist theory of exploitation that claims that exploitation exists in the self-interested advantage one gets by interacting with vulnerable others. He argues that in cases of exploitation, the duty to protect vulnerable others is breached. Goodin believes we exploit others when we take advantage of the fact that the other is incompetent, has renounced strategic bargaining, or is grossly outmatched. In these situations we recognize or should recognize that the other is vulnerable. To protect the vulnerable Goodin believes we must not abuse our power over them, and we must shield them from the "predations" of others. Robert Goodin, *Protecting the Vulnerable: A Reanalysis of our Social Responsibilities* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985) p. 36.

²⁷ While Sample asserts that her account is not explicitly Kantian, I think it is. However, arguing for such is outside the scope of this paper.

²⁸ The type of respect Sample writes of reflects Darwall's concept of "moral recognition respect" (not appraisal respect), where a member of the moral community is owed such

respect by virtue of being the sort of creature who is part of the moral community. See Stephen Darwall, "Two Kinds of Respect," *Ethics* 88 (1977): 36-49.

²⁹ Sample, *Exploitation*, p. 57.

³⁰ Sample, *Exploitation*, p. 75.

³¹ Rawls' primary goods are things that "every rational man is presumed to want." These include "social" primary goods such as rights and liberties, powers and opportunities, income and wealth, and least of which is the social basis of self-respect. They also include "natural" primary goods such as health and vigor, intelligence and imagination. John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1971) p. 62.

³² Nussbaum's "capabilities approach" in which she defines capabilities as the "basic powers of choice that make a moral claim for opportunities to be realized and to flourish." Martha Nussbaum, *Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach*.

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). A list of Nussbaumian capabilities are: life (to have a normal life span); bodily integrity; sense, imagination, thought; emotions; practical reason; affiliation; interaction with other species; play; and political and material control over one's environment. Martha C. Nussbaum, *Sex and Social Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) pp. 41-42.

³³ Amartya Sen believes in the importance of freedom, which is instrumental to and constitutive of a good life. He lists different sorts of freedoms that are necessary for this good life, including: political freedoms, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparencies of government, and protective security. His account obviously focuses on the political realm (as do Nussbaum's and Rawls').

³⁴ The worry here is that if all that is required to get rid of exploitation is money, we could still be engaged in poverty tourism and voyeurism as long as the funds provided went to a worthy cause. I think even if the funds went to a cause which worked on trying to help people in poverty to flourish, worries of voyeuristic exploitation remain.

³⁵ Sample, *Exploitation*, p. 57.

³⁶ It is a commonplace of artistic theory (Ruskin's, for example) that anything can be made beautiful by seeing it one way rather than another. However, many aestheticians still believe that there are more or less compassionate ways to portray your subject. While Dianne Arbus photographs people who have atypical bodies or clothing, her photographs are often considered beautiful because of the humility and beauty she imparts in her portraits. She illuminates the beauty often overlooked in marginalized people, rather than exploiting the foibles of the fugly.

³⁷ One may ask if there is voyeurism in all tours, whether slum or not. Is it morally problematic for us to gawk at people walking to work while on a city tour of Washington DC? I think worries of exploitative voyeurism could still hold. For example, my friend owned a brownstone in the Georgetown neighborhood of Washington DC that just happened to be on a popular walking tour. Every morning he was faced with onlookers peering through his kitchen window to find him eating his morning cereal. In this situation something has gone awry. By buying this house my friend did not agree to give up his privacy. He is an injured third party in this situation, and the tourist are doing something morally inappropriate by peering into a private citizen's house (in fact UNESCO has discussed this very issue in their "Hoi An Protocol," which states that tours must respect the privacy of those living and working inside historic buildings.) However, I think that most of us can see that the exploitation occurring in this situation is not as tragic as in the poverty tour case. Why? Perhaps it is because my friend had a choice to move, and therefore isn't as vulnerable as those who don't have the choice. Exploitation, I believe, exists along a continuum; it comes in degrees.

³⁸ This interpretation follows from an example Sample uses in her book. She states that the factory owner, if he makes little profit and is doing the best he can by his workers, is not exploiting them if he pays them low wages. He is trying to contribute to their flourishing. However, if the factory owner makes a huge profit and is neglectful of how his

stingy wages affect the flourishing of his employees, then he is exploiting them (Sample, *Exploitation*, p. 89).

³⁹ We used to look at people from “far away lands” in literal zoo setting. For more on this phenomenon, see Pascal Blanchard, Nicolas Bancel, and Eric Deroo (eds.), *Human Zoos: Science and Spectacle in the Age of Empire* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009). Some of these “cultural festivals” happened under the auspices of the Smithsonian Institution on the National Mall.

⁴⁰ Jen Swanson, “The Pros and Cons of Slum Tourism,” *CNN Travel*, May 16, 2011.

⁴¹ The researcher’s questionnaire asks people choose one word of pairs such as happy/sad, harmony/disharmony, modern/traditional. They asked people to take the survey before and after going on the tour of various townships in South Africa. They found that people had a more favorable opinion of the location and people after the tours. (See Fig. 8 in Manfred Rolfes “Poverty tourism: theoretical reflections and empirical findings regarding an extraordinary form of tourism,” *GeoJournal*, Vol 75., No. 5 (2010)).

⁴² John Lancaster, “Next Stop, Squalor,” *Smithsonian Magazine*, March, 2007.

⁴³ Perhaps part of the reason these tours serve as opportunities for photographs more than opportunities for education is because of a lack of : 1) signage along the tour; 2) the history is so new that people don’t feel the need for a history lesson.

⁴⁴ John Patrick Leary, “Detroitism” in *Guernica; A Magazine of Art & Politics*, January 2011.

⁴⁵<https://roadtrippers.com/blog/urban-exploration-tours-bringing-droves-of-tourists-to-detroit-ruins>

⁴⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/ParkerCreativePhotography>

⁴⁷ <http://motorcityphotoworkshops.com/MCPW/beautifying-blight-with-mcpw/>

⁴⁸ Although *Lonely Planet* has since removed information about ruin tours from its website, its 2011 guide lists such tours.

⁴⁹ John Patrick Leary, “Detroitism” in *Guernica; A Magazine of Art & Politics*, January 2011.

⁵⁰ Ibid. (bold my emphasis)

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Thomas Morton, “Something, Something, Something, Detroit: Lazy Journalists Love Pictures of Abandoned Stuff” *Vice*, July 31, 2009.

⁵³ John Patrick Leary, “Detroitism” in *Guernica; A Magazine of Art & Politics*, January 2011.

⁵⁴ Andrew Sargus Klein, “Poverty Is So Photogenic” on *Splicetoday.com*, January 3, 2011.

⁵⁵ Sean O’Hagan, “Detroit in Ruins: The Photographs of Yves Marchand and Romain Meffre.” *Guardian: The Observer*, January 1, 2011.

⁵⁶ Eli Rosenberg, “Motown or Ghostown? Ruin Porn in Detroit.” *The Wire*, January 20, 2011.

⁵⁷ Willy Staley, “What’s Really Pornographic? The Point of Documenting Detroit,” *The Awl*, September 1, 2011.

⁵⁸ <http://www.heidelberg.org>

⁵⁹ Joseph Raz, *Value, Respect, and Attachment* (Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 2001) pp. 161-64.

⁶⁰ This is also true of books consisting of Detroit ruin porn. For example Meffre and Marchand’s *The Ruins of Detroit* is a photographic coffee table book. The photos are accompanied by a brief essay by Thomas J. Sugrue who cites capitalism and the decline of the auto industry as the cause of Detroit’s decline.

⁶¹ Very few Americans see Detroit as a tourist destination. However, the Heidelberg Project claims to receive 275,000 discrete visitors a year. <http://www.heidelberg.org>

⁶² Thomas Morton. “Something, Something, Something, Detroit: Lazy Journalists Love Pictures of Abandoned Stuff” *Vice*, July 31, 2009.

⁶³ John Patrick Leary. “Detroitism” in *Guernica; A Magazine of Art & Politics*, January 2011.

⁶⁴ <http://www.responsibletourismpartnership.org/CapeTown.html>

⁶⁵ Elsewhere I have argued that communities should have the option to label such structures ruins. A ruin only remains so if it is left to decay. I think Detroiters should decide whether to allow local structures to ruinate, and whether to allow photographic

tours of such places. Of course, ruin stabilization (shoring up the structures just enough to make them approachable with endangering human life) would be necessary for such tours to exist.

⁶⁶ Carole Hay, "The Obligation to Resist Oppression", *Journal of Social Philosophy*, 42 (2011): pp. 21–45.