JOURNEYING TO THE HEART OF DARKNESS:

An analysis of genocide tourism

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DECLARATION

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Signed: **(Candidate)**

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JOURNEYING TO THE HEART OF DARKNESS

An Analysis of 'Genocide Tourism'

Rosina Owens

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines 'genocide tourism' as a contemporary socio-cultural phenomenon which has the potential to play a significant role in the dissemination, at an exoteric level, of a greater awareness and understanding of genocide and genocide prevention. The juxtaposition of the words 'genocide' and 'tourism' bring together two diametrically opposed constellations of emotions, the former denoting a heinous crime, and the latter a leisurely pursuit. Yet, the term 'genocide tourism' has become part of the academic lexicon and offers a novel perspective from which to understand one unique way in which people can learn about genocide. 'Genocide tourism' is predominantly researched as a niche phenomenon within the broad parameters of dark tourism and thanatourism studies, and in terms of theory, that is where it remains. My thesis challenges this thinking and proposes that 'genocide tourism' should be studied as a singular focus of research with a view to expanding its potential in raising awareness of genocide. This qualitative study explores the meanings, understandings, and interpretations that form the bases of experiences of 'genocide tourism' as a socio-cultural phenomenon. The theoretical framework is formed around theories of memory, including Astrid Erll's development of a theory of transcultural memory. Field research involving interviews and indepth observation was carried out at Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum, and at Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum and Choeung Ek Genocidal Centre in Cambodia. The data was rigorously analysed through a systematic identification and evaluation of emergent themes. Gademerian hermeneutic phenomenology was used to interrogate the data. The findings indicate that unprecedented access to sites of genocide, both as travel destinations and online through virtual tours, has contributed to an increased awareness of genocide. However, the findings also show high levels of confusion among some visitors and the need for continuous re-evaluation of interpretative practices at 'genocide tourism' destinations.

Keywords: genocide tourism; thanatourism; dark tourism; genocide; Holocaust; memory; Auschwitz-Birkenau; Cambodia.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have seen a growing appetite for, and interest in genocide-related tourism experiences. The current study is an investigation of the contributory factors involved in the upsurge of interest in these activities. It explores how acts of the most extreme violence and barbarity, as embodied in the Holocaust and other genocidal events, are remembered, memorialized, and subsequently harnessed, to disseminate awareness of genocide at an exoteric[1] level. Sites that have borne witness to events relating to genocides are representative of an uneasy accommodation between memory, history, and truth in postmodern global society. This in turn raises moral and ethical questions about the nature of commemoration and remembrance in the aftermath of genocide, and ultimately, about the transmission of a universal awareness of genocide as a social phenomenon and as lived experience.

In this opening chapter the primary research topic is introduced and the key term 'genocide tourism' is defined. The study is then located within current academic research in order to present the research questions which drive this study. Following on from this, an outline of the motivational factors behind the choice of topic is presented, alongside reasons why this research makes an original contribution to the study of how awareness of genocide is communicated at an exoteric level. The chapter concludes with a brief outline of the subsequent individual chapters.

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[1] Intended to or likely to be understood by the general public (Concise Oxford English Dictionary, 2006).

1.2 Presentation of the Research: Exploring the Heart of Darkness

Susan Sontag describes the culture of today as one 'in which shock has become a leading stimulus of consumption and source of value' (2003: 20). Her assertion is echoed in the view expressed by medical anthropologists Arthur and Joan Kleinman. They hypothesize that the recent fascination (particularly amongst Westerners) with visiting massacre sites is directly linked to 'the more ominous aspects of globalization, such as the commercialization of suffering, the commodification of experiences of atrocity and abuse, and the pornographic uses of degradation' (cited in Dawes, 2007: 34). Statistical evidence points to a growing appetite among tourists and travellers for undertaking visits to sites associated with genocide, as well as centres commemorating the victims. In 2001, 492,500 people visited Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Museum in Poland; by 2011, that number had risen to 1,405,000, and in 2014, the Memorial hosted 1.534 million visitors, 70% of whom were under 18 (Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial, 2012; Bender, 2015). In January 2006, annual visitor numbers to the Choeung Ek Genocidal Center ('Killing Fields') in Cambodia totalled 12,599; by January 2008, visitor numbers ran to 22,515; figures for 2014 show that 210,000 tickets were sold (Choeung Ek, 2015; Vannak, 2015). Opening in 2004, Kigali Memorial Centre in Rwanda is a recent addition to the list of genocide tourism destinations, with an estimated 6,000 visitors each month. For the year 2011, visitor numbers were recorded at 40,000 (Aegis Trust, 2012).

While the views expressed by Sontag and the Kleinmans hold some validity in terms of a global (predominantly Western) thirst for a variety of sensational experiences, they also suggest an image of those who participate in such experiences as verging

on the ghoulish, voyeuristic, or indulging in *schadenfreude²*. However, to accept this image unquestioningly, particularly in the case of genocide tourism, is to over-simplify the desire on the part of some people to engage in visits to such sites. Furthermore, it diminishes the need to explore why a growing number of people from all walks of life consciously choose to visit sites of extreme suffering, mass killings, and tragedy, including sites of past genocide. At another level, an unquestioning belief that those who visit sites that memorialize genocide are drawn there to indulge a sense of morbid fascination with violent death on a grand scale debases the victims of genocide and dishonours their families and those who survived.

1.2.1 Defining genocide tourism

The central concern of this qualitative interpretive research study is the contemporary social phenomenon of genocide tourism. 'Genocide tourism' has yet to be clearly defined in academic terms; therefore, I have developed the following definition, which will be adhered to throughout the current study:

Genocide tourism describes the act of travelling to and visiting sites and centres specifically associated with acts of genocide, either as a purposive act³or as part of an extended touristic itinerary.

The current study explores the nature of experiences of genocide tourism through three empirical lenses: the Holocaust as represented at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Museum in Poland, the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum and Choeung Ek

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² Taking pleasure in viewing the misfortune of others.

³ By 'purposive act' I mean the conscious choice to visit a site of genocide.

Genocidal Center, the latter two sites being located in and near Phnom Penh, Cambodia. This research concentrates on genocide tourism as it is experienced by English-speaking tourists with a particular focus on visitors to sites of genocide in Cambodia. The nature of genocide tourism experiences is analysed through an exploration of what such experiences signify for those who participate[4] in visits to sites of genocide; the understandings they bring to the experiences; the meanings they extract from the experiences, and what those meanings reveal about the broader social and cultural landscape in terms of knowledge of, memorialization of, and understanding of acts of genocide.

1.3 From Dark Tourism to Genocide Tourism

The act of visiting sites of genocide is not an entirely new phenomenon, having originally emerged in the wake of the most infamous of all genocides, the Holocaust. Visits to sites of former Nazi concentration and extermination camps in Poland and other parts of what was once Nazi-occupied Europe have been possible since Auschwitz Memorial Museum opened to the public on 14 June 1947 (Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Museum, 2010). Sachsenhausen, Dachau, and Mauthausen museums opened in 1961, 1965 and 1970 respectively. The practice of visiting Holocaust memorial sites and museums is labelled as 'Holocaust tourism' (Pollock, 2003; Ashworth, 2003; Kugelmass, 1993). While the term Holocaust tourism is established in both academic and non-academic circles, the term 'genocide tourism' is comparatively new, having appeared for the first time in 2007 in the popular media, most notably online (Travel Industry Deals, 2007). The phenomenon of

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[4] By 'those who participate' I refer to those who visit sites and centres of genocide as tourists, the researcher in a combined role as participant-researcher and observer, and, to a lesser extent, those who act as guides at the sites.

genocide tourism is currently addressed within the broader framework of 'dark tourism' or 'thanatourism' studies. While they differ in several notable ways, the terms 'dark tourism' and 'thanatourism' are often used interchangeably to describe the popularity of visiting sites associated with death, disaster and trauma (Foley & Lennon, 1996; 2000; Seaton, 1996); however, 'dark tourism' is the most commonly used term (Biran et al, 2011, 821). Although there are signs of an increase in academic interest in the study of genocide tourism as a stand-alone topic (Beech, 2009: 207), this interest is limited, and the focus of scholarly research continues to be centred on the study of dark tourism. Nevertheless, both dark tourism and thanatourism cover a broad spectrum of activities and can range from taking part in cemetery tours, embarking on night-time guided tours of Jack the Ripper's London, or, at the more extreme end, visiting sites of former Nazi concentration camps[5].

1.3.1 The concept of dark tourism

Dark tourism is now a well-established concept supported by a growing body of academic research (Sharpley & Stone, 2009; Stone, 2006; Foley & Lennon, 2000, 1999, 1996; Seaton, 1996) – much of it emanating from within the field of tourism studies[6]. Dark tourism research, including that which deals with genocide tourism, tends to focus attention on commercial aspects of the dark tourism 'product', such as supply and demand, incorporating themes of memory, representation or display into an economic framework. While researchers are never less than respectful when

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[5] Holocaust tourism, dark tourism, and thanatourism are discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

[6] The term 'dark tourism' reached a wider and more general audience in 2010 with the publication of UK comedian Dom Joly's book *The Dark Tourist* (Simon & Schuster) documenting his travels to some of the world's dark tourist attractions, including Cambodia's Killing Fields. This book is noteworthy in that it is the first non-academic text dealing specifically with dark tourism to arrive in high street bookshops.

addressing issues related to the Holocaust and genocide, other foci of dark tourism research often comprise frivolous or 'fun' aspects of exploring the darker side of human nature, with a certain degree of 'theme park' allure in terms of how some of the 'less dark' experiences are presented. However, this research project contends that given the sensitive nature and content inherent in all genocide tourism activities, there is justification for extracting genocide tourism as a niche phenomenon from within the broad base of dark tourism studies and examining it as a unique activity.[7]

The breadth and types of experiences that come under the banner of dark tourism studies highlight a discernible lacuna in the existing research in that the human element, in this case, the genocide tourist, is frequently overlooked, given limited attention, or subsumed under themes such as supply and demand that dominate the commercial considerations of dark tourism ventures. This project seeks to build on and complement current trends in research related to Holocaust and genocide tourism, while at the same time emphasizing the importance of a participant dimension as a unique lens through which to focus on meanings of experiences of genocide tourism, and the potential impact of these experiences in terms of raising awareness of genocide and helping to transmit and share that awareness with as many people as possible. In doing so, this study grapples with the challenge of drawing together the various themes that converge in and around experiences of genocide tourism. It is this perspective that takes the current study beyond the scope of existing work in similar fields relating to Holocaust and genocide studies.

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[7] I accept that the study of genocide tourism has its origins in the field of dark tourism studies.

1.4 The Research Questions

Four key research questions underpin this study and drive it forward:

(i) What is genocide tourism?

(ii) How are memories of genocide represented in genocide tourism?

(iii) What meanings may genocide tourists derive from experiences of visiting genocide sites and exhibitions?

(iv) What role does genocide tourism play in:

- raising consciousness?

- promoting awareness of genocide?

- preventing genocide?

Implicit in the framing of these research questions is a desire to develop an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of genocide tourism. Building on the answers to these four questions, this research presents a holistic study of experiences of genocide tourism and aims to enhance current understanding of how knowledge of genocide is communicated to a global audience. In identifying the unique nature of genocide tourism as an increasingly popular and accessible means of learning about genocide, the study uncovers how genocidal pasts are presented and re-presented exoterically. Furthermore, the research offers an insight into how genocide tourism experiences can inform ongoing efforts to transmit the message of genocide awareness and prevention, particularly in terms of how the development of such awareness should be viewed as a universal responsibility.

1.4.1 Why research genocide tourism?

The motivation for pursuing an investigation of the phenomenon of genocide tourism lies in a long-held personal interest in genocide, particularly genocide education, and a desire to understand the variety of ways in which knowledge of genocide is, or could be communicated to a lay audience. Genocide tourism presented a novel perspective from which to approach the research. My experiences both as a mature student and as an adult educator consolidated a realization that people's real-world experiences provide a platform for valuable learning experiences as much as any formal, that is, classroom or lecture-hall based learning. In an era of relatively cheap and accessible air travel to ever more distant locations, the idea of visiting sites of genocide in Poland, Cambodia, or even Rwanda, is no longer the impossible or unlikely prospect it once was. In capturing experiences of genocide tourism this research makes a valuable contribution to the still under-researched area of genocide awareness at an exoteric level, while the use of a qualitative interpretive approach privileges the voices of human experiences of visiting sites of genocide and allows tapping into a rich vein of primary sources.

1.5 Presentation of the Thesis

This research explores experiences of genocide tourism among a number of visitors to sites and centres associated with acts of genocide. It seeks to uncover the role played by a variety of experiences of genocide tourism in communicating knowledge of, and raising awareness of genocide at an exoteric level. It does so by adopting an interdisciplinary methodological approach. The philosophical underpinnings of the study belong to a qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological perspective, an approach which focuses on the meanings, understandings, and interpretations that

form the bases of experience. At the core of the theoretical framework lie theories of memory. The complexity of the topic is reflected in the sequence of presentation of subsequent chapters.

Having introduced the research topic in this opening chapter, the next chapter locates the project within the current framework of knowledge, and provides a rationale for undertaking this research. Chapter 2 explores the origins of the phenomenon of genocide tourism as a 'subsumed'[8] term within the field of dark tourism and thanatourism studies, and justifies its extraction from within this area and the need to treat it as a phenomenon worthy of stand-alone research. Existing research on the topic of genocide tourism is examined and the theoretical framework is discussed. The chapter concludes with a re-presentation of the research questions driving the current study. As previously stated, dark tourism studies cover a vast range of touristic activities and this is illustrative of the eclectic nature of the framework within which genocide tourism presently resides. An examination of empirical studies in this field highlights lacunae in the current knowledge regarding experiences of genocide tourism.

Chapter 3 discusses the central role of memory as a dynamic and evolving theoretical framework within which to explore genocide tourism. The focus here is on the on-going drive to re-evaluate and supplement long-standing sociological perspectives on memory with more recent approaches. In Chapter 4, the methodology is presented. A qualitative interpretive methodology has been employed, which philosophical underpinnings are based on a Gadamerian hermeneutic phenomenological paradigm. The precise configuration of the approach is discussed in terms of its design and

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[8] Subsumed in that it is incorporated under the broader classification of dark tourism.

suitability for this specific research project. The second part of this chapter documents the research journey. It involves discussion of the research methods deployed – the choice of sites and participants; approaches to data collection and analysis; and the key role of the researcher as participant-researcher and observer alongside the implications of this for the current project. Ethical considerations governing the management of the study are also outlined and issues arising during the course of the research are addressed in the conclusion to this chapter.

Chapters 5 and 6 present the findings and discussion elements of the current study. Chapter 5 describes the field work element of the project and represents the findings based on the empirical data gathered at the research sites at Auschwitz and in Cambodia, and to a lesser extent, The Imperial War Museum in London. Chapter 6 engages in an explication of the findings and illustrates the complexity of the phenomenon of genocide tourism and the diversity of motivations and experiences in evidence. Analysis of the data was carried out using a method aligned to Gadamer's hermeneutic phenomenology. The final chapter of the study – Chapter 7 – is an overall review of the research findings and the contribution made by the study to the current body of knowledge. Areas warranting further investigation are identified, including the potential impact of genocide tourism on those populations for whom genocide was and is part of their lived experience, reality, and history.

CHAPTER 2: TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF GENOCIDE TOURISM

2.1 Introduction

'Genocide' and 'tourism' do not sit easily together, the former having one of the most emotive connotations known to humankind, the latter describing an activity that has become an almost mundane leisure feature of contemporary society. Nonetheless, the composite term 'genocide tourism' accurately denotes the types of activity that form the subject matter under investigation in this study, that is, the act of travelling to and visiting sites and centres specifically associated with acts of genocide, either as a purposive act, or as part of an extended touristic itinerary. The aim of this chapter is to define the term 'genocide tourism' and to contextualize the phenomenon within a sociological framework. This involves tracing the provenance of the term; acknowledging its relationship to dark tourism and thanatourism studies; and, identifying Holocaust tourism as the direct forerunner of genocide tourism. These three key expressions - 'dark tourism', 'thanatourism', and 'Holocaust tourism' – will be defined and discussed. At present, the act of visiting sites of genocide as part of a touristic activity is subsumed within the confines of what is described as an 'eclectic and theoretically fragile' dark tourism perspective (Sharpley, 2009: 6; Stone, 2006: 146). This chapter highlights the need to recognise that the unique and politically sensitive nature of genocide demands that the subject of genocide tourism be given independent scholarly attention rather than being treated as a niche phenomenon within the broader framework of dark tourism studies.

2.2 Tracing the Origins of 'Genocide Tourism

On 6 August 2007, an article entitled 'Genocide tourism: Tragedy becomes a tourist attraction'[9] appeared on a tourism industry website, travelindustrydeals.com. This short article described a growing fascination among tourists with visiting sites of genocide at various locations around the world, from Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland to genocide sites in Bosnia, Cambodia, and Rwanda. While no agreed source[10] for the term 'genocide tourism' has been uncovered during the course of this research, the *Travel Industry Deals* article marks the earliest evidence of its usage.

The term 'genocide tourism' is a product not of the academic world, but rather of popular culture and online journalism. This may be seen as reflecting the way in which increased access to communication, driven by technological advances in global communications and social media, offers new and more fluid possibilities in terms of how, what, when and for whom information is created. Writing in relation to the dissemination of knowledge of heritage and history, Keith Hollinshead (2002: 174) contends that the personal and public world has undergone a transformation in recent decades. Citing Crouch and Marquand (1995) he attributes this to the onset of 'the postmodern predicament', whereby 'the local/territorial/bounded market place of ideas and connectivities is replaced by a larger, global, and more fluid field of knowledge and communication'. Hollinshead notes how this exposes people to a much 'wider pool of interpretations about the past' (2002:174). Lennon and Foley

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[9] This was largely a reproduction of an article by Steve Silva, entitled 'Genocide tourism: Tragedy becomes a destination', which was published on 5 August 2007 in the online version of the *Chicago Tribune.*

[10] 'Agreed source' on the part of either the academic community or within popular media and popular culture circles.

posit that this turn to postmodernity has 'changed the relationship between people and world events' (Lennon & Foley, 2000: 119). The role played by online media in disseminating knowledge of genocide tourism is illustrated by the selected examples displayed in Table 2.1 below, which were collated over a four year period from August 2007 to September 2011[11].

2.3 Dark tourism

This study defends the position that when the central focus of an experience relates to visiting sites of genocide, this should immediately set it apart from the broader scope of dark tourism and thanatourism interests. Nonetheless, the introduction of genocide tourism to the academic realm and its designation as a valid focus of scholarly interest is indebted to the broader field of dark tourism research.

The early work of Malcolm Foley and John Lennon, alongside that of Tony Seaton, is of particular relevance in this regard, and forms the basis for much of the research carried out by others, especially Philip Stone and Richard Sharpley.

2.3.1 Defining 'dark tourism'

In 1996, sociologists Lennon and Foley coined the term 'dark tourism' for academic audiences, which they used to describe the growing popularity among tourists of visiting sites associated with 'death, disaster, and depravity', and the concomitant commodification and commercialization of such sites by the tourism industry (Lennon & Foley, 1999: 46).

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[11] The role of various media in the creation of pre-conceptions of genocide tourism experiences are discussed in Chapter 6.

Table 2.1 Online References to Genocide Tourism Experiences (2007 – 2011)[12]

DATE	ONLINE PUBLICATION	ARTICLE/ITEM TITLE	REFERENCES TO GENOCIDE TOURISM
August 2007	*Chicago Tribune* (USA)	'Genocide tourism: Tragedy becomes a destination'.	"An increasing number of tourists are traveling to places of horrific human catastrophe... Tragedy has become a destination"
April 2011	*Anthropologies* (Blog)	'Toul Sleng Genocide Museum, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.	"As a tourist location, S-21offers a piece of Cambodia's recent history put on display for travellers".
August 2011	telegraph.co.uk	'Once strife-riven countries that have become holiday hotspots'	"...the most popular tourist destination is the Kigali Memorial Centre...permanent memorial for the victims of genocide...built on a site where 250,000 are buried".
September 2011	'Feministe' (Blog)	'Where Dark Tourism Meets Global Feminism'	"An estimated 20,000 people were imprisoned, tortured, and killed. Right there in the place you walk through. The museum's (Toul Sleng) website boasts 500 visitors a day now...as many voluntary, paying tourists will shuffle through as did torture victims and prisoners over four years".

Prior to the use of the term 'dark tourism', the relationship between death, the macabre, and tourism had been given limited attention in academic circles (Lennon & Mitchell, 2007: 168). This relationship had been approached previously by Chris Rojek (1993) in *Ways of Escape: Modern Transformations in Leisure and Travel*, which included a discussion of 'Fatal Attractions' and 'Black Spots'. However, Seaton (2010: 525) contends that Rojek's use of these terms, particularly 'fatal attractions', is problematic in that 'the tourism phenomena' they describe are 'too limited and ill-defined'. This contention is rooted in what Seaton perceives as Rojek's privileging of 'recent spectacles associated with simulation and images', at the expense of 'both ancient and modernist sites' ... 'that have evolved historically within grand narratives', and which are more materially 'authentic' (Seaton, 2010: 525). Yet, as the examples below illustrate, it can be argued that Rojek traverses a broad historical spectrum, and in the process, espouses a postmodernist perspective on contemporary culture characterized by the proliferation of 'duplication and reproduction' (Rojek, 1993: 142):

- Black Spots – commercially developed sites at: graveyards; sites of violent or mass death; sites of celebrity deaths.

- Heritage Sites – 'performance sites' (for example, village life re-enactments and open air museums such as the Ulster American Folk Park, Northern Ireland), and 'tableaux' (for example, simulations of past events using technology).

- Literary Landscapes – real and imaginary landscapes based around the lives of writers and their characters.

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- Theme Parks – designed around continuous spectacle and themed attractions (for example, Alton Towers Theme Park in the UK).

(Rojek, 1993: pp136-137).

What Rojek terms 'these new escape areas' are heavily dependent on long-term capital investment and the use of simulated images. He posits that 'meaning has been replaced with spectacle and sensation dominates value' (Rojek, 1993: 136). Rojek's work deserves recognition as a potential catalyst for Lennon and Foley's work on dark tourism.

2.3.2 Lennon and Foley's 'Dark Tourism'

Returning to Lennon and Foley, their stated objective in coining the term 'dark tourism' was to 'signify a fundamental shift in the way in which death, disaster, and atrocity are being handled by those who offer associated tourist products' (Lennon & Foley, 2000: 3). 'Dark tourism' made the first of many subsequent appearances in an article entitled 'JFK and dark tourism: A fascination with assassination' (Foley & Lennon, 1996) in *The International Journal of Heritage Studies*, which examined touristic approaches to the ongoing interpretation and representation of the death of President John F. Kennedy in 1963. This article was followed in 2000 by the publication of Lennon and Foley's seminal text on the subject, *Dark Tourism: The Attraction of Death and Disaster* which, building on their earlier work, followed trends in the development and marketing of a variety of sites as dark tourism attractions appealing to 21st century international travellers.

2.3.3 Intimations of postmodernity in dark tourism

Not only do Lennon and Foley define dark tourism as a modern concept, but they also discern within it 'an intimation of postmodernity' (2000: 11) which hinges on their identification of three characteristics of the phenomenon. Firstly, advances in global communications technology ensure continuous and up-to-the-minute worldwide public access to reports of death, disaster, and trauma. This was exemplified by global coverage of the 11 September, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Centre and supports Hollinshead's (2002) contention that knowledge and communication are globalized and 'fluid' fields within which time can be manipulated, and to a certain extent, controlled by a technologically literate global community. Secondly, dark tourism sustains nascent anxieties among those who participate in dark tourism experiences, feeding fears that the project of modernity has failed, notwithstanding advances in science, technology, and human thinking. Examples of this include the sinking of the RMS *Titanic* in April 1912, which was perceived as the failure of infallible science and technology of the period. The third and final postmodern characteristic which Lennon and Foley attribute to dark tourism relates to the notion that as the educational, ethical and commercial aspects of dark tourism compete for space and attention, boundaries become increasingly blurred within the phenomenon.

Consensus on definitions of postmodernity and associated terms such as 'postmodern' or 'postmodernism' are notoriously difficult to pin down. The characterization of dark tourism as a postmodern phenomenon as outlined above, follows one common line of accepted thinking in that a postmodern world is perceived as being endlessly unstable and fragmented. Lennon and Foley choose not

to pursue the discussion, stating that they 'do not seek to enter any philosophical debates over the use of this term ('dark tourism')', while identifying within it certain 'significant aspects of postmodernity' (Lennon & Foley, 2000: 11). Rachel Hughes argues that Lennon and Foley's stance is 'a refusal on their part to engage with prior theorizations of tourism that draw sophisticated links between postmodernity and mobility' resulting in a rejection by them of the idea 'that international tourism can rarely be thought of if not through war and violence' (2008: 320). In keeping with Hughes's position, the current project contends that Lennon and Foley's reluctance to expand their discussion of postmodern concepts in relation to dark tourism represents a missed opportunity, and this area would benefit from further development. Such a discussion is particularly relevant in terms of memorial culture and, therefore the concept of postmodernity can be used constructively in a future exploration of genocide tourism.

2.3.4. Dark tourism parameters

Alongside the three postmodern characteristics initially ascribed to dark tourism, Lennon and Foley argue that in order for an activity or experience to qualify as dark tourism it must fulfil two additional criteria: firstly, events must have taken place 'within the memories of those still alive to validate them' (Lennon & Foley, 2000: 12); secondly, dark tourism experiences and activities must 'posit questions, or introduce anxiety and doubt about, modernity and its consequences', resulting in a perceived collapse of metanarratives (Lennon & Foley, 2000: 12). As Stone (2006: 149) points out, the first requirement gives their work a 'somewhat restricted focus' in respect of temporal contextualization.

Lennon and Foley's perspective on those who perform dark tourism – 'dark tourists' - is also confined within narrow parameters. They exclude those who deliberately choose to visit 'dark' sites either because of a personal connection (concentration camp survivor or family member), an interest in warfare (for example, war veterans visiting battlefields), or any kind of 'specialist' (historian, psychologist). Instead, Lennon and Foley confine their attention to 'those who visit due to serendipity, the itinerary of tour companies or the merely curious who happen to be in the vicinity' (Lennon & Foley, 2000: 23). In terms of investigating dark tourist motivations and experiences, this offers an extremely limited data pool from which to garner information, unless the researcher's primary focus is on the psychology of consumption of dark tourism products, which Lennon and Foley suggest as an interesting avenue for further research. The contention within this study is that restrictions and exclusionary practices which Lennon and Foley favour limit the scope for detailed analyses of how dark tourism operates.

2.3.5 Dark tourism – 'a troubling nomenclature'

While Lennon and Foley's work has excited researchers, their coinage and use of the term 'dark tourism' has also drawn criticism from some quarters (Bowman & Pezzullo, 2009; Hughes, 2008, Stone, 2006; Wight, 2005). For example, Michael Bowman and Phaedra Pezzullo who have carried out extensive research in the fields of environmental justice studies, social justice studies, and tourism studies, exhibit some disquiet regarding the application of the term 'dark tourism' when used to describe their own research: 'Owing no doubt to its popularity, we find our own work in environmental justice and advocacy and battlefield tours increasingly linked by colleagues, students, and editors with this trend, even though we do not identify

ourselves as dark tourism researchers' (2009: 188). They are particularly critical in two respects: they argue that the trope 'dark' holds negative connotations, conjuring up images of 'something disturbing, troubling, suspicious, weird, morbid, or perverse' (2009: 190). Bowman and Pezzullo are also critical of the refusal on the part of academics to engage with an exploration of the use of the term 'dark tourism' citing Lennon and Foley's wish to avoid 'philosophical debates' on the issue. They posit that until the term is correctly identified and interrogated it will retain the negative connotations of the language, thereby impeding meaningful engagement with the study of dark tourism (2009: 190). Hughes also takes issue with the use of the term (as it is applied to sites of war and violence), viewing it as 'a kind of double denigration: of tourists for their apparent passivity in being led to such sites, and of national governments and cultural institutions of other (often post-conflict) countries for developing profitable sites that politicize historical events' (2008: 320).

Bowman and Pezzullo point out that although Lennon and Foley's 'dark tourism' label may be a recent coinage: 'people travelled to places associated with death well before the advent of modern touring' (2009: 190). This highlights another key issue arising from Lennon and Foley's initial study - the question of what they term 'chronological distance' (Lennon & Foley, 2000: 12). Although they freely acknowledge that a fascination with death is nothing new, they are firmly of the opinion that dark tourism should be studied as a contemporary phenomenon that has been driven forward by the growth and development of global communications technology. While Lennon and Foley do not explain the rationale behind their adherence to a narrow timespan, their insistence on an exclusive focus on sites related to events that happened within 'living memory' (Lennon & Foley, 2000: 8) is

problematic, setting 'rather strict, self-imposed parameters' (Stone, 2006: 149), and has been the cause of 'some contention' (Wight, 2005: 120). What does this issue of a restricted chronological timeframe imply for the on-going study of dark tourism, and consequently for the study of genocide tourism? If there were to be a strict adherence to Lennon and Foley's methodology (and definition), does this suggest that when the last of those who remember the assassination of J.F.K. are no longer alive to bear witness to the event, it should be marginalized or even excluded as a focus of interest for dark tourism research? The same questions apply even more urgently in the case of the Holocaust, already fading from *living* memory as each year fewer survivors remain alive to bear witness. These questions also have major implications for the study of genocide tourism, particularly in terms of creating and enhancing awareness of genocide as a historical as well as a contemporary concept, not to mention the implications for the study of genocide memory. It is essential to understand that genocide has a long history and that while the word 'genocide' is a relatively recent addition to global lexicons, the act itself has a global history. Thus genocide tourism is both impeded and challenged when treated as a niche area of dark tourism studies.

2.3.6 Over-abundance of sub-categories: Stone and Sharpley

In spite of their reluctance to embrace the use of what they term 'the troubling nomencalture' of dark tourism, Bowman and Pezzullo (2009: 188) acknowledge that having been introduced as an academic term in the 1990s, the term 'now appears in popular and academic discourses, as the theme of academic conferences, and as the subject of an online forum[13]' (ibid). Since its introduction to academic platforms

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[13] Philip Stone's 'Dark Tourism Forum' www.dark-tourism.org.uk

'dark tourism' has stimulated a growing interest in what researchers in the field refer to as the 'darker' side of touristic activities. This increased interest has given rise to the appearance of a plethora of sub-categories, which in turn has led to fragmented and, it may be argued, less cohesive discourses surrounding this emotive term. Dark tourism is an 'emotive' term as it elicits emotional responses on many levels, particularly when the dark tourism experience is of a 'darker' or distinctly death-related nature.

The desire to classify and categorize is a recognized feature of tourism studies. This fragmentation is evident in the following examples of types of tours and activities that currently qualify for inclusion under the banner of 'dark tourism':

- Glasnevin Cemetery Museum, Dublin

- Elvis's former home, 'Graceland'

- Jack the Ripper tours of London's East End

- Black taxi tours of Belfast

- Visits to the scene of the fatal accident involving Diana, Princess of Wales at Pont d'Alma in Paris

- The 9/11 memorial site at Ground Zero, New York

- Hiroshima, Japan

- Robben Island, South Africa

- Lilian Thuram's Human Zoo exhibition at Paris's Quai Branly Museum

The above list was chosen at random from an inexhaustible selection of possible choices, all of which meet the criteria for classification as dark tourism activities within the parameters set out by dark tourism researchers, as discussed earlier. The list indicates the problematic nature of seeking to categorize such diverse activities under one all-encompassing term. Löfgren (1999) characterizes this determination to label and categorize within 'dark tourism' as 'an unhappy marriage between marketing research and positivist ambitions of scientific labelling' (cited in Bowman & Pezzullo, 2009: 199).

Table 2.2 displays a selection of the more established sub-categories of dark tourism. Some newer sub-categories such as trauma tourism, morbid tourism, and atrocity tourism comprise events and activities that overlap, blurring the boundaries and contributing to an overall sense of fragmentation within the field. Both genocide tourism and Holocaust tourism are currently considered to be sub-categories of 'dark tourism' by those who specialise in that field of research. For this reason they have been included in Table 2.1.[14] As previously stated, it remains the position of this study that activities related to visiting sites of genocide should be given independent scholarly attention rather than being designated as a sub-category, or niche element of dark tourism studies.

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[14] The issue of the uniqueness of the Holocaust is addressed later in this chapter.

Table 2.2 Death-related sub-categories of dark tourism

Subcategories of dark tourism	Referenced in
Genocide tourism	Beech, 2009
Holocaust tourism	Pollock, 2003; Ashworth, 2003; Kugelmass, 1993
Grief tourism	Trotta, J. 2006; O'Neill, 2002
Trauma tourism	Clark, 2005, 2002; Fysh, 2005; Payne & Clark, (forthcoming); Thompson, 2005.
Morbid tourism	Blom, 2000;
Battlefield tourism	Baldwin, 2009; Basarin, 2011; Dunkley & Morgan, 2011; Winter, 2009; Prideaux, 2007; Ryan, 2007; Edwards, 2005; Holguin, 2005; Seaton, 2000, 1999; Lloyd, 1998.
Atrocity tourism	Ashworth & Hartmann, 2005; Timothy & Prideaux, 2004; Podoshen, 2011.

2.3.7 Addressing the challenges of over-categorization in dark tourism

Over-categorization is a growing problem in dark tourism studies and risks undermining the academic credibility of the field. Independently, Philip Stone (2006)

and Richard Sharpley (2009) propose two related models in an effort to develop a framework that would counteract, or limit the difficulties posed by the fragmentary nature of the categories within the already eclectic field.

Stone's 'dark tourism spectrum of supply' illustrated in Figure 2.1 below provides an interesting insight into the challenges facing scholars attempting to understand the phenomenon (2009: 22). The idea that dark tourism can be viewed in terms of 'shades', or 'degrees' of darkness has previously been posited by scholars (Seaton, 1999; Miles, 2002; Strange & Kempa, 2003; Sharpley, 2009; 2005), however, Stone is the first to present a visualization of the idea of a 'darker-lighter tourism paradigm' as suggested by Miles (2002 cited in Stone, 2006: 150). The dark tourism spectrum ranges from the 'darkest' point, at which would be located the actual 'sites of death and suffering' (for example, Auschwitz), to the 'lightest' point, at which would be found 'sites associated with death and suffering' (for example, The Imperial War Museum's Holocaust Exhibition, London). Aspects of the 'dark tourism product', such as location, authenticity, and orientation, are also plotted on the dark tourism spectrum and designated as 'darker' or 'lighter' in tone. Falling at points between these two extremes are sites such as The London Dungeon, which offers recreations of macabre historical events as interactive entertainment; or, Deeley Plaza in Dallas, Texas where J.F.K. was assassinated.

Figure 2.1 A Dark Tourism Spectrum: Perceived Product Features of Dark Tourism Within a 'Darkest-Lightest' Framework of Supply. (Source: Stone, 2006: 151)
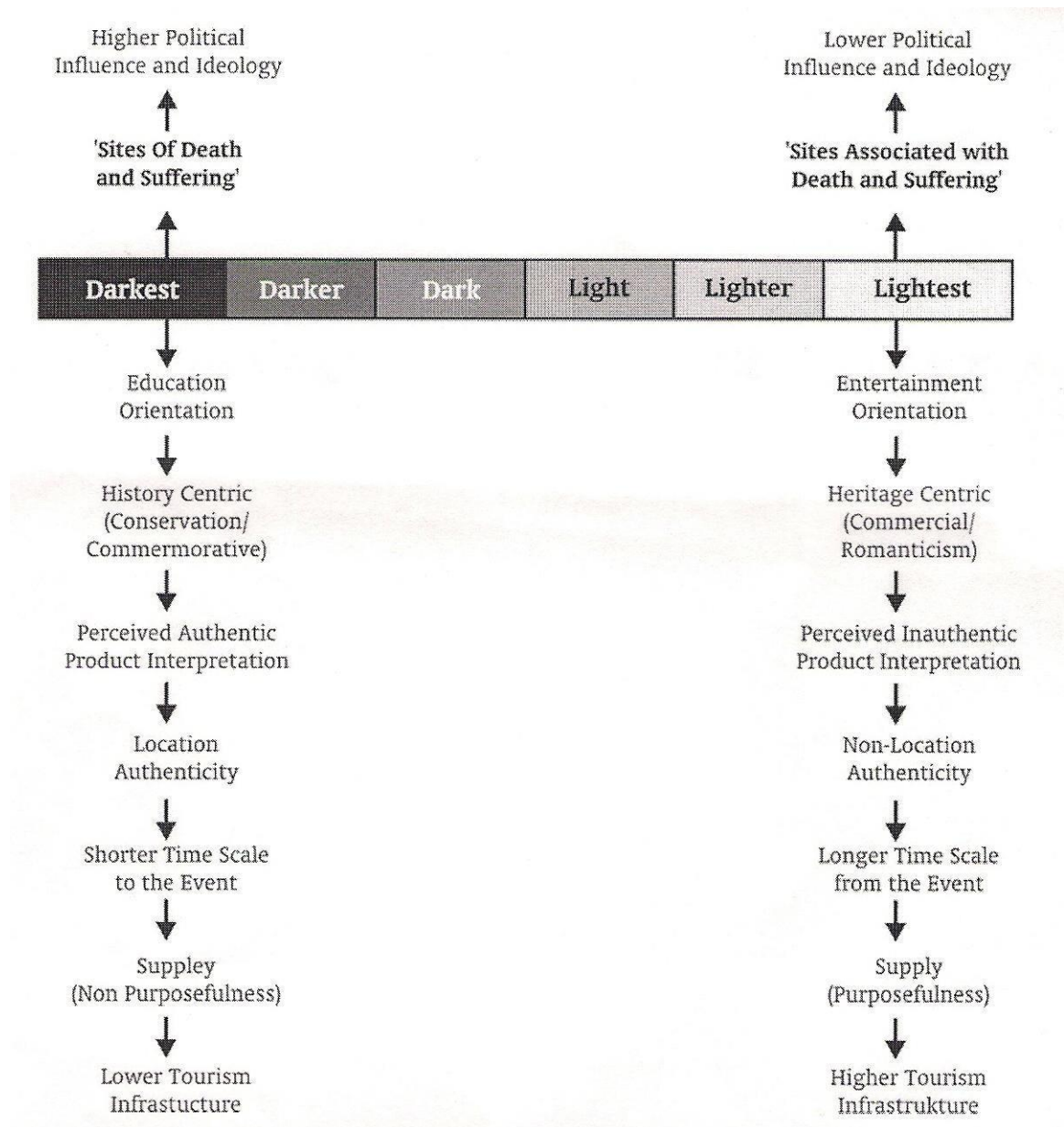
Alongside Stone's 'Dark Tourism Spectrum' Sharpley proposes 'a matrix of dark tourism supply and demand', which seeks to combat the inherent eclecticism in dark tourism, aiming to provide 'much needed clarity and a setting of parameters, which may be applied to the eclectic dark tourism product range' (Stone, 2006: 158).

Within this framework, reproduced in Figure 2.2 below, Sharpley identifies and plots four 'shades' of dark tourism: pale tourism; grey tourism demand; grey tourism supply, and black tourism.

Figure 2.2 Matrix of Dark Tourism Supply and Demand
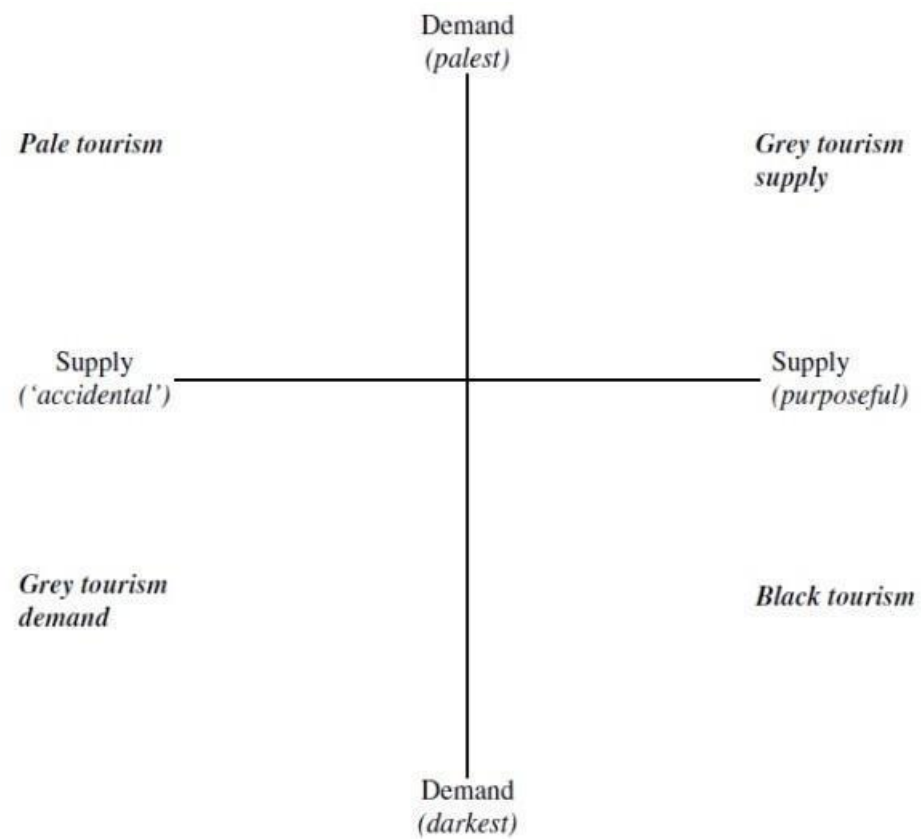
Sharpley, 2009: 20

According to Sharpley, these 'shades' can be defined and described as follows:

- *Pale tourism* – Describes tourists with a *marginal* interest in death who visit sites which were not planned as dark tourism attractions, but are gaining a reputation as dark tourism destinations.

- *Grey tourism demand* – Describes tourists *actively seeking* dark tourism experiences who visit attractions that were not initially intended or planned as dark tourism attractions, but which have gained a reputation as such among those seeking out such experiences

- *Grey tourism supply* – sites *intentionally* developed for dark tourism purposes, which attract tourists with a limited interest in death

- *Black tourism* – Intentional dark tourism sites with tourists actively engaged in seeking to satisfy a 'fascination with death'. Supply and demand are matched perfectly in the 'purest' form of dark tourism.

(Sharpley, 2009: 20).

Stone's dark tourism spectrum of supply and demand and Sharpley's matrix of supply and demand are proposed as potential solutions to the problem of fragmentation and over-categorization within the field. However, it may be argued that they actually create scope for greater fragmentation and complication by splicing together a 'darker-lighter' tourist paradigm and a 'darker-lighter' tourism site paradigm. Nevertheless, Stone envisions a bright future for his model suggesting that his dark tourism spectrum can provide a framework for the location and identification of 'the types of 'dark tourists' within each of these product types, and commence (sic) the fundamental task of extracting and interrogating the motives and experiences of dark tourism consumers' (Stone, 2006: 158).

The models which Stone and Sharpley propose are developed around concepts of supply and demand with an emphasis on product and commoditization-related aspects of dark tourism. The predominant focus of extant research is on the commercial aspects of dark tourism, which is evidenced by the fact that much of the language of dark tourism studies emanates from the worlds of tourism and business. There has, however, been a concerted effort on the part of some researchers to progress beyond this point, bringing a more socio-cultural dimension to the field. Tony Seaton has been at the forefront of this effort with his work on dark tourism's companion term 'thanatourism'.

2.4 Thanatourism

2.4.1. Defining thanatourism

The term 'thanatourism' has thus far failed to capture the imagination of the public and media in the same way they have embraced the term 'dark tourism'. Two reasons for this may lie in the actual word 'thanatourism'. Firstly, it may be perceived as overly cumbersome, lacking the impact and appeal of 'dark tourism', especially from a popular culture perspective. Secondly, as a term, it may be viewed by both public and media as elitist, and therefore less accessible to mainstream audiences and readerships. Thanatourism is frequently used interchangeably with Lennon and Foley's dark tourism and is accredited to A. V. (Tony) Seaton (1996). It derives from the word 'thanatopsis' which is defined as 'a meditation on the subject of death' (Webster's Dictionary). This in turn has its origins in the Greek word *thanatos* meaning death[15]. Seaton defines thanatourism as 'travel to a location

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[15] 'Thanatopsis' is also the title of a poem by the 19th century American poet William Cullen Bryant (Yale Book of American Verse, 1912).

wholly, or partially, motivated by the desire for actual or symbolic encounters with death, particularly, but not exclusively, violent death, which may, to a varying degree be activated by the person-specific features of those whose deaths are its focal objects' (Seaton, 2009: 521; cited in Williams, 2007: 141). In contrast to narrow definitions of dark tourism, within Seaton's definition of thanatourism there is an immediate acknowledgement of the 'person', both he/she who visits the sites and he/she whose death is woven into experiences of visiting the sites[16].

Seaton contends that the term thanatourism is preferable to that of dark tourism and other related terms such as 'atrocity tourism', 'morbid tourism', or 'fatal attractions', for three key reasons (2009: 526). Firstly, he describes it as 'the more inclusive concept' in that it can be applied equally as effectively and appropriately in relation to visiting Holocaust memorial sites, as it can be in respect of taking a tour of Madame Tussaud's Chamber of Horrors. Secondly, for Seaton, thanatourism does not have the pejorative association of its companion term whereby the trope of 'dark' immediately conjures up negative images. Thirdly, thanatourism is not afflicted with what Seaton views as the 'postmodern bias' evident in similar terms, such as Rojek's fatal attractions, a bias which Seaton argues leads to the privileging of 'present spectacle' over 'authentic materiality' (2009: 525).

2.4.2. A typology of thanatourism

In keeping with the predilection for developing typologies, Seaton also presents a concise determination of what he sees as the characteristics of the phenomenon of

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[16] It is interesting to note that the latter part of Seaton's definition is omitted by Stone when referencing Seaton, thereby failing to acknowledge the role of the 'person' in thanatourism (2006: 149).

thanatourism. His typology is comprised of five types of death-focussed travel behaviour:

- 'Travel to witness public enactments of death' – executions, accidents, disasters

- 'Travel to see sites of mass death or individual deaths' – sites of genocide, battlefields, celebrity death sites

- 'Travel to interment sites and memorials to the dead' – graveyards, war memorials

- 'Travel to view the material evidence, or symbolic representations of death, in locations unconnected with their occurrence' – museums, exhibitions

- 'Travel for re-enactments or simulations of death, sometimes religious, but also secular' – religious processions, English Civil War re-enactments.

(Seaton, 2000: 578; Seaton, 1996: 237).

Seaton's typology has much in common with other typologies offered by researchers in dark tourism and thanatourism studies such as Rojek, Lennon and Foley, and Stone and Sharpley. The current study contends that in view of the number of typologies (all of which display similar characteristics) found throughout the fields of dark tourism and thanatourism studies, the task of developing a singular typology of

dark tourism and thanatourism activities has been dealt with in extant research, and it is now time to engage with the more substantive elements of the phenomena[17].

2.4.3 A thanatoptic tradition

While both dark tourism and thanatourism share a common focus on death-related tourism activities, they differ in some basic, yet significant ways, particularly in terms of chronological perspective (Wight, 2006: 120; Stone, 2006). If the proponents of dark tourism studies are keen to locate their phenomenon in the present, then thanatourism is adamant that it is only by acknowledging the historical background of the interest in travelling to sites associated with death and dying that it is possible to fully understand the phenomenon of thanatourism, and in turn genocide tourism. Those such as Seaton, who prefer the term thanatourism, contend that it is firmly rooted in tradition, given that people have always visited sites related to death. This tradition is the starting point for much of Seaton's work, and he cites extensive historical and literary evidence to support this assertion. The commodification of this 'contemplation of death' (Stone, 2006: 149), which Seaton labels the 'thanatoptic tradition' (ibid) is predominantly a Western phenomenon. It can be traced back to writings of the Middle Ages, which document visits to shrines of early Christian martyrs, and onwards to the present with its multiple modes and means of contemplation. Seaton embraces this thanatoptic tradition and uses what he terms 'profound shifts in the history of European culture, which still impact today' (2009:

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[17] This is not to suggest that typologies are a defunct tool. They can be productively employed in respect of the current research, in relation to an analysis of visitors to sites of genocide, as will be discussed later in this study.

526), to trace the Western tradition of death-related travel and tourism[18]. He cites the importance of three historical discourses in the formation of this tradition:

- Christianity from c.400A.D. to the 16th century

- Antiquarianism and the ideology of national heritage

- Romanticism

2.4.4 Pilgrimages and fatality

Contemplation of death has always been a feature of Christian faith practices, where it is a constant presence, and continues to be actively encouraged, most notably in the Catholic faith.[19] The Western roots of interest in travel to sites of death and death-related experiences lie in a tradition of early Christian pilgrimage. Death, often violent, is a recurring feature of Christianity, epitomized by the primary identifying symbol of the Crucifixion. As Seaton notes, 'Christianity was thus the first, and only, world religion to make an instrument of torture and death its corporate logo' (Seaton, 2009: 527). Although this rationale has its origins in Western religious doctrine, it has since filtered through to non-religious contemplation of death, and lives on in contemporary Western secular society's continuing fascination with death and dying[20].

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[18] Seaton concentrates on Western traditions.

[19] Examples of this type of death-related ritualism also exist in other cultures, for example, the annual Pchum Ben ('Ancestors Day') festival of the dead in Cambodia, which lasts for 15 days.

[20] Contemplation of death is also a feature of Islamic beliefs, with followers encouraged to contemplate death and prepare for it with good deeds. However, in the case of Islam, contemplation of death retains its singular identity as a tenet of Islamic faith and is not considered a feature of the socio-cultural landscape, as embodied in the shrines and memorials favoured by Judeo-Christian societies and cultures.

Seaton's adherence to the idea that thanatourism has a long tradition is borne out by the continuing popularity of physical sites associated with death, disaster and the macabre, dating far back through history, particularly those with a tradition of religious pilgrimage. While initial motivations on the part of visitors may have changed over time, the attraction of pilgrimage sites as contemporary tourist centres has grown. One such example is that of the shrine of St. Thomas Becket at Canterbury Cathedral in the United Kingdom, renowned in literature as the destination of Chaucer's pilgrims in *The Canterbury Tales* (Late 14th century). What would initially have been a place of Christian pilgrimage (and remains so for many), now attracts tourists with many different motivations and interests, as evidenced in this extract from the Cathedral guidebook:

> 'The development of Canterbury as one of the world's great religious centres is linked inextricably with the martyrdom and subsequent canonization of its most famous archbishop – St. Thomas Becket. Even today, when many different interests draw visitors to the building, its ancient fame as the resting place of a great English saint endures' (Keats & Hornak, 2002: 34).

Canterbury Cathedral has made the transition from having a singular function as a site of Christian pilgrimage to developing an additional identity in a secular society as a site of thanatouristic interest.

2.4.5. Antiquarianism and an ideology of national heritage

What had until then been a unified Christianity in Europe came to an end with the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century and, in countries where the Reformation took hold, the tradition of making pilgrimages to shrines and holy places ended, albeit temporarily. However, the emphasis on fatality that had been so much a

feature of Medieval Christianity continued to exert its control, inducing severe anxiety and producing a population who believed that only by participating in activities such as pilgrimages and other religious practices could they be assured of 'spiritual benefits' (Seaton, 2009: 527). The Reformation deprived many people of 'certain reassuring instruments of grace' (such as pilgrimages) that were vital to those who had always followed a faith that stressed 'the prospect of hell as graphically as Christianity did' (Elton, 1999: 122). Therefore, the restrictions imposed on traditional Christians by the Reformation left a vacuum, which for some scholars and travellers, particularly in 'emerging nation states such as Britain and France', was partially filled by a turn to antiquarianism[21] and 'a quest for heritage' (Seaton, 2009: 529). Anticipating the Enlightenment belief in science, reason and the experimental method, antiquarianism argued against traditional reliance on existing literary authority and the infallibility of ancient philosophers such as Aristotle. Travelling widely across Europe, antiquaries set out to study and, when possible, collect artefacts that would shed light on the past and, in the process, nurture the seeds of a new European ideology of national heritage (Seaton, 2009: 529). It was through the efforts of these early antiquaries that the idea of 'cabinets of curiosities', the precursors of modern museums, first came into being, allowing the past to be put on show in the present in the form of fossils, coins, and stuffed specimens. As Seaton states: 'Antiquarian discoveries did not just provide evidence of the truth value of the authentic past, but vehicles through which it could be experienced in the present by sightseers' (2009: 529). In addition, antiquaries were

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[21] Beginning in the 16th century, the study, acquisition, and documentation of artefacts from the past. The precursor to modern archaeology. The Society of Antiquaries of London remains a vibrant organisation.

often accused of showing an unhealthy level of interest in death because of their frequent exhumations at ancient (and not-so-ancient) grave sites in order to carry out investigations of burial practices and, also to determine the nature of decomposition.

The activities of British, French and Italian antiquaries heralded the arrival of a new phenomenon in travel for the sake of curiosity and education – The Grand Tour – which became a feature of life for wealthy and middle class young men from the latter half of the 16th century (Urry: 1999: pp.60-65). The Grand Tour was primarily aimed at and designed to introduce future leaders of European society to the cultural heritage of Europe and to develop in them an appreciation of art, music, and classical heritage. The Tour took in cities across Europe, climaxing in a visit to Rome and Naples and usually culminated in the traveller returning with a wide selection of books, paintings, and cultural artefacts as souvenirs of the journey and material evidence of the knowledge they claimed to have absorbed along the way. The war between Republican France and Great Britain meant that the tradition of the Grand Tour was interrupted from 1793 to 1815, when its' resumption coincided with the onset of the Romantic period. This was a time of major influence on the way that death and travel to sites of death are perceived, the legacy of which continues to resonate in both dark tourism and thanatourism, and ultimately, in genocide tourism.

2.4.6. 'Romanticism and the age of the beautiful death'

Evolving in the mid-eighteenth century in Europe, romanticism and the Romantic period are notoriously difficult to define (Cuddon, 1999: 767; Davies, 1997: 782; Merriman, 1996: 663). For the purposes of this study, it is most useful to view romanticism as what Seaton terms 'a complex and problematic nexus of ideas' which went on 'to influence attitudes and behaviour towards death, and expand the desire

for travel to places associated with fatality' (Seaton, 2009: 526). Reacting against the high Enlightenment ideals of the mid-eighteenth century (Davies, 1997: 783) and antiquarianism, romanticism espoused 'imagination and emotion in personal development' (Merriman, 1996: 663). Where the Enlightenment stood for Reason, the Romantic movement was 'attracted by all in human experience that is irrational: by the passions, by the supernatural and paranormal, by superstitions, pain, madness and death' (Davies, 1997: 783).

Arising out of this focus on emotions and passions, Seaton (2009: 533) states that romanticism generated two ways of thinking about death and fatality: In the first instance, 'a cult of sensibility and sentimentality' developed that was inextricably linked with 'responses to death'. The second mindset was more internalized and individualistic - what Seaton describes as 'a more covert, slightly sadomasochistic mentality, expressing the vicarious pleasures of terror, fostered by the sublime and the gothic' (Seaton, 2009: 533). These two ways of thinking subsequently filtered through to the Victorian age and onwards to the present.

As previously stated, Seaton espouses the reality of a 'thanatoptic tradition'. Thanatourism charts the evolution of this tradition of death-related travel from its earliest incarnation in the shape of the religious practice of pilgrimage, to its eventual manifestation as a form of secular travel for purposes of entertainment and education. In this respect, it shares some characteristics of both Holocaust and genocide tourism, making it an appropriate and useful platform from which to explore these closely related phenomena. Thanatourism emphasizes its identity as a 'traditional kind of travel that evolved and was shaped by profound shifts in the history of European culture, which still impact today' (Seaton, 2009: 526). The impact of one

of these 'profound shifts' can be seen and experienced in Holocaust tourism, and subsequently, in genocide tourism.

2.5 Holocaust Tourism

2.5.1. Defining Holocaust tourism

The term Holocaust tourism is used to describe the activity of travelling to and visiting sites of former Nazi concentration and death camps, as well as museums and memorials associated with the Holocaust. It is the earliest example of what can be more broadly defined as genocide tourism.

At first glance, Holocaust tourism appears to be an uncomplicated, easily understood phenomenon. Unlike dark tourism and thanatourism, the term has a familiar and recognisable resonance in that the Holocaust 'is perhaps the one genocide of which every educated person has heard' (Jones, 2008: 147). Also, as Lennon and Foley note, 'the constant re-creation through film, texts and television of this era reminds us of the massive interest in this dark period of human history' (2007: 27) and has 'placed the Holocaust in the popular consciences' (Schwartz, cited in Thurnell-Read, 2009: 30). Nonetheless the Holocaust continues to be the subject of some confusion, one of the most frequent misunderstandings being the perception of it as an exclusively Jewish tragedy.

2.5.2 The Holocaust as a unique event

The Jewish Holocaust or, as it is more usually termed by 'scholars and others' (Jones, 2008: 147) 'simply' the Holocaust, describes the systematic murder of an estimated 6 million Jews in the period 1941 to 1945 by the Nazi regime and its allies. The original meaning of 'holocaust' as defined by the Oxford English Dictionary, is

'a Jewish sacrificial offering burnt on an altar.' The term 'Holocaust' or, 'the Holocaust', came to be used on a more regular basis from the early 1950s and went on to be popularized by the Jewish author and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel. However, today, Jews prefer to adopt the Hebrew word 'Shoah' meaning 'catastrophe', or alternatively, 'Churban' meaning 'destruction', to refer to the Nazi genocide of European Jews. This preference for the use of alternative terms to designate the murder of Jews at the hands of the Nazis lies in a desire on the part of the Jewish people to have the Shoah recognized as a unique event. From a Jewish perspective, the term 'the Holocaust' is now used to refer to all of the approximately 11 million victims of Nazi persecution – including an estimated 5 million non-Jewish people.

Based on their perceptions of the singular nature of anti-Semitism, the Jewish people argue that the Shoah is a unique event and must be treated as such. While the evil of anti-Semitism is beyond dispute, the idea of the Jewish Holocaust or Shoah as a unique example of genocide is the subject of on-going debate among both scholars and non-academics. Those who contend that it is a unique event tend to base their argument on the systematic approach taken by the Nazis and their use of modern and progressive scientific methods to carry out the 'Final Solution'. Nevertheless, other genocides were equally, if not more, effective in terms of achieving the ultimate objectives of the perpetrators. Genocide scholar Adam Jones cites the case of Rwanda as illustrative of other genocides that can stand side by side with the Holocaust, noting that the Rwandan genocide not only moved at a proportionately faster pace than the Jewish Holocaust, but also led to a higher proportion of the

targeted group being killed – 'some 80 percent of Rwandan Tutsis[22] (sic) versus two-thirds of European Jews' (Jones, 2008: 163). Jones's argument is based on tenuous linkages between the perpetration of the two genocides and it is difficult to support his thesis. The foundations of the Holocaust were laid well in advance of the actual beginning of the mass killings with the introduction of the anti-Jewish race laws from as early as 1933. When the annihilation got under way it continued from 1936 to 1945. Even in the closing days of the war when Nazi Germany was on the brink of defeat priority continued to be given to the implementation of the Final Solution whereby essential rail stock earmarked for the transportation of troops and munitions was diverted for the transportation of Jewish prisoners.

It is difficult to counter the belief held primarily, but not exclusively, on the part of Jews, that the Jewish Holocaust represents a very unique attempt in both design and method to completely annihilate one race of people and their entire culture from the face of the earth as an act of pure hatred. It was perpetrated in the heart of Europe, in perhaps the most highly developed nation on the continent, by white, civilized, educated citizens, upon people who were in the majority of cases, their fellow citizens. As sociologists Chalk and Jonassohn argue, it is only 'by comparing the Holocaust with other cases of genocide that one can fully grasp the fact that the Holocaust was the most carefully conceived, the most efficiently implemented, and the most fully realized case of ideologically motivated genocide in the history of the human race' (1990: 323). This was effectively the industrialization of genocide.

As sociologists and educators such as Deborah Abowitz argue (2002), it makes sense to integrate teaching of the Holocaust with the teaching of other genocides and

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[22] Moderate Hutus and the minority Twa tribe were also targeted by the genocidaires.

atrocities as part of a comparative programme of learning while simultaneously emphasising the fact that it is counterproductive to construct any kind of hierarchy of genocides.

In the midst of this ongoing debate there is a danger that the non-Jewish victims of the Holocaust will be forgotten. This is evidenced in the lack of knowledge and confusion concerning other groups that were victimized under the Nazi regime, as displayed by visitors to former concentration camp sites and Holocaust museums. One example of this is the fate of the European Roma and Sinti who use the word 'Porajmos' meaning 'the Devouring' to describe their experience of the Holocaust (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2014) Issues relating to visitor knowledge and understanding will be discussed in later chapters of this study.

2.5.3 'The Holocaust Industry'

Norman Finkelstein coined the phrase 'the Holocaust Industry' (Hoskins, 2001: 334) in 2000 to describe the way in which a post-World War II obsession with the Nazis has led to the exploitation of the suffering of Jews during the Holocaust for the purposes of financial and political enhancement. In his book *The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering,* he is critical of what he views as the way in which the Holocaust has been used to further Israel's place in the world based on its status as a 'victim' nation – 'manipulating the world's collective guilt' (Freedman, 2007).

Finkelstein raises an issue that is pertinent to this study – the exploitation of the Holocaust. However, Finkelstein's views are predominantly political with his central focus on what he perceives to be the role of Israel in cultivating its position as the

eternal victim. In doing so, he is blind to the need to continue to research and memorialize the Holocaust in order to ensure that it retains its position as a reminder of the barbarity of which mankind is capable. The Holocaust represents an event of such terrible magnitude that it is almost beyond human comprehension, and yet, if the nature of this event is to be understood at even a most basic level efforts must be continued to present evidence of what happened to as wide an audience as possible. As Norman Geras, Professor Emeritus of Politics at the University of Manchester argues: 'It is unthinkable that a society and culture committed to human rights and the prevention and punishment of crimes against humanity should not be interested in the Holocaust' (Geras, 2012). Writing more forcefully on the idea of a 'Holocaust industry', journalist Seth Freedman states: (The Holocaust) 'deserves to be rammed down people's throats just as much as any other scar upon the world's conscience. As long as it's viewed in context and not set up as untouchably unique by those teaching it, then it is as essential learning as it is uncomfortable' (Freedman, 2007).

American Democratic senator and human rights campaigner Stephen Solarz (1940 – 2010) believed that in terms of preventing future genocides 'the Holocaust is the key to the whole thing. It is the Rosetta stone' (cited in Power, 2007: 128). Indeed, awareness of the Holocaust and other genocides can be raised by exploiting the 'Holocaust industry' itself for the purposes of educating future generations. This process is already in place due to the on-going development and maintenance of Holocaust sites, museums, and memorials as tourist destinations. The most famous of these destinations is the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Museum in Poland.

2.5.4 The centrality of Auschwitz in Holocaust tourism

While many of those who visit Auschwitz are 'former prisoners, religious Jews and descendants of the dead' (Schwabe, 2005), Auschwitz also attracts thousands of visitors each year who have no personal connection to the Holocaust, but who come to pay their respects and experience something of the horrors they may have read about or seen on television and film. Auschwitz has become the icon of the Holocaust, ranking foremost among sites associated with the Holocaust and genocide. The location of the former concentration camp has been designated a memorial site since 1947, and in 1973 it became a UNESCO World Heritage Site (Lennon & Foley, 2007: 49).

2.5.5 Holocaust museums – an embarrassment of riches

According to Paul Williams (2007: 7), the 1980s saw the proliferation of Holocaust memorials and museums, 'often far from the actual sites of torment'. Since then, the number of Holocaust-related museums and exhibitions has continued to grow with estimates ranging from 109 worldwide (New Jersey Department of Education, 2011), to 250 in the United States alone (Williams, 2007: 7). A number of commentators have expressed varying degrees of cynicism at attempts to create museum/tourist experiences from such a visceral event. Making a generalized comment on museums, Theodor Adorno dismissed them as repositories for objects that no longer hold value for the observer, stating that the words 'museum and mausoleum' had more in common than mere phonetics (Misztal, 2003: 21). Unlike mainstream museums, the objects displayed in Holocaust museums transcend Adorno's cynical observation while the museums themselves are engaged in a continuous effort to overcome the apathy of visitors who are exposed to extreme imagery on a regular

basis. Journalist and author Philip Gourevitch writes of visiting the United States Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. in 1994 and watching as visitors queued for two hours before opening time and bought lapel pins emblazoned with the rallying cries of "Remember" and "Never Again" (Gourevitch, 2000: 152; Dawes, 2007: 61). While these crowds flocked to view an exhibition detailing a genocide that had taken place forty years earlier, that same day the local newspapers carried front page photographs of Rwanda's genocide victims and reports of ongoing atrocities. As far as Gourevitch could observe, visitors did not appear to make the connection between events past and events current. If visits to Holocaust and genocide memorial museums and centres aim to raise awareness of other genocides and mass atrocities, then on this occasion what Gourevitch witnessed was the failure of this objective to bridge the disconnect between understanding how genocidal events of the past relate to genocide being perpetrated in the present.

In his discussion of what he describes as 'apparently unlikely museums' – among which he includes Holocaust museums – John Urry points out that such museums 'appear to work because some connections between the past and the present are usually provided by 'place' (2006: 123). According to Urry, this means that for a museum to function as a site where events are remembered, it should be located at a site that has a specific connection with the events, people, or industry which it represents. In terms of recent genocides, this study contends that the location of the museum on or near the actual site of events is significant, providing the visitor the opportunity to be exposed to, and benefit from the full impact of the experience. The rationale behind this contention is that in the context of a globalized postmodern society, genocide should ideally be viewed from the perspective of the culture in

which it was perpetrated, allowing for the added input of the indigenous population. This aspect will be discussed at the end of the current study.

The Holocaust represents a dark and extraordinary moment in the history of Western civilization. The on-going challenge for Holocaust museums is to sustain interest among visitors and to encourage them to view the Holocaust as part of a much wider category of genocides. Holocaust museums are 'literally a reminder of the dark side of human nature' (Lennon & Foley, 1999: 49).

2.6 Genocide tourism

As stated in the introduction to this thesis, I have developed the following definition of genocide tourism and it is adhered to throughout the study:

Genocide tourism describes the act of travelling to and visiting sites and centres specifically associated with acts of genocide, either as a purposeful act or as part of an expanded touristic itinerary.

Genocide tourism is exclusively concerned with visits to sites associated with mass murder and extermination. It is now part of a global tourism industry and can be viewed as a by-product of globalization. Increasing numbers of tourists are travelling to destinations that have witnessed genocide and the relevant countries are now seeing the revenue potential in investing in the development of these sites as tourist attractions. While genocide tourism is readily definable, what constitutes genocide has proven less clear-cut, and it is necessary to give some consideration to the origin of the concept before proceeding further.

2.6.1 Defining genocide

The word 'genocide' was coined by the lawyer, author, and human rights activist Dr. Raphael Lemkin in 1943 (Bloxham & Moses, 2013: 2). Lemkin took his inspiration from a speech made by Winston Churchill in 1941 in which he (Churchill) spoke of the havoc being wreaked across Europe as 'whole districts are exterminated'. Churchill's pronouncement that 'We are in the presence of a crime without a name', spurred Lemkin into coming up with a word that would adequately define this crime (Power, 2007: 29; Hinton, 2005: 5). Taking 'the Greek derivative *geno* meaning "race" or "tribe", and the Latin derivative *cide* meaning "killing" (Temple-Raston, 2005: 65; Power, 2007: 42), he combined them to form a word that has been both mis-used and over-used since its coinage. Jean Hatzfeld, author of a series of reports on the Rwandan genocide and its aftermath has noted this and argues that 'the word "genocide" is becoming more and more compromised, bandied about by political figures, journalists and diplomats, whenever they speak of particularly cruel killings or carnage on a massive scale' (2008b, pp.97-98).

The 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide delivered a lengthy and technical definition outlining a series of acts 'committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group' (Power, 2007: 57; Jones, 2006: pp.12-13; Chalk & Jonassohn, 1990: pp.44-45). The Convention has variously been criticized as too vague, too restrictive, or too technical, and has led to numerous alternative definitions of genocide being proposed Adam Jones (2008: pp.15-18) provides a comprehensive list of definitions dating from 1959 to 2003.

The Convention continues to provide the only judicial and legalistic way forward (to date) in terms of dealing with genocide, and its implementation has been instrumental in the fight to bring perpetrators of genocide to justice, as in the case of the ECCC (Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia or the Khmer Rouge Tribunals), the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in Arusha, Tanzania, and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in the Hague. As is the case with the Convention, these institutions are flawed, but are important vehicles in promoting the idea that all perpetrators of genocide and crimes against humanity will be pursued beyond any perceived statute of limitations.

2.6.2 Genocide in a historical, social and cultural sense

In seeking to understand why sites of genocide attract a growing number of tourists, it is necessary to understand the individual cases of genocide that are dealt with in this research. Therefore, this study must acknowledge the role of texts and representations of the Nazi Holocaust and the Khmer Rouge genocide in Cambodia. Having a sound knowledge of the historical, social, and cultural context of these individual genocides serves certain important functions in terms of the approach taken to the study. Firstly, being acquainted with the facts surrounding these genocides highlights the reality that while all genocides share certain characteristics, they are all also unique events that have had direct and very terrible consequences for millions of people. Being familiar with the background to genocides confirms the act of genocide as a human action: Genocides are the result of conscious actions carried out in the main by ordinary human beings against their fellow human beings. It is this recognition that simultaneously attracts and repels and is fundamental to how genocide tourism is experienced. In writing about Hannah Arendt's reporting of

the trial of Adolf Eichmann, Tzvetan Todorov describes how she 'had to acknowledge that despite the prosecutor's efforts to demonize him, this man who was responsible for one of the most devastating evils in the history of humanity stood before the court a profoundly mediocre, indeed common human being' (Todorov, 2000: 124). Similarly, in reflecting on the Khmer Rouge genocide and the notion that those who perpetrate genocide are often 'just like us', Nic Dunlop, the journalist who was responsible for tracking down Kaing Guek Eav or 'Duch', the head of Tuol Sleng prison in Phnom Penh, remarks: 'Mass murderers eat Pringles[23] too. These details don't bring us closer to them. They bring them closer to us' (Dunlop, 2006: 314). When the visitor to a site of genocide – a genocide tourist – realises that these acts were carried out by groups and individuals acting as agents of destruction on behalf of and towards their fellow man, the process of understanding genocide can begin.

Prior to arriving at sites of genocide, many visitors may already have made an 'imaginative investment' in the subject of genocide because they have become accustomed to learning from, and becoming emotionally engaged with film, TV, theatre and the internet, as well as literature and newspapers (Tan, 1994). Popular culture and more recently new media,[24] play a major role in promoting knowledge of genocide at an exoteric level. Rapid technological advances in global communications mean that even genocides and mass atrocities committed in distant parts of the world are brought to the attention of the public more quickly than ever before. Protestations of "But we didn't know!" can no longer be said to hold true,

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[23] Pringles are a well-know brand of potato crisp.

[24] Digital technologies allowing interactivity on the part of the user. For example, websites, blogs, and social networks.

even for those who claim to have only a passing interest in world affairs. However, the argument can also be made that as such events are now widely and promptly reported in the media, or made the subject of numerous cinematic representations, this has given rise to a sense that over-familiarity has bred a level of apathy among a media-literate and information-saturated public. Having ease of access to news from around the world does not guarantee that global events of humanitarian and historical significance, such as genocide, will be recognised, understood, and perhaps acted on by a mass audience (Kansteiner, 2002: 194). As Stjépan Meštrović points out, 'mere information is not enough to translate knowledge into appropriate moral action' (1997: 139), while James Dawes quotes the poet Archibald MacLeish who wrote: "We are deluged with facts but have lost or are losing our ability to feel them" (Dawes, 2007: 67). And yet, popular culture in one form or another is where most people will encounter representations of genocidal events. Whether or not these representations make any difference to how genocide is understood is open to question.

2.6.3 Tourism in a postmodern world – touring genocide

The availability of affordable air travel in the last decades of the 20th century, alongside a growing awareness of the geographical location of sites of genocide outside of Europe through access to a global mass media, have promoted a growth in interest in what has come to be labelled 'genocide tourism'. Increasing numbers now travel specifically for the purpose of visiting areas associated with genocide, while others will visit such sites as part of a wider itinerary.

The era of instant global media communications and growing technological literacy has led to a high level of expectation - particularly in Western societies – that there

will be 24-hour access, 7 days a week to a non-stop stream of detailed media images depicting the full range of human activities from the banal to the exotic, including extreme examples of brutality and violence. Echoing the earlier Romantic period's obsession with emotion, the postmodern world thrives on sensory stimuli. The viewer becomes a participant in unfolding events. Entertainment and information have merged almost seamlessly to form 'infotainment' (Cottle, 2006: 93).

Genocide tourism appeals to the postmodern condition in that such activities offer the participant the opportunity to visit sites of past genocides and to explore at close quarters some of the darkest and most disturbing episodes in human history. Stjepan Meštrović notes that in the case of the Holocaust, some critics believe that elements more readily associated with 'theme parks' are now commonplace within the remembrance of events such as genocide and mass killings and he posits that this devalues the meaning of such events and transforms the 'visitors into voyeurs' (1997: pp.10-11). However, if these methods of packaging memory and truth for consumption by a postmodern audience are successful in delivering the message that these events must never be forgotten, then is it worth the trade-off in terms of having to use certain 'tricks' of the entertainment trade in order to do so? If the answer to this question is 'yes', can this justify the risk of the collective and individual memories of the victim group becoming compromised in that they will probably have to undergo some degree of manipulation over which they may or may not have control? In the case of the Holocaust, manipulation was a factor even as the camps were being liberated by the Allied forces as the war drew to a close. Much of the footage shot by Russian troops showing the gates of the camps being unlocked and the prisoners being freed was actually re-enacted for the cameras some time after the

original events (USHMM, 2014). In contrast, as part of the Holocaust and Crimes Against Humanity exhibition at the Imperial War Museum (IWM) in London, video display units embedded in the walls of the exhibit show survivors talking about their lives before, during and after the Holocaust. Whereas those who were filmed on being liberated from the camps in war-torn Europe were not in a position to control how their memories were manipulated, those who lent their voices, memories, and experiences to the IWM installation were fully involved in every aspect of the project. The same is now true of the genocide memorial centre in Kigali, Rwanda which was established in 2004 by the UK-based genocide prevention organization, Aegis Trust at the request of and in partnership with the Kigali City Council and the Rwandan National Commission for the Fight Against Genocide (Aegis Trust, 2014).

Ultimately, the postmodern appetite for interactive extreme experiences is well catered for by genocide tourism. At one time, this was possibly at the expense of the key stakeholders - the victims and survivors of genocide; however, with the implementation of progressive collaborative ventures such as those outlined above, this should no longer be an inevitable by-product of bringing experiences of genocide to life for those who wish to know about genocide.

2.6.4 Towards an exoteric understanding of genocide tourism

When a new term, phrase or label appears on the academic horizon, it can frequently ignite discussion in scholarly quarters as attempts are made to define, lay claim to, defend, and contest the validity of the new arrival. The term 'genocide tourism' engenders such responses; and rightly so, as it is through a navigation of the framework of these discussions that the complexity of this or any other new or under-researched concept is opened up for academic study. One of the key aims of

the current study is to evaluate the role of genocide tourism in disseminating knowledge of genocide at an exoteric level. In other words, can genocide tourism play a part in helping ordinary people who visit sites of genocide to gain a better understanding of genocide? Genocide tourism sites can act as important vehicles whereby memory and historical truth can be utilized in innovative ways in order to assist with the dissemination of information on genocide and genocide prevention. In this way, genocide tourism can realistically contribute to the goal of genocide education and is consistent with the Israeli psychologist, historian and genocide expert Israel Charny's ambition to 'make awareness of Holocaust and genocide part of human culture' (Charny, 1993).

2.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter has sought to trace the origins of genocide tourism and examined it in relation to dark tourism and thanatourism studies. The work of Lennon and Foley, alongside that of Stone and Sharpley was discussed and evaluated in terms of how useful and appropriate dark tourism is as a framework from which to approach the study of genocide tourism. The chapter highlighted the limitations in using dark tourism as a platform from which to explore genocide tourism, notably a bias towards the commercial aspects of dark tourism and the inflexible approach to the issue of chronological distance in Lennon and Foley's work. However, it was found that thanatourism presents a more appropriate backdrop to the study of genocide tourism based on several factors including Seaton's identification of a thanatoptic tradition. Holocaust tourism was singled out as the forerunner of genocide tourism, before moving on to introduce the topic of genocide tourism. The terms 'Holocaust' and 'genocide' were defined and discussed, highlighting the need to recognise the

unique and politically sensitive nature of the phenomenon of genocide tourism and

justifying its extraction from within the niche area of dark tourism studies.

CHAPTER 3: REMEMBERING GENOCIDE

3.1 Introduction

In terms of discussing genocide, sooner or later questions of memory and remembrance are raised. This is true whether those involved in the discussion are a group of scholars with a specialist interest in the topic, or a party of tourists visiting one of the many sites of genocide that have been developed as visitor centres. This chapter explores how sociological concepts and theories deriving from collective, communicative, and cultural memory[25], shape understandings of the phenomenon of genocide tourism, particularly in terms of how memory is embodied and embedded in sites of genocide tourism. Concepts of memory have become a source of intense interest in recent decades across many scholarly fields and at wider societal levels (Erll, 2011; Hoskins, 2003; Huyssen, 2003; Levy & Sznaider, 2002; Misztal, 2003). This chapter explores the on-going drive to re-think and supplement long-standing sociological perspectives on memory with more recent approaches that recognize the evolving and dynamic nature of memory studies in globalized society. In focussing attention on this particular aspect of genocide tourism, the central role of memory in the development of a theoretical lens facilitating an exoteric understanding of genocide is established. Cultural memory theorist Astrid Erll notes that memory studies provide an ideal platform from which to 'address new questions emerging from new developments and challenges – questions, for example, about the relation of nature and culture, about globalization and its discontents, and about the futures that we envision' (2011: 4).

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[25] These concepts are defined in section 3.3.

Following on from a discussion of key foundational aspects, most of which derive from the treatment of Holocaust memory, brief outlines of the various movements in memory studies will be presented. The work of Maurice Halbwachs and Pierre Nora provide the starting point for most examinations of memory. Moving on from this a brief description is presented of updated approaches to working with memory in an age of globalization where the focus is on a turn to new conceptualisations of memory (Hoskins, 2001; Huyssens, 2000, 1995), driven by advances in global media and communications technologies. At this point, attention will be directed to more recent interconnected conceptualizations of collective, communicative, and cultural memory as they transcend the boundaries set by traditional memory studies, and which, it is argued, can more effectively address issues regarding the representation of memory in genocide tourism experiences. Here the focus will be on two distinctive, yet closely aligned forms of memory: Levy and Sznaider's (2002) concept of 'cosmopolitan memory', and Astrid Erll's (2011) work on transcultural memory.

3.2 'The Persistence of Memory'[26]

The goal of those who perpetrate genocide is not only the total physical annihilation of the targeted group, but also, the complete obliteration of all memory of that group, wiping them from the face of the earth both figuratively and literally. This is a basic tenet held by perpetrators for whom genocide is 'apocalyptic', requiring 'a form of world destruction in the service of a vision – or collective fantasy – of absolute political and spiritual renewal' (Lifton, in Hinton, 2005: xxi). Attempts to obliterate memory can take many forms in conjunction with the destruction of human beings

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[26] Title of a 1931 painting by Salvador Dali.

and need not necessarily be instigated as part of an official policy. In the case of the Nazi Holocaust of the Jews, not only were synagogues demolished, but grave markers in Jewish cemeteries were smashed to pieces and, in some places, were used in the construction of roads and buildings across Germany and the occupied territories of Europe (United States Holocaust Museum, 2009). This has led the sociologist of tourism, Dean MacCannell, to state that he refuses to drive on Germany's autobahns because smashed Jewish gravestones were used in the building process – 'The entire autobahn is a memorial, symbolic of horrendous cruelty'(2011: 177). During the Khmer Rouge period in Cambodia, a ban was imposed on 'minority languages and cultures' (Kiernan, in Totten and Samuels, 2009: 361), while across the country, national libraries and cultural treasures were looted and vandalized with libraries literally becoming pigsties and stupas[27] used as grain repositories. Even when there is no formal policy of memory destruction on the part of the perpetrators, violent actions such as those described, alongside the slaughter of large numbers of people, can effectively result in the wiping out of broad swathes of collective and cultural memory. In relation to the Cambodian genocide, it is the contention of this study that the destruction of memory and repositories of memory played a significant role in attempts to create a *table rasa* (clean slate) upon which the new shape of the next generation of 'Democratic Kampucheans'[28] could be formed under and dictated by the Khmer Rouge.

Repositories of memory such as those outlined above continue to be prime targets for perpetrators of genocide. On April 4, 1995, Hungarian academic and bibliographer,

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[27] Buddhist memorial shrine marking a sacred spot and often containing relics of Buddhist monks and nuns.

[28] Khmer Rouge used the name Democratic Kampuchea instead of Cambodia.

Andras Riedlmayer, testified at a U.S. Congressional Hearing on the targeting of Bosnia's cultural heritage during the genocide. He stated that when nationalist extremists reduced cities in Bosnia and Herzegovina to rubble and murdered the citizens in 1992 and 1993, their aim was 'to eliminate not only human beings and living cities, but also the memory of the past'. He continued: 'Their targets have included libraries[29], archives, museums, universities and academies, entire historic districts, ancient cemeteries, and above all, places of worship: mosques, churches, and synagogues' (Riedlmayer, 1995).

Understanding garnered from secondary research conducted throughout this study suggests that the destruction of memory serves two important functions for perpetrators of genocide – it satisfies the hatred and rage that is a driving force behind acts of genocide, and it also attempts to initiate forgetting, not only for the perpetrators, but also for their wider societies. According to Adam Jones, when something, or someone, is forgotten, 'there is no need to deny' (Jones, 2006: 351). The destruction of memory is also an attempt to destroy evidence that could potentially be used in future trials. This has become an important consideration for those who participate in acts of genocide as more and more perpetrators are brought before international courts and tribunals to face justice. This supports Chalk & Jonassohn's (1990: 421) suggestion that the implementation of genocide prevention policies should be targeted more towards the perpetrators and their potential supporters whereby they are left in no doubt as to the implications and consequences of their actions.

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[29] In August 1992, snipers targeted people in Sarajevo as they attempted to rescue books from the national library (Tumarkin, 2005: pp.88 -89).

As genocide scholars Samuel Totten and William S. Parsons state: 'it is clear that the perpetrators of mass killing learn from one another' (Totten & Parsons, 2009) and also from how past atrocities have been addressed by the international community. A well-known early illustration of this comes from Nazi Germany. In a speech he made in August 1939, Adolf Hitler gave voice to his belief in the advantages to be gained by the absence (or in this case, perceived absence) of memory. Addressing his Wehrmacht commanders just two weeks prior to the Nazi invasion of Poland, he made his underlying intentions clear in respect of his wish that 'men, women, and children of Polish race and language' be wiped out 'without mercy' (Jones, 2006: 101). In what Jones refers to as 'some of the most resonant words in the history of genocide' (2006: 101), he posed the rhetorical question: 'Who, after all, talks nowadays of the annihilation of the Armenians?' (Power, 2007: 23; Jones, 2006: 101; Hoffman, 2004: 161). In choosing the Armenians as an example, Hitler took it for granted that his audience would know to whom he was referring, thus unwittingly acknowledging that the fate of the Armenians had not disappeared from memory and that the Armenian genocide[30] had not been forgotten. Another case of the persistence of memory is that of the Herrero and Nama genocides of the early twentieth century (Olesuga & Erichsen, 2010). This was, until recently, a forgotten genocide perpetrated on Namibian tribes by their German colonial masters. In 2007 the Namibian government demanded the return of a number of skulls belonging to the victims that were still being held in various German universities. This subsequently led to a reawakening of memory of the first genocide of the twentieth century and to the return of the skulls in 2011 (BBC News, 30 Sept. 2011). While

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[30] The Armenian genocide took place between 1915 and 1923 when approximately 1.5 million Armenians lost their lives at the hands of the Ottoman Turkish regime (Jones, 2006: 24).

memory may lie dormant for extended periods - particularly traumatic memory such as that of genocide - it has a habit of never really disappearing, as evidenced by the ongoing work of the Khmer Rouge Tribunals in Cambodia where the age and ill-health of the accused have proven to be no barrier to their convictions and imprisonment. Sites and centres dedicated to the preservation of memories of genocide represent solid and crucial evidence in such cases, which is drawn on by those such as DCCAM - The Documentation Centre of Cambodia – who are engaged in seeking justice for victim groups.

The role of memory in genocide tourism has already been identified in the opening chapter as one of the key focus points of this research project as it provides some of the most useful and useable theories upon which to develop an understanding of the phenomenon of genocide tourism. However, the term 'memory' covers a wide and varied area and, therefore, needs to be refined for the purposes of this study.

3.3 Defining and Theorizing Memory

Kerwin Lee Klein offers a broad definition of memory as 'a collection of practices or material artefacts' and goes on to cite Michael Shudson's (1995) description of this as 'the generic social science understanding of the term' (Klein, 2000: 135). While such a comprehensive definition is helpful in beginning to locate the idea of memory as a sociological concept, it is too vague to be of any determinate value in advancing a discussion of memory. As Jeffrey K. Olick points out, 'the old concept of memory – individual and either instrumental or straightforwardly functional – is [also] clearly insufficient' (Olick, 2007: 27). A more concise focus is required which opens the way to an explication of the use of 'memory' in 'articulating the connections between the cultural, the social, and the political, between representation and social

experience' (Confino, 1997). It is by way of an exploration of communicative memory, collective memory and cultural memory that a clearer understanding of the manifestation of memory in the construction of genocide tourism experiences can be developed. Therefore, collective, communicative, and cultural memory will be presented here as foundational aspects of this element of the study.

Collective memory, as defined by Misztal, is 'the representation of the past, both that shared by a group and that which is collectively commemorated, that enacts and gives substance to the group's identity, its present conditions and its vision of the future' (2003: 7). Therefore, collective memory carries a multiplicity of memories and operates within a socially constructed network of associations based around the cohesiveness of the group. The concept of collective memory is most associated with the work of Maurice Halbwachs, which is discussed in section 3.4.1 below.

Halbwachs' concept of collective memory casts a wide net over all forms of group memory, thus creating difficulties in terms of identifying different types of collective memory. Jan Assmann sought to rectify this by introducing the concepts of communicative and cultural memory. He defines communicative memory as including 'those varieties of collective memory that are based exclusively on everyday communications' (1995: 126), that is, the words and memories of living participants. As with collective memory, communicative memory is heavily reliant on group dynamics for the creation of memory through a shared past. According to Assmann, communicative memory has a 'limited temporal horizon', which 'does not extend more than eighty to (at the very most) one hundred years into the past' (Assmann, 1995: 127). At this point, with no remaining living carriers of memory remaining, what Assmann terms 'objectivized culture' in the form of memorial sites,

monuments, archives, rituals, or geographical locations takes over and memory, as cultural memory, makes the transition to become history (1995: 128). In terms of memory of genocide, this illustrates the importance of preserving sites of genocide and the objectivised culture housed there. Given the propensity on the part of genocidaires to seek to wipe out the culture as well as the person, this is not always possible. Under these circumstances cultural memory, which can 'exist independently of its carriers' (Misztal, 2003: 13), takes on even greater significance. According to Assmann (1995: 132) cultural memory is culture specific in that it 'comprises that body of reusable texts, images, and rituals specific to each society in each epoch, whose "cultivation" serves to stablilize and convey that society's self-image.' Assmann also notes that it is by way of its cultural memory and heritage that a society 'makes itself visible to itself and to others.' (1995: 133). In terms of the desire to destroy all traces of a victim group, this does not escape the attention of those who plan and perpetrate genocide.

3.3.1 The 'memory boom'

World War I changed the nature of memory and commemoration. In the aftermath of four years of sustained warfare states stepped in to take control of war memory and, as Misztal points out, 'widespread state-sponsored commemorative practices after the war...were exploited by nationalist leaders to create an identification of states with mass memory' (2003: 45). In spite of a heightened interest in memory and remembrance in the wake of the Great War, they took on a different character post-World War II, particularly in terms of how quickly perspectives on memory were developed. It was at this time that the transition was made from the introspective life of memory to the ritualistic performance of remembering.

The late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have seen a marked growth in interest in all aspects of memory in both academia and in mainstream society - what Pierre Nora refers to as 'a world-wide upsurge in memory' (2002: 1). The growth in interest has been variously referred to as a 'memory boom', 'memory wave', 'an obsession with memory', or as an 'explosion in interest in all things memory-related' (Huyssen, 1995, 2000; Kansteiner, 2002; Nora, 2002; Misztal, 2002, 2003; Winter, 2006; Williams, 2007). This period coincides with a growing appetite for, and interest in Holocaust and other genocide-related tourism experiences. As noted in the introductory chapter, extensive investigation of the increased interest in both memory and genocide tourism sheds light on how acts of the most extreme violence and barbarity are remembered, memorialized, disseminated, and to a certain extent, commodified and exploited to serve a range of interests. On a global scale, visitor sites associated with acts of genocide perform important functions not only as *lieux de mémoire* – sites or places of memory (Nora, 1989), but also as points from which to engage in discussions relating to historical truth. This in turn raises moral and ethical questions about the nature of remembrance and representation in the aftermath of genocide, which invite more indepth investigation than that permitted within the scope of this study.

3.3.2 The rise of memory in post-World War II societies

According to Paul Williams (2007: 163) there is little general agreement as to why memory has become a passionate interest for so many people in recent times. What can be agreed on is that the rise in academic interest runs virtually parallel with the growth in interest across wider society by way of cultural institutions and popular culture. Widespread use of terms such as 'memory boom' or 'memory wave' to

describe the increased attention given to memory discourses since the late 1970s overshadows the fact that interest in memory narratives grew out of the civil unrest of the late 1960s, particularly in France and Germany (Friedländer, 2000: 5). Student riots, decolonization, and a decline in belief or faith in metanarratives (Huyssen, 2000: 22) heralded, among other things, an unwillingness to accept what Friedländer calls 'the lies and the obfuscation regarding the Nazi period[31]' (2000: 5). It is here that the seeds of the 'memory boom' were sown, and it is also at this time that the Holocaust[32] emerged from the silence of post-war Europe, since when it has been and continues to be dissected, analysed and re-visited in every possible manner. Reflecting on the place of the Holocaust in the cultural landscape, Andreas Huyssen states that it 'has now become something like an (sic) ubiquitous cipher for our memories of the twentieth century' (2000: 28). The debate surrounding the status of the Holocaust as a unique event in the memory of the modern world has already been discussed to a limited extent in this study. However, in terms of memory and genocide tourism, experiences related to the Holocaust, particularly Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Museum in Poland, are recognized as setting the benchmark against which all subsequent genocide visitor sites are judged.

3.3.3. The desire to forget

It is understandable that in the immediate aftermath of World War II there should have been a desire to forget, or at least, a reluctance to remember on the part of

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[31] Friedlander does not reveal who he believes to have been responsible for these lies and obfuscations.

[32] The term 'Holocaust' is used throughout this study to describe the systematic mass extermination of Jews, Gypsies, the disabled, and other targeted groups, by the Nazis between 1935 and the end of World War II in 1945. Use of the term in this way is discussed in Chapter 2.

many. In terms of the Holocaust, three main factors can be cited. Firstly, those who had escaped death in the concentration camps of Europe remained severely traumatised. This trauma was often manifested in feelings of guilt on the part of survivors – 'survivor guilt' (Jaffe, 1970: 307-314). They may have survived, but were forced to live with the memory of what they had experienced, which included witnessing the death and suffering of loved ones at close quarters. The majority were not ready or willing to re-visit those memories in a public fashion. Many had left Europe to forge new lives for themselves in other parts of the world. For those of Jewish background, the ever-present fear of anti-Semitism meant that some did not want to advertise the fact that they had been the victims of Nazi persecution, with many going to the extent of changing their names to disguise their ethnic or religious background. That is not to say that there was no effort made by survivors to bear witness to the horror of what had taken place. Some of those who lived through the experience of Auschwitz were instrumental in developing the museum and memorial from as early as March 1946 through to the 1950s (Kimmelman, 2011), while other survivors, such as Primo Levi, Elie Wiesel, Jean Améry and Charlotte Delbo, became vocal witnesses to - and acclaimed authors on - the Holocaust.

In the second instance, in the aftermath of the war questions relating to how much was known in the early stages of the Nazis implementation of their extermination policies, and why nothing was done to prevent the slaughter of millions, led to moral issues being raised as to the inaction of the Allied powers at the time. In "*A Problem From Hell": America and the Age of Genocide* Samantha Power (2003: 34) notes that there was ample intelligence emanating from trustworthy sources from as early as July 1942, with reports detailing numbers of those who had already been

murdered. However, the prime objective was the defeat of Germany. This was bolstered by a lack of political will on the part of those who were in a position to make the decision to take action, accompanied at a public level by an inability to believe that something like this could be happening at the heart of 'civilized' Europe and the less palatable notion of a sense of indifference to the suffering of the Jews (Power, 2003: 34-35). In the decades following the end of the war, the legacy of this inaction was an unspoken uneasiness which made it preferable to repress memory and led to the creation of official histories. In the course of this research, one of the questions most frequently asked by visitors to genocide memorial sites is: *"If so many people knew what was happening, why didn't they do something to stop it?"* Ironically, as they pose this question, they fail to remember that what has been referred to as the first genocide of the twenty-first century has been ongoing in the Darfur region of Sudan since 2003 with widespread coverage of events in the global media, often as they happen in real time.

The final determining factor in the desire to forget is that there was simply too much work to be done in terms of putting the world back together. The years following the end of the war were taken up with the challenge of reconstructing and rebuilding whole countries and societies, as well as international relations. All available mental and physical reserves of energy were engaged in these endeavours. Recognizing and dealing with the memory of the Holocaust would have to wait. In the meantime, a thin veneer of official memory was put in place, while memories of what had actually happened were largely and collectively repressed or ignored.

3.3.4. Reclaiming memory

By the 1960s a new generation of Europeans had reached maturity and, in the midst of various protests aimed at venting their discontent with the policies and politics of the respective societies in which they had grown up, demanded to be told the full story of what had taken place during the war rather than continue to accept the official versions of history. In respect of the emergence of the Holocaust as a site of memory, Saul Friedländer sees this 'generational factor' as offering an interpretation of the 'growing rise of the memory of the Shoah[33]...as the gradual lifting of collective repression, induced by the passage of time' (2000: 7).

In the aftermath of the unrest of the 1960s, the 1970s saw an upsurge of interest in memory. In France, the dark underside of Vichy France was exposed, as was its legacy. In 1972, President Georges Pompidou quietly granted a pardon to *milicien[34]* and close associate of Klaus Barbie, Paul Touvier, causing outrage among former members of the Resistance (Nora, 2002: 2). When challenged on this decision he exhorted the nation to end the debate on collaboration and called on citizens to 'forget the time when the French did not like each other' (Nundy, 1994). In the face of concerted efforts to maintain the official memory of the Vichy period, popular culture intervened to reveal the true[35] history. *The Sorrow and the Pity*, (1969/1972) Marcel Ophuls's documentary on French collaboration with the Nazi regime was banned in France, while the French translation of American historian Robert

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[33] For Jews, the Hebrew word 'Shoah' is preferred to 'Holocaust'.

[34] The malice were a French militia created by the Vichy regime in World War II to fight the French Resistence.

[35] 'True' in the sense that it was founded on careful and thorough research.

Paxton's 1973 book *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order*[36] is regarded as having been instrumental in changing the way the collective memory of the Vichy regime is understood (Nora, 2002: 2). By the mid-1970s it was becoming increasingly difficult to maintain official memory discourses.

Kerwin Lee Klein draws attention to another aspect of the transglobal rise in popularity of memory when he describes the period of the 1970s as being marked by 'a great swell of popular interest in autobiographical literature, family genealogy, and museums' (2000: 127). In America, two major television events exemplified this new obsession with memory. Both of these series grabbed and held the attention of mainstream audiences by weaving a narrative based on historical events, around the lives of families - an African-American family in *Roots*, and a German-Jewish family in *Holocaust*. In 1977, the series *Roots* was screened to widespread acclaim, detailing the story of an African slave and his descendants. The second, and more relevant series in terms of the focus of this study, was the 1978 four-part television production *Holocaust*, which followed the fortunes of a Jewish family in World War II. While both of these series are credited as major influences on popular perceptions of memory, *Holocaust* has taken on an iconic status in terms of the historiophoty[37] of genocide. It is also recognized as having been instrumental in 'broadening debate about the Holocaust' as memory discourses gathered pace (Huyssen, 2000: 22). Nowhere was this truer than in West Germany. *Holocaust* was screened there in January 1979 and in the weeks that followed 'newspapers and magazines were filled

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[36] The French translation of the book bears the title *La France de Vichy.*

[37] Historiophoty is defined as '…the representation of history and our thought about it in visual images and filmic discourse' (Rosenstone, 2006:23).

with diaries of concentration camp survivors, interviews with former Auschwitz guards, and articles on the history of German-Jewish relations' (Herf, 1980: 49).

3.4 Towards a Sociology of Collective, Communicative, and Cultural Memory

Sociologist Jeffrey K. Olick, has described the field of social memory studies as 'a non-paradigmatic, transdisciplinary, centerless enterprise' (Olick & Robbins, 1998: 106). And it does indeed tend to be an eclectic mix given its transdisciplinary nature. This eclecticism gives rise to a rich diversity of perspectives on memory studies and their ongoing development. Astrid Erll credits the transdisciplinarity of the field with the transformation of memory studies into a vibrant and vigorous focus of international research (2011: 4).

3.4.1 Maurice Halbwachs – collective memory

Maurice Halbwachs (1887–1945) is frequently cited as 'the founding father of contemporary memory studies' (Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi & Levy, 2011: 5; Kantsteiner, 2002: 181). It is a field which is credited with bringing the subject of memory into the realms of sociology by advancing the concept of a 'framework of collective memory', thereby being the first to use the term 'systematically'[38] (Confino, 1997: 1392). Prior to Halbwachs, memory had been studied and written about mainly within a 'biological framework' (Misztal, 2003: 45) and had been the preserve of psychologists (Williams, 2007: 163; Hoelscher & Alderman, 2004: 348; Klein, 2000: 127; Zerubavel, 1996: 283), such as Charles Blondel (1876-1939) and

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[38] Two contemporaries of Halbwachs – French historian Marc Bloch (1886-1944) and German art historian and cultural theorist Aby Warburg (1886-1929) also explored ideas of memory, while the intellectual, Hugo von Hoffmanstahl is credited with being the first to use the actual term 'collective memory' in 1902. However, Halbwachs work is acknowledged as the sociological blueprint.

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). While Halbwachs respected, and was held in high regard within the field of psychology[39], he nevertheless 'remained adamant in rejecting too close a collaboration between sociology and psychology' (Coser, 1992: 10). This stance gave rise to a rejection of his work in some psychological quarters, where it was viewed as counter-intuitive in that it went against perceived notions within psychology. Much of the theoretical explication of memory, and particularly that associated with death and trauma, has emanated from within the field of psychology, where memory is seen as an individual and internal process. However, while sociology may have given less attention in the past to memory and remembering, there is now a well-established and widely available body of contemporary research and textual material.

Halbwachs's 1926 work *On Collective Memory (Les Cadres sociaux de la mémoire)* continues to be the first port of call for many researchers embarking on sociological studies of memory. Building on a Durkheimian perspective, which was largely concerned with the ways in which commemorative exercises and rituals ensured continuity within societies, Halbwachs proposed the notion that there is a correlation between the 'coherence and complexity of collective memory', and 'coherence and complexity at the social level' (Misztal, 2003: 4). In *On Collective Memory* Halbwachs argues that while each individual has his or her own capacity for memory, it is only within the context of group memory that this individual memory can function. He expounds the theory that individual memory is subject to the influence of the thoughts emanating from the social framework within which the

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[39] During the last years of his life, Halbwachs was appointed vice-president of the French Psychological Society and also, chair of collective psychology at the Collège de France (Coser, 1992: 6).

individual moves and interacts: 'In this way, the framework of collective memory confines and combines our most intimate remembrances to each other' (Halbwachs, [1926] 1992: 53). While Halbwachs work on collective memory may initially appear somewhat restrictive and anachronistic in terms of a study of genocide tourism, Misztal argues that '[H]is assertion that every group develops its own past that highlights its unique identity is still the starting point for all research in this field' (2003: 51). Indeed, this illustrates the potential for expanding on Halbwachs's thesis to advance an understanding of the way in which the collective memory of different cultural groups is used or exploited in the development of genocide tourism sites and experiences. However, the fact that Halbwachs speaks of memory as being 'confined' within 'frameworks', places spatial and locational restrictions on the exploration of a concept that is by its very nature, both fluid and dynamic. In terms of discussions of memory in a global age, this limits the degree to which Halbwachs work can be applied in the overall context of this study.

3.4.2. Pierre Nora –lieux de mémoire

Pierre Nora (1989, 1996) introduced the phrase 'lieux de mémoire' or 'sites of memory' into the language of memory studies. His work on memory is defined by his belief that living memory no longer exists and memory is now more about historical understanding. Lieux de mémoire have moved to fill this vacuum as compensation for the loss of what Nora describes as *milieux de memoire* or environments of memory (Huyssens, 2000: 33). And yet, he contends that man's relationship with the past is broken. He paints a dystopian picture of a 'fractured past' where memory is lost in 'the discontinuity of history'...'The past has become a world apart' (1989: 17). Nora has been criticized for being preoccupied with a

France-centred view of national memory and has also been perceived as overly focused on the primacy of 'official' sites of memory as designated by the state. His argument that history and memory must be treated as completely different entities has led to his critics labelling him a 'cultural conservative' (Misztal, 2003: 106). Nora's model of lieux de mémoire has proven to be highly influential and, also, somewhat controversial. His work undoubtedly heralded a transformation in attitudes to cultural memory, which underwent a process of regeneration that saw it emerge as national memory. Nevertheless, one of the main criticisms of Nora's conceptualization of the nation and memory is the absence of a 'mnemonic space' for ethnic groups within the host nation. As Stephen Legg argues, 'the inner logic of the lieux de mémoire project fails to encourage multiple imagined communities based around ethnic or social principles, through its attention on a unitary national homeland' (2005: 493). Nora's vision appears to be that of 'an ethnically homogeneous society' (Erll, 2011: 7). Given that his focus of attention – France - is deemed to be one of the most multi-ethnic and multi-cultural nations in the world, Nora's failure to address issues of postcolonial memory or to reference France's large immigrant population has drawn criticism from, among others, Hue-Tam Ho Tai, Professor of Sino-Vietnamese history (Erll, 2011: 7; Graves & Rechniewska, 2010: 3). Legg adds to this censure when he asserts that Nora displays an especial disinterest towards countermemories that challenge the Europeanness of the French nation' (2005: 492). In spite of these criticisms, Nora's work has been the inspiration for much of the new thinking emerging in memory studies in the recent past.

3.4.3 The turn to new memory

According to Astrid Erll (2011: 4) research on cultural memory can thus far be divided into two phases, with the notion of a third phase being undetermined at this stage. Phase one of the study of cultural memory occurred at the beginning of the twentieth century with the work of Maurice Halbwachs and others such as Walter Benjamin and Aby Warburg. Erll traces the onset of the second phase of research to somewhere near the publication of Nora's 'Les Lieux de Mémoire' in the 1980s. While Erll suggests that determinations of the onset of a third phase in memory studies may be open to debate, there is the sense that a nascent movement has already appeared on the horizon in the shape of ideas such as Andrew Hoskins's work on mediated memory and cultural theorist Andreas Huyssens's concept of 'anamnesis.'

Hoskins posits that engagement with new insights into memory rests on the premise that globalized, technologically sophisticated societies are subject to a marked change in respect of how memory is 'manufactured, manipulated and above all, mediated' (2001: 334). In what he terms 'new memory', Hoskins argues that key events from the recent past are now 'unthinkable, or perhaps unmemorable, in a form that is not dominated by their electronic mediation' (Hoskins, 2001: 337). Indeed, it would be difficult to conceive of the events of 9/11 and the destruction of the World Trade Centre without remembering the images from television, newspapers, and the internet.

Andreas Huyssens has also commented on the increasing mediatization of memory. He makes the observation that 'We cannot discuss personal, generational, or public memory separate from the enormous influence of the new media carriers of all forms

of memory' (Huyssens, 2000: 29). In addition to reflecting on the role of new media in memory studies, Huyssens examines the way in which memory of the Other is frequently missing from Western perspectives on memory, even in the midst of a frenzy of mediated memories. He introduces the term 'anamnesis[40]' in reference to 'the recognition of difference and otherness and to the constitutive reliance of dominant memories on exclusion' (Legg, 2002: 492). This echoes criticism of Nora's privileging of national memory above other and Other memory, which can only be sustained if the dominant player – in this case, the state or nation – continues to exert control over how memory is managed. With the development of global communication technologies providing a readily accessible form of source knowledge and inspiration, the state's post-World War II role in the management of memory no longer goes unchallenged. This is a positive development as the potential to engage in collaborative memory construction and management projects opens the way to inclusive rather than exclusionary practices, which is a particularly important consideration in relation to recognizing the role of victim groups in the construction of genocide memory. One such example of this progressive development is seen in the conceptualisation of cosmopolitan memory.

3.4.4 Levy and Sznaider – cosmopolitan memory

Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider coined the term 'cosmopolitan memory' to describe a distinctive and complex form of memory born out of the age of globalization. Characterized by a process of 'internal globalization' (2002: 87), cosmopolitan memory views global issues, such as genocide (as epitomized by the Holocaust) as a feature of local experiences for an increasing number of people across the globe.

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[40] Taken from Plato's use of the term to describe remembrance of past lives.

Cosmopolitan memory is not a replacement or substitute for nationally or ethnically bounded memories, but it transcends them and, in the process, they are transformed and enhanced. Cosmopolitan memory is founded on the memory of the Holocaust. These foundations emerged in a post-war Europe that was trying to come to terms with the extermination of the Jews (Sznaider & Beck, 2002:112). Levy and Sznaider posit that the reason behind the explosion of scholarly and public interest in the Holocaust over recent decades is because there is a 'need for a moral touchstone in an age of uncertainty and the absence of master ideological narratives' (2002: 93). They go on to credit media in all its forms with exploiting this interest, making particular note of how the 1978 television series 'Holocaust', was a major turning point in the manner in which that pivotal human tragedy was represented. A message was delivered that while the Holocaust past was something that happened to the Jews of Europe, 'the Holocaust future might happen to anyone' (2002: 96) thus promoting the idea of a cosmopolitan cultural memory.

Levy and Sznaider's conceptualization of cosmopolitan memory presents a complex addition to the memory studies repository with the potential to advance efforts to raise awareness of genocide at an exoteric level given the focus on the Holocaust as a site of cosmopolitan memory. However, as Levy and Sznaider state, their intention is to have memories of the Holocaust 'contribute to the creation of a common European cultural memory' (2002: 87), which means there is much work to be done if their theory is to be applied beyond European borders. Nowicka and Ruvisco (2009: 2) propose two analytical levels of cosmopolitanism that may advance the development of a wider application and which are already embedded within the concept of cosmopolitan memory. The first analytical level is developed as 'a

practice which is apparent in things that people do and say to positively engage with the otherness of the Other and the oneness of the world.' The second level appears as a 'moral ideal that emphasises both tolerance towards difference and the possibility of a more just world.' Cosmopolitan memory feeds into the desire on the part of many to actively show solidarity with the victims of genocide, as was frequently witnessed during the course of the field research element of this study. While cosmopolitan memory has been criticized for being too deeply embedded in Holocaust memory, it has the potential to expand in focus to play a role in exploring genocide tourism as a transcultural activity.

3.4.5 Astrid Erll – Transcultural memory

If Pierre Nora's work on lieux de mémoire has been viewed as narrowly focussed on national memory to the exclusion of the memory of the Other, then in conjunction with Levy and Sznaider's concept of cosmopolitan memory, Astrid Erll's conceptualization of transcultural memory acts as a corrective force. Erll defines transcultural memory as 'a certain *research perspective*, a focus of attention, which is directed towards mnemonic processes unfolding *across* and *beyond* cultures' (2011: 9). She goes on to argue that a transcultural memory perspective must break free of the constraints imposed on it and, in the spirit of bricolage[41], be prepared to explore new approaches to existing research procedures in memory studies.

While Erll 'names' transcultural memory, she argues that although that term was not used at the time, intimations of it are to be found in the early 20th century in the work of Maurice Halbwachs and his contemporary, Aby Warburg. According to Erll,

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[41] Based on Claude Levi-Strauss's use of the term to describe the researcher's use of intellectual tools to hand. See Chapter 4, 4.3.6

Halbwachs displays an awareness of the transcultural nature of memory in his treatment of individual memory; yet, when it came to dealing with collective memory he was unable to sustain a transcultural approach, or to escape the idea of memory as a 'container' concept. Therefore, in seeking to understand the mechanism of transcultural memory, Erll turns to Aby Warburg for her preferred conceptualization. Warburg describes a nomadic form of memory characterised by what Erll contends is 'the incessant wandering of carriers, media, contents, forms, and practices of memory, their continuing 'travels' and ongoing transformations, through time and space, across social, linguistic and political borders' (Erll, 2011: 11). Based on this contention, she highlights the dynamic nature of memory, which is ripe for treatment within a transcultural framework.

Transculturality is firmly embedded within everyone's day-to-day lived experience. All individuals occupy multiple positions across a wide range of discourses such as nationality, occupation, religion, or socio-culturally. For example, an American nurse taking part in a genocide tour occupies at least three positions. In recognition that everyone holds multiple positions simultaneously within their socio-cultural world, transcultural memory supports the contention that everyone is therefore part of 'several mnemonic communities' (Kansteiner, 2002: 189).

According to Erll, 'Not each 'memory around the globe' will automatically become a veritable 'global memory'; not every worldwide available object of remembrance will be turned into a cosmopolitan, an ethical, or an empathetic memory' (2011: 15). In respect of the current study of genocide tourism a similar assertion may be made. Not every memory of genocide will become a global memory of genocide; not every artefact of genocide, such as human remains or torture devices will be transformed

into objects of empathetic memory. However, examining genocide tourism through the lens of transcultural memory presents the possibility of introducing the memory of the Other into the research equation. Thus far, this perspective has been notable by its absence. The contention here is that the more commercial and touristic aspects of visiting sites of genocide (as discussed in Chapter 2) have over-shadowed and often excluded completely the perspective of the Other's memory.

3.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter explored the concept of memory as a theoretical lens through which genocide tourism can be viewed and understood. The origin of today's memory studies was traced from its beginnings in the 1920s with the work of Maurice Halbwachs, through Pierre Nora's groundbreaking 1980s conceptualization of lieux de mémoire (sites of memory). The turn to new ideas on memory was discussed with particular attention being given to Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider's cosmopolitan memory, which is primarily, memory of the Holocaust. The chapter concluded with an examination of Astrid Erll's concept of transcultural memory.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY IN GENOCIDE TOURISM RESEARCH

4.1 Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 2, a review of literature relating to visits to sites and centres associated with acts of genocide identifies genocide tourism as an emergent contemporary social phenomenon[42] founded on a strong thanatoptic tradition, while also highlighting the current lack of empirical research dedicated to the topic. The term 'social phenomenon' is defined within this study as being an observable activity that operates in a real-life socio-cultural context thereby determining its suitability as a subject for further study within a qualitative sociological framework. This echoes the opening lines of Denzin and Lincoln's definition of qualitative research which refers to it as 'a situated activity that locates the observer in the world' (2005:3). The word 'emergent' is applied here to denote that the term 'genocide tourism' is a recent addition to the academic lexicon, from where it is currently discussed, albeit to a limited degree, within the broader parameters of dark tourism and thanatourism studies. This means that current analyses of genocide tourism derive from a largely tourism-centred methodology. Research undertaken from this tourism-centred perspective tends to be biased in favour of industry and marketing agendas (Pernecky & Jamal, 2010). This is not to diminish the contributions made by researchers working in the field of tourism studies, which have brought the phenomenon of genocide tourism to the attention of researchers from various fields and paved the way for the study of other aspects of genocide tourism within wider academia. This research project focuses on genocide tourism as one phenomenon that is

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[42] 'Phenomenon' – From the Greek *phaenesthai* meaning 'to appear or show itself' (Moustakas, 1994)

representative of the many complexities of the social world of the late 20th and early 21st centuries and the lay actors[43] who inhabit that world. By extracting it from within the domain of dark tourism and thanatourism studies and treating it as a stand-alone, singular focus of research, the current study uncovers the role of genocide tourism as an innovative and potentially significant factor in the dissemination of knowledge and understanding of genocide at an exoteric level.

4.2 The Qualitative Research Framework

This chapter describes the methodology employed on the current study and explains the rationale behind the chosen approaches to exploring this phenomenon. It devotes particular attention to the philosophical framework underpinning the research, which can sometimes become lost within the wider methodology when conducting a study of this nature. Following on from this, the methods used to carry out the research are detailed, including the process of choosing the sites and participants; collecting, collating and analysing the data, and also the ethical considerations involved. Therefore, the qualitative methodology employed in this study can be viewed as two distinct, yet inextricably linked or symbiotic parts; namely, the philosophical foundations of the research, which lie within the realm of Gademerian hermeneutic phenomenology, coupled with the practical elements of the investigative journey as structured around observational and interpretive practices. The inclusion of a hermeneutic perspective in research methodologies encourages 'a deeply self-reflexive and self-critical process' (Prasad, 2002: 24), which complements and

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[43] Harrington (2005: 322) defines a 'lay actor' as 'any ordinary person who is not a social scientist...any ordinary person except in the case when this person acts as a social scientist'. However, Giddens (1984) argues that all social actors 'are social theorists, who alter their theories in the light of experience'.

strengthens observational and interpretive practices. A critical bricolage approach is embedded within the overall framework of the methodology as a linking mechanism between the philosophical underpinnings, and the socio-culturally framed research narrative.

4.2.1. Working towards a methodology

Max Weber's (1864-1920) conceptualization of a general sociology marks a pivotal point of departure for interpretive qualitative research in that it brings into play the idea of meaning and meaningfulness. He posited that 'sociology [...] is a science concerning itself with the interpretive understanding of social action and thereby with a causal explanation of its course and consequences' (Weber, cited in Käsler, 1988: 150). Weber's insistence on the importance of meaningfulness in social action has been drawn on by anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1926-2006) and philosophical anthropologist Charles Taylor. In relation to his study of culture, Geertz states: 'Believing with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning' (Geertz, 1973: 5). Taylor is similarly critical of empiricist tradition for its attempts 'to reconstruct social reality as consisting of 'brute data alone' devoid of any interpretive perspective (Taylor, 1994, cited in Seale, 2006: 13). Such viewpoints illustrate Outhwaite's contention that 'interpretive social theory is motivated by an interest in knowledge which is rather different from the more general scientific interest in explaining social processes' (2005: 111). Without the meanings which individuals confer on their actions there can be no social reality.

According to Kockelmans (1978: 13) 'all sociology is reconstruction which aspires to confer intelligibility on human behaviour which in itself is to some degree still obscure and confused'. In terms of this study of genocide tourism, the contention is that where such obscurity and confusion exist, they can be combated most effectively by employing a qualitative approach. This approach is widely viewed as being more humanistic than its quantitative counterpart because 'on the whole, researchers find that people's words provide greater access to their subjective meaning than do statistical trends' (Lazar, in Seale, 2006: 14). Mason (2010) argues that qualitative research focuses on meaning rather than 'generalised hypothesis statements', while Masucci (2007) values a qualitative approach because it 'deploys a broad spectrum of interconnected methods, in an attempt to get a better purchase on the research question(s) under investigation'. Masucci's evaluation is particularly pertinent given that Gadamerian hermeneutic phenomenology and bricolage are core components of this research design. Both of these components (which are discussed below) favour the use of a wide variety of methods, theories, and intellectual tools to explore, investigate, and elucidate.

Adler and Adler (2012), in reflecting on the relative merits of qualitative versus quantitative methodologies, note the 'emphasis on numbers' in quantitative research. The current study focuses on questions of "how?" as in: how does genocide tourism function as a phenomenon and what can it contribute to the wider context of raising awareness of genocide?; rather than "how many?" as in: how many genocide sites operate as tourist destinations and attractions, or, how many tourists visit these sites? While in the past quantitative studies were deemed to provide 'better evidence' (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2013: 193), with qualitative research being denigrated as

the refuge of those seeking soft solutions to the research process (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003: 5), this is no longer the case (Eberle, 2005) and, as Cresswell (2007: 40) notes, it (qualitative research) 'keeps good company with the most rigorous quantitative research'.

In relation to the quality and validity of research data produced through qualitative approaches, Haralambos and Holborn (2002: 971) note that qualitative data reaches a greater depth than quantitative data and is usually seen as being 'richer and more vital' thereby providing more realistic and truer images of 'a way of life, of people's experiences, attitudes and beliefs'. This is achieved by what Masucci describes as 'the systematic use of a variety of empirical materials – case studies; personal experience; introspective life story; interview; observational; historical; interactional, and visual texts' (Masucci, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003: 5). Ultimately, what the research participants have to say and how the researcher observes and describes events are central to the 'essence of qualitative inquiry' (Quinn Paton, 2002: 457).

4.2.2 Epistemological considerations

The epistemological stance of the researcher, that is, his or her understanding of what constitutes knowledge, determines how the topic will be investigated (Gray, 2010: 17). In reflecting on his or her epistemological assumptions, the researcher is then in a position to assess what the implications are for their research practice. According to Spicer (in Seale, 2006: 294), epistemology concerns '*what we are able to know* and *how we can know it*'. Cresswell (2007: 17) illustrates this process by posing the question of what the relationship is between the researcher and the phenomenon under investigation. An attempt is then made to bridge the gap between the researcher and the phenomenon. This is manifested practically when the researcher

'collaborates, spends time in the field with participants, and becomes an "insider"' (2007: 17).   In the case of this study, the epistemological stance was based on the premise that while a limited study of genocide tourism could be conducted within the narrow parameters of library and archive research, the richest data was to be obtained by visiting sites of genocide, which would allow access to and engagement with a broad spectrum of participants.

4.3 Philosophical Foundations

For qualitative research to be pursued to optimum effect, it requires sound philosophical underpinnings that compliment and drive the investigative processes forward. Dr. de Sales Turner (2003) of Deakin University, Australia, is critical of the superficial treatment given to philosophical foundations in many research studies, whereby a particular philosophical tradition is purported to have been undertaken and yet, within the body of work, there is scant discussion of the chosen philosophy and little evidence to support such a claim (2003: 1).   Ensuring that the philosophical framework is expanded upon and interwoven into the methodology can only benefit the overall rigour of any qualitative research study and thus give added depth and richness (Koch, 1995: 174).

4.3.1 Foregrounding phenomenology

The philosophical underpinnings of the current study adhere to the principles of Hans Georg Gadamer's hermeneutic phenemonology. Phenomenology is not an invention of the 20th century.   In one form or another the practice of reflecting on states of

consciousness – in effect, phenomenology[44] – has been in existence for centuries in both western and eastern philosophical traditions (von Eckartsberg & Valle, 1981)[45]. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) promulgated theories linking consciousness and experience, and self-consciousness and knowledge (Blackburn, 2008: 197; 161). However, it was through the work of Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) that it had its 20th century manifestation and in recognition of his contribution to the discipline he is variously referred to as the 'founder of phenomenology', 'father of phenomenology' and 'the fountainhead of phenomenology in the twentieth century' (Kearney, 1994; Polkinghorne, 1983: 41; Vandenberg, 1997: 11).

In an existential turn, Husserl believed that 'objective' truths were foundering in a modern age that had lost its 'sense of rootedness in man's life-experience' (Kearney, 1994: 13). He was attracted to the phenomenological method because he saw in it the promise of 'a new sense of being' (Laverty, 2003: 5). Husserl's aim was to develop phenomenology as a countermeasure to the malaise caused by loss of rootedness and 'a disintegrating civilization' (Eagleton, 1983: 54). He determined to do so by turning 'back to the things themselves' - *zu den Sachen selbst* (Srubar: 1984: 174). In consideration of this, phenomenology espouses the belief that humans only make contact with their external world via their five senses. For Husserl, this negated any sense of objectivity on the part of a person; individuals were only in a position to classify the phenomena they encountered as products of their own mind,

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[44] The term phenomenology – 'derived from two Greek words: *phainomen* (an appearance) and *logos* (reason or word). This translates as 'reasoned appearance where appearance stands for anything one is conscious of' (Stewart & Mickunas, 1974, quoted in Pernecky & Jamal, 2010: 1056).

[45] Evidence of Hindu meditative practices dates back to approximately 1500 BCE (Everly, George S. & Lating, Jeffrey M. 2002: 199)

rendering such classifications closed to any evaluation in terms of being true or false. To overcome this obstacle and uncover the true nature of physical objects, Husserl suggested that only by 'bracketting off' reality and commonsense beliefs could a reflective process begin, thus re-directing attention back to 'the things themselves' (Moran & Mooney, 2007: 1). This 'bracketting off' is referred to by Husserl as 'epochē[46]' (Cresswell, 2007: 59; Kearney, 1994: 19; Polkinghorne, 1983: 43-44) and is one of his most significant requirements for an effective implementation of a Husserlian phenomenological analysis.

Husserlian phenomenological analysis is designed to be applied to an individual or group in order to clarify and interpret the very essence of experience of a phenomenon as it impacts on them. This study does indeed seek to engage with lived experiences of the phenomenon of genocide tourism; however, phenomenology as envisaged by Husserl, places the emphasis on 'consciousness, individualism and confinement to an inner world of experience' (Ferguson: 2006: 86). For the purposes of the current study, this was deemed to impose too many restrictions on the scope of the research in relation to the participants, the researcher, and the phenomenon at the heart of the investigation. Husserl's particular brand of phenomenology – 'pure phenomenology' (Cerbone, 2008: 29), also termed transcendental phenomenology, veers towards and draws upon psychology[47]. While the researcher embraces epochē

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[46] The term epochē means to withhold or suspend judgement. Both the word and the concept originated in Greek philosophy with Greek sceptics such as Pyrrho and Arcesilaus putting it into practice to guard against making statements of knowledge founded on insufficient evidence. Epochē first appears in Husserl's work around 1913. He argued that both epochē and phenomenological transcendental reductions were the key components in the practice of phenomenological method (Moran & Cohen, p.106: 2012).

[47] In his early writings on phenomenology Husserl stated: "phenomenology is descriptive psychology". (Husserl, *Logical Investigations Vol. 1* 1900 cited in James, Jon L. 2007: 15

to ensure that his or her experience maintains a state of purification, there is, simultaneously, a strong focus on reaching into the deepest recesses of the participants' consciousness to uncover the very essence of their experiences of a phenomenon. Husserlian phenomenology is epistemological in nature. In this respect it focuses not only on questions of knowing, but on how we come to know what we know, and on the limits of what we can know. The essence of the conscious mind of the individual becomes the central unit of analysis. This type of approach is well suited to longitudinal studies or where there is ease of access to participants on an on-going basis, which is not the case with the current study. Also, the process of 'bracketting off' (epochē) limits exploration of how social, cultural and historical influences impact on experiences and precludes the researcher's world view, for the investigator must suspend all of their beliefs 'about the sources and success of conscious experience' (Cerbone, 2008: 15). While applying Husserl's phenomenology has proven particularly effective in studies that seek to know the innermost workings of the individual human mind, careful consideration as to how it is practiced as a research method and the types of studies in which it has been successfully applied[48], led to the conclusion that it would not be a suitable approach for use in the current project.

Transcendental Phenomenological Psychology: Introduction to Husserl's Psychology of Human Consciousness).

[48] Husserl's 'pure' phenomenology is popular with researchers working in all fields of health care, nursing and psychotherapy studies (See Cresswell, 2007, Moustakas, 2004; 1999; 1988, Crotty, 1996).

4.3.2 Gadamerian hermeneutic phenomenology

Gadamer's evocation of hermeneutic phenomenology derives from his extension of the work of Husserl's student Martin Heidegger. Believing that it was not possible to 'bracket off' a person's background during the process of interpretation, Heidegger reacted against Husserl's 'pure' phenomenology and advocated a turn to an ontological approach to understanding which generates questions of what it means to 'be'. Heidegger espoused the belief that because the world inhabited by human beings is an interpretive realm, then 'to be human is to be interpretive' (Polkinghorne, 1983: 224). While data may continue to be gathered from the same sources for both Husserlian and Heideggerian phenomenological studies, it is mainly in the approach to data analysis that Heidegger diverges from Husserl's methods and embraces the construction of an interpretation based around the experiences, understandings, and historicality of the participants as well as those of the researcher/interpreter. Heidegger maintains that these elements could not be subjected to Husserl's epochē because 'consciousness was not separate from the world and instead was a formation of historically lived human existence' (Polkinghorne: 1983: 205).

4.3.3 Understanding and interpretation as an iterative process

Gadamer developed a number of concepts to advance understanding and interpretation in hermeneutic phenomenology. Four of these concepts are used in the current study:

- Pre-understanding: the belief that an individual's situatedness in the world precedes and, therefore, determines his or her understanding of the world.

- Bildung: '...intimately associated with the idea of culture and designates primarily the properly human way of developing one's natural talents and capacities' (Gadamer, 1975/1989: pp.9-10). It is 'the element within which the educated man (Gebildite) moves' (Gadamer: 1975/1989: 14).

- Prejudice: Viewed in a positive light by Gadamer who views prejudice as historical reality, which works within the dialogic process to advance understanding. Structures of cultural capital and socialization determine levels of understanding. We are the sum of many parts.

- Fusion of horizons: Gadamer defines 'having a horizon' as 'not being limited to what is nearby but being able to see beyond it' (1975/1989: 313). Horizons are not fixed, but move with the individual. Cultural collisions with the horizons of other individuals call for a temporary openness to the perspectives of another, which sets in motion the fusing together of the different horizons of the interpreter and that which is the subject of interpretation. In research, the operationalization of a fusion of horizons is illustrated in the writing up of the research process.

4.3.4 Hermeneutic circles within circles

Gadamer, a student of Heidegger, also rejected the Husserlian notion that an individual's life experiences and understandings could be bracketed off and that a researcher could be a neutral observer in the process of interpretation. Embracing Heidegger's turn to an ontological investigation of interpretation, Gadamer followed

Heidegger in building on existing notions of the hermeneutic circle[49] in philosophical hermeneutics as a method of interpretation. In its basic form the hermeneutic circle is a metaphor used to signify how a text in its entirety can only be understood if the individual parts of the text are also understood. Thus, 'coming to understand the meaning of the whole of a text and coming to understand its parts are always interdependent activities' (Schwandt, 2007:133).

Gadamer expanded on Heidegger's foundational supposition that the historical and cultural traditions underpinning the society to which an individual belongs are ultimately responsible for how that individual understands and interprets their world. Interactions with individuals from other traditions and societies create new understandings and interpretations and hence, interpretation is an ever-evolving process in which knowledge is created and re-created, and understanding is constantly under development. As an individual's horizon expands in this way, understanding materializes. As Gadamer states, 'The circle, then, is not formal in nature. It is neither subjective nor objective, but describes understanding as the interplay of the movement of tradition and the movement of the interpreter' (1975/1989: 305).

4.3.5 Conceptualizing experience and understanding

In hermeneutic phenomenology, the interpretive process focuses on 'historical meanings of experience and their developmental and cumulative effects on individual and social levels' (Laverty, 2003: 15). It does so by addressing 'experience from the perspective of meanings, understandings and interpretations'

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[49] The hermeneutic circle emerged out of a tradition of ancient rhetoric and was subsequently developed by Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) (Schwandt, 2007: 133).

(Pernecky & Jamal, 2010: 1056). According to Richard E. Palmer (1969: 193) the concept of experience is essential in understanding Gadamer's interpretation of hermeneutics. Van Manen and Adams (2010: 449) argue that 'in a broad sense, any human experience may become the focus of phenomenological research'. They go on to state that 'phenomenology tries to show how our words, concepts, and theories always shape (distort) and give structure to our experiences as we live them' (450). Given that experience is a central theme within the overall philosophical discipline of phenomenology, it is worth devoting some space to an examination of what is understood by 'experience'.

The German philosopher, literary critic and historian Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911) distinguished between mere 'experience' and 'an experience' (Turner & Bruner, cited in Ritchie & Hudson, 2009: 112). According to Dilthey's thesis, 'experience' refers to individual experience as a stream of private, internalized events known only to their owner. Experience is self-referential; one can only experience one's own life as it comes through one's own consciousness. No matter how many and varied the clues as to another's experiences, or the inferences made regarding another's experiences, it is never possible to 'know completely' someone else's experiences (Bruner, 1986: 5). Bruner continues by positing that 'an experience' is more subjectively articulated than 'experience' (1986: 6) and it is through communication with our fellow social beings (specifically through language) that 'the necessary limits of our thought and experience' are formed (Oksala, 2007: 32-33). Ritchie and Hudson (2009, 112) echo this idea when they note that we as 'social beings' have an innate desire to share 'what we have learned from our experiences'. This is a crucial element in the development of genocide tourism as a vehicle for consciousness-

raising, as cited in the research questions outlined in Chapter 2. This need to communicate experiences is of significance in relation to how knowledge of genocide is disseminated at an exoteric level. As those who visit genocide tourism sites process their experiences and then go on to share those experiences with others in multifarious ways, they advance awareness of genocide. Bruner (1986: 5) notes the broader spectrum of communication when he states that 'lived experience, then, as thought and desire, as word and image, is the primary reality'. Phenomenology focuses on the 'lived experience' of the individual and attempts to transmit that experience as accurately as possible, no matter how 'niche' that experience may be, as in the case of genocide tourism experiences. In this way, 'phenomenology aims to demonstrate how the world is an *experience which we live* before it becomes an *object which we know* in some personal or detached form' (Kearney, 1994: 13, italicised within the original text). The concept of experience as described by Dilthey, and later by Van Manen and Adams, is more in tune with a Husserlian phenomenological approach, whereas Bruner's explication of what constitutes 'an experience' is more in line with Gadamerian hermeneutic phenomenology.

Gadamerian hermeneutic phenomenology is located 'in the centre of the philosophical problems of today' (Palmer, 1969: 43), thus providing a framework which encourages the researcher to embrace all aspects of the phenomenon from a broad philosophical and sociological perspective - a framework which, in the case of this study, incorporates a *bricolage* approach.

4.3.6 Expanding the bricolage

Interpretive qualitative research incorporates multiple, complex layers of process and practice. A bricolage approach speaks to such complexity, and in doing so,

constructs a bridge between the broader social sciences framework of this study and the philosophical underpinnings. According to Matt Rogers of the University of New Brunswick, Canada, although the bricolage approach is becoming more established in research communities, it remains 'misunderstood and unpopular' largely due to its complex nature (2012: 1). However, this study contends that the strength of bricolage as a research approach lies in its very complexity, particularly given its development by advocates such as Denzin (1999), Lincoln (2001), Kincheloe (2001; 2004; 2005), and Berry (with Kincheloe, 2004).

Anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss introduced the intellectual concept of bricolage in *The Savage Mind* (1966), describing it as the inventive use of 'whatever is at hand' in terms of tools and materials to complete a particular task (Lévi-Strauss, 1966/1972: 7). Lévi-Strauss's ideation of intellectual bricolage conveyed the manner in which researchers employ the intellectual tools to hand to progress their work in what his biographer, Patrick Wilcken, identifies as 'a kind of off-the-cuff experimentation' (2010: 249). Bricolage research, as it is currently conceptualized and theorized, emerged from what Denzin and Lincoln (2005: pp.2-3) label 'the *blurred genres* phase (1970 – 1986)' of North American qualitative research.[50] This phase introduced a more open attitude to the interchange of knowledge, expertise, and resources between the social sciences and humanities, which in turn allowed for the construction and deployment of a greater spread of research practices. As a

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[50] Denzin and Lincoln describe eight historical moments in the historical timeline of North American qualitative research. They are: the traditional (1900-1950); the modernist or golden age (1950-1970); blurred genres (1970-1986); the crisis of representation (1986-1990); the postmodern (1990-1995); postexperimental inquiry (1995-2000); the methodologically contested present (2000-2004); and the fractured future or now (2005-). According to Denzin and Lincoln, these moments 'overlap and simultaneously operate in the present'.

result, the contents of the qualitative researcher's toolbox expanded and the researcher became a *bricoleur* – 'a maker of quilts' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005: 4), 'a Jack of all trades, a kind of professional do-it-yourself' (Levi-Strauss, 1966/1972: 17). Taking their lead from Levi-Strauss's bricolage metaphor, Denzin and Lincoln harnessed its power to move beyond traditional theoretical and methodological approaches towards a more flexible, albeit eclectic mode of research and the development of the idea of the researcher as a *bricoleur*.

Joe Kincheloe (2001; 2004; 2005) builds on the foundations laid by Denzin and Lincoln to develop a critical bricolage where the researcher as bricoleur becomes an active rather than a passive element of the research process. Bricoleurs 'are emancipated from the tyranny of pre-specified, intractable research procedures' (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004: 13). Rogers (2012: 8) outlines Kincheloe's 'criticalization' of the bricolage process of inquiry as follows:

(a) a move away from restrictive positivist and monological research approaches

(b) an appreciation of the lived world as a complex interconnected arena that is best served in a research context by the study of 'objects-in-the-world' rather than 'things-in-themselves'

(c) an embrace of 'critical theories, interdisciplinary/postmodernist/poststructuralist epistemological rationalities.

(from Kincheloe, 2005).

Kincheloe's conceptualization of bricolage and the bricoleur takes Levi-Strauss's original metaphor of a handyman and transforms him into a skilled craftsman who 'looks for not yet imagined tools, fashioning them with not yet imagined

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connections' (Lincoln: 2001: 693). Laurel Richardson (in Kincheloe, 2004: 21) uses the metaphor of a crystal to reflect on the nature of bricolage, noting how 'new patterns emerge and new shapes dance on the pages of the texts produced by the bricoleur – images unanticipated before the process took place'. In this sense, bricolage can be seen as part of an evolutionary process. Levi Bryant, Professor of Philosophy at Collin College, Texas, makes the suggestion that the term 'exaptation' can be applied to bricolage. Originally a term used in biology, it describes 'a process of evolution whereby a trait that once served one function comes to serve another function'. The trait then functions in 'a new way and poses a whole set of new problems resulting in the shift in function that must be fitted with other things in the environment' (Bryant, 2009). Viewing bricolage in this fashion as a process of exaptation emphasises the interpretive and hermeneutic dimensions of critical bricolage.

A significant element of the critical bricolage process is the way in which it empowers the researcher and encourages the use of the active rather than the more traditional passive voice. Therefore, in Section 4.5.which outlines the more practical elements of how the study was operated, I, as the researcher, in seeking to position myself within the study, will embrace this aspect of bricolage research and describe the process using the active voice. Before moving on to describe how the study was carried out, the research questions will be located within an interpretive paradigm.

4.4 Locating the Research Questions Within an Interpretive Paradigm

Having outlined the rationale for choosing a qualitative stance, and having explored the philosophical foundations of the project, the next step is to focus on the particular approach that shapes the research as it progresses. Creswell (2007: 246) defines an

'approach to inquiry' as being an established means of investigating a phenomenon, having secured its reputation by way of 'a distinguished history in one of the social science disciplines' and having 'spawned books, journals and distinct methodologies'. Cresswell points out that Denzin and Lincoln (1994) prefer the term 'strategies of inquiry', while Tesch (1990) favours the word 'varieties.' Staying with Cresswell's terminology, an interpretive approach was chosen as the optimum guiding presence within this study.

The focal point of this qualitative study is to explore and understand genocide tourism as a very specific type of contemporary experience. As Denzin and Lincoln (2005: 3) point out, 'an interpretive naturalistic approach to the world' lies at the heart of qualitative research. They also note that when a range of empirical materials[51] are used within a single study, which is frequently the case, then a number of interconnected interpretive practices may be employed in order to accommodate the richness and diversity of the data extracted from the materials. An interpretive approach captures this wealth of information and in doing so 'makes the world visible in different ways' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005: 3). The interpretive position emphasizes the meaningful nature of phenomena, in this instance genocide tourism, and the need to interpret that meaningfulness (Harrington, 2005: 323). Therefore, this approach was judged to offer the best outcome for the project. The research questions are attentive to these factors.

As previously discussed, four key research questions underpin this study and drive it forward:

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[51] For example, personal experiences; case studies; cultural and visual texts and artifacts; interviews.

(i)   What is genocide tourism?

(ii) How are memories of genocide represented in genocide tourism?

(iii) What meanings may genocide tourists derive from experiences of visiting sites and exhibitions?

(iv) What role can genocide tourism play in:

- raising consciousness?

- promoting awareness of genocide?

- preventing genocide?

4.4.1 The interpretive approach

Stokowski (1997) advocates a turn to sociological interpretation, citing a number of key issues that he suggests are ripe for study in a reframing of interpretation as a social practice. The five key issues which Stokowski outlines inhabit a similar space to that occupied by the research questions addressed in the current study:

- 'how interpretive experiences become socially constructed'

- 'the claims-making process of rhetorical (even if not "authentic") representation of historical and contemporary realities'

- the presentation of community and place meanings in the political choice of images

- the process by which stakeholders in communities, both individuals and agencies, exist in alignment with each other, and how this impacts on their 'presentations of interpretive themes and stories'

- 'the consequences' of what Rojek (1993) terms "mass reproduction" of 'interpretive themes'[52].

(Stokowski, (1997: 50).

In outlining the issues above, Stokowski illustrates the need to embrace all aspects of human interaction with the modern world. He recognizes the existence of multiple realities within that world, while at the same time championing the role of 'stakeholders' within societies and communities. By advocating a turn to sociological interpretation, Stokowski advocates empowerment and encourages individuals and communities to look more closely at their surroundings, even when those surroundings may be manifestations of Rojek's 'mass reproductions'. The value of empowering individuals is of significance when addressing the final research question in this study as outlined earlier, which deals with the potential role performed by genocide tourism in raising awareness of genocide.

Stokowski's view that interpretation should be re-framed as a social practice complements Cresswell's (2007: 24) evaluation of 'interpretive positions' as providing 'a pervasive lens or perspective on all aspects of a qualitative research

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[52] By 'mass reproductions' Rojek is referring to the proliferation of reproductions of artefacts, images, etc. that have been copied from existing reproductions. Rojek posited that such reproductions are so far removed from the original that they may bear little or no resemblance to the authentic item, if that item existed in the first place. Rojek echoes Jean Baudrillard's concept of simulacra (copies of things that may never have had an original or that no longer have an original) as a defining feature of postmodern society (Baudrillard, Jean 1994 *Simulacra and Simulation* University of Michigan Press, US).

project'. This pervasiveness, accompanied by an innate versatility, adds to the attractiveness of an interpretive approach when undertaking an interdisciplinary research project of this nature. It is also compatible with Gadamerian hermeneutic phenomenology. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), qualitative research tends to favour interpretive positions, while Cresswell (2007: 248) states that interpretive approaches are now accepted as being inextricably linked to the central features of qualitative research. This marks a departure from the Durkheimian[53] perspective where the focus is on the large scale and macro structures and forces that underpin society such as culture, social institutions and law (Ritzer, 2000: 17). Interpretive social science approaches drill down through the macro structures of society and focus on 'the attempt to understand the social meaning of [...] phenomena insofar as they actually occur in a given society' (Kockelmans, 1978: 1) and consequently how individuals and groups interpret and make sense of phenomena. An interpretive perspective acknowledges that qualitative research is self-reflective in nature, privileging the researcher's dual role as both 'interpreter of data and an individual who represents information' (Cresswell: 2007: 248).

While a number of approaches to qualitative studies exist[54], the probing nature of the interpretive paradigm makes it particularly suited to a qualitative study of genocide tourism. Using this approach, an analysis of the nature of genocide tourism experiences is carried out by exploring what such experiences signify to those who participate in genocide tourism; the understandings they bring to the experiences; the

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[53] Émile Durkheim (1858-1917) was a French sociologist who campaigned to have sociology recognised as an independent field of study.

[54] Cresswell (2007) identifies five approaches: narrative research; phenomenology; grounded theory; ethnography, and case study.

meanings they extract from the experiences, and how these meanings translate into the broader cultural and social landscape in terms of knowledge and memoralization.

4.5. The Research Process

4.5.1 Transition to use of first person

To conclude this chapter the research process will be described. As mentioned previously in section 4.3.6., this section of the study will be delivered using the first person. Whereas this was once frowned upon on in academic writing it is becoming more accepted. Research blogger and educator, Pat Thompson (2013) notes: 'the understanding that research is never neutral is now so taken for granted in many disciplines and locations that it may well seem out of step to be arguing and writing otherwise'; while The Writing Centre at University of North Carolina advises: 'first person is becoming more commonly accepted, especially when the writer is describing his/her project or perspective' (2010-2014). As Creswell states: 'No longer is it acceptable to be the omniscient, distanced qualitative writer' (2007: 178). Therefore, I contend that the qualitative researcher in the guise of bricoleur is not only 'emancipated from the tyranny of pre-specified, intractable research procedures' (Kincheloe, in Kincheloe & Berry, 2004: 13), but is also empowered to express the heretofore repressed 'self' when writing about practical field research aspects of their study. This does not mean that use of the first person is applicable to or acceptable in all qualitative writing, but in measured application it adds to the richness of the research narrative.

4.5.2 The research programme

Table 4.1 below presents an outline of the research programme. As can be seen from this table, my first encounter with the research material was through the development of the research framework. While there is, at present, a dearth of empirical research dealing specifically with genocide tourism, this does not mean that there are not larger volumes of material related to the composite parts of the term 'genocide tourism', as discussed in Chapter 2. Therefore, 'reading around' the research topic initially involved covering a large and eclectic territory. In the course of conducting secondary research, texts spanning the humanities and social sciences were examined, ranging across history, literature, sociology, anthropology, social psychology, tourism, cultural, and genocide studies; and this list is not exhaustive. In the process of cross-referencing material and working through a system of elimination, it was possible for me to contextualise the phenomenon of genocide tourism, locating it within a broad socio-cultural field and thereby defining it as a true socio-cultural and transcultural phenomenon. As I worked with the secondary sources and became more familiar with the research topic, I identified the sites that would become the focus of the field research element of the study.

Table 4.1 The Research Programme

Research Location	Method	Participants	Outcomes
Desk based research	Review of secondary sources	n/a	Development of research framework. Identification of sites for pre-testing & field research.
Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Museum	Participant-researcher. Informal conversations.	Self	Pre-test to assess feasibility and improve research design.

Research Location	Method	Participants	Outcomes
Imperial War Museum London: Holocaust & Crimes Against Humanity Exhibition.	Researcher-observer.	Self	Visit to off-site genocide exhibition for comparative purposes. Area of interest for future research.
Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, Cambodia	Participant-researcher. Creative interviews. Informal conversations. Video & photography.	Self & 7 others (includes 1 guide)	Data collection & recording. Photo elicitation to assist in post-visit reflection.
Choeung Ek Genocidal Centre, Cambodia	Participant-researcher. Creative interviews. Informal conversation. Video & photography.	Self & 4 others (includes 1 guide)	Data collection & recording. Photo elicitation to assist in post-visit reflection.
n/a	Structured interview via email.	Tour guide and former head of Cambodian Tour Guide Association.	Insight on genocide tourism from a Cambodian perspective.

4.5.3 Selection of sites for field research

This study explores the nature of genocide tourism, defining it as the act of travelling to and visiting sites and centres specifically associated with acts of genocide, either as a purposeful act, or as part of a wider touristic itinerary. Four sites were selected as locations for the field research element of the study. Selection was made on the following bases:

- Accessibility for research purposes

- Popularity with visitors

- Status as established site of genocide remembrance and memorialization, professionally organised and managed to receive visitors.

The chosen sites are:

1. Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum, Poland.

2. The Imperial War Museum: Holocaust and Crimes Against Humanity Exhibition, London.

3. Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

4. Choueng Ek Genocidal Centre, Dangkor District, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

In choosing to focus attention on multiple sites in different countries rather than concentrating on one or two sites within a single country, I sought to explore the evolution of genocide tourism across time and cultures, thereby opening up the discussion to address transcultural[55] dimensions of the phenomenon. As they continue to attract ever-growing numbers of international visitors, these sites perform an important function in that they act as vehicles for the transmission of global and transcultural memory[56].

4.5.4 Selection of participants

I visited Auschwitz-Birkenau as a participant-researcher and did not conduct interviews with other members of the tour group. I did however engage in casual conversations with some of those on the trip and made notes of my observations. My visit to The Holocaust and Crimes Against Humanity Exhibition at The Imperial War Museum was undertaken to observe and experience how genocide is commemorated off-site - that is, at a location that was not the scene of actual genocide.

Cambodia was the key location at which my field research was conducted. Given the settings and nature of the topic under investigation, purposeful random sampling was chosen as the most effective way in which to select participants. Gray states that this sampling strategy 'seeks to obtain insights into particular practices that exist within a

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[55] According to German philosopher Wolfgang Welsch, 'transcultural' 'describes phenomena which reach *across* and – eventually, as the result of the contemporary process of globalization – also *beyond* cultures' (Erll, 2011: 8).

[56] Transcultural memory is defined and discussed in Chapter 3.

specific location, context, and time' (2010: 180). Visitors to sites of genocide are generally limited in how long they can spend at the sites and therefore, I needed to be opportunistic in my evaluation of who I should approach to take part in the research study, while at the same time being mindful of the need to capture a varied sample. This echoes Gray's assertion that participants 'are therefore identified because they are known to enable the exploration of a particular behaviour or characteristic relevant to the research' (2010: 180).

Aside from myself in my role as participant-researcher, there were eleven participants within the overall study – seven at Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, four at Choeung Ek Genocidal Centre, and one via email. The number of participants required in qualitative research studies varies from project to project. As Creswell states, 'the important point is to describe the meaning of the phenomenon for a small number of individuals who have experienced it' (2007: 131). At the same time, the cohort of participants should be diverse enough to ensure the richness of the data. It is generally considered best practice to 'stop adding cases when you are no longer learning anything new' (Ragin, in Baker & Edwards, 2012).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted at Tuol Sleng with the following participants[57]: Robert (42, U.S.); Karen and Randy aged late 40s to early 50s (late 40s/early 50s, South Carolina, U.S.); 'Pat' and 'Geoff' late 50s (Norfolk, UK), 'Aina' (27, Spain), and Julieta aged early 20s (Argentina). At Choeung Ek, Glenn (Mid-30s, Pennsylvania, U.S.); 'Anna' (late-20s, UK), and Nathan (29, London, UK) recounted their experiences of visiting the site. I also spoke informally with two tour

[57] Inverted commas indicate a pseudonym where participants did not wish their own names to be used. (See also: Chapter 5, p.119 footnote)

guides at each location, and conducted an interview by telephone and email with a senior member of the Cambodian Tour Guides Association. The latter interaction was unexpected and was arranged through an American contact in Phnom Penh. The role of the tour guide in genocide tourism is of paramount importance as guides are responsible for sensitive and clear interpretation. Ablett and Dyer (2010: 225) view the tour guide as 'a professional interpreter' who 'can become a "critically reflective practitioner" in a process of educational and ethical transformation.' Speaking with the guides presented an opportunity to gain an insight into how Cambodians involved with the sites viewed the way in which their painful past was represented and managed for international visitors.

4.5.5 The role of the researcher

The decision to make genocide tourism the focus of my research arose out of a deep interest in the history and sociology of genocide, and in a desire to understand how what is known about genocide is transmitted beyond specialists such as those directly involved with genocide scholarship. How does the 'man and woman in the street' become aware of acts of genocide and what opportunities are available to help them understand how and why such barbaric acts occur, and why should it matter to them? That is to say, how is awareness of genocide communicated at an exoteric level?

As a researcher of genocide tourism, my main task in terms of the field research element of the project was to place myself in a position whereby I could attempt to capture the meanings people extract from their experiences of visiting genocide tourism sites. Additionally, as a participant-researcher and novice genocide tourist, I also had the opportunity to explore my own perceptions of the phenomenon (etic)

and compare and contrast them with the experiences of the participants (emic). In this respect, the research takes on the characteristics of a peer-to-peer relationship in that I was as much a genocide tourist as my participants were. This was particularly the case in respect of my early field research trip to Auschwitz-Birkenau, when I travelled as part of a group; whereas the field research in Cambodia was conducted as an independent traveller and therefore the same bond was not formed with the participants. I feel that in experiencing genocide tourism from both a group and individual perspective, this has added to the richness of the overall research data and is more reflective of the nature of genocide tourism in an international context, whereby it is an activity that is as frequently undertaken by solo travellers as it is by groups.

Creswell defines the researcher as a 'key instrument' and states: 'qualitative researchers collect data themselves through examining documents, observing behaviour, and interviewing participants. They may use a protocol – an instrument for collecting data – but the researchers are the ones who actually gather the information. They do not tend to use or rely on questionnaires or instruments developed by other researchers' (2007: 38). Another aspect of the multi-faceted role of the researcher engaged in qualitative research is that he/she always brings elements of him/her self to the research. These may include certain biases, assumptions, and expectations, which must be managed and controlled. As discussed in section 4.3.6 the role of the researcher has undergone a transformation in recent times and it is now more apt to characterise him or her as a bricoleur willing to embrace the challenge of adapting to changing circumstances within the research process. David E. Gray expands on Creswell's definition and gives a succinct

outline of the role of the researcher in a qualitative study: 'They must be able to perceive of situations holistically and be responsive to environmental cues in the field. For example, they need to be sensitive to situations where they risk biasing the responses of people they are interviewing. In addition, they usually adopt a reflexive stance, reflecting on the subtle ways in which bias might creep into their research practice through the influence of their personal background and belief systems' (2009: 183). While Gray does not actually use the term, the essence of the bricoleur is apparent in his characterisation of the researcher.

Incorporating this 'reflective stance' has proven to be one of the more challenging aspects of the research project, particularly in my role as a participant-researcher. While actively taking part in the experience of genocide tourism, I was at the same time observing my fellow genocide tourists, who were also my participants, for the purpose of data collection. The subject of this study – genocide tourism – also requires that I strike a balance between understanding the traumatic and horrific events that lie behind the existence of the visitor sites, and the idea of tourism to the sites, with all the hedonistic and consumerist connotations which are associated with that word 'tourism'. I have attempted to strike and maintain this balance at all times by keeping a close focus on the individuals at the heart of the study – the genocide tourists (I include myself here). I practiced this approach during my first experience of genocide tourism at Auschwitz-Birkenau, and subsequently, with my field research in Cambodia. This approach is now firmly embedded within my research practice. It involves a process of continuous critical reflection. This means making a conscious decision to step back from the research at regular intervals and assess not

only the progress of the work, but also my personal feelings about the research in which I am engaged.

When conducting some of the field research elements of this study, I chose to position myself as a participant-researcher with an added focus on the importance of my role as an observer, which tends to go hand-in-hand with this position. This type of research strategy is termed 'participant observation' and, while it is most commonly associated with cultural anthropology, it is also employed as a research method in sociology and other related fields (Creswell, 2007; Seale, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2007; Abercrombie et al, 2006).

Margaret Mead colourfully describes the role of the participant-researcher in anthropology when she states: 'The anthropologist not only records the consumption of sago in the native diet, but eats at least enough to know how heavily it sits upon the stomach' (McCannell, 1999: 95). The only way in which I could fully understand genocide tourism was if I actively 'consumed' the experience. As I had never visited any Holocaust or genocide site, or even an exhibition related to genocide, prior to undertaking this research, I was ideally suited to take on the role of participant-researcher. Participant observation allows me to observe and analyse not only the experiences of those who take part in genocide tourism activities, but also my own experiences as a genocide tourist. My role as participant-researcher is important in terms of gaining as deep an understanding as possible of what it means to be a genocide tourist. To date, I have not found any evidence that this research strategy has been employed in other studies of visits to sites of genocide. Those who have previously conducted similar studies (Bickford, 2009; Hughes, 2008; Yuill, 2003)

have adhered to the traditional role of researcher as a data gatherer. I have only found one study which chose to use a participant-researcher approach to investigating experiences of visiting Holocaust sites. However, this was a longitudinal study which examined a group of Canadian friends over an extended period of time following their return home after having visited a number of former concentration camp sites (Keats, 2009). The longitudinal aspect is a feature of traditional participant observation strategies.

Although participant observation is generally employed in long-term studies ranging in duration from a few months to many years, I would argue that this strategy is equally suited to a study of this nature focussing on experiences of genocide tourism. David E. Gray contends that the 'central intent' of a participant observation approach 'is to generate data through observing and listening to people in their natural setting[58], and to discover their social meanings and interpretations of their own activities. Part of this process is the reporting of the researcher's own experiences, feelings, fears, anxieties and social meanings when engaged with people in the field' (2009: 400).

Any experience of tourism is a fleeting moment, a snapshot in time, and a snapshot is not a panorama. Tourists by their nature do not stay in the same place for more than a few days, or at most, a few weeks. In the case of genocide tourism, the experience of visiting sites may last as little as half an hour, or at most an hour; yet, a wealth of research material may be condensed within that short period of time. A participant

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[58] The natural setting for a genocide tourist is a site of genocide.

researcher with keen observation skills can extract valuable data from the briefest of encounters.

4.6. Data Collection

4.6.1 Photo elicitation

Creswell (2007: 130) identifies audiovisual material and interviews as two of the four types of data used in qualitative research, the others being observations and documents. Gray highlights the role of photographs and other audiovisual media pointing out their use 'either to stimulate discussion or recall events during the research process, or as a means of capturing evidence in data gathering' (2010, 326). Photo elicitation is an interpretive approach which is usually employed by the researcher as a technique to engage participants in discussion. Participants are asked to look at photographs – their own or those taken by the researcher – and are then asked to 'discuss the contents of the pictures' (Creswell, 2007: 129). I contend that photo elicitation can also be used effectively by the researcher as part of his/her reflexive process. The photographs and short videos I collected during my field research in Cambodia have proven to be invaluable *aides mémoire*. Audio recordings of interviews were also made, except in cases where the participants expressed the wish that I not record them.

4.6.2. Creative interviewing

Steinar Kvale and Svend Brinkmann (2009: xvii) state: 'If you want to know how people understand their world and their lives, why not talk with them?' Depending on the research topic, this can be an easy part of the research process, or it can be 'challenging'. Given the nature of my topic, I felt that I needed to gauge the willingness (or not) of my potential cohort of subjects to being asked about their

experiences of visiting a genocide tourist site, prior to embarking on the opening phase of my investigations. In an effort to uncover and possibly pre-empt any unforeseen difficulties in dealing with visitors to the sites, I decided to undertake a preparatory field trip in October 2008 to the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Poland. My aim on this occasion was not to interview, but to 'talk with' my fellow 'genocide tourists' and to use this experience to develop the interview protocol for my field research in Cambodia. On the whole, I found that people were not only responsive to the idea of discussing their experience, but were keen to speak about it at some length. As a learning experience, this exercise has proven invaluable, not least because it highlighted the fact that given constraints such as the duration of tours, the actual location, and the sensitive nature of the subject matter, I needed to be prepared to operate with a high degree of flexibility and creativity in terms of my interviewing techniques if I were to elicit any meaningful data from my encounters. As pointed out by Fontana and Frey (2005: 709), 'interviewers must necessarily be creative, must forget "how to" rules, and must adapt to the ever-changing situations they face.'

As an empirical method, interviewing continues to be a crucial source of experiential material in which knowledge is co-constructed. 'While we might intend interviews to be informal, semi-structured and even conversational, the question-answer format still prevails as the dominant mode of discourse' (Nairn, Munro & Smith, 2005: 228). Nevertheless, as researchers we need to be attuned to how we perform within an interview situation, at the same time giving careful attention to 'the needs, experiences and skills of the people we are likely to be interviewing' (May, 2010). As Clive Seale notes: 'The boundaries between, and respective roles of, interviewer

and interviewee have become blurred as the traditional relationship between the two is no longer seen as natural' (2006: 110). This highlights the role of the interviewee as a key stakeholder in the interview and research process, thereby inviting and encouraging them to 'do creative things' (May, 2010). One of the 'creative things' cited by May is the 'mobile interview', a modified form of which I used during my research in Cambodia.

Mobile interviewing, alternatively referred to as 'go-along' and 'ride-along', counteracts what Sheller and Urry (2006) refer to as the 'sedentary' and 'a-spatial' nature of standard interview methods and allows for 'a more interactive style of interviewing'. In the case of my own research, I interviewed visitors at the memorial sites at Tuol Sleng Museum in Phnom Penh, and Cheoung Ek Memorial Site. This allowed me to see how people interact with the memorials and also enabled me to note the specifics of some of the more elusive sensory aspects of their reactions as they manifested themselves 'on the spot'. In this respect, the researcher employing the mobile interviewing technique is akin to what Kvale and Brinkmann call the *interviewer traveller*. 'The interviewer-traveller wanders through the landscape and enters into conversation with the people he or she encounters.' (2009: 48). This perspective sees knowledge as constructed rather than given, and envisions 'interviewing and analysis as intertwined phases of knowledge construction, with an emphasis on the narrative to be told to an audience' (49). The interviewer-traveller metaphor has anthropological undertones with a postmodern flavour whereby constructive understanding is developed by way of 'a conversational approach to social research' (49). In terms of this research, mobile interviewing presented some difficulties such as:

- Recording the interview while moving about

- Peripheral noise during interviewing

- Encouraging the interviewee to be specific rather than vague ('this display', 'that set of photographs').

- Allowing for unexpected responses when the interviewee was confronted by potentially upsetting sights.

However, in reflecting on my preparatory visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau, I believed that this type of interviewing could best meet the needs of my research. It has an air of informality which elicited co-operation from my interviewees, who, as tourists, can be reluctant to spend valuable leisure-time filling in questionnaires and surveys. Ultimately, interviews conducted with tourists can only happen in 'snapshot mode' (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009: 299). Using a mobile interview approach, which uncovers certain nuances of expression that may not appear in conventional interview situations, adds to the volume of material that can be harvested from such brief encounters. This involves looking 'for not only what is 'said', but what is said 'between the lines' (Kvale, in Laverty, 2003: 19).

4.6.3 Ethical considerations

As is standard procedure, prior to undertaking my field research I went through the process of seeking approval from the Research Ethics Committee of Dublin City University. This involved a detailed explanation of how I intended to pursue my research in Cambodia and required the submission of a draft interview schedule, which is included in the Appendix. While preparing the application was time-consuming, I feel this is now an essential part of any research process. It demands

standards from the researcher, while also ensuring a level of protection for participants that may not always have been there in the past. It is also helpful to be able to show participants evidence that the research is a legitimate undertaking which has been approved and that the researcher is genuine. In being asked to justify why and how I wished to undertake a study of this nature, I was forced to think deeply about the forthcoming field research and in doing so, to reflect on the ethical implications of conducting research at the actual location of genocide, where human remains were displayed for public viewing. This is an aspect of the research that I intend to pursue in the future.

4.7 Analysing the Data

The process of analysis starts as soon as the researcher begins collecting data. As conscious human beings this is unavoidable. Fortunately, this can be an advantage when it comes to certain approaches to analysing qualitative data within a hermeneutical framework. As stated earlier in this chapter, the philosophical underpinnings of this study emanate from a Gadamerian hermeneutic phenomenological perspective, which influences the manner in which the data is analysed. The aim of the process is to work with the participants in the co-construction of data 'as they engage in a hermeneutic circle of understanding' (Laverty, 2003: 21). This involves visiting and re-visiting multiple strands of data on a continuous basis until prejudices (as pre-judgements) can be identified and addressed prior to reaching the point where a fusion of horizons can occur between the researcher, the participants and the phenomenon under investigation.

While data gathered from observations made at sites of genocide provided a rich source of knowledge, information gleaned from interviews formed the core element

of the material to be analysed. For the interviews that were recorded, I followed the recommended procedure and transcribed them as soon as possible. In the case of those participants who did not wish to be recorded, I made copious notes, which I transcribed into greater detail shortly afterwards. Analysis of the taped interviews took the form of an iterative process whereby I first listened to the recordings a number of times. I then read and re-read the transcribed texts to the point where I had become completely familiar with what they contained. Having arrived at a point where I felt I had 'heard' what the participants said as opposed to simply 'listening to' the recordings, I then decided to begin the process of analysing the transcripts as texts. Just before embarking on this exercise I re-visited my field notes and research diary to check for any analytic memos that I may have made at the time of the interviews. Memos may only be small snapshots in time but as such they capture the researcher's thought processes at that precise moment. Returning to the texts of the interviews, I started by making brief notes along the page. As I re-read the text and the growing number of memos, I moved from the whole to the part and from the part to the whole, in a continuous circular motion characteristic of Gadamer's imagining of the hermeneutic circle. In this way meaning is produced 'through a circle of readings, reflective writing and interpretation' (Laverty, 2003: 22).

Moving on to the next stage of analysis I proceeded to identify codes and themes within the texts. It is important at this stage to remain true to the voice of the participant and to resist any temptation to change the language used as even subtle changes can have an impact in terms of understanding. Interviewing individuals of varying ages, nationalities, and social backgrounds was an advantage in this respect as the 'voices' were distinctive enough to remain memorable throughout the

analytical process. Re-viewing the numerous photographs which I took at each location was also helpful in drawing me back to the days on which the interviews and interactions had taken place. As codes evolved into categories I continued to question the data and at this point several common themes began to emerge which provided me with an explanatory framework to which I could apply a Gadamerian approach to understanding. This involves two of Gadamer's concepts – prejudice, and fusion of horizons, both of which were outlined earlier in section 4.4.3. Gadamer asserts that prejudice is 'historical reality itself, and the condition of understanding it' (1989: 170). How a person reacts to any given circumstance is dictated by their ethical and cultural background, and by the traditions within which they dwell. It is only by confronting their prejudices that they can move towards meaningful interpretation through a fusion of horizons. In general, the reactions which I encountered from participants were mixed. Some found their experiences confusing, mainly because they had no knowledge of the background and history. Others seemed overwhelmed by the enormity and brutality of what had taken place. For my part, I was torn between incomprehension and an acute desire to want to understand. For a fusion of horizons to occur in this study it was necessary to achieve an understanding of what their experiences of genocide tourism meant to the participants, while my own horizon also had to be taken into account. It is at the intersection and divergence of these multiple horizons that meaningful understanding occurs.

Understanding and meaning are never static in hermeutics. Caputo (in Laverty, 2003: 22) notes this point stating that 'coming to a place of understanding and meaning is tentative and always changing in the hermeneutic endeavour.' Interpretation

therefore, is always a work in progress. A full evaluation of a Gadamerian approach to data analysis is beyond the scope of this study, but it presents an opportunity for further investigation at a later date.

4.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter detailed the qualitative interpretivist methodology employed on the current study. I devoted particular attention to the philosophical underpinnings, which are based on a Gadamerian hermeneutic approach. I discussed the evolving nature of bricolage and how it can provide a bridging mechanism between the broader social sciences and the philosophical framework. Having signalled my intention to switch to use of the first person in writing about my research, I outlined the research programme and examined the role of the researcher. I concluded the chapter with an outline of the collection, recording, processing and analysis of the data. The limitations placed upon the study were mainly encountered in conditions outside of my control, namely poor weather conditions, which were not conducive to conducting extended interviews with the participants. In this respect, my familiarity with the bricolage approach meant that I was able to overcome these barriers and create supplementary opportunities for data collection, such as speaking with tour guides. The next chapter deals with the research findings.

CHAPTER 5: ENCOUNTERS IN THE HEART OF DARKNESS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of this research study on genocide tourism. As stated in Chapter 1: 1.2.1, the following definition of genocide tourism has been formulated for use in the current study:

Genocide tourism is the act of visiting sites and centres specifically associated with acts of genocide, either as a purposive act or as part of a wider touristic itinerary.

Research was carried out at four locations using a variety of data collection methods, as described in Chapter 4: Table 4.1. The four locations are:

- **Location 1**: Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Museum, Poland.

- **Location 2**: The Imperial War Museum London – Holocaust and Crimes Against Humanity Exhibition.

- **Location 3**: Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, Cambodia.

- **Location 4**: Choeung Ek Genocidal Centre, Cambodia.

Findings from each site of research will be reported in the sequence in which they are listed above. This is also the sequence in which they were visited: thus the researcher's impressions of the second site are informed in part in relation to the first, and so on. The findings are impressionistic and observational – in keeping with the methodology as outlined in Chapter 4. They draw together the individual human voice of immediate experience – of the researcher, of other 'genocide tourists' with statements from guides, curators and professionals associated with the four locations.

The findings use observations taken from field research notes, the research diary, and data gathered from interviews carried out with visitors and tour guides in order to develop a holistic picture of genocide tourism. A brief overview of each location will precede the report of the findings.

5.2 Location 1: Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Museum, Poland

Following the end of World War II, Poland became part of the post-war Soviet sphere of influence. Auschwitz opened as a museum on 14 June, 1947 and, while under the control of Poland's communist government, the museum's principal focus was not the fate of the Jews, but the loss of socialist lives, with all those who suffered being collectively referred to as 'victims of Fascism' (Rees, 2005: 329). With the fall of the Communist regime, this interpretation changed. The International Auschwitz Council was formed in 1990 under the chairmanship of Professor Wladyslaw Bartoszweski, a former Auschwitz prisoner. Its remit was to ensure that the museum no longer operated under a Marxist bias, with a series of recommendations being put in place to redress the interpretational balance. Today, the museum remains the most important and complex of all genocide tourist sites, not only because of the events that took place there over seven decades ago, but also because of how those events are remembered and portrayed. Such is the museum's significance that, in 2014, for example, 1.534 million people visited Auschwitz-Birkenau, 70% of whom were under 18 (Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum, 2015).

Some of the earliest iconic images associated with Auschwitz have become so deeply embedded within wider public perception that they have led to numerous misconceptions surrounding important factual details pertaining to camp life. So, as visitors begin their tour, the majority of those who pass beneath the infamous

'Arbeit Macht Frei' archway are unaware of the fact that it was *not* a central feature of the prisoners' lives and deaths, but is rather a symbolic point in the collective memory of the 'post-Auschwitz generation' (Dwork & van Pelt, 1994: 236-237). Whether or not visitors are made aware of the fact that this was not the daily route taken by all prisoners depends on their tour guide. Another fact which is not made known to visitors is that the museum entrance to the left of the restaurant was formerly the location of the reception building for new prisoners and the site of what Dwork and van Pelt describe as 'this ritual of humiliating baptism into the kingdom of death' (1994: 238).

My visit to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum took place in October 2008. While I always had a keen interest in the historical and socio-cultural aspects of the Nazi Holocaust, this was my first visit to a place directly associated with the Holocaust. The tour of Auschwitz-Birkenau, which was booked through an Irish tour company specializing in short city breaks, was part of a 3 day city-break package to Kracow, Poland.

5.2.1 Composition of tour group

The group comprised 6 women and 7 men, ranging in age from 45 to 78 years[59]. Everyone in the group was Irish and they came from all over the country. Three of the group (including the researcher) came specifically for the purpose of visiting Auschwitz; the others chose this particular tour because it combined the trip to Auschwitz with a city break in Kracow, allowing time for other tours and shopping.

5.2.2 Visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau

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[59] Pseudonyms used at request of those I spoke with. These were casual conversations.

The Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum is located about one hour by bus outside the city of Kracow, in the town of Oswiecim. The Nazis changed the name of the town to the more German-sounding Auschwitz, hence the name of the camp. (Oswiecim reverted to its original name after the war). On arrival at the museum, tourists gather at the main entrance and wait for the arrival of the official museum tour guide. Group tours are more regulated now than in past years. The growing numbers of visitors has necessitated a tightly controlled schedule of tours. Each guided tour lasts for approximately 3 hours and this includes the trip to the Birkenau site (also known as Auschwitz II), a short shuttle-bus journey from the main site, Auschwitz I.

Our group arrived at 12 noon and the tour was scheduled to begin at 12.30p.m. While we waited, our travel company representative suggested that we might like to have some coffee in the restaurant or purchase some postcards. In this excerpt from my notes I recorded my reaction to this invitation:

> I really wish I hadn't known about the original purpose of the area next the restaurant. To think that this is where all those poor people were brought to be stripped of everything including their dignity! I feel ashamed to even be here on this spot – almost as if I'm standing on a grave. I haven't even started the tour and already I feel this is wrong (Field research notes – 21 October 2008).

The travel company representative did not point out that this had formerly been the location of the reception building for new prisoners. Nor were we told that the entrance to the museum was not the entrance to the original camp, but that we were already well within the original camp boundaries at that point. However, the guide may not have been aware of these details.

Prior to my visit, I had been told by others who had gone there that there was a very visible commercial presence at Auschwitz. I did not find this to be the case. There was some evidence of commercialization, but it was, in my opinion, understated, and

certainly not on a level that could be compared with other heritage sites. The official museum guide book costs 4 Zlotys (approximately €1.20) and offers a comprehensive overview of the history of the camp and the exhibits.

Our guide for the tour in Auschwitz was Wojciech Smolen. He worked for the museum and, as he later told me, was a biology graduate. Before we set off, I asked him whether it was possible to make the tour without an official guide:

> "Yes, it is, but it's much better to use the guides from the museum because we're trained and can make sure you get to tour the site properly" (Conversation with guide, 21 October, 2008).

He was keen to point out that the guides were better equipped to interpret the museum. Not only does the museum cover a wide area, but as Birkenau (Auschwitz II) is at a separate location, it is helpful to be accompanied by the same guide for the duration of the tour.

In preparation for the tour, we were each issued with a set of headphones and a small receiver to enable us to hear only our own tour guide's voice. The tour proper begins at the infamous 'Arbeit Macht Frei' gate, and from my observations it appears that the museum guides communicate with each other at this and other points along the tour, to 'control' the overlap of entrance of large groups to the block houses at any one time. This seemed to be very effective, as despite the fact that there were obviously large numbers of visitors, there was no sense that the site was overcrowded at any stage of our visit, except in some of the smaller interiors. Photography is not allowed inside the block houses, although some people ignored this sanction. As the guide pointed out, and as has been widely reported in the media, many of the exhibits, particularly the vast amounts of victims' hair, is deteriorating at a rapid pace. He stated that the preservation methods that must be used are the most

expensive type. In conversation with him I asked if any funding had been made available to help the Polish government with these expenses:

> "There is no support financially from any source other than the Polish state – only moral support" (Conversations with guide at Auschwitz, 21 October 2008)[60].

There is a large box in the main reception area where donations can be deposited. These donations contribute to the upkeep of the exhibits and are well supported by visitors.

The mood amongst the guides was relaxed rather than sombre. There were no overly long commentaries from them on any aspect of the tour. It was left to the visitor to 'absorb' the atmosphere. There was a distinct sense that this is a memorial site and not simply a museum/heritage centre. This was pointed out by the guide at the start of the tour, when he asked that everyone refrain from smoking or throwing litter. He also requested: "Please remember that this is the site of the death of thousands of people and is a memorial to them. Please respect that fact and act accordingly".

As the tour moved past the blocks, the guide stopped at various points along the way to offer brief explanations. It was taken for granted that everyone who visits, knows what happened at Auschwitz, and also that they have a reasonably good knowledge of the history of the period. While there were opportunities to pause, the guide was always keen to keep us moving on. With our group this proved to be a little difficult, as two of our number had difficulty walking, one of them in having to use a

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[60] This situation has since changed with the establishment of the Perpetual Fund of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation to which Germany has contributed €60 million – about half of the total needed to fund the conservation plan (Auschwitz Foundation 2014).

wheelchair, which was provided on site. As many of the exhibits inside the block houses are upstairs, this means that visitors with disabilities or mobility problems are unable to view them.

One lady in our group had brought along a little card on which she had written what she called 'a prayer'. In conversation with her later, I asked her what she had written on it and why she wanted to leave it at that particular spot:

> "I just wanted to say something, to make an expression of sympathy with the victims of Hitler. I thought about this while I was getting ready to come over here so I sat down the night before at the table and wrote out the card. I put on it 'For all those who perished here at the hands of tyrants.' Did you see the small Irish flag I stuck on it? I made that myself. Well, I left it there because that's where all the other people had left tributes. Did you see how many there were from all over the world? I'd say most of them are from Jews (Conversation with 'Jane.' 21 October, 2010).

The same lady who went to the trouble of making and placing this tribute, who was in her early 60s, made an additional comment, which I was unsure about including in this study. However, I have decided that it needs to be recorded. Her exact words were: "I hate the Jews, but I'm fascinated by what happened to them." She told me that her father had business dealings with Jews and never trusted them. Even now, these words cause me great unease as they highlight the insidious nature of anti-Semitism and how some people still feel free to express such thoughts openly.

'Jane' left her tribute at a place known as the 'Death Wall', which is located between two of the most notorious block houses in Auschwitz I, the hospital block house and the block house containing the torture cells.

 The tour of Auschwitz I ends with a visit to the site of the reconstructed crematoria. As we moved towards the exit one of the women in our group asked the guide if he'd heard of the book *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, to which he responded sharply: "Forget that book!!' Later that evening I asked the lady about this and she expressed her surprise at his reaction:

"Well, to tell you the truth, I felt like a bold child who'd been bad mannered and needed to be chastised! It was very embarrassing in front of everyone. I only asked the question. He didn't need to bite my head off. I suppose he's just fed up with being asked about that" ('Kate' 21 October 2010).

Having finished our tour of Auschwitz I, we then took the short (3km) bus journey to the nearby village of Brzezinka and the camp of Birkenau or Auschwitz II. Along the way, our company representative pointed out the railway and unloading platform. Knowing that Birkenau was built specifically as a death camp gives the place an even more disturbing atmosphere than Auschwitz I. This section of the tour was much shorter, and we only saw a fraction of the camp. I believe the visit was curtailed because of another question from 'Kate' to the guide. In this instance she asked him why no-one in the Polish community outside the camp had told the outside world about what was happening. He answered, that people just did not understand the situation at the time but his tone of voice betrayed his true feelings towards such questions.

The overall consensus among the group was that they were not completely satisfied with the tour. One man expressed his disappointment that he had not felt as horrified as he had hoped:

"I was told that the hairs would stand up on the back of my neck as I walked under the gate at Auschwitz and I didn't feel anything! Very disappointing!!" (Conversation with 'Patrick' 21 October 2010).

A female member of the group said that the guide should have given more information – told some anecdotes about the prisoners. She stated:

"I didn't learn anything I didn't know before I came here." (Conversation with 'Paula' 21 October 2010).

My own perception of Auschwitz-Birkenau is that it is a simple, stark memorial that makes me reflect on a particularly horrific part of our human past. I too had been told of the absence of birdsong in the camp, which the guide assured me is a myth, and which heritage studies lecturer Chris Keil has proven to be untrue by recording a skylark 'singing its head off above the ruins of the crematoria' at Birkenau in 2003 (Keil, 2005: 492). Another myth is the sensation of the hairs standing on the back of the neck as one walks beneath the words 'Arbeit Macht Frei'. While I did not experience this, I did feel that there is a distinct air of tragedy about the place.

The artefacts that I found most disturbing were the photographs of the prisoners in one of the blocks. Photographs were taken in the early stages of the camp's existence, before the volume of prisoners led to the quicker and more efficient method of identification – the notorious tattoo. I reflected on the impression made on me by these images in my field notes:

> It was so obvious that the people in these pictures were desperate to show how fit and healthy – and therefore worthy to live – they were. Their humanity was as clear to me and anyone else who took the time to look closely, as it surely must have been to those who took the photos (Excerpt from field research notes, 21 October 2010).

It is these pictures that will stay with me, not the vast amounts of decaying hair or the reconstructed crematoria, or even the death cells.

5.3 Location 2: The Imperial War Museum (IWM) Holocaust and Crimes Against Humanity Exhibition, London.

The Holocaust Exhibition opened in the Imperial War Museum, London in 2000 and was followed by the addition of the Crimes Against Humanity Exhibition in 2003. Both exhibitions are permanent. The Holocaust Exhibition traces the descent into the Holocaust using images, artefacts, videos, and displays. It covers 1200 square

meters on the second level of the Imperial War Museum and 'provides a full narrative exhibition on the Nazi persecution of the Jews and other groups before and during the Second World War' (Bardgett, 2000: 1). The Crimes Against Humanity Exhibition is made up of two parts, a thirty-minute film presentation on twentieth century genocides and a small interactive digital space where visitors can learn more about genocides of the last century.

Apart from being conveniently located in London, I chose the IWM Holocaust and Crimes Against Humanity Exhibition as my key off-site location as, along with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC, it is one of the most renowned permanent exhibitions on the Nazi Holocaust. While the main focus is on the extermination of the Jews, it also details atrocities committed against other groups. According to Susanne Bardgett, project director of the Holocaust and Crimes Against Humanity exhibit at the IWM, it caters for the "absolute surge in interest in Holocaust and genocide studies in the last ten years" (Bardgett, October, 2010). Since opening in June 2000, the numbers visiting the exhibitions have averaged 275,000 each year. (IWM: Sept. 2009).

I contacted the Imperial War Museum prior to my visit and was told that I would not require any special permission to carry out my observations. I was also assured of the co-operation of the staff, if required. I spent four hours in the Holocaust and Crimes Against Humanity Exhibition, during which time I made close observations of visitor practices as well as taking careful note of the range of visitors touring the exhibition.

5.3.1 The Holocaust Exhibition

On arriving at the entrance to the exhibition, I noticed a sign stating: 'Not recommended for children under 14'. Having not yet toured the exhibition I found this surprising as I expected the age limit to be lower in order to facilitate younger secondary school students.

The exhibition makes copious use of witness testimonies displayed through video and audio representations. I found these to be very striking and noted my reactions:

> The first part of the exhibition is a celebration of Jewish life before Hitler came to power. A wall of screens floods the senses with the voices, music, film footage and photographs of ordinary people who are totally unaware of the fate that awaits them in the years to come. This really makes me think about how easily the world can change and all that we know and love can be taken away (Observations on Holocaust Exhibition, 24 September, 2009, 1pm).

It's at this point that I remember the words of Hazel Brown from the Imperial War Museum's Department of Holocaust and Genocide History regarding the witness testimonies:

> "It is most gratifying to learn that the display both moves and informs out visitors regarding this immensely dark chapter in history. Credit for the power of the Exhibition must, however, go to the Holocaust survivors who so bravely spoke about their experiences and gave us treasured artefacts, documents and photographs. They enabled us to tell not only their stories, but also those of their murdered families and friends" (Email to author, 29 September 2009).

On the day of my visit the age of the visitors seemed to fall predominantly into two cohorts – senior citizens, and senior cycle secondary school students. The older people spent considerably more time in the area devoted to the voices and faces of pre-Nazi Jewish life, while the students engaged more with the physical artefacts on display. However the younger people I observed also showed a notable fascination with some of the more gruesome displays. For example, I made these observations at one such display:

On display in a dark corner is a replica of a dissection table from the Kaufbeuren-Isee Psychiatric Hospital near Munich. The information panel states that it was used as part of the Nazi's T4 Programme for the extermination of the disabled. Explicit images of medical experiments are on display. A large mixed school group draw near and some of the girls and boys recoil, while others go back for another look (Observations on Holocaust Exhibition, 24 September, 2009, 3.30pm).

While the students may have shown an added interest in the more graphic artefacts, they were at all times respectful and well-behaved.

5.3.2 Crimes Against Humanity Exhibition

The film presentation that makes up the main part of this exhibition is rated as 12A and a plaque at the gallery entrance states that it is not suitable for children under 12. The film lasts for thirty minutes. This is a very graphic presentation of the history of genocide in the twentieth century and it is narrated by a series of experts and commentators including the late American human rights activist Alison des Forges, Irish reporter Fergal Keane, and Canadian author and academic, Michael Ignatieff.

By the time I'd reached this part of the dual exhibition, I was feeling overwhelmed by the entire experience. However, I spent a brief time in this space watching the film and then observing other visitors who sat down on the extremely uncomfortable stone benches to watch. I noticed that many of them did not stay for the duration of the film:

The stone benches in this area of the exhibition are very uncomfortable, and some of those who chose to watch the film did so standing up, or sometimes sitting on the floor. Few people stayed to watch the entire film, drifting off to the adjoining area to try out the interactive screens, which unfortunately weren't working very well. Perhaps it was the seating that put people off or perhaps they too had been left feeling overwhelmed by the earlier Holocaust exhibition experience. Perhaps it's a good idea to be forced to sit uncomfortably when watching a century of genocide unfold before your eyes on a large screen (Observations on Crimes Against Humanity Exhibition, 24 September, 2009).

In combination, my visits to Auschwitz-Birkenau and then to the Imperial War Museum Holocaust and Crimes Against Humanity Exhibition provided a firm base from which to make the transition from Holocaust tourism as the earliest form of genocide tourism, to the transcultural territory of contemporary genocide tourism as encountered in Cambodia.

5.4 Location 3: Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

According to varying reports, there are 309 to 388 documented genocide sites in Cambodia comprising some 19,000 to 19,733 mass graves (Cambodian Genocide Project, 2014; Dy, 2007: 4). These numbers are constantly under review as more sites are uncovered due to soil erosion, or when they are discovered by farmers while they work the land. A small but growing number of these sites are being developed as genocide tourist sites throughout Cambodia. This research focuses on two of the best-known sites, the first of which is Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum.

When Vietnamese troops seized Phnom Penh in early 1979, their discovery of the S21 prison[61], also known as Tuol Sleng, housed on the site of a former high school, revealed the full extent of the horrors perpetrated by the Khmer Rouge during the three years, eight months and twenty days of their rule. Of an estimated 14,000 prisoners who passed through the torture centre only 10 survived. Accompanied by photographer, Ho Van Tay, the Vietnamese were quick to recognise the propaganda potential of such a site. The image they wished to portray to the world was that of

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[61] David Chandler points out that it was essentially a torture and interrogation unit rather than a prison (1999: 15).

the Vietnamese army as liberators[62] of Cambodia's death camps rather than invaders of Cambodia, in imitation of the way Western Allies had been hailed as the liberators of the Nazi concentration camps (Power, 2007: 145; Dunlop, 2006: 184).

One of the most respected historians of the Pol Pot era, David Chandler, points out that while the early stages of the museum's development were overseen by a Vietnamese colonel, Mai Lam, it was a Cambodian survivor of Tuol Sleng – Ung Pech – who was installed as director of the museum on its official opening in 1980 (Chandler, 1999: 5). In this way, Cambodian memories of the genocide were initially harnessed in order to serve a Vietnamese agenda. While the museum at Tuol Sleng has been allowed to remain largely underdeveloped as a tourist site since it first hosted guided tours (for Westerners only) in March 1979 (Chandler, 1999: 8), work is ongoing to extend and re-develop this site and the nearby Choeung Ek 'killing fields' in order to enhance the genocide tourism experience for the predominantly Western, Japanese and Korean visitors[63]. In contrast to this commercial aspect of the site, in July 2009 Toul Sleng was listed on the UNESCO Memory of the World Register in recognition of the importance of the archival collections held there:

> The Memory of the World is the documented, collective memory of the people of the world. The UNESCO Memory of the World Programme recognizes documentary heritage of international, regional and national significance, maintains registers of it, and facilitates preservation and access. The programme works to raise awareness of the documentary heritage and to alert governments, the general public, and businesses to preservation needs (UNESCO, 2010).

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[62] The question of whether the Vietnamese intervention constituted liberation or invasion continues to be a divisive issue both in Cambodia and internationally.

[63] Japanese and Korean visitors make up a growing number of visitors to the sites, but the focus of the current study is on Western English speaking visitors.

Inclusion on this register ensures the continued preservation of this site and is primarily due to the efforts of the Documentation Centre of Cambodia (DCC), which was established in 1995 by Ben Kiernan of Yale University's Cambodian Genocide Programme following the passing of the Cambodian Genocide Justice Act by the U.S. congress in 1994 (Power, 2007: pp.486-490). With the assistance of Yale University, the DCC is now independently run by Cambodians.

Prior to his death in 1998, Pol Pot came to recognise the significance of Tuol Sleng and called for the closure of the museum realizing that the visual and documentary evidence contained within could be damning for him in the event of his appearance before any future tribunal[64]. What may have started out as a purely propagandist exercise on the part of the Vietnamese is now one of the most important sites of memory and renowned genocide tourism destinations in the world.

5.4.1 Visiting Tuol Sleng

Visitors to Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum are confronted with a complex of buildings that housed one of the most notorious torture and interrogation sites in the history of the twentieth century.

My visit to Phnom Penh, Cambodia took place in September/October 2010. Prior to my arrival in Cambodia, I made inquiries about several matters related to how I planned to go about my field research. Some months before my planned visit, I attempted to contact both Toul Sleng and Choeung Ek to find out how I should go about getting permission to carry out interviews with visitors and guides at the sites.

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[64] See Chapter 3: 3.2

The email address listed on the official Choeung Ek website[65] was incorrect and I received no reply from Toul Sleng. I proceeded to contact the Ministry of Tourism in Phnom Penh in mid-July. Further efforts to engage with Cambodian authorities produced no results; therefore I had no choice but to proceed with my research.

I visited Tuol Sleng Museum on three occasions and planned my visits around the following research activities:

- To spend 30 – 40 minutes carrying out observations.

- To take a guided tour.

- To obtain at least four interviews with tourists.

- To locate and read extracts from the visitor books.

Having learned from my experience at Auschwitz, I used my first visit to familiarize myself thoroughly with the layout of the site and to carry out some preliminary observations of visitor practices there. My first impressions of the site were mixed:

> So, on entering Tuol Sleng Museum, the first thing that struck me was the size of the place and it has a really weird hybrid quality – at once being easily imagined as a school thronged with students, while at the same time being recognizable as the torture centre that I've become so familiar with in the images I've seen during my research. I felt uneasy (Field notes: 2 October, 2010).

Perpetrators of genocide seem to have a desire to corrupt certain buildings, transforming them into complete opposites of the purpose for which they were originally designed.

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[65] It was only when I visited Choeung Ek and looked at my entrance ticket that I saw the current email address listed, which was completely different to the one which appears on the website.

Using a small unobtrusive video camera, I was able to discreetly obtain footage of tourists as they made their way around the museum, particularly as they negotiated the cramped interiors of the rooms containing the smaller cells. I also took photographs and made a rough sketch of the layout of the museum. This allowed me to develop a strategy for undertaking the next phase of my field work involving visitors. I noticed that some of the male visitors were determined to immerse themselves as deeply as possible when it came to the smaller torture cells. As I look back on my photographs, I see that each cell approximates the dimensions of a toilet cubicle and was designed to limit the movements of the prisoners who were also shackled to the floor. The shackles are still intact. I observed one visitor go to extreme lengths to take a photograph from inside one of these cells:

> As I looked on discretely, I saw a large man squeeze himself inside the tiny cell. He then sat down on the floor of the cell and started to take photographs. The only perspective he could have been aiming for was the one which the prisoners would have had. (Field notes: 2 October, 2010).

This was not the only occasion on which I observed this type of action by a visitor, but invariably such actions were carried out by male visitors.

While I had expected to see many international visitors at the museum, I was surprised to see a group of Muslim girls at the site. This should not have been any surprise given that the Muslim Cham population were a particular target of the Khmer Rouge, therefore marking this location out as a site of memory for Muslims just as Auschwitz is for Jews.

During my second visit to Toul Sleng I took a guided tour of the museum to compare this with the experience of touring the museum independently, as I had on my previous visit. It also gave me the opportunity to ask the guide some questions.

Following this I prepared to approach tourists with a view to interviewing them. The weather presented a serious challenge in this respect as humidity levels were extremely high for the time of year (89%) and it was obvious that many of the tourists (me included) were finding it difficult to cope with the extreme conditions. While several of those I approached declined to be interviewed, others agreed. Time was also a problem as many of the tourists who visit Toul Sleng arrive as part of a tour group who travel from their hotels to the museum by tour bus, accompanied by guides who operate to a tight schedule. This meant that either they apologised and said they did not have time to speak with me, or else I had to conduct a shorter version of my planned interview with them. On this occasion only one tourist refused outright to speak with me and I obtained four other interviews.

My final visit to Toul Sleng was the most productive and also the most problematic. I secured two interesting and complete interviews, but I was also beginning to come to the attention of the security guards and tourist police who maintain an armed presence at all tourist sites. The operators of one of the two souvenir stalls at the site had also begun to take an interest in my activities as the green area where I spoke with a number of people was located only a short distance from their doorway. As this was the third time I had visited the museum, it would have been difficult to explain my reasons for making so many visits in such a short space of time. In the interests of my own safety I decided to make this visit my last.

I concluded my interviews at Tuol Sleng by speaking to 'Julietta' from Argentina – a reluctant interviewee. She was staying with her boyfriend in Siem Reap, northwestern Cambodia as part of her trip around South-East Asia and decided to visit Phnom Penh. She wasn't overly impressed with Tuol Sleng, stating forcefully:

"In Vietnam they show you really, really horrible pictures of dead people! This place is just...you know...well, not *that* bad...you know?" (Interview with 'Julietta' at Tuol Sleng, 10 October 2010).

When I asked her if she would be posting pictures of her visit on Facebook, she said that her camera battery had run out, so she would just download some photos from Google and upload them to her Facebook page – "Like who's going to know they're not mine, right?" Before we finished, I asked her if she would be visiting Choeung Ek, to which she replied:

"Are you going there too? Don't bother going there...it's just a (expletive deleted) farm! Friends told me there's nothing worth seeing there and it's way out of town."

With that, 'Julietta' made her way to the exit, stopping briefly to examine the display of clothing at the souvenir shop.

5.5 Location 4: Choeung Ek Genocidal Centre, Cambodia

I interspersed my visits to Toul Sleng with two visits to Choeung Ek. Situated on the site of a former Chinese graveyard, Choeung Ek is located some 15km southwest of Phnom Penh in Dangkor District. From 1977 prisoners were taken here from Toul Sleng to be murdered at this 'killing field' (Chandler, 1999, 139). According to estimates, 13,000 were killed at the site, with some 8,985 skeletal remains having been exhumed to date (Choeung Ek Genocidal Centre, 2010). Many of these remains now form part of the museum exhibits. The journey to Choeung Ek is not easy as it can take anything up to 40 minutes to get there. It also traverses some of the most impoverished parts of the city and its outskirts. Therefore, tourists must make a conscious decision to visit this site, whereas in the case of Toul Sleng, which is centrally located in the city, they can visit that museum as part of a tour of the city or

on their way to some of the other main tourist attractions, such as the Central Market and Russian Market.

5.5.1 Visiting Choeung Ek

I made two separate visits to Choeung Ek. Whereas Toul Sleng is a former prison and museum, Choeung Ek is the location of a 'killing field', which in recent years has seen the addition of a small museum housed in a separate area of the site. While they are two very different genocide tourist sites, I aimed to follow a pattern in terms of the approach I took to gathering data at both locations. Choeung Ek is located in a district that is particularly prone to flooding during the rainy season and given the persistent bad weather at this time, I felt that it would be prudent to gather as much data as possible at one visit, in the event that I should be prevented from returning to the site. As it transpired, I was fortunate to be able to make my two visits to the site as planned. At the beginning of my first visit I secured the services of a guide, following which, I spent some time exploring the site by myself. I then carried out three interviews. By following a similar pattern to the visit to Toul Sleng, I was able to draw comparisons between how the two sites are interpreted for and by tourists. It also gave me another opportunity to speak 'one-to-one' with the guide, Cham Theng, who works at Choeung Ek as part of his tourism studies course. I asked him how he felt about the memorial sites and the exhibition of human remains at Choeung Ek. He felt it was necessary:

> "It proves to people not from Cambodia about what happened here and also to educate young Cambodians because they know so little about those bad times. And it makes evidence for the tribunals. My parents they ask me always why it is taking so long time for the leaders to bring to trial." (Conversation with Cham Theng at Choeung Ek, 13 October 2010).

Theng went on to point out that, as a Buddhist, he believes the souls of the dead at Choeung Ek went straight to the final stage of rebirth rather than having to be re-incarnated time and again: "They suffered already enough."

During my second visit to Cheoung Ek, I concentrated on taking photographs and video footage of the site. I also visited the small museum that stands within the grounds of the centre, and conducted four interviews with English-speaking tourists. This second visit was also punctuated by a further conversation with the guide from my first visit, during which I was able to question him briefly regarding the site operation.

My final encounter at Choeung Ek was a departure from previous interviews and conversations at other visitor sites. As I moved to enter a small covered area labelled 'Visitor Impressions', which is used to house the visitor comment books, a young American man sitting nearby told me that the books had probably been taken away because of the heavy rain of the past days. He invited me to sit down and, having made him aware of my purpose in visiting Choeung Ek, I asked if he would be prepared to speak with me. He agreed, but very soon I had to abandon any hope of using my schedule of questions as he was more interested in telling me what he thought of Cambodia and the Pol Pot regime. He was of the opinion that the extent of the killings had been exaggerated and that Pol Pot's "vision for Kampuchea" could have worked if given time. He was also less than complimentary about the changes that had taken place in Cambodia and how "do-gooder Westerners" came there thinking they could "fix" the nation. I'm still not sure how I can place this man within the framework of those who visit the sites and therefore I treat him as an

example of an 'outlier' – an observation that is markedly different and an anomaly that should be acknowledged.

5.6 Chapter summary

This chapter presented a selection of the findings arising out of the current study. Taking each research location in turn, I drew on data from field notes, research diary, photographs, interviews and conversations, to present an impressionistic and observational overview of genocide tourism as it is performed and experienced in situ. Participants were drawn from across the spectrum of those involved in the activity of visiting sites of genocide, and this includes me as researcher-participant, researcher-observer, and genocide tourist. The next chapter will discuss the findings in the context of the research questions which drive this study.

CHAPTER 6: TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE INCOMPREHENSIBLE

6.1 Introduction

This research study set out to investigate genocide tourism as a contemporary social phenomenon. A central objective of the study was to 'extract' genocide tourism from within the broader field of dark tourism and thanatourism research, and to submit it to examination as a stand-alone topic. The research questions, which are set out in Chapter 1: 1.4 and re-presented in Chapter 4: 4.4, were formulated toward this end. The answers to these questions, as they emerged during the research journey, provided the structural framework upon which to build a holistic interpretation of the current state of the phenomenon of genocide tourism. They provide the main themes informing the content of this chapter:

- The nature of genocide tourism.

- Remembering genocide

- Meanings and understandings

- Genocide tourism as a consciousness-raising device.

6.2 The Nature of Genocide Tourism

Steven Pinker states: 'Of all the varieties of violence of which our sorry species is capable, genocide stands apart, not only as the most heinous but as the hardest to comprehend' (2012: 386). This study seeks to move towards an understanding of genocide even though it is an act that can seem beyond comprehension, particularly at an exoteric level. Therefore, even though 'genocide tourism' may be an

unsatisfactory term, and one that has elements of a 'Faustian pact[66]' between the drive to understand genocide as an act of extreme violence, and an activity imbued with commercial overtones, it has a role to play in disseminating knowledge of genocide.

A review of the literature related to dark tourism and thanatourism highlighted the lack of any solid definition of 'genocide tourism'. Therefore, my first task was to construct a bespoke definition that could be employed in the current study, and could also be applied in future research on the topic. That definition has already been presented in Chapters 1 and 5, and, therefore, does not need to be repeated here.

According to Beech (2009: 222), the question of whether genocide tourism should continue to be discussed in its present condition as a sub-category of dark tourism remains a matter for further debate. Beech suggests that the many complex variations involved in terms of visitor motivations, site sensitivities, and commercial considerations, may not be conducive to the study of genocide tourism within the collective concept of dark tourism. Sites defined as dark tourism destinations are comprised of an eclectic mix of death-related destinations, theme-park activities, and sensationalist sightseeing.

Thanatourism tends to cast a more sombre and reflective eye over sites and activities associated with death and disaster, whereas dark tourism's approach can sometimes be viewed as lacking sensitivity by categorising death-related 'tourism' experiences alongside those of a more sensational nature. An example of this may be seen in the

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[66] A Faustian pact is a deal made or done for future gain without regard for future costs or consequences (The Free Dictionary Online 2015).

controversy surrounding the opening of a 'Jack the Ripper[67] Museum' in the borough of Tower Hamlets in East London in July 2015. Planning permission had been granted based on the initial application for a museum dedicated to the history of East London women. Such was the level of objections and threats made against the museum that police officers were stationed outside during its opening weeks (Khomani, 2015). The museum continued to court controversy with its invitation to visitors at Halloween to have a 'selfie' taken with actors portraying the serial killer and his victims (Dearden, 2015). In light of such examples, it is difficult to justify continuing to assign genocide tourism a place as a sub-category within the more eclectic – and often sensationalist - framework of dark tourism.

6.2.1 The genocide tourist

Defining those who visit sites of genocide as 'genocide tourists' is a provocative, and sometimes controversial nomenclature. Nonetheless, if we are to speak of 'genocide tourism' as a category, it is inevitable that we must look at the phenomenon of those tourists attracted to such sites, and that we must have a name for them. In my research, reactions to this description differed considerably: One of the questions put to participants during interviews was how they felt about being described as 'genocide tourists'? Responses and reactions varied. Some, like 'Robert' and 'Geoff', who were interviewed at Tuol Sleng, didn't mind and viewed it as part of the current trend for needing to 'label' everything. Yet, 'Robert' did acknowledge that it may not be well-received by other visitors to sites of genocide. Others showed concern for how it impacted on the memory of the victims, with 'Aina' (also

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[67] Jack the Ripper was the name given to a serial killer who was active in the East End of London for a period between 1888 and 1891. He was held responsible for the murder of five women, and suspected of 11 others. His identity remains unproven.

interviewed at Tuol Sleng) remarking that it displayed a lack of 'respect' for the people who had died at the sites. Participants at Choeung Ek did not think the term was appropriate. 'Anna' called it 'totally inappropriate!' while 'Glenn' just shook his head and said 'No way!' Nathan went a little further, stating:

> "I find the idea of being seen as this 'genocide tourist' type wholly inappropriate, and quite frankly, offensive. I came here (*hesitation*)...I wanted to come here (*hesitation*)...to learn more about what the Khmer Rouge did to their own people. If what I'm now doing is going to have me tagged as some kind of cheap thrill-seeker, then I'll leave now". (Interview at Cheoung Ek, 13 October, 2010)

This was the first time I had encountered such a strong reaction to this question. Before embarking on the interviews, it was exactly the type of reaction I had anticipated. As the interviews progressed I began to think I had been mistaken in my expectation that all of those questioned would disapprove of the label.

On reflection, my interpretation of Nathan's reaction is that it was deeply influenced by the nature of the Choeung Ek site. Yes, Tuol Sleng is terrible, in every sense of the word, but Choeung Ek is a very different space. It is situated in the open, where large colourful butterflies flit between the gnarled trees, and children from the adjoining farm call out cheerily to visitors through the boundary fence. In the midst of this scene, the visitor must step carefully along the rough pathways to avoid stepping on bone fragments, teeth, and pieces of clothing embedded in the mud. Nailed to one of the larger trees is a sign stating that it was against this tree that the Khmer Rouge beat in the heads of infants, to save ammunition. I spoke to Nathan after he had toured the site and he was visibly moved. He came there to bear witness to the genocide in a respectful manner only to be confronted with the possibility of being labelled as a 'genocide tourist.' I can only surmise how he would have reacted if I had spoken to him at Tuol Sleng.

6.2.2 Reaction of tour guide

When the idea of 'genocide tourism' and 'genocide tourists' was put to senior Cambodian tour guide, Cheng Phal, his reaction was also one of disapproval, this time from his perspectives as a Cambodian, and as a member of the tourism profession. When asked how he felt about the term 'genocide tourism' being used to describe visits to sites of genocide he stated that it was 'disrespectful,' the implication being that commercial interests were at work in a drive to make money from the genocide:

> "I think that it is not good to use the term Genocide Tourism. It looks like the people who work in tourism sector try to exploit to make money from the suffering of the KR (Khmer Rouge) victims, because we feel that when we use the words tourism, it is refer to business where people make money."(Interview with Cheng Phal via email, October 2010)[68].

While I have no reason to doubt Phal's integrity, there is a degree of irony here in view of the high levels of corruption and commercialization evident around officially designated genocide sites[69] in Cambodia, with visitors providing a rich resource for concession stands *inside* the sites, and tuk-tuk[70] drivers actively promoting visits to the sites. Cheng Phal is clearly aware of corrupt activity at Tuol Sleng:

> "I feel so sad when hear that management of Tuol Sleng Museum makes money from selling tickets to visitors for their own pockets" (Interview with Cheng Phal via email, October 2010).

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[68] I have not corrected the text to honour the authenticity of Cheng Phal's voice.

[69] As opposed to small sites developed for local commemoration.

[70] A tuk-tuk is a three-wheeled motor vehicle used as a taxi. It is a popular mode of transport across South-East Asia.

I witnessed this practice during my visits to Tuol Sleng, but with a strong culture of corruption ('graft') at all levels of Cambodian society, it is not unexpected that it should also feature at sites of genocide.

Survival of the sites 'depends on the international-tourist dollar' (Williams, 2004: 250). There is thus a somewhat paradoxical attempt to attract international tourists to sites of genocide (in which state institutions actively collude), alongside a distaste (at least for some) in referring to what is occurring as 'genocide tourism'. Each of the responses to attachment of the labels 'genocide tourism' and 'genocide tourist' indicate an issue surrounding the way in which application of such labels impacts on perceptions of making visits to sites of genocide. It is possible to cast some light here by discussing this issue through the lens of labelling theory.

Labelling theory originates in the sociological tradition of symbolic interactionism, which focuses on the concept of 'the self': in basic parlance, how we perceive ourselves and how we in turn are perceived by others[71]. Thus far, labelling theory has been predominantly associated with deviant behaviour. However, in a modified version, elements of the theory can fruitfully be applied to a discussion of labelling in genocide tourism. The label 'genocide tourist' or 'genocide tourism' may be conferred by various vested interests, for example, media (from where the term originated), socio-cultural researchers, and tourism bodies. Drawing on the propositions advanced in labelling theory, when an individual is labelled as a genocide tourist, it is not the activity itself that is inherent in the definition, but societal reaction – the reaction of others - to that activity. Following on from this, the reaction of others can determine whether the genocide tourist accepts or rejects

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[71] A fuller analysis of this is beyond the scope of this study.

their assigned label. If they respond favourably (or at least willingly) to societal reaction by accepting the label of 'genocide tourist', they then identify themselves with that role, which becomes an element in their self-definition. Whether this feels comfortable or acceptable to them may depend in large part on how the term is offered to them and how they imagine society views the label: for example, whether it is applied in a cynical, critical or condescending manner (which is how Nathan perceived it); in a more neutral descriptive one (Robert and Geoff's perceptions); or whether it comes across as a term which denotes a certain seriousness of intention or element of respect. Their relation to the person or persons applying the label may also be a factor in how they receive the term. Thence, the imposition and embracing of the label 'genocide tourist' is shown to be characteristic of 'social imputations and the exercise of social control' (Abercrombie et al, 2006: 210). Use of the label 'genocide tourism' or 'genocide tourist' demands further discussion beyond this study in terms of how apposite it is in describing the activity of visiting sites and centres associated with genocide, and in describing those who take part in the activity. Until the issue is satisfactorily dealt with, the term will continue to be used.

Genocide tourism has the potential to educate visitors about the history and nature of genocide, not just as it is depicted at the sites, but also as a feature of the world they inhabit. Visits to sites of genocide bring the reality of genocide to life in a unique way by allowing the visitor to step into places where the destructive relationship between victim and perpetrator was played out, and to sense the residue of those encounters. However, given the complex, and frequently disturbing nature of the victim/perpetrator relationship, clear, sensitive, and balanced interpretation is an

essential component of this element of the visitor experience, where respect for the memory of victims, survivors, and their families must remain a central focus.

6.3 Remembering Genocide

When Primo Levi called on his fellow Holocaust survivors to embrace the 'duty to remember' (devoir de mémoire), he did so with a view to ensuring the continuity of the memory of the Holocaust by exhorting other survivors 'to testify, to bear witness [...] to resist the temptation to forget' as they endeavoured to pick up the threads of their past lives. He urged them to not only pass on their experiences to new generations, but he also demanded that they make themselves heard (Rousso, 2002: 21). Cognitive scientist Steven Pinker describes his experience of hearing a survivor of the Holocaust bear witness in this fashion. While attending a family event, he met a relative who had been a prisoner in Auschwitz. Clenching Pinker's wrist, the man began to tell how, when one of their number dropped dead while eating, a group of men fought each other for the smallest morsels of bread belonging to the dead man. The relative told how the others 'fell on his body, still covered in diarrhea, and pried a piece of bread from his fingers.' (2012: 404). The man does not state if he was a member of the group or merely a witness to the incident. Pinker's reflection on hearing this man's unsolicited testimony is in keeping with how it is hoped all such testimonies would be received: 'To tell a story of such degradation requires extraordinary courage, backed by a confidence that the hearer will understand it as an accounting of the circumstances and not of the men's characters' (2012: 404). Pinker's assessment of this encounter is made up of three significant elements: Firstly, he holds the survivor in high esteem and does not question his role in the matter; secondly, he salutes the man for showing extraordinary courage; and thirdly,

he highlights the man's conviction that what happened will be viewed by his listener not as an example of the depths to which these men sank during their time in Auschwitz, but as a result of the horrific circumstances into which they had been cast, this latter being an example of the great risk survivors of genocide take when they rise to the challenges of making themselves heard.

During my visit to Cambodia, I encountered survivors of the Khmer Rouge genocide who were committed to Levi's principles of testifying, bearing witness, and resisting the temptation to forget. One such encounter took place during a guided tour of Tuol Sleng. When my guide, Paluth, realised during our conversation that I already had some understanding of the genocide, and that I was also familiar with the ongoing Khmer Rouge Tribunals, her demeanour towards me changed perceptibly and she began to tell me her story of survival, without any prompting on my part. She was 17 years old on 17 April 1975 when the Khmer Rouge entered the city of Phnom Penh, and like many others she welcomed them at first. However, she soon realised that this was the start of a terrible time for Cambodians. She was sent to the countryside when the evacuation of the city got underway and during the remainder of the period she was moved from province to province in work details, losing many of her family to starvation and violence along the way.

Hearing such testimony at first-hand awakens the listener to the reality of what happens in circumstances like those Paluth experienced. This leads me to consider possible reasons why none of those I interviewed (all Westerners) chose to engage with Cambodians at the sites. While some people do take the guided tours when available at both Tuol Sleng and Choeung Ek, and they do ask questions about what happened at the sites, I observed reluctance on the part of visitors to ask the guides

about how they and their families experienced the genocide. I do not perceive this as disinterest, but rather as (a) sensitivity towards survivors, particularly in the case of Choeung Ek, where human remains are strewn about the pathways, and 8,000 human skulls are stacked neatly in an ornate stupa-like monument; and (b) varying cultural attitudes to death and dying. Cultural complexities must be a prime factor here as there is no denying the many cultural differences between East and West. Also, the limited time visitors spend at the sites must be a consideration.

How the dead are treated is loaded with symbolism in all cultures, and to stand before vast quantities of human hair, or among bone fragments and shreds of victims' clothing embedded in mud is not conducive to engaging in conversation about personal experiences of genocide and how it should be remembered. Intercultural complexity is just one of many challenges to representing memory in genocide tourism.

6.3.1 The duty to remember – devoir de mémoire

Writing on Holocaust memory, Barbara Misztal describes the duty to remember as 'the duty to keep alive the memory of suffering by the persistent pursuit of an ethical response to the Holocaust experience' (Misztal, 2007: 144). Levi's noble call to honour the duty to remember belies the extreme burden this places on survivors of all genocides, as exemplified earlier in Pinker's account of being the recipient of a witness testimony. Khmer Rouge survivor, Sokreaska S. Himm writes of post-genocide memory as 'an abnormal form of memory' (2003: 122); while fellow Cambodian, Chanrithy Him, voices the pain of remembering: 'My memory speaks until it hurts' (2001: 90). The challenge facing those tasked with establishing sites of genocide as genocide tourism sites is to present the memory and memories of

genocide in a manner which honours the victims and survivors, while simultaneously enabling new generations from many different cultures and backgrounds to access narratives of genocide. Paul Ricoeur echoes this sentiment, noting that 'the duty to remember consists not only in having a deep concern for the past, but in transmitting the meaning of past events to the next generation' (cited in Misztal, 2007: 144).

Even if they are unaware of it, those who visit sites of genocide immediately become part of a memory transmission process. I had expected that the subject of memory and remembering would have been more to the fore during the interviews. This was not the case with the Western visitors I spoke to, where remembering, or not forgetting, was only mentioned in passing. For example, 'Geoff' (interviewed at Tuol Sleng) saw the sites as providing 'evidence' for use in the prosecution of perpetrators of genocide, rather than as vehicles of remembrance:

> "I think if places like this had been flattened and built on there would be nothing for humanity to see about what one human being is quite capable of doing to another one [...]. It's like the concentration camps. If they weren't there, the perpetrators can say – 'We did nothing. There is no evidence.' You see, the evidence is quite clear for all to see" *Gestures at surroundings*. (Interview with 'Geoff' at Tuol Sleng, October 2010).

One serendipitous by-product of maintaining sites of genocide as evidence in trials is that they also exist and function as managed sites of memory.

'Geoff's' expression of a desire to maintain sites of genocide such as Auschwitz, Tuol Sleng and Choeung Ek transcends cultural barriers and is evocative of Levy and Sznaider's concept of 'cosmopolitan memory' as applied to genocide memory. It exhibits a willingness to empathise with others from different social and cultural backgrounds and acknowledges genocide as a global concern. The reason for this is not clear from the data, but may speak to an inherent need within human beings to

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have a tangible, visible point of reference for traumatic memory in the same way that pleasant remembrances benefit from having a focal point of reference. Sites of genocide that have been developed as visitor sites serve to 'concretise' the cultural and collective memory of genocide and in doing so provide a vehicle for the transformation of the introspective, interior life of memory into the ritualised enactment of remembrance.

Based on my observations at the sites, expressions of a need to remember are more readily evoked by visitors in many of the entries in the comment books which feature at genocide and Holocaust tourism sites. For example, in one entry at Tuol Sleng 'Belle' from the 'U.S.' wrote: "Thank you for the exhibition as it allows those tragedies not to be overlooked or forgotten." At Toul Sleng, graffiti is used by visitors to express their feelings, with the words 'Remember' and 'Never Forget' (also in other languages) scratched into, or written on the walls of the former prison. It may be that by writing these words, be it on a wall or in a visitor book, visitors to sites of genocide feel they leave a permanent tangible impression of their desire to remember the victims of genocide.

6.3.2 Transcultural memory

Western tourists who visit Holocaust sites in Europe enter a world that is not entirely alien to their frames of reference. Holocaust remembrance is an annual event across the continent and access to information on the Holocaust is readily available in popular culture as opposed to being confined to the 'thick tomes' of serious history (Rosenstone, 2006: pp.2; 37). Western tourists visiting sites of genocide in distant locations such as Cambodia enter less familiar territory, where their knowledge of what happened may be limited to having seen the film *The Killing Fields* or having a

vague recollection of John Pilger's news reports from Phnom Penh in 1979. Regardless of their level of knowledge, having arrived at international destinations such as Tuol Sleng or Choeung Ek, visitors engage with transcultural memory as a mnemonic process that unfolds across and between cultures.

Transcultural memory is a powerful mechanism for inspiring visitors to contemplate connections with other genocides and also with ongoing conflicts. In the process, it encourages an understanding that genocide is no respecter of territorial or cultural boundaries. 'Geoff' was prompted by his experience of visiting Tuol Sleng to make a link between the First World War and British involvement in the conflict in Afghanistan. He spoke of how he had visited war memorials in France and Malaysia – "graveyards full of white headstones" - and how this had led to him preventing his son from joining the British army – "We talked him out of any career like that." In visiting Tuol Sleng Geoff made a connection between that experience of a genocide site and his memory of visiting other sites related to war and conflict, thus exhibiting a capability to move across and between different cultural memories of conflict and violent death.

Applying the concept of transculturality (as defined in Chapter 3 – 3.4.5) to the field of memory studies creates an effective mechanism for understanding how 'genocide tourists' engage with the memory of genocide at an international level and how this then impacts on the meanings they take from their visits to international sites. It is useful here to contemplate Astrid Erll's contention that what we conceive of as 'our' cultural memory is actually the product of early transcultural movements. She cites the examples of 'Persian influence on the Old Testament', Islamic influence on the Renaissance, and the French origins of the Grimm brothers 'German' fairytales (Erll,

2011: 11). To think of transcultural memory in this way demystifies the concept for both researchers and participants and assists understanding of how genocide is remembered across cultures.

6.4 Meanings and Understandings

In exploring the meanings which actors attach to their social actions, the researcher must first reach a level of empathy with the actor, which will ensure that an understanding of that meaning is achieved. Max Weber described two types of understanding – '*aktuelles Verstehen*' and '*erklärendes Verstehen*' (Käsler, 1988: 176). *Aktuelles Verstehen* refers to a direct form of observational understanding and is limited to the meanings that can be derived from simply observing an immediate action. For example, in observing a visitor (of any nationality) at Choeung Ek who begins to cry, it is reasonable to suggest that they are upset. *Aktuelles Verstehen* goes no further than this. For Weber, this represents the most superficial level of understanding and therefore, is not sufficient to explain social action. His second type of understanding is '*erklärendes Verstehen*', which translates as 'explanatory understanding'. In this case, the researcher examines the motivational roots of an act and then strives to extrapolate meaning from it (Haralambos & Holborn, 2002: 1051). With this type of 'explanatory understanding' (Käsler, 1988: 176), the actions of the visitor to Choeung Ek would be questioned in terms of why they were crying. Were they a survivor? Were they upset by the seeing the Chankiri or 'killing' Tree? Was the sight of so many human remains too much for them? Haralambos and Holborn (2002: 1051) argue that in order to achieve '*erklärendes Verstehen*', it is 'necessary to put yourself in the shoes of the person whose behaviour you are explaining. You should imagine yourself in their situation to try to get at the motives

behind their actions'. Quinn Patton also advocates this approach, calling it 'empathic identification' (2002: 52). As researcher-participant, this is what I did.

Inevitably, visitors to sites of genocide will derive a multiplicity of meanings from their experiences, some of which will immediately be apparent to them, others which may take time to clarify or emerge after their visit. In this sense, we can never encompass the full range of meanings that any visitor – or genocide tourists as a whole – will take from their experiences of visiting these sites. For example, while at site X, a visitor may be primarily affected in Y way, yet some weeks/months/years later a different awareness may emerge, of Z. This is illustrative of what Gadamer described as 'the oscillating movement between whole and part' (Gadamer, 1975/2014: 197) in the continuous process of developing understanding.

From my conversations with members of the Auschwitz tour group, two of them expressed their disappointment at not feeling more shocked by the camp, having come there with various pre-conceptions, usually based on what they had read or seen on television. However, they all had some knowledge of the Holocaust, which was enhanced by the interpretation practices at the site. In contrast to this, at Tuol Sleng and Cheoung Ek, where interpretation is less established, visitors tended to arrive at the sites with limited or no knowledge of the Khmer Rouge genocide. Randy, who was interviewed at Tuol Sleng after having toured that site, remembered watching unfolding events in Cambodia on the news in the 1970s:

> "I knew about it (the genocide) because I remember watching it on the TV news when I was a teenager. And then they made that film 'The Killing Fields' – the one with Malkovich in it – back in the 80s" (Interview with Randy at Tuol Sleng, 2 October 2010)

Based on his responses, Randy came to the site knowing very little about the genocide, and left knowing little more than the fact that Tuol Sleng existed.

Nonetheless, some clear patterns and themes do emerge from the data. These include the desire to express empathy and solidarity with victims of genocide, the wish to identify with and become phenomenologically familiar with some element of the victim experience, and, for some, simply the impulse to be intensely affected by visiting sites of such highly charged cultural meaning. The hermeneutic process of arriving at these points of understanding is illustrated in Figure 6.1 which is based on Kansteiner's conceptualization of a 'hermeneutic triangle' as 'an open dialogue between the object, the maker, and the consumer in constructing meaning' (2002: 197).
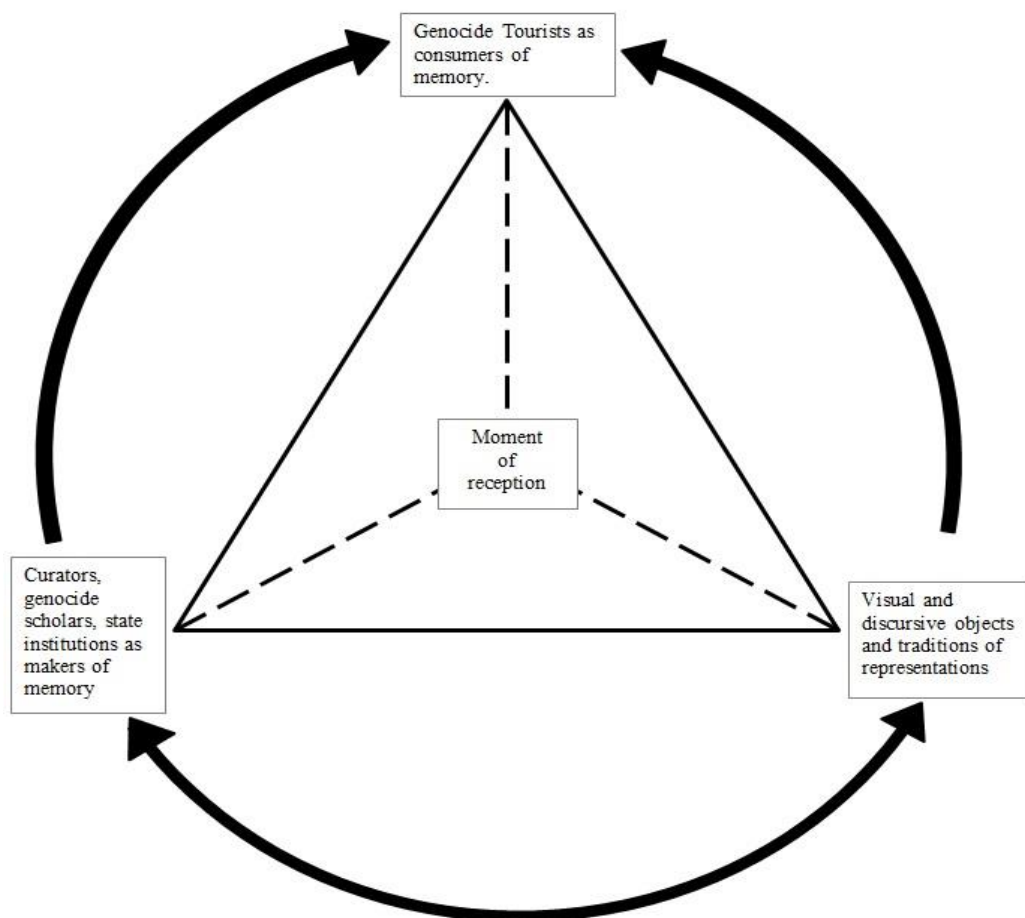

Figure 6.1 The hermeneutic triangle (Kansteiner, 2002: 197).

6.4.1 A typology of genocide tourists

As sociological concepts typologies are useful in the analysis of genocide tourism when attempting to uncover what motivates some people to visit sites of genocide; therefore, I have formulated a typology of genocide tourists. This typology is based on Weber's conceptual construct of the 'ideal type' which directly emanates from his development of interpretive understanding (*Verstehen*) and, as Quinn Patton points out, 'is one simple form of presenting qualitative comparisons' (2002: 459). Ritzer defines an ideal type in its simplest form as 'a concept constructed by a social scientist, on the basis of his or her interests and theoretical orientation, to capture the essential features of some social phenomenon' (2000: 115). They are analyst-constructed typologies that 'take on the task of identifying and making explicit patterns that appear to exist but remain unperceived by the people studied' (Quinn Patton, 2002: 459). One of their greatest strengths as analytical tools lies in their use as a means of conveying the 'bounded variety of cultural phenomena, allowing scholars to 'compare and contrast' systematically whole ranges of diverse yet interrelated aspects of social experience' (Harrington, 2005: 66). However, Quinn Patton issues a warning to those employing ideal types when he points out that as they are 'analyst-constructed typologies' there is always the possibility that they may display an over-reflection of the researcher's world at the expense of the world of the participants involved in the research. He suggests that this can be counteracted by presenting the ideal types to the participants in order to gauge their recognizability (2002: 459-460). This 'testing' offers some insurance against bias on the part of the researcher. As the typology was not finalised until after the field research had been

completed, I did not have the opportunity to test it on my participants. However, I have since presented it to two people with experience of visiting a site of genocide.

Reaction to the typology was markedly different to that elicited by questions to my participants in Cambodia about the labels 'genocide tourism' and 'genocide tourist.' Both people sat together and took time to examine each 'type' of on the list before making a selection which they felt accurately identified them. Each of my participants in this exercise felt that they could inhabit more than one type, echoing the contention expressed in Chapter 3 - 3.4.5 that it is possible to hold multiple positions simultaneously across our socio-cultural worlds.

- *The Accidental Genocide Tourist* – This is a person who visits a site associated with genocide without having intentionally planned to do so. This could be because it is one of a variety of sightseeing trips included in a tour package or itinerary or because they happen upon the site while travelling independently and decide to visit. They may have been encouraged to visit the site by a travelling companion who has made a conscious decision to take the tour but does not want to go alone.

- *The Pilgrim* – This person deliberately seeks out genocide sites because they wish to pay their respects to the victims. This could be for reasons of personal association with the genocide, as in the case of those who lost family members in the Holocaust. For these individuals the visit is akin to a religious pilgrimage as discussed in Chapter 2 – 2.4.4.

- *The Ghoul* – This type refers to someone with a morbid interest in death and disaster. Genocide sites that openly display artefacts such as skulls, bones and

hair, would hold the greatest appeal for this person. For instance, they would favour Auschwitz-Birkenau over Bergen-Belsen because the latter does not display human remains whereas Auschwitz does in the form of vast quantities of hair. The prime motivation behind this person's visit is to get as close as possible to the experience of extremely violent death on a mass scale. They may disguise their true intention by taking on the characteristics of any of the other ideal types.

- ***The Genocide Scholar*** – This ideal type may comprise schoolchildren, university students, academics and independent scholars; in short, anyone with scholarly interests in the subject of genocide. The majority come to the site with an informed expectation of what they will see and a desire to expand on their current level of knowledge. They may arrive as part of a school field trip or for the purpose of carrying out specific research tasks. This does not necessarily diminish the impact of the experience on these visitors.

A particular consideration when drawing up such typologies is the use of metaphors and analogies as labels, especially when they are applied to people. Quinn Patton points out that while 'metaphors and analogies can be powerful ways of connecting with readers of qualitative studies', some can cause offense' (2002: 504), as discussed in section 6.2.1. The use of the term 'ghoul' - defined in the Oxford English Dictionary (2006) as being a person with a morbid interest in death and disaster - is a case in point. However, I would argue that it is a valid type in terms of genocide tourism, and as Weber stated '[...] it is probably seldom if ever that a real phenomenon can be found which corresponds exactly to any one of these ideally constructed ideal types' (cited in Bauman, 2007: 27). It should also be borne in mind

that many people have an innate curiosity regarding suffering and death, whereby 'horror and death have become established commodities, on sale to tourists' (Uzzel, 1989, cited in Lennon & Foley, 2007: 58).

6.5 Genocide Tourism as a Consciousness-Raising Device

Genocide prevention through education avails of a fundamental socialization process, which is 'a process that makes possible an enduring society and the transmission of its culture between generations' (Abercromie et al, 2006: 363). This echoes Israel Charny's aspiration that the goal of Holocaust and genocide education 'must be to make awareness of Holocaust and genocide part of human culture, so that more and more people are helped to grow out of killing and from being accomplices to killers, or from being bystanders who allow the torture and killing of others' (cited in Totten & Parsons, 2009: 10). Jonassohn also sees education as the best way forward, believing that the route to successful genocide prevention lies in focussed educational programmes based on an understanding of the economic and cultural damage perpetrators inflict on their own societies when they engage in acts of genocide (1990: 421). Since Jonassohn advocated this approach in the 1990s, there have been major developments in the delivery of genocide education at all levels, and the process is on-going. However, success is difficult to evaluate, and is contingent on co-operation between various institutions within the state. Jonassohn's approach is aimed at societies and cultures that may be at risk of genocide, as determined by analysts, or which have a past history of genocide. However, success is difficult to evaluate, as 'the paradox of genocide prevention is that in the end no-one really knows if a specific series of actions has actually staved off genocide or

not, for an event cannot be deemed genocide until it has actually been perpetrated' (Conley-Zilkic & Totten, in Totten & Parsons, 2009: 611).

Genocide tourism has a visceral power that can be harnessed in the service of raising consciousness of genocide as a global, ever-present threat that can befall any society or culture at any time. The Bosnian genocide of 1995 stands as testament to this when the world watched on as Bosnian Serb forces attacked Srebrenica and Žepa and 8,000 Bosniak (Bosnian Muslim) men and boys were massacred. This did not happen in South-East Asia, but in Europe, in 1995.

6.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the research findings in the context of the wider literature. A hermeneutical approach was applied to themes emanating from the findings in order to answer the research questions. This approach centred on the development of interpretation and understanding. To expand on this approach, included in this chapter was the presentation of my original typology of genocide tourists derived from the current research. The chapter concluded with a reflection on the role of education in genocide prevention and the contribution genocide tourism makes to this undertaking as a consciousness-raising device.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION – FINAL REFLECTIONS

7.1 Introduction

The final chapter of this study presents a reflection on the overall research project and revisits preceding chapters. The contribution made to existing research is discussed, which is followed by an assessment of the prospects for further research opportunities arising from the current study.

7.2 Review of the Research

In Chapter 1, I introduced the primary research topic of genocide tourism, identified it as a contemporary social phenomenon, and presented my definition of genocide tourism for use within the current study and beyond. I then situated the topic in the existing research, which mainly falls within the fields of dark tourism and thanatourism studies, where it is treated as a niche phenomenon. Following on from this, the research questions driving the current study were presented. Having outlined my motivations for choosing this particular focus of investigation, I also highlighted my intention to extract genocide tourism from within dark tourism studies and treat it as a stand-alone research topic. Chapter 2 focussed on the origins of the phenomenon of genocide tourism as it is 'subsumed' within dark tourism and thanatourism studies. A review of the literature exposes the eclectic and fragmented nature of the frameworks within which genocide tourism resides and highlights lacunae in extant research into experiences of genocide tourism.

Memory in its many forms as remembrance, commemoration and memorialisation, plays a central role in the study of genocide tourism. Chapter 3 discussed 'memory' as a dynamic and evolving theoretical framework within which to examine genocide tourism as a socio-cultural phenomenon. The idea of 'transcultural memory' is a

recent addition to the conceptualisation of memory within a globalised world, which provides a lens through which to view how genocide is remembered and re-presented. Chapter 4 presented the methodology, examining the research topic from a qualitative interpretive perspective, with the philosophical underpinnings being founded on a Gadamerian hermeneutical phenomenological paradigm, which adheres to the idea that human beings are inextricably linked to the world and worlds in which they dwell. An expansion of the concept of *bricolage* was discussed in conjunction with how, as *bricoleurs,* contemporary researchers are empowered. Chapter 5 detailed a selection of findings emanating from field research conducted at four visitor sites associated with genocide. The research findings were discussed in Chapter 6, which contextualised the data within the wider literature. A hermeneutical approach centred on the development of understanding and interpretation was applied to themes emanating from the findings in order to answer the research questions. This chapter concludes with the presentation of my original typology of the genocide tourist derived from the current research.

7.3 Some Concluding Remarks

Genocide tourism's current niche position within dark tourism and thanatourism studies renders it less effective than it would otherwise be in raising awareness of genocide. By extracting genocide tourism from within these fields of study and treating it as a singular focus of research, its 'soft power[72]' as a vehicle for understanding genocide can be more effectively harnessed. As no satisfactory definition of 'genocide tourism' was to be found within the literature, I formulated a

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[72] 'Soft power' is defined as a persuasive approach to international relations, typically involving the use of economic or cultural influence.' (Oxford Dictionary Online 2015).

definition that is concise and can be fruitfully employed in future research on the topic. It is my hope that this definition will enable/encourage a more thorough analysis of genocide tourism as a specific phenomenon, and draw attention to the significance of its role in how specific genocides – and the phenomenon of genocide itself are remembered and understood.

This study also highlights an area that has not yet received sufficient attention: When genocide tourism is a topic of research - as it rarely is - it is usually examined from a Western perspective only. How indigenous populations perceive genocide tourism has yet to be addressed. This area is ripe for investigation and this study has opened the way to further investigation in that direction. Attempts to understand genocide will always be incomplete without the input of those for whom memorial sites are more than an afternoon tour during an extended city break, or an item on the list of things to see and do when visiting South-East Asia.

This concludes my study of the contemporary social phenomenon of genocide tourism.

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INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR VISITORS TO THE TUOL SLENG MUSEUM OF GENOCIDE AND THE CHOEUNG EK MEMORIAL IN PHNOM PENH, CAMBODIA.

BASIC DETAILS:

Age:

Occupation:

Nationality:

Duration of visit to Cambodia:

Duration of stay in Phnom Penh:

Please choose which of the following describes your travel arrangements:

(i) As part of a package tour?

(ii) Independently?

(iii) Other?

1. **Could I ask you some questions about why you decided to visit Cambodia?**

- Are you visiting other parts of Cambodia or South East Asia during this holiday?

- What attracted you to Cambodia?

- Before you arrived here, how much did you know about Cambodia and the history of the country?

- Had you heard about the Khmer Rouge genocide before you came here?

2. **Could I now ask you some questions about your visit to the Museum today?**

- Where did you hear about Tuol Sleng/Choeung Ek? Was it from the Internet, your travel organiser, a guide book, television, etc.?

- Was that recently or had you known about the museum for some time?

- What motivated you to come here during your visit to Cambodia?

- What was it that first struck you when you started your tour of the museum?

- Did you feel uneasy about taking the tour? If so, why?

- Did you...
  - *Take a guided tour***?**
  - *Take photos or make video recordings***?**
  - *Speak with fellow visitors***?**
  - *Leave a comment in the visitor book***?**
  - *Make a donation to the museum***?**

- Why did you decide to visit the Museum/Memorial site?

- At which areas of the sites did you spend the most time during your visit?

- Which areas did you find...
  - *Most interesting?*
  - *Least interesting?*
  - *Most disturbing?*
  - *Most sad?*

- What do you think of the on-going renovations at Tuol Sleng? (A carpark, 'reflective area' and visitor toilets are planned).

- Do you think that the Museum/Memorial is designed to attract tourists rather than Cambodians?

- Did you purchase anything from the souvenir stand?

3. I just have a few more questions....

- Is this the first time you have ever visited a site related to genocide, including the Nazi Holocaust?

- If you have previously visited such sites, where were they and when (approximately) did the visits take place?

- Visiting sites or heritage centres specifically associated with acts of genocide is an increasingly popular activity among tourists. This activity has come to be labelled as 'genocide tourism'. How do you feel about this label? Do you think it is an inappropriate or even an offensive term?

- Do you think that the experience of visiting sites of genocide that have been developed as visitor centres helps to spread a greater awareness of genocide and genocide prevention?

- Do *you* now feel better informed about the Khmer Rouge genocide?

- Is there anything you would like to add about your experience of visiting the sites?

- ❖ **Thank you for taking time out to participate in this research study.**

Interview 001.1

Name: Robert

Age: 42

Gender: Male

Occupation: Catering manager

Nationality: American

Duration of visit to Cambodia: 2 weeks

Duration of stay in Phnom Penh: Not decided...maybe a week.

Will you visit Tuol Sleng Museum and Choeung Ek Killing Fields?

Robert: I'm going to the Killing Fields next. I have a tuk-tuk guy who knows the way **(All tuk-tuk drivers in Phnom Penh know how to get there).**

Please choose which of the following describes your travel arrangements:

(i) As part of a package tour?

(ii) Independently?

(iii) Other?

Robert: It's a solo trip for me.

R: I'd like to start by asking you some questions about your visit to Cambodia. Will you be visiting other parts of Cambodia or South East Asia during this trip?

Robert: I'm touring all over so it's just part of a whole South Asia thing for me.

R: What attracted you to Cambodia?

Robert: It's got a lot of history and a lot of it's wrapped up with the Vietnam War so I wanted to experience the place. It's part of American history, you know...kinda important...

R: Before you arrived here, how much did you know about Cambodia and the history of the country?

Robert: Yea, I read a lot of books and saw some movies and documentaries on TV back home. So you could say I have a good background knowledge. Yea, I know about what happened here during the Pol Pot time back in the '70s.

R: Could I now ask you some questions about your visit to the museum today? Where did you hear about Toul Sleng? Was it from the internet, your travel organizer, a guide book, television, or somewhere else?

Robert: Internet and TV.

R: What was it that first struck you when you entered the Museum today?

Robert: It's just weird. You know, you read all about these things but when you actually stand here, I mean, in the place where these butchers operated...well, it just blows you away! Oh, and the stench...it's like what happened here...well, you can still smell death all over.

R: Did you feel uneasy about touring this Museum?

Robert: I knew it was going to be a special experience. I hoped it would be. 'Uneasy', you mean like uncomfortable?

R: Yes.

Robert: Can't say I did **(thinks for a moment)...**no, I just had to come.

R: Did you take a guided tour?

Robert: I didn't know there was one! They sure didn't ask me if I wanted one when I was at the desk on the way in. I just followed the route everyone else seemed to be taking. It's a pretty small place.

R: Did you take photographs or make any videos?

Robert: I took *so* many photos. I want to make sure I get all this on record.

R: I saw you taking pictures inside the small cells earlier. You were getting close up photos of the shackles?

Robert: Oh yea. I wanted to try to capture what it must have been like to sit in those cells day after day waiting for your turn to be taken out and beaten or tortured or murdered. I got some awesome shots in there...real good shots.

R: Did you speak to other visitors?

Robert: It's weird! I'm a guy who likes to talk...a lot...but I just didn't feel like talking to anyone when I was in there...and it didn't look like anyone else did either. I think it's just so overwhelming. I mean what the hell do you say when you walk into a room that's still got traces of blood on the floor!

R: Did you leave a comment in the visitor book?

Robert: You bet! I wrote something like "Let the whole world know what happened here so that it won't ever happen again. God bless the Cambodian people". Something like that.

R: Did you make a donation to the Museum?

Robert: No. Who knows who gets their hands on that. This is one corrupt country!

R: At which areas in the Museum did you spend the most time during your visit?

Robert: I spent a lot of time around those cells over there (points to the Building B). You get a real sense of what those guys suffered when you look in there. And the skulls...those were once people...just like us...killed by their own damn countrymen!

R: Which areas did you find the most interesting?

Robert: The cells and the skulls...oh, and the torture stuff? Like, what sick mind would come up with things like that?! The photographs were interesting too. The Khmer Rouge sure knew how to make life hell for their prisoners...making them have their photographs taken...you could see some of those people were beaten to death.

R: Which areas did you find the least interesting?

Robert: All those rooms upstairs. I mean what's the point in having empty rooms? Yea, I know they have some kind of exhibition going on up there, but the pictures on the walls are washed out and it didn't make a lot of sense. At least it was a chance to get out of the heat for a moment. Jeez, this place is hot!

R: What do you think of the ongoing renovations at Tuol Sleng Museum? They're building a carpark, a reflective area and visitor washrooms.

Robert: I think they should leave it just as it is. I mean, this isn't meant to be a comfort stop! Anyway, they should wait until the place finishes up for the day. It would be real easy to break a leg over there **(Points to on-going works).**

R: Do you think Tuol Sleng is designed to attract tourists rather than Cambodians?

Robert: I wouldn't say tourists, but if you mean international visitors, then yea, I would say that is true. Cambodians have to live with this, so they sure as hell don't need to come here to see it!

R: Did you purchase anything from the souvenir stands?

Robert: No way! Two stores in a place like this?! I tell you, it shouldn't be...it just shouldn't be. And did you see the crap they got in there? That sure isn't for the locals. They couldn't afford it anyway.

R: I just have a few more questions and I know your tuk-tuk is waiting outside, so it won't take long...Is this the first time you have ever visited a site related to genocide, including the Nazi Holocaust?

Robert: I went to Dachau in Germany about 10 years ago with my dad. He was stationed in Germany after the war and he wanted to take me there. This is a lot worse!

R: Visiting sites or heritage centres specifically associated with acts of genocide is an increasingly popular activity among tourists. This activity has come to be labelled as 'genocide tourism'. How do you feel about this label? Do you think it's an inappropriate or even an offensive term?

Robert: Well, they always got to stick a name on everything. It is what it is. Don't bother me. I can see it might not sit too well with some.

R: Do you think that the experience of visiting sites of genocide that have been developed as visitor centres helps to spread a greater awareness of genocide and genocide prevention?

Robert: Everyone needs to know what happened in these places. It won't stop it happening again, but no-one can say "we didn't know". Didn't stop Rwanda and it sure isn't stopping Darfur and that's a genocide too you know...a real genocide happening right now, as we speak!

R: Do you now feel better informed about the Khmer Rouge genocide?

Robert: I think I was already well informed, but this is a big deal for me to come here and stand in these places where it all happened. That was important for me. It makes it real to me, you know?

R: Is there anything you'd like to add about your experience of visiting the site?

Robert: Yes. What I can never figure out is how they could do this to their own people! It's hard to find words to describe what happened here. It's just unbelievable.

R: Do you use Facebook or other social media, and if so, will you be posting anything about your experience of this visit to the museum?

Robert: I'll post some pictures on Flickr and maybe on Facebook and some comments. I got to say something about an experience like this.

R: Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with me today. I'm sure you're going to find Choeung Ek very interesting after this.

Robert: I know I will.

Interview 001.4

This interview deviates slightly from the semi-structured schedule used in the other interviews. It was a bit more impromptu and I have less personal details of the participants. The husband and wife couple asked me not to use their real names, so I have chosen to use the names 'Pat' and 'Geoff'. I approached 'Pat' as she sat on a bench outside the Museum buildings waiting for her husband who was touring the site alone. I explained my purpose in requesting an interview and she agreed. Her husband returned during the course of the interview and joined in. The couple were from Norfolk in the UK.

Age: Late 50s

Nationality: British

Occupation: Retired

R: So, you're from England?

Pat: Yea.

R: And you're here more or less to accompany your husband?

Pat: **(Laughs)** Yea.

R: And how long are you here in Cambodia for?

Pat: I think we're here 15 days altogether. Well, we started off...no, I think it's 12 days we're actually in Cambodia.

R: Right, and it's not just based in Phnom Penh, no?

Pat: No, we're off to Siem Reap and Angkhor Wat in a few days.

R: Did you come as part of a package tour or are you travelling alone?

Pat: No, we're travelling alone. Yea.

R: So, are you visiting other parts of Cambodia – yes, you are – but are you visiting other parts of South East Asia?

Pat: Em, well on this trip we actually started off in Laos, but we have been to Thailand and Malaysia and Singapore on other occasions.

R: What attracted you to come to Cambodia?

Pat: My husband wanted to come to all these places to be honest.

R: That's great. Before you got here did either of you know much about Cambodia?

Pat: My husband did, yea. He studies everything. He sits on the internet for hours on end.

R: Had you heard about the Khmer Rouge genocide before you came here?

Pat: We have, yea.

R: Ok. Where did you hear about Toul Sleng and Choeung Ek? Was it from the Internet, your travel organizer, your husband?

Pat: The husband for me, yea **(laughs).**

R: And was that recently or had you known about these places for some time?

Pat: No. It was only recently – I suppose the last nine months maybe.

R: And you came here specifically because your husband wanted to come?

Pat: Yea.

R: What was the first thing that struck you about the museum when you came in?

Pat: (Pause) Very shabby and I didn't think there was...very informal and everything, you know, run down.

R: They try to keep it as much as it used to be as possible.

Pat: Oh yea. I know because there wasn't any big signs or anything. It's quite hidden really.

R: Yes, but everyone seems to know where it is.

Pat: Yea, yea.

R: Did you feel uneasy about coming here?

Pat: (Pause) I wasn't over-keen to be honest.

R: Did your husband take the guided tour?

Pat: No, he's doing it all on his own. He likes to take his own time.

R: The tour costs $6, but they only take you around the bottom part.

Pat: Is it? Oh, right. No, he likes to spend time and have a look.

R: Do you think he'll take photos and video?

Pat: Oh, yea. My husband will. Yea, yea.

R: There are visitor books upstairs. Do you think he'll write something in one of these? Does he do that sort of thing?

Pat: He normally does, yea.

R: Which areas of the site have you been around, or did you just stay here?

Pat: I just went on this bottom level at the moment.

R: Ok. Which place did stay in longest? Which held your attention for the longest time so far?

Pat: Well, just the small cells I walked in to really.

R: Do you think this place is more designed to attract tourists rather than Cambodians?

Pat: Yea, I would say so, yea.

R: Do you think you'll buy anything from the souvenir stand?

Pat: Probably not.

R: It's very over-priced.

Pat: Is it?

(At this point, her husband, 'Geoff' returns)

Geoff: Hello!

R: Hello. I'm sorry; I've commandeered your wife here!

Geoff: Oh, that's alright.

R: You can chip in if you like.

Geoff: That's ok. Are you asking questions or...?

R: Yes; I'm a researcher with Dublin City University in Ireland.

Geoff: Oh, yea; ok then.

R: I'm trying to find out why people come to visit these sites. Ok, so your wife has already told me you're a fanatic.

Geoff: (Laughs) She's told you she's been dragged here, has she?

R: Yes, by force. Divorce proceedings are starting next week!

(Laughs)

Pat: They should have started years ago with all the places I've been dragged along to!

R: So, have you been dragged along to other places like this?

Pat: Yea, yea, many a time.

Geoff: No, a lot of places you don't go in.

Pat: No, I don't always go in, but I've gone with you haven't I?

Geoff: Yea, but you don't always go in, do you?

Pat: No.

R: This sort of activity, it's got a new name, it's called 'Genocide Tourism'. How do you feel about being labelled as a genocide tourist? Do you think it's an insult or inappropriate?

Geoff: Well, they can put whatever label they want on me. Em, I think if places like this had been flattened and built on, there would be nothing for humanity to see about what one human being is quite capable of doing to another one; and with no reason. It's quite simply...it's like the concentration camps. If they weren't there, the perpetrators can say - **(At this point he mimics a German accent) -** "We did nothing. There is no evidence". You see the evidence is quite clear for all to see **(Gestures at surroundings).**

R: You're going to Choeung Ek afterwards, aren't you?

Geoff: Yes. **(Firmly).**

R: I think you'll find that more of an experience.

Geoff: Really.

R: Yes; it's better organized, and it's just...even though it's smaller.

Geoff: They could do a lot more with this to be honest. I appreciate they've left it probably as it was since 1979.

R: They tried to, but the floors were collapsing in one of the upstairs levels a few weeks ago.

Pat: Oh, my!

R: Part of the walls fell into the houses at the back, but they kept it quiet because that didn't appear on the Internet. They're desperate to keep the visitors coming.

Pat: Yea.

Geoff: Oh, I didn't know it had started to collapse to be honest.

R: No, I didn't, except the guide told me last week.

Pat: Oh, right, yea.

R: Do you think places like this are a good way of educating people about genocide, people like yourselves, who come from the West?

Geoff: yea, yea, I think so. I mean in the Western world where this has gone on, it still educates people. I'm not saying it stops anything.

R: Yes.

Geoff: It quite clearly doesn't. Em, I mean you can go to all these countries in this area; places like Singapore, Malaya, and you'll see graveyards full of white headstones, all regimented and the same in France, all regimented, you know, and it all says the same thing

– 'soldier so-and-so, aged 18, killed in action, my beloved son, your broken-hearted mother. But, we're still sending our boys to Afghanistan!

R: Nothing changes, does it?

Geoff: It doesn't, no! You go down to Wooton Bassett **(Small market town in Wiltshire, UK now famous for the funeral corteges of soldiers killed in Iraq and Afghanistan, which pass through the town)** and it's the same thing virtually every day.

R: It's become a circus.

Pat: Yea.

Geoff: Yes, it does tend to become a circus! Yes, it does!! Yes. A lot of people say this should become The Royal Borough of Wooton Bassett. Should it? I don't want my son to die just so that can become The Royal Borough of Wooton Bassett! Well, my son would never have joined the army. I mean, we talked him out of any sort of a career like that. I'm not having my family give their lives for a country that basically doesn't care about us, you know?

R: A lot of our own Irish guys joined the British army.

Geoff: Oh, they did! Yes, certainly, yes!

R: You know, we don't have troops in Afghanistan, but young men want adventure, they want excitement, so they join up.

Geoff: Correct me if I'm wrong, but I think they still can join the British army, even in the Republic?

R: Oh, they are, in droves; because they want to see some action; because life just isn't exciting enough anymore.

Geoff: Yea, yea. **(Nods).** Well, I've always said I'd rather be a living coward than a dead hero! **(Laughs).**

R: Do you think by the time you've finished your tour of both places that you'll know more about the Khmer Rouge genocide than you did before you came?

Pat: Well, I certainly would, but you've sort of studied it **(Geoff nods vigorously in agreement).**

R: Yes, you're into it already.

Geoff: Yea. I think people of my generation have heard of Pol Pot anyway because he was on in the news so much in the late 70s. Em, I think what angers me is when he was in power he had influential friends. China supported him. USA supported him. But the USA only supported him because he was anti-Vietnamese.

R: Connected to the Vietnam War?

Geoff: Yea, getting their own back. If Hitler had been anti-Cuban, if he'd been in the right place at the right time and he was anti-Cuban, they would have said, " Well, we'll support him".

R: It's like a game of chess.

Geoff: Yes, very much so!

R: Do you use Facebook or any of those social networking sites?

Pat: Not really. We're on it, but we don't use it to be honest.

Geoff: We don't bother to be honest.

R: Right, well I think that's about it. I'm so glad I came across you both because I've got two people from different perspectives.

Pat: Yea, as I say, I get quite emotional and I don't like looking in the end.

Geoff: We all do you know.

APPENDIX B

Cambodia's Killing Fields 1975 - 1979

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