Death, Dying and Dark Tourism in Contemporary Society:
A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis

by

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of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the
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Student Declaration

I declare that while registered as a candidate for the research degree, I have not been a registered

candidate or enrolled student for another award of the University or other academic or professional

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I declare that no material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission

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Type of Award:
PhD

School:
School of Sport, Tourism & The Outdoors

Abstract

Despite increasing academic and media attention paid to dark tourism – the act of travel to sites of death, disaster and the seemingly macabre – understanding of the concept remains limited, particularly from a consumption perspective. That is, the literature focuses primarily on the supply of dark tourism. Less attention, however, has been paid to the consumption of 'dark' touristic experiences and the mediation of such experiences in relation to modern-day mortality. This thesis seeks to address this gap in the literature. Drawing upon thanatological discourse – that is, the analysis of society's perceptions of and reactions to death and dying – the research objective is to explore the potential of dark tourism as a means of contemplating mortality in (Western) societies. In so doing, the thesis appraises dark tourism consumption within society, especially within a context of contemporary perspectives of death and, consequently, offers an integrated theoretical and empirical critical analysis and interpretation of death-related travel.

The study adopts a phenomenological approach and a multiple case studies design with integrative and complementary methods of covert participation observation, semi-structure interviews ($n = 64$) and survey research ($n = 419$), as well as a focus group and a diarist account. As a result, the thesis explores the fundamental interrelationships between visitors and sites that offer a representation of death. In particular, the research examines these relationships at Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum & Memorial (Oświęcim, Poland), WTC Tribute Visitor Centre at Ground Zero (New York), Body Worlds exhibition at the O2 Arena (London), and the Dungeon visitor attractions (York and London).

The research finds that in a contemporary secular age where ordinary and normal death is sequestered behind medical and professional façades, yet abnormal and extraordinary death is recreated for popular consumption, dark tourism plays a mediating role between life and death. Ultimately, therefore, the thesis argues that dark tourism is a (new) mediating institution within secularised death sequestered societies, which not only provides a physical place to link the living with the dead, but also allows the Self to construct

contemporary meanings of mortality, and to reflect and contemplate both life and death through consuming the Significant Other Dead.

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Acknowledgements

This thesis is dedicated to my children, Sara Joanne Stone and Aaron Philip Stone

– In a fragmented secular world that appears to spin ever faster,
May God Bless You Always... –

_____

During the course of this study, many people have influenced my research journey, which has been long and, at times, lonely. I thank you all!

However, I would like to give several people a special mention. Firstly, my appreciation goes to my family. My father, who found his calling in theology and an ecclesiastic ministry, has had a profound influence upon me. I grew up as a child believing that religion was faith, and that faith was religion; yet, as an adult, I have come to understand that religion is a social construct, though faith remains inherent. To that end, this thesis supports that social construct – particularly in the face of mortality – although (my) faith remains...

With the passing of my mother during this research, I would like to thank my brothers and sisters, David, Susan, Stephen, Elisabeth and Rachel, who have all watched me suffer, but grow and develop over a difficult period. Your notes of encouragement were always appreciated, though not always acknowledged. My gratitude also goes to my wife, Joanne, who has quietly supported me for many years and listened to me – though, perhaps, not always fully comprehending the intricacies of my conceptual ramblings. Nonetheless, I thank you and I love you – today, tomorrow and forever...

My appreciation goes to my friend Keith, who always had words of wisdom to offer – often on a Friday night in the Red Lion – words that were always noted, but not always remembered! My appreciation also goes to friends and colleagues David and Carly, who have always offered their support and encouragement in the most constructive of terms.

A Personal Preface

It is perhaps unconventional to write a personal preface for a study of this kind. However, given the nature of the emotive, provocative and poignant subject of research, I trust you will forgive my impertinence.

I have taken the liberty to write this brief personal preface in the first person. This is significant to me, as I have been writing about the subject of death, dying and grief in the third person for the past six years or so. Upon reflection, writing in the objective third person has had an effect on me – it allowed me to become detached from the subject of mortality. Of course, this is important from the professional researcher perspective but, from a private point of view, becoming divorced from the realities of death and the tragic circumstances that death sometimes occurs has been an unintended consequence of undertaking this study. During the course of this research, I have published widely on the subject, taught the intricacies of dark tourism to undergraduates, supervised postgraduates, and spoken at numerous international conferences, as well as speaking to the media across the world – both on radio and television. The cumulative effect of this 'immersion' into a subject that provokes the most fundamental questions of existence, meant that most days I researched about knowing that, as I shall live, then so I shall die. Of course, bracketing out such issues by being *objective*, despite getting up close and personal to death in the dark tourism sense, became a defence mechanism to keep any sense of dread of mortality of me and my loved ones at bay.

However, there were two incidences during this research that broke down my bracketing defences. The first one occurred early on in the study, when my mother passed away at the age of 63 after suffering a terminal illness for the best part of a decade. Consequently, I was exposed to death and grief for the first time as an adult. I, and those who loved my mother could only experience this grief. This was not the kind of death I had come to write about but, during subsequent research – the people I spoke with, the surveys I analysed, the things I saw – meant that I was often reliving and contemplating her pain, suffering and passing through consuming other people's plights and tragic demise. The second incident was in

New York whilst undertaking ethnographic research at Ground Zero. In the WTC Tribute Visitor Centre at Ground Zero, a little boy who had lost his father in the Twin Towers had written him a postcard. It simply read:

> *"To Daddy,*
> *I hope you are having a great time in heaven.*
> *I Love You.*
> *Love*
> *Kevin"*

Immediately upon reading this agonising and tragic message, any defences that I had to bracket any fear of death were broken. His words became my words, as I not only thought about such a sad loss for a little boy and his family, but also reflected on my own loss of my mother, and my children's loss of their grandmother. I consumed Kevin's pain and made it my own.

This is the nature of dark tourism. As I will reveal, consuming dark tourism and Other Death has consequences and implications for the broader contemplation and personal reflection of mortality. I shall also reveal contemplation of death is against a backdrop of a contemporary secular society that is medicalised and individualised. At the time of writing, Archbishop Vincent Nichols, the leader of the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales, used a homily on *healing* at Westminster Cathedral to criticise what he saw as a lack of compassion in hospitals and, how medical professionals see patients as no more than a set of medical problems. He concluded by saying that modern society does not know how to deal with death. Throughout this research, I have reflected upon the idea that I (as part of society) do not know how to deal with death. I *do know* how to deal with death – I helped organise my mother's funeral, chose her coffin, liaised with the coroner, planned her wake, and so on. It was not that I could not deal with biological *death*; it was living through a social and ontological *dying process* that, with hindsight, I had difficulty mediating with. Therefore, it is against this background of personal bereavement that I write this study. With the research written in the third person, there is undoubtedly a degree of detachment – but that detachment is for the purposes of professional research. Dark tourism and this

research, on a personal level, has allowed me to gaze upon death and the nature of dying –
and for that reason, I cannot become detached.

VOLUME ONE

Dark Tourism in Contemporary Society

A Theoretical Analysis

Chapter One

Shining Light on Dark Tourism Research

They take planes and fly around, like the great soaring birds who endlessly cross and recross the ocean. Like the albatross, we are looking for our soul. Tourism is a rehearsal for death.

(J.G.Ballard cited in Crashman, 2008: 1)

1.0   Introduction

Deaths, disasters and atrocities in touristic form are becoming an increasingly pervasive feature within the contemporary visitor economy. For the individual who wishes to journey and gaze upon real or recreated death, a plethora of sites, attractions and exhibitions are now emerging across the world to cater to the 'darker side of travel' (Sharpley & Stone, 2009a). Indeed, seemingly morbid practices within tourism vary from people gazing upon sites of brutality at former World War One battlefields of northern France, to visitors purchasing souvenirs of atrocity at Ground Zero, to tourists sightseeing in the ruins of New Orleans (after Hurricane Katrina), or excursionists touring sites of genocide and tragedy such as Auschwitz-Birkenau or the Killing Fields of Cambodia. Consequently, the phenomenon by which people visit, purposefully or as part of a broader recreational itinerary, the diverse range of sites, attractions and exhibitions that offer a (re)presentation of death and human suffering is ostensibly growing within contemporary society. As a result, the rather emotive label of *dark tourism*, and its scholarly sister term of *thanatourism*, has entered academic discourse and media parlance (Seaton, 1996; Foley & Lennon, 1996; Lennon & Foley, 2000). Although this study does not wish to enter into a philosophical debate over the term *dark*, but rather to accept a generally accepted poetic meaning of the term, it is fair to assume that the expression *dark*, as applied to *tourism*, alludes to apparent disturbing or morbid products and experiences within the broader tourism domain. Thus, it is suggested that dark tourism may simply be referred to as 'the act of travel to sites associated with death, suffering or the seemingly macabre' (Stone, 2006:146). Similarly, Foley and Lennon (1997: 55), whilst adding a chronological element, define dark tourism as 'the visitation to any site associated with death, disaster and tragedy in the twentieth century for remembrance, education or entertainment'. Meanwhile, Tarlow (2005:48) acknowledges historical dimensions and identifies dark tourism as 'visitations to places where tragedies or historically noteworthy death has occurred and that continue to impact our lives'. Furthermore, Rojek (1993:85) highlights commercial facets of dark tourism and describes the concept as 'fatal attractions' or 'black spots' and suggests these are 'commercial developments of grave sites and sites in which celebrities or large numbers of people have met with sudden and violent deaths'.

The thesis returns to the definitional debate surrounding dark tourism later, particularly in relation to conceptual 'shades of darkness' or, more specifically, the complex taxonomy of dark sites and experiences from a variety of temporal, spatial and political dimensions (see Chapter 3). Generally, though, the concept of dark tourism, in its various manifestations, has generated a significant amount of academic and media attention over the past decade or so. Certainly, the increasing weight of coverage with regard to dark tourism over the past few years from both press and broadcast media, including news, travel features and guidebooks has been striking (e.g. Adfero Ltd, 2005; Press Trust, 2005; Stone, 2008). As a result, Seaton and Lennon (2004:63) suggest that dark tourism as a contemporary 'leisure activity', has been ratcheted up by the popular press from the status of myth to meta-myth, subsequently allowing the media to 'depict it, not just a genre of travel motivation and attraction, but as a social pathology sufficiently new and threatening to create moral panic'.

The issue of morality and the influence of the media are addressed later. The point to be emphasised here is that, prior to the mid-1990's, dark tourism, as a generic term for travel associated with death, atrocity or disaster, had not previously featured in the academic literature as a specific element of consumption in periodic typologies of tourism. An encyclopaedia entry by Seaton (2000) elaborated the range of sites and places which may be included as dark tourism. Consequently, the rapid acceptance of dark tourism as an academic field of study and a distinct area to scrutinize tourist motivations and meanings is, according to Seaton and Lennon (2004:63), 'rather akin to astronomers agreeing to recognise the existence of a new planet in a solar system, thought to have been pretty comprehensively mapped and delineated'. Ryan (2005) suggests a significant level of research interest has been expressed in dark tourism, whilst Preece and Price (2005:191) observe that 'dark tourism is a relatively new area of research, unrecognized by scholars until the mid-1990's, and many aspects of dark tourism still require further investigation to reveal the intricacies of the phenomenon'. Sharpley and Stone (2009a) also recognize the complexity and multifaceted nature of dark tourism. They argue that dark tourism research within a broader socio-cultural and political framework has remained limited; hence, the literature continues to be eclectic, theoretically fragile and thus inconclusive. Similarly, Seaton and Lennon (2004:81) note there are more questions than answers in relation to dark

tourism, and 'its extent and motivations, and above all the identities of its pursuants, have yet to be revealed'. They go on to suggest that there is clearly a need for a much fuller exploration of the consequences and motivations of dark tourism in both general and micro-populations. Likewise, Reader (2003:2), whilst noting the distinction between dark tourism and the processes of pilgrimage, suggests 'the dynamics through which people are drawn to sites redolent with images of death… and the manner in which they are induced to behave there… [means] that the topic calls out for discussion'.

Consequently, the central tenet of dark tourism, which is *death*, is brought firmly into the realms of dark tourism discourse. Indeed, the researcher elsewhere calls for dark tourism scholarship to be located within a *thanatological* context (Stone, 2005a). In other words, dark tourism research is enlightened by studying the phenomenon within the confines of contemporary society's *perceptions of* and *reactions to* death and dying. In particular, Stone (2005a) advocates that dark tourism research agendas should include critical analyses of psychosocial and emotional aspects of contemporary death and dying and its influences on dark tourism experiences, and vice versa. Thus, this thesis begins that task, in so doing, constructing original theoretical frameworks in which dark tourism may be located. Subsequently, the study empirically grounds key concepts and ideas, whereby results are interpreted and revised frameworks offered. Future research directions are also provided.

1.1 Research Rationale, Aim and Objectives

Seaton (2009a) suggests the origins and transformation of dark tourism lie in traditional travel that has evolved and been shaped by profound shifts in the history of European culture – and which still impacts today. Consequently, he argues three key historical epochs have defined dark tourism in its current Western tradition. In particular:

- *Christianity*, as it evolved between the fourth and sixteenth centuries, and its unique, doctrinal emphasis on fatality – specifically, Seaton points out with reference to the Cross as Christianity's identifying symbol, 'Christianity was the first, and only, world religion to make an instrument of torture and death its corporate logo' (2009: 527);

- *Antiquarianism* and its related *secular-sacred* ideology of national heritage that first emerged in sixteenth century Europe and, which included the recording and subsequent promotion of significant deaths of cultural figures, politicians, artists, and so on, as well as memorials, epitaphs, effigies and ancient burial grounds, and;

- *Romanticism* and its complex nexus of literary, artistic and philosophical ideas that were founded in Britain, France and Germany in the last half of the eighteenth century and through the nineteenth century, and which added to the propensity for secular, death-related travel and, which continues today.

The rationale for this research centres upon the act of modern-day travel to sites of real and recreated death and dying. Crucially, however, the justification for this research revolves around consequential aspects of dark tourism consumption and issues of death and its contemporary contemplation. In short, the purpose of this research is to further the knowledge of dark tourism consumption and to reveal its fundamental interrelationships with contemporary death and dying. The research aim, question and objectives are shown in Table 1.

Research Aim	To appraise dark tourism consumption within society, especially within a context of contemporary perspectives of death and, in doing so, offer an integrated theoretical and empirical critical analysis and interpretation of death-related travel.
Research Question	Within a thanatological context, what fundamental interrelationships exist between visitors and sites that offer a (re)presentation of death, disaster or the seemingly macabre?
Research Objectives	1. To critically evaluate the concept of *death-related travel*, known as dark tourism, and its socio-cultural, and historical origins. 2. To compile a conceptual *typological framework* in which to locate diverse visitor sites of death, disaster and the seemingly macabre. 3. To explore contemporary aspects of *morality* and dark tourism experiences and meanings. 4. To synthesise potential relationships between *mortality* and the contemporary consumption of dark tourism. 5. To compare and contrast a range of dark tourism *empirical experiences* within a framework of society's perceptions of and reactions to morality and mortality.

Table 1: Research Aim, Question and Objectives

1.2   Thesis Structure

The research comprises two key parts. The first part comprises a theoretical analysis, drawing upon extant concepts and interdisciplinary literature. The second part offers an empirical analysis of dark tourism across a multiple case study design, and constructs a narrative that arrives from both ethnographic and survey research. The study is divided into nine chapters and supporting appendices (Figure 1).
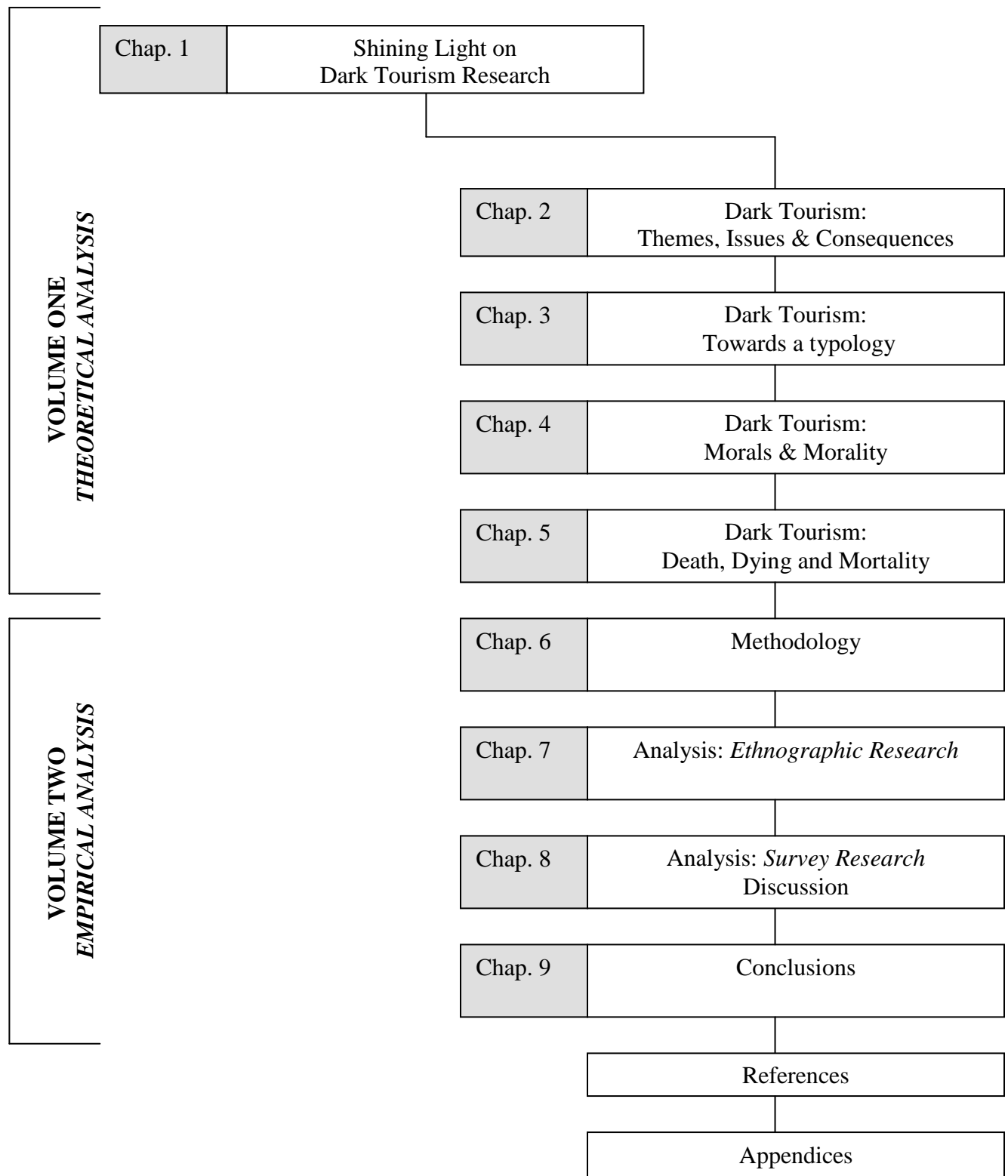
Figure 1: Overall thesis structure

Whilst this introductory chapter broadly establishes the study and its key parameters, Chapter Two begins the task of examining the history of dark tourism and its fundamental position within contemporary society. In so doing, current themes, issues and consequences of dark tourism are critically discussed. Chapter Three syntheses these current themes and constructs a conceptual typological framework in which various dark tourism sites, exhibitions and visitor attractions may be located. Chapter Four examines ethical dilemmas found within dark tourism and broader notions of morality whilst experiencing (re)presented sites of death. Chapter Five concludes the first part of the study by drawing together previous chapters and, in doing so, constructs the underpinning conceptual framework that locates dark tourism consumption within the broader thanatological condition of society. Figure 2 illustrates the theoretical structure of this research.

Literature Review

Construction of Typological Framework

**Ethical Dimensions
of Dark Tourism**

**Thanatological Aspects
of Dark Tourism**
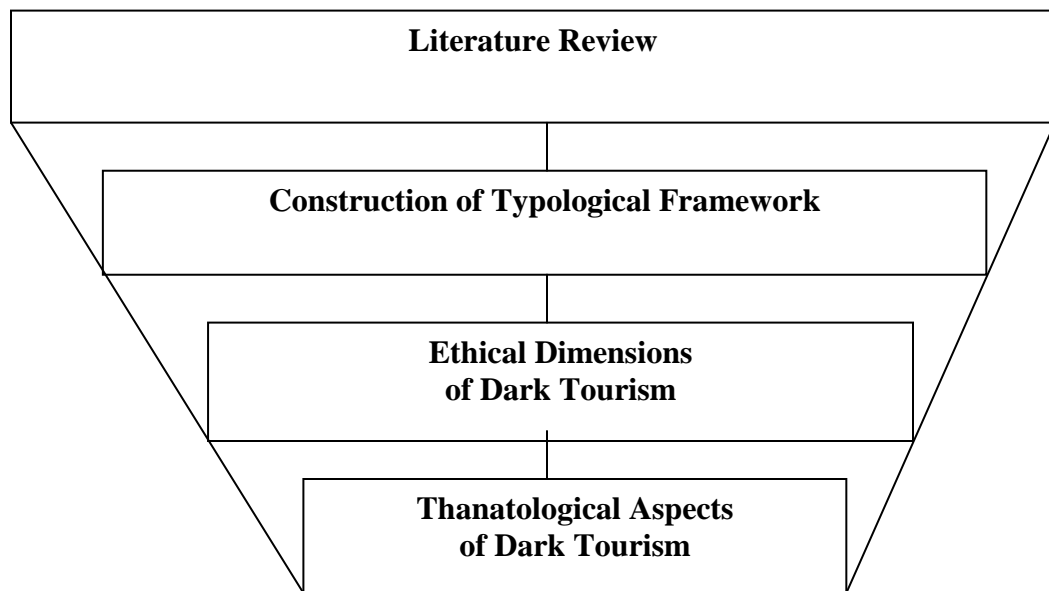
Figure 2: Theoretical Structure

The second part of the thesis (Volume Two) centres upon empirical research processes and outcomes. Chapter Six outlines the research philosophy and methodology, as well as discussing methods and analytical techniques. Chapters Seven and Eight respectively chart empirical results and offer explanations as to key research findings, whilst Chapter Eight also offers discussion with the broader literature and conceptual frameworks. Finally,

Chapter Nine concludes the study by synthesising research findings with theoretical considerations, as well highlighting the research limitations and offering future research directions. In Chapter Nine, a thesis is proposed that addresses the overall research aim.

1.3   Research Publications

As a special note, the publication of numerous academic articles, as well as various international conference presentations, global media consultations and press articles are a direct result of this study. Table 2 highlights nine publication references to illustrate the relationship of various academic articles to specific chapters of this study.

Chapter	Publication
Chapter One – Shining Light on Dark Tourism Research	Stone, P.R. (2005) Consuming dark tourism: a call for research. *eReview of Tourism Research* 3(5) 109-117.
Chapter Two – Dark Tourism: Themes, Issues & Consequences	Stone P. R. and Sharpley R (2008) Consuming Dark Tourism: A Thanatological Perspective. *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol 35(2): 574-595. Sharpley, R. & Stone, P.R. (2009) Representing the Macabre: Interpretation, Kitschification and Authenticity. In R.Sharpley and P.R.Stone (eds) *The Darker Side of Travel: The Theory and Practice of Dark Tourism*, Aspect of Tourism Series, Bristol: Channel View Publications: 109-128.
Chapter Three – Dark Tourism: Towards a Typology	Stone, P.R. (2006) A Dark Tourism Spectrum: towards a typology of death and macabre related tourist sites, attractions and exhibitions. *Tourism: An Interdisciplinary International Journal* 54(2) ,145-160.
Chapter Four – Dark Tourism: Morals & Morality	Stone, P.R. (2009) Dark Tourism: Morality and New Moral Spaces. In R.Sharpley and P.R.Stone (eds) *The Darker Side of Travel: The Theory and Practice of Dark Tourism*, Aspect of Tourism Series, Bristol: Channel View Publications: 56-72.
Chapter Five – Dark Tourism: Death, Dying and Mortality	Stone P. R. and Sharpley R (2008) Consuming Dark Tourism: A Thanatological Perspective. *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol 35(2): 574-595. Stone, P.R. (2009a) Making Absent Death Present: Consuming Dark Tourism in Contemporary Society. In R.Sharpley and P.R.Stone (eds) *The Darker Side of Travel: The Theory and Practice of Dark Tourism*, Aspect of Tourism Series, Bristol: Channel View Publications: 23-38.
Chapter Seven & Eight – Analysis & Findings, Discussion	Stone, P.R. (2009) 'It's a Bloody Guide': Fun, Fear and a Lighter Side of Dark Tourism at the Dungeon Visitor Attractions, UK. In R.Sharpley and P.R.Stone (eds) *The Darker Side of Travel: The Theory and Practice of Dark Tourism*, Aspect of Tourism Series, Bristol: Channel View Publications: 167-185.
Chapter Nine – Conclusions	Stone, P.R. (2010) Dark Tourism Experiences: Mediating between Life and Death. In R.Sharpley and P.R.Stone (eds) *Tourist Experiences: Contemporary Perspectives*, London: Routledge. Sharpley, R. & Stone, P.R. (2009) Life, Death and Dark Tourism: Future Research Directions. In R.Sharpley and P.R.Stone (eds) *The Darker Side of Travel: The Theory and Practice of Dark Tourism*, Aspect of Tourism Series, Bristol: Channel View Publications: 247-251.

Chapter Two

Dark Tourism:
Themes, Issues & Consequences

…if we started worrying about upsetting people or giving
kids nightmares, we would have to pack up and take up
tiddlywinks…. Let's face it, 99% of people go to Grand
Prix racing hoping there's going to be a crash…

(Anon cited in Dann, 1998:11)

2.0   Introducing Dark Tourism Themes, Issues & Consequences

8 September 1934: the SS Morro Castle, named after the fortress that guards the entrance to Havana Bay, set sail from New York on 23 August 1930 on her maiden voyage to Cuba. Offering luxury, though affordable, travel as well as a Prohibition-era opportunity for the legal consumption of alcohol, the ship immediately became popular amongst tourists and business travellers alike and, over the next four years, successfully plied the route between New York and Havana. In the early hours of 8 September 1934, however, disaster struck. During the previous evening, as the ship was approaching the eastern seaboard of the USA on the return journey from Havana, Captain Robert Wilmott apparently suffered a heart attack and died in his bath tub and, as a consequence, command passed to the First Officer, William Warms. At 2.45am, fire broke out in the First Class Writing Room and quickly spread, with design faults and questionable crew practices contributing to the conflagration. For a variety of reasons, however, including alleged indecision on the part of officers, the SOS was not sent out until 3.25am, by which time the ship had lost all power and was fully ablaze. Despite the ship's position close to the shore, rescue operations were slow and ineffective and the eventual death toll amounted to 137 passengers and crew out of a total of 549 people on board (Gallagher, 2003; Hicks, 2006).

The devastating fire on SS Morro Castle remains one of America's worst and most controversial peacetime maritime disasters and, at the time, led to significant fire safety improvements in ship design. However, it was also notable for the fact that large numbers of people came to witness the aftermath of the event. Attempts to salvage the ship were unsuccessful and, driven by the wind, the smouldering wreck, with numerous victims still aboard, drifted onto the shore of New Jersey at Asbury Park (Plate 1). Almost immediately, it became a tourist attraction. Spurred on by newspaper and radio reports and special excursion train fares from New York and Philadelphia (Hegeman, 2000), up to a quarter of a million people travelled to view the wreck and, according to press reports at the time, an almost carnival atmosphere prevailed. As Hegeman (2000) observes, 'the scene at the wreck of the Morro Castle was both a spontaneous public festival and a media event. Postcards were printed, souvenirs were sold, and radio broadcasts offered… firsthand

accounts of the scene on board the wreck complete with lurid descriptions of charred corpses'. It was even proposed that the wreck should be permanently moored at Asbury Park as a tourist attraction, although it was eventually towed away to Baltimore to be sold for scrap some six months later.

On the 75th anniversary of the accident, in September 2009, the Ashbury Park Historical Society organised a series of visitor events to commemorate the disaster and unveiled the first ever memorial to victims (Webster, 2009; also Plate 2). Similarly, a current exhibition of the disaster at the Museum of New Jersey Maritime History promotes itself as 'the most extensive Morro Castle shipwreck exhibit ever seen, including: rare photographs, original 1934 video news footage of the disaster; an authenticated life-vest worn by one of the survivors; original Acme News media photos; autographed menus; 1934 newspaper accounts; stateroom keys; rescuer notes; inscribed tokens, rescuer notes and much more' (Museum of New Jersey Maritime History, 2010).

Plate 1: Visitors at the fire damaged SS Morro Castle berthed at Asbury Park, New Jersey, 1934
(Source: Asbury Park Historical Society, 2009)

Plate 2: Marc Mappen, Executive Director of the New Jersey Historical Commission, speaks at the dedication ceremony for a new monument to the S.S. Morro Castle in September 2009
(Source: Webster, 2009)

In short, the brief maritime case study of the SS Morro Castle is an example of how death and disaster, or events that agitate a sense of the macabre, can be manufactured into a (visitor) attraction. In particular, the case has specific characteristics:

- the ordinary and the normal (that is, a ship at sea) is transformed into the extraordinary and the abnormal (in this instance, a ship marooned, helpless and out of context with its primary purpose), with which individuals appear to have an inherent fascination;

- a disaster event that is publicised and perpetuated by media promotion and commentary;

- the commercialization and commodification of disaster manifests itself soon after the event, including attracting individuals to the actual site;

- and, the (selective) commemoration of disasters occurs through either anniversary ceremonies, or with purpose-built visitor attractions and/or exhibitions, or by specific commemorative markers, thus allowing the original disaster to have longevity and to occupy a durable place within the collective conscience;

These points are discussed later in this thesis but, firstly, the maritime disaster case is an examples of a phenomenon that has more recently come to be referred to as 'dark tourism' (Lennon and Foley, 2000). Indeed, for as long as people have been able to travel they have been drawn, purposefully or otherwise, towards sites, attractions or events that are linked in one way or another with disaster, suffering, violence or death (Stone, 2005b). The gladiatorial games of the Roman era, pilgrimages, or attendance at medieval public executions were, for example, early forms of such death-related tourism whilst, as Boorstin (1964) alleges, the first guided tour in England was a rail trip to witness the hanging of two murderers. The tour was arranged in Cornwall in 1838 to take people of Wadebridge by special train to the nearby town of Bodmin. There they witnessed the hanging of two murderers, and 'since the Bodmin gallows were in clear sight of the uncovered station, excursionists had their fun without even leaving the open railway carriages' (Boorstin, 1964:10). In the specific context of warfare, however, Seaton (1999) observes that death, suffering and tourism have been related for centuries (also Smith, 1998; Knox, 2006), citing tourism to the battlefield of Waterloo from 1816 onwards as a notable nineteenth century example of what he terms 'thanatourism'. Additionally, in the nineteenth century, visits to morgues were, as MacCannell (1989) notes, a regular feature of tours of Paris, perhaps a forerunner to the Body Worlds exhibitions in London, Los Angeles, Tokyo and elsewhere that, since the late 1990s, have attracted visitors in their tens of thousands (Body Worlds, 2008). Similarly, the historical precedent of visitors 'gazing' upon the less fortunate in society, similar to Brazilian favelas slum tours of today (Rolfes, 2010), was set by Jack London's 1903 sociological treatise about the abject poverty of London at the turn of the 20th century. In his commentary of social and political failure 'The People of the Abyss', an affluent Edwardian descends into the slums and gazes at the 'under-world':

> I went down into the under-world of London with an attitude of mind which I may best liken to that of the explorer. I was open to be convinced by the evidence of my eyes, rather than by the teachings of those who had not seen, or by the words of those who had seen and gone before. Further, I took with me certain simple criteria with which to measure the life of the under-world. That which made for more life, for physical and spiritual health, was good; that which made for less life, which hurt, and dwarfed, and distorted life, was bad (London, 2004:1).

As considered shortly, the extent to which dark tourism may be considered an historical phenomenon – that is, applicable to sites, attractions or events that pre-date living memory – remains a subject of debate (Wight, 2006; Seaton, 2009a). It is clear, however, that visitors have long been attracted to places or events associated in one way or another with death, disaster and suffering. Equally, there can be little doubt that, over the last half century and commensurate with the remarkable growth in tourism more generally, dark tourism has become both widespread and diverse. In terms of supply, there has been a rapid growth in the provision of such attractions or experiences. Indeed, there appears to be an increasing number of people keen to promote or profit from 'dark' events as tourist attractions, such as the Pennsylvania farmer who offered a $65 per person 'Flight 93 Tour' to the crash site of the United Airlines Flight 93 – one of the hijacked aircraft on '9/11' (Bly, 2003; Sharpley, 2005). Moreover, dark tourism has become more widely recognised as both a form of tourism and a promotional tool with websites, such as www.thecabinet.com, listing numerous dark tourism sites around the world (Dark Destinations, 2007). Similarly, a recent online poll commissioned by the Czech Tourist Board sought to discover, and thus promote, the 'top ten darkest places of interest' within the Czech Republic (Šindeláøová, 2008).

At the same time, there is evidence of a greater willingness or desire on the part of tourists to visit dark attractions and, in particular, sites of death. For example, in August 2002, local residents in the small Cambridgeshire town of Soham in the UK appealed for an end to the so-called 'grief tourism' that was bringing tens of thousands of visitors to their area. Many of these visitors, travelling from all over Britain, had come to lay flowers, to light candles in the local church or to sign books of condolence. Others had simply come to gaze at the community – indeed, it was reported that tourist buses en route to Cambridge or nearby Ely Cathedral were making detours through the town (O'Neill, 2002). All, however, had been drawn to Soham by its association with a terrible – and highly publicized – crime: the abduction and murder of two young schoolgirls. In the same year, Ground Zero in New York attracted three and a half million visitors, almost double the number that annually visited the observation platform of the World Trade Centre prior to 9/11 (Blair, 2002). Interestingly, repeating what had occurred at Asbury Park with the SS Morro Castle

disaster, the site also attracted numerous street vendors 'selling trinkets that run the gamut of taste' (Vega, 2002). Kitsch souvenirs on sale ranged from framed photographs of the burning towers to Osama Bin Laden toilet paper, his picture printed on each square (Lisle, 2004). More generally, evidence suggests contemporary tourists are increasingly travelling to destinations associated with death and suffering. According to one recent report, for example, places such as Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Angola and Afghanistan are experiencing a significant upsurge in tourism demand (Rowe, 2007).

Nevertheless, despite the long history and increasing contemporary evidence of travel to sites or attractions associated with death, it is only relatively and, perhaps, surprisingly recently that academic attention has been focused upon what has collectively been referred to as 'dark tourism' (Foley & Lennon, 1996a). More specifically, the publication of Lennon and Foley's (2000) *Dark Tourism: The Attraction of Death and Disaster* introduced the term to a wider audience, stimulating a significant degree of academic interest and debate. Furthermore, academic interest in the subject area has been greatly augmented by The Dark Tourism Forum (see www.dark-tourism.org.uk), an online facility that promotes scholarly research into dark tourism. At the same time, media interest in the concept of dark tourism continues to grow, the juxtaposition of the words 'dark' and 'tourism' undoubtedly providing an attention-grabbing headline. However, to date, the academic literature remains eclectic and theoretically fragile and, consequently, understanding of the phenomenon of dark tourism remains limited, (though a new book on dark tourism by Sharpley and Stone (2009a) goes some way to addressing this issue). Nonetheless, numerous attempts have been made to define or label death-related tourist activity (e.g. Dunkley, Westwood & Morgan, 2007), whilst many commentators explore and analyse specific manifestations of dark tourism. These range from war museums which adopt both traditional and contemporary museology methods of (re)presentation (Wight & Lennon, 2004), to genocide commemoration visitor sites and the political ideology attached to such remembrance (Williams, 2004). Typically, though, much of the literature is descriptive and 'supply-side comment and analysis' (Seaton & Lennon, 2004; Stone, 2005a); conversely, a demand-side perspective has, for the most part, been notably lacking, although some recent

work has begun to focus on demand-related issues (e.g. Dunkley, 2007; Preece & Price, 2005; Yuill, 2003).

As a result, a number of fundamental questions with respect to dark tourism remain unanswered, not least whether it is actually possible or justifiable to categorise collectively the experience of sites or attractions that are associated with death or suffering as 'dark tourism'. That is, such is the variety of sites, attractions and experiences now falling under the collective umbrella of dark tourism that the meaning of the term has become increasingly diluted and fuzzy. More specifically, it remains unclear whether dark tourism is tourist-demand or attraction-supply driven or, more generally, the manifestation of what has been referred to as a (post)modern propensity for 'mourning sickness' (West, 2004). Other questions are also raised, but go unanswered, in the literature. For example, has there indeed been a measurable growth in 'tourist interest in recent death, disaster and atrocity … in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries' (Lennon & Foley, 2000: 3) or is there simply an ever-increasing supply of 'dark' sites and attractions? Are there degrees or 'shades' of darkness that can be related to either the nature of the attraction or the intensity of interest in death or the macabre on the part of tourists (Stone, 2006; Miles, 2002; Strange & Kempa 2003)? What governance and interpretation issues are raised by labelling sites or attractions as 'dark'? How does the media both promote and perpetuate notions of disaster, and, in turn, what are media influences upon dark tourism? What ethical and moralistic dilemmas are posed by the seemingly (commercial) exploitation of tragedy, grief and atrocity? Moreover, does the popularity of 'dark' sites result from a rudimentary, voyeuristic interest with death, or are there factors and consequences that are more fundamental?

Thus, the overall purpose of this thesis is to address these and other questions, thereby providing a critical analysis of dark tourism. In particular, the study draws upon extant concepts, introduces new theoretical perspectives on the subject, as well as developing a theoretically informed and empirically tested foundation for examining the demand for, and supplies of dark tourism experiences. Moreover, it identifies and explores issues relevant to the development, management and interpretation of dark sites and attractions, focusing in

particular on the relationship between dark tourism and the cultural condition and social institutions of contemporary societies, especially in relation to mortality. The first task, however, is to establish a context for the research through a review of contemporary perspectives on dark tourism. The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to set the scene for the concepts, debates and challenges considered in subsequent chapters.

2.1 Researching Dark Tourism

Arguably, the increasing attention paid to the phenomenon of dark tourism in recent years may, to some extent, be symptomatic of the trend within academic circles to codify specific forms of tourism, or to sub-divide tourism into niche markets and excursions (Novelli, 2005) which, in turn, are often referred to as 'special interest tourism' (McKercher & Chan, 2005). Indeed, special interest tourism 'uses the concept of niche as a counter-point to the seemingly homogenous and undifferentiated mass tourism product' (Stone, 2005:191). Consequently, McKercher (2002) outlines a classification of special interest or niche tourists according, firstly, to the importance of cultural motives in the decision to visit a particular destination or attraction and, secondly, the depth of experience. It is this latter point that concerns this study, although as other studies have demonstrated empirically in a range of tourism settings, different niche tourists engage sites at different levels, some more intensely, some less so (e.g. Kerstetter, Confer, & Bricker, 1998; McIntosh & Prentice, 1999; McKercher & Chow, 2001; McKercher & Chan, 2005). Therefore, this varying level of visitor engagement is also presumed for dark tourism sites (but, see Chapter 8).

Nevertheless, tourism consumption patterns in general, and the growth of niche excursions in particular, are thought to reflect the continuously increasing diversity of recreation interests of the present-day leisure society (Douglas, Douglas & Derret, 2001). This diverse array of vacation and excursion interests, referred to by Opaschowski (2001:1) as 'Das gekaufte Paradies' (the bought paradise) has resulted in a highly segmented tourism market, whereby specific excursions – that is, particular visits to sites, attractions and exhibitions within a broader travel experience – has enabled the tourism industry to increasingly subsume the identity of an *experience industry* (Trauer, 2006). Furthermore, Opaschowski

(2001) suggests that (niche) tourists are seeking emotional stimuli during their excursion visits – they want to buy feelings and not products. In other words, and notwithstanding issues of authenticity, tourists want to experience personally the immaterial qualities, seek ambiance, aesthetics and atmosphere, and look for an experience full of varying intimacies, intensities and complexities (Trauer, 2006).

Moreover, special interest tourism, of which dark tourism may be considered a micro niche (Novelli, 2005), should be viewed as part of an interdisciplinary system of both supply and demand, with the media being conceptualised as a major influencer (Trauer, 2006; McKercher & Chan, 2005). Hence, special interest tourism and the specific excursionary experiences that constitute it, allow for narrative reflections which (re)create myths for and of the individual, helping create meaning and which 'help us to remember that we are heroes in a big human adventure' (Bammel & Bammel, 1992:364). Thus, it is not simply the niche activity and the unfolding of the experience that determines the depth of meaning for the niche tourist, but rather the level of an individual's perception and interpretation of the (tourist) experience. Consequently, for this reason, the study of dark tourism as a form of niche tourism may be considered simply as academic endeavour. Equally, however, dark tourism may also be seen as a specific manifestation of a wider social interest or fascination in death. As suggested earlier, a combination of the words 'dark' or 'grief' with 'tourism', the latter connoting relaxation, escape, hedonism or pleasure, creates an enticing and provocative headline. Thus, dark tourism may also be considered an example of media hype responding to this presumed fascination in death and dying (Walter, 2009).

However, the study of dark tourism is both justifiable and important for a number of reasons. Generally, and as the following section reveals, dark tourism sites and attractions are not only numerous but also vary enormously in a variety of socio-cultural contexts, from 'playful' houses of horror, through places of pilgrimage, such as the graves or death sites of famous people, to the Holocaust death camps or the sites of major disasters, atrocities and genocides. Nevertheless, all such sites or attractions require effective and appropriate development, management, interpretation and promotion. These activities, in

turn, require a fuller understanding of the phenomenon of dark tourism within social, cultural, historical and political contexts.

More specifically, the nature of many dark sites and, in particular, the conflicts they represent or inspire, point to a number of inter-related issues that demand investigation and understanding. These include:

- *Ethical/moral issues:* a question relating to many dark sites and attractions is: is it ethical to develop, promote or offer them for touristic consumption? Significant debate, for example, surrounded the construction of the viewing platform at Ground Zero, enabling casual or even voyeuristic visitors to stand alongside those mourning the loss of loved ones (Lisle, 2004), whilst the proposed construction of a large Tsunami Memorial in the Khao Lak Lamu National Park in Thailand has been highly controversial (Rittichainuwat, 2008). More generally, the rights of those whose death/grief is commoditized or commercialized through dark tourism also represents an important moral dimension deserving consideration.

- *Media/promotional issues:* many dark tourism sites and attractions are, in a sense, 'accidental'. That is, they have not been purposefully created or developed as tourist attractions but have become so for a variety of reasons, such as the fame (or infamy) of people concerned, the events that once occurred there or, perhaps, even the notoriety of a building. Frequently, the popularity of such sites may be enhanced by the marketing and promotional activity of businesses or organisations anxious to profit through tourism; equally, the media frequently plays a role in 'promoting' dark sites (Seaton, 1996). Whatever the case, greater understanding of the relationship between the site and the media and/or promotion is required.

- *Interpretation/political issues:* the interpretation of tourist sites and attractions, in terms of both the manner in which they are presented and the information they convey, has long been the focus of academic attention. However, interpretative issues that relate to dark sites and attractions and their inherent emotive and provocative representations of death and tragedy take on extra dimensions and,

indeed, possibly greater importance. Inevitably, perhaps, greatest attention has been paid to the development and interpretation of Holocaust sites and the dissonance of their (re)presented history (Ashworth, 1996; Ashworth and Hartmann, 2005). However, other dark tourism sites offer the opportunity to write or re-write the history of people's lives and deaths, or to provide particular (political) interpretations of past events. For example, Cooper (2006) explores the way in which Japan's imperial past is interpreted in the context of Japanese battlefield tourism sites (Siegenthaler, 2002). Hence, the political dimensions of commemoration, and how tragedy influences upon the collective conscience is an integral component of dark site design and, thus, deserves consideration.

- *Management/governance issues:* many dark sites and attractions are, by definition, places where individuals or numbers of people met their death, by whatever means. There is, therefore, a need to manage such places appropriately based upon an understanding of, and respect for, the manner of the victim(s) death, the integrity of the site and, where relevant, the rights of the local community. Additionally, appropriate consideration should be given to the meaning or significance of the individual(s) concerned and the place of their death to those wishing to visit. It may be necessary, for example, to control or restrict access to a site. For example, the public are allowed to visit the house and grounds of Althorp, where Princess Diana was born and raised; however, access to her burial place on an island on the estate is not permitted (Blom, 2000). In the extreme, action that is more drastic may be required, such as in the case of 25 Cromwell Street, Gloucester, England, the home of Frederick and Rosemary West and site of multiple murders by the couple. In 1996, following their trial and imprisonment, the house was demolished and the site transformed into a pathway to prevent it becoming a ghoulish shrine (Bennett, 1995; Coughlan, 2004).

- *Socio-cultural/thanatological issues:* many dark sites and attractions, which exist within a plethora of geo-political and socio-cultural contexts, have implications and meanings for the broader cultural condition of society. In particular, contemporary

issues of individualisation, secularisation and the negation of religious institutions and how mortality and morality is both addressed and perceived within society require consideration. Specifically, questions need to be asked of the role dark tourism plays within the broader secularisation of society, especially in relation to how people, both individually and collectively, confront grief and trauma and, subsequently, contemplate death and dying.

To an extent, these issues represent the basic agenda for the rest of this thesis. That is, subsequent chapters address these issues and related topics in more detail, exploring in particular their relevance to understanding the demand for and supply of dark tourism experiences. First, however, it is important to consider the meaning of dark tourism, a question that can be addressed from both descriptive/definitional and conceptual perspectives.

2.2   Dark tourism: diversity, scope and associations

Although it is only in recent years that it has been collectively referred to as dark tourism, travel to places associated with death, disaster and destruction has, as noted earlier, occurred as long as people have been able to travel. In other words, it has always been an identifiable form of tourism (Seaton & Lennon, 2004) and, as participation in tourism, more generally had grown, particularly since the mid-twentieth century, so too has the demand for and supply of dark tourism experiences increased in both scale and scope. Smith (1998), for example, suggests visitor sites associated with war probably constitute 'the largest single category of tourist attractions in the world' (see also Henderson, 2000; Ryan, 2007). Indeed, numerous specialised tour operators, such as Midas Tours and Holts Tours in the UK, offer trips to battlefield sites around the world (Baldwin & Sharpley, 2009). Similarly, guidebooks are available to help the tourist visit war-related sites and attractions. For example, Thompson (2004: xii) provides a detailed guide to the '25 Best World War II Sites' in both Europe and the Pacific and notes 'a battlefield where thousands died isn't necessarily a *good* place, but it's often an important one' (also Stone, 2008). That said, Siegenthaler (2002:1133), in his investigation of tourist guidebook presentations of

Hiroshima and Nagasaki, suggests that 'denial of the war's memory is undoubtedly part of the guide's message'. It is here, within (dark) touristic processes, that containment of (Japanese) war memories occurs and, as a result, ambivalence and the decentring of memories of the atom bombs mark a loss of historical perspective (Siegenthaler, 2002). Tourism processes and memories of war are also recognised by Slade (2003) who suggests Gallipoli, the battlefield where Australia and New Zealand suffered a defeat during World War One, was where both countries, respectively, have their '*de facto* psychological and cultural origins' (Slade, 2003:782). Consequently, Slade (2003:793) advocates Gallipoli tourism has important implications for the construction of nationhood and notions of mythmaking, whereby 'most Australians and New Zealanders who visit Gallipoli are engaged, to some extent, in a journey of discovering who they are, where they came from, and what the meanings of their nations might be in the modern world.' Of course, battlefields across the world are numerous, and some war-sites are not commemorated or commercialized. However, Chronis (2005) recognises how war landscapes, such as those at Gettysburg, the site of one of the bloodiest battles during the American Civil War, can be symbolically transformed and used by service providers and tourists alike to negotiate, define, and strengthen social values of patriotism and national unity. However, given the number of battlefield sites, Hanink and Stutts (2002:707) warn of competing market forces of battlefield visitor sites. In particular, they suggest that a 'battlefield's spatial market potential, its vintage, and the number of casualties that occurred there contribute to its popularity'. Outlining a spatial demand model, they go on to suggest close proximity of one battlefield visitor site to another 'depresses visitation and the sites appear to be competing with one another' (2002:707).

Yet war-tourism attractions, though themselves diverse, are a subset of the totality of tourist sites associated with death and suffering. Reference is frequently made, for example, to specific destinations, such as the Sixth Floor in Dallas, Texas (Foley and Lennon, 1996a), site of one of the most (in)famous assassinations of the twentieth century. Alternatively, reference is often made to specific forms of tourism, such as visits to graveyards and cemeteries (Seaton, 2002), the Holocaust (Ashworth, 1996; Beech, 2000), atrocities (Ashworth & Hartmann, 2005), prisons (Strange and Kempa, 2003; Wilson, 2008; Stone,

2009), slavery-heritage or 'roots tourism' (Dann & Seaton, 2001). However, such is the diversity of death-related attractions, from the 'Dracula Experience' in Whitby, UK or Vienna's Funeral Museum to the sites of 'famous' deaths (James Dean, Buddy Holly, Elvis Presley – see Alderman, 2002) or major disasters (for example, Ground Zero), that a full categorisation is extremely complex.

At the same time, alternative terminology has been applied to the phenomenon. For example, Seaton (1996) refers to death-related tourist activity as 'thanatourism', whilst other labels include 'morbid tourism' (Blom, 2000), 'black-spot tourism' (Rojek, 1993), 'grief tourism' (see www.grief-tourism.com) or as Dann (1994: 61) alliterates, 'milking the macabre'. More specifically, Bristow (2004) introduces the term 'fright tourism', a variation of dark tourism whereby individuals may seek a thrill or shock from the experience. Of course, the 'fright' element of a tourism experience may not always be death-related although, as noted shortly, Dann (1998) suggests that 'dicing with death' – that is, seeking experiences or 'holidays in hell' (O'Rourke, 1988; Pelton, 2003) that challenge tourists or heighten their own sense of mortality – may be considered one reason for participating in dark tourism. Dunkley et al (2007) add to the definitional debate and offer various 'thanatourism categories', including horror tourism, hardship tourism, tragedy tourism, warfare tourism, genocide tourism and extreme thanatourism. The latter category, according to these authors at least, involves a marketable 'live-event' aspect of death and dying, and they cite examples such as the contemporary visitation to private cremations in Bali, or visits to public executions in the Middle East or Asia. However, it is unclear how these rather broad categories have been devised, apart from personal observations, and there is little attempt to ground wider theory into their conceptual framework. As a result, Dunkley et al (2007), with their allocation of labels, have perhaps been culpable of 'oversimplification and the absurd reductionism that obliterates the detail and complexity of a methodology' (Hart, 2003:144).

Nevertheless, a factor common to all these terms or forms of tourism is an association, in one form or another, between a tourism site, attraction or experience and death, disaster or suffering. Consequently, definitions of dark tourism focus on this relationship between

tourism and death and, in turn, help 'explain the world in which we live, [and] to try to understand and interpret specific phenomena at the individual and societal level' (Rosengren, 2000:5). Hence, Tarlow (2005: 48), for example, identifies dark tourism as 'visitations to places where tragedies or historically noteworthy death has occurred and that continue to impact our lives', a definition that aligns dark tourism somewhat narrowly to certain sites and that, perhaps, hints at particular motives. However, it excludes many dark sites and attractions related to, but not necessarily the site of, death and disaster (Miles, 2002). Therefore, for the purposes of this thesis and, as outlined earlier, dark tourism may be defined simply and more generally as the act of travel to sites associated with death, suffering and the seemingly macabre (Stone, 2006).

Of course, such a definition embraces an enormous variety of places and experiences, a consideration of which is well beyond the scope of this research. However, a useful overview of the scope of dark tourism can be provided by summarising Dann's (1998) alliterative and 'post-modernistically playful inventory' (Seaton and Lennon, 2004) of dark tourism (Table 3).

Divisions of 'Dark Tourism'	Sub-Divisions
Perilous places: dangerous destinations from the past and present	• towns of horror • dangerous destinations
Houses of horror: buildings associated with death and horror, either actual or represented	• dungeons of death • heinous hotels
Fields of fatality: areas / land commemorating death, fear, fame or infamy	• bloody battlegrounds • the hell of the Holocaust • cemeteries for celebrities
Tours of torment: tours / visits to attractions associated with death, murder and mayhem	• mayhem and murder • the now notorious
Themed thanatos: collections /museums themes around death and suffering	• morbid museums • monuments to morality

Table 3: A categorisation of dark tourism (adapted from Dann, 1998)

It is immediately evident that numerous examples could be listed under each category; equally, it is evident that the categorisation summarised in Figure 9 is by no means definitive. The important point is, however, that earlier attempts to define or categorise dark tourism lack theoretical foundations and are, hence, largely descriptive. That is, although pointing to the scale and breadth of the phenomenon of dark tourism, little is revealed about the nature of the demand for and supply of dark tourism experiences. In particular, limited attention has been paid to exploring why tourists may be drawn towards sites or experiences associated with death and suffering, and perhaps more importantly, the consequences of doing so.

This is not to say that this issue has been completely overlooked. A number of 'drivers' of dark tourism have been suggested in the literature, varying from a simple morbid curiosity,

through *schadenfreude* – a malicious pleasure in others' misfortune (Seaton and Lennon, 2004), to a collective sense of identity or survival 'in the face of violent disruptions of collective life routines' (Rojek, 1997: 61). More specifically, Tarlow (2005) links the attraction of dark sites with either 'reflexive' or 'restorative' nostalgia, though he too resorts to suggesting a wide variety of potential motives for dark tourism consumption. Meanwhile, Thurnell-Read (2009) highlights how certain tourists, namely young travellers on a budget, engage with and interpret their experiences of visiting a dark tourism site. In particular, he notes how individuals seek to engage actively with Auschwitz, drawing on imaginative devices that are rooted in historical, pedagogical and cinematic influences of the Holocaust. Whilst the study is limited, both in its context and in methodology, Thurnell-Read (2009: 49) does note that 'dark tourism offers a rich ground for exploring the various meanings which suffuse tourism as a social phenomenon and as an experiential practice'. He goes on to suggest that 'dark tourism highlights instances of engagement and meaning which are clearly striven for by many individuals' (2009: 49). Even so, whilst studies such as these are specific to types of tourism and destination, in this case the Holocaust and Auschwitz, and thus by definition are narrow in scope, perhaps the most comprehensive list of 'motivational drivers' of dark tourism, again, is provided by Dann (1998), who identifies eight possible factors. These include the 'fear of phantoms' (i.e. overcoming childlike fears); the search for novelty; nostalgia; the desire to celebrate crime or deviance; a more basic bloodlust; and, as noted above 'dicing with death'. The latter might include visits to specific destinations or, more generally, when travel becomes travail, when tourists place themselves in peril (often, to subsequently recount their 'survival'). However, as Dann (1998) observes, these categorisations are largely descriptive and may be related to specific attractions, destinations or activities rather than motivations of individual tourists.

Nevertheless, academic interest in dark tourism in recent years has resulted in increasingly theoretically informed perspectives on the subject. This has not only enabled the deconstruction of many of the broad assumptions surrounding dark tourism, but has also provided both a framework for developing our understanding of the phenomenon and a foundation for further conceptual and empirical analysis.

2.3   Dark tourism: theoretical perspectives

Reference has already been made to the origins of the term 'dark tourism', first coined by Foley and Lennon (1996a,b) in a special issue of the *International Journal of Heritage Studies* and, subsequently, as the title of a book that arguably remains the most widely cited study of the phenomenon (Lennon & Foley, 2000). Their work was not, however, the first to focus upon public (re)presentations of dying and grief, or the interpretation of death, whether violent, untimely or otherwise. Indeed, within the discipline areas of sociology, anthropology, cultural and literature studies, museology, or art and architecture, the association between death, dying and suffering and its depiction within culture and society has long been a focus of attention. Certainly, within the arts, death has long played a pivotal role in the portrayal of both life and life-end. Consequently, through music, poetry, or paintings of death, one sees not only conceptions of death but also the cultural styles with which the event is anticipated and met. Indeed, the depiction of death within the arts reveals people's sense of themselves and, as Kearl (2009) notes, 'art is one sure defence against time, against that dumbfounding piece of information that life has a temporal end'. The artistic depiction of life-end is summarised well by the artist Archibald MacLeish:

> It is when one first sees the horizon as an end that one first begins to see... Ends are the hardest things in the world to see - precisely because they aren't things, they are the ends of things. And yet they are wonderful. What would life be without them! If we didn't die there would be no works - not works of art certainly, the only ones that count… Death is the perspective of every great picture ever painted and the underbeat of every measurable poem...
> (Kearl, 2009: 1).

As with the arts, museology has a history of exhibiting multifarious and contentious topics and taboos, including death and dying. For instance, Macdonald (1996:167), in his article *Museums and Controversy: What Can We Handle?, asked* the question 'controversy – can museums handle it?' The answer, accordingly to Macdonald at least, was invariably 'yes'; nevertheless, a debate opened and centred upon taboo representations within an otherwise traditional and conservative museological environment and culture (Williams, 2001; Ellison, 2003). Thus, according to Cameron (2003:2), conventional 'museums now exist in a cultural, social and political context of contestation,' as do non-conventional (dark)

heritage visitor attractions and tourist sites. In particular, sites associated with war and atrocities, as highlighted earlier, have long been considered within a broader heritage tourism context, especially from an interpretative perspective. For example, Uzzell (1992) argues for the 'hot' interpretation of war and conflict sites (interpretation that is as intense or passionate as the site/event) as a means of conveying the 'true' significance or meaning of events to visitors. Meanwhile, Tunbridge and Ashworth's (1996) subsequent work on 'dissonant heritage' (also, Ashworth, 1996) develops an important conceptual framework for the management of such sites. Indeed, the challenge of heritage dissonance is, perhaps, most starkly evident in the context of dark tourism, particularly that associated with the heritage of atrocity (Ashworth, 1996). Dissonant heritage is concerned with the way in which the past, when interpreted or represented as a tourist attraction, may, for particular groups or stakeholders, be distorted, displaced or disinherited. As Ashworth (1996) states, 'atrocity heritage is both a highly marketable combination of education and enjoyment and a powerful instrument for the transference of political or social messages'. Inevitably, then, conflicts arise between interested groups, representing significant challenges for the managers of atrocity-tourism sites – for Ashworth, the dramatic increase in tourism to the Kazimierz district of Kraków in Poland (importantly, directly related to Steven Spielberg's 1993 film 'Schindler's List') is a powerful example .

Though contemporaneous with Foley and Lennon's (1996) work and, indeed, addressing similar issues relating to the management and manipulation of atrocity sites, Tunbridge and Ashworth's work on dissonant heritage does not refer more broadly to dark tourism. Nevertheless, the interpretative / dissonance theme remains central to a number of studies of dark sites. For example, Wight and Lennon (2007) examine selective interpretation within particular dark heritage sites in Lithuania, suggesting that 'moral complexities' ensure that important epochs remain unchallenged and un-interpreted in the nation's collective commemoration of the past. Similarly, Muzaini et al (2007), assessing historical accuracy and interpretation at the Fort Siloso visitor attraction in Singapore, argue that dark tourism privileges the 'visual' and the 'experiential' over historical rigour. Additionally, dissonance remains the central theme of Ashworth and Hartmann's (2005) recent collection on atrocity tourism. Moreover, Sharpley (2009a:163) offers a conceptual model of dark

heritage governance, which provides a 'basis for encouraging harmony, reconciliation, understanding or learning (or reducing the potential for dissonance) through a more inclusive memorialisation and interpretation of dark or tragic pasts'.

To return to the origins and development of academic interest and research in dark tourism, the notion of dark attractions was first introduced by Rojek (1993), who proposes the concept of 'Black Spots'. He introduces his analysis by referring to the hordes of sightseers flocking to disaster sites, such as the shores of Zeebrugge in 1987 (the capsizing of the ferry Herald of Free Enterprise) and Lockerbie, Scotland (the crash site of Pan Am 103) in 1988. Interestingly, these responses are similar to that following the maritime calamities discussed earlier in Blackpool and New York. Rojeck goes on to discuss three different examples of Black Spots – the annual pilgrimage to the place where James Dean died in a car crash in 1955, the annual candlelight vigil in memory of Elvis Presley at Graceland in Tennessee and the anniversary of JFK's assassination in Dallas, Texas. These he refers to as postmodern spectacles, repeated reconstructions that are dependent on modern audio-visual media for their continued popularity (as considered below, and a fundamental underpinning of Lennon and Foley's thesis). Other attractions, such as national and metropolitan cemeteries, are categorised as 'nostalgic' sites and it is only later that he goes on to distinguish disaster sites as being 'analytically distinct from Black Spots as sensation sites' (Rojek, 1997:63). A similar distinction is made by Blom (2000) who defines 'morbid tourism' as, on the one hand, tourism that 'focuses on sudden death and which quickly attracts large numbers of people' and, on the other hand, 'an attraction-focused artificial morbidity-related tourism'. Thus, the concept of dark tourism is at once rendered more complex by a number of variables, including:

- the immediacy and spontaneity of 'sensation' tourism to dark sites of contemporary death and disaster compared with premeditated visits to organised sites or events related to near and /or distant historical occurrences;
- the distinction between purposefully constructed attractions or experiences that interpret or recreate events or acts associated with death, and 'accidental' sites (that

is, those sites, such as churches, graveyards or memorials that have become tourist attractions 'by accident');

- the extent to which an 'interest' in death – to witness the death of others, to dice with death in dangerous places, to learn about the death of famous people, and so on – is the dominant reason for visiting dark attractions; and

- why and how dark sites/experiences are produced or supplied – for example, for political purposes, for education, for entertainment or for economic gain.

These issues are considered shortly but, to return to the work of Foley and Lennon, their use of the term 'dark tourism' relates primarily to 'the presentation and consumption (by visitors) of real and commodified death and disaster sites' (1996a), a broad definition later refined by their assertion that dark tourism is 'an intimation of post-modernity' (Lennon and Foley, 2000: 11; also Muzaini et al, 2007). That is, firstly, interest in and the interpretation of events associated with death is to a great extent dependent on the ability of global (media) communication technology to instantly report them and, subsequently, repeat them ad infinitum (hence time-space compression). As contemporary tourism has become 'dedifferentiated', perhaps an indication of the 'blurring' between touristic experiences and those of the everyday, the media has essentially brought 'death into our living rooms' (Lennon & Foley, 2000; Schofield, 1996). Consequently, as individuals become 'emotionally invigilated' by the media (Walter *et al*., 1995), especially the news media, and thus influenced by both real and pseudo representations of the macabre, it could be argued death has become a commodity for contemporary consumption (Lennon & Foley, 2000). It could also be argued that individuals may simply wish to seek to affirm the validity of macabre or disaster events, which have been initially viewed through 'media incursions' (Schofield, 1996). Of course, whilst the (post)modern media is perhaps undoubted in its influence upon dark tourism, both in its production and consumption, Walter (2009) argues that the media is simply a contemporary 'mediating institution' which allows for death to be brought firmly back into the individual and collective consciousness. Therefore, the media not only informs the expectations of what 'dark tourists' will see, in

other words, the morbid tourist gaze (after Urry, 2002), but also, and perhaps more importantly, begins a process of contemporary mortality contemplation.

Secondly, Lennon and Foley (2000) claim that most dark tourism sites challenge the inherent order, rationality and progress of modernity (as does the concept of post-modernity). In particular, grand narratives and strategies of the modern period have, allegedly, been called into question and scrutinised by dark tourism sites (see Best and Kellner, 2001). For instance, the Holocaust with its ability to draw upon modern methods of planning and industry for wholesale execution and destruction is illustrated well by Holocaust sites and exhibitions throughout the world. However, it is this very (public) illustration that challenges the rationality and progress of modernity, and as a result, introduces a sense of doubt and anxiety (Lennon & Foley, 2000). Thirdly, at most sites, according to Lennon and Foley (2000), the boundaries between the message (educational, political) and their commercialisation as tourist products has become increasingly distorted. Consequently, the post-modern tourist or 'post-tourist' (Feifer, 1985) 'increasingly accepts the commodified world and therefore does not seek authentic values' (Blom, 2000:31). However, in the case of dark tourism where (macabre) fantasy and (tragic) reality may be interwoven (after Nuryanti, 1996), 'history is increasingly disconnected from the lived experiences of the individual' and 'the present is colonized by images valued solely for their capacity to distract and entertain' (Schwartz, 1998:65).

Hence, for Lennon and Foley, because of some rather strict, self-imposed parameters, attractions based on events that neither took place 'within the memories of those still alive to validate them' (2000:12) nor induce a sense of anxiety about modernity *do not* qualify as dark tourism. Thus, for these authors, dark tourism is a chronologically modern (i.e. twentieth century onwards), primarily western phenomenon based upon (for reasons they do not justify) non-purposeful visits due to 'serendipity, the itinerary of tour companies or the merely curious who happen to be in the vicinity' (2000: 23). As Reader (2003) suggests, this lack of attention to motivation in general and an evident reluctance to accept that tourists may positively desire 'dark' experiences, and more importantly, the consequences of doing so, overlooks an essential dimension of the study of dark tourism.

Lennon and Foley's temporal positioning of dark tourism as a modern or 'within living memory' phenomenon remains, as observed earlier, an issue of contention with the literature. For example, Ryan and Kohli's (2006) study of the 'buried village' in New Zealand – the former premier tourist village of Te Wairoa that served as a base for visiting the nearby Pink and White Terraces and that, in 1886, was buried in ash and mud following an eruption of Mt. Tarawera – concurs with Lennon and Foley (2000) that dark tourism is a modern phenomenon. That is, the experiences of contemporary tourists to the site are multifaceted and not predominantly related to the disaster in 1886 (but, see Smith & Croy (2005) for a counter-argument). Others, of course, assert that the phenomenon of dark tourism has a long, identifiable history. Beech (2000), for example, asserts that military buildings in particular have long been tourist attractions. To some extent, this debate is underpinned by the distinction between dark tourism supply and demand. That is, both Rojek and Lennon and Foley focus primarily on the site and contemporary methods of repeated representation whereas, as explored later, visitors' experiences may not necessarily be determined by the recentness of the death-related events associated with the site. That said, however, visitors' experiences may be influenced by the perceived relevancy of the death/disaster event being (re)presented.

This is certainly the position adopted by Seaton (1996), who argues that dark tourism has a long history, emerging from what he refers to as a 'thanatoptic tradition' (i.e. the *contemplation* of death) that dates back to the Middle Ages but which intensified during the Romantic period of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. He cites a number of attractions, including graves, prisons, and public executions and, as mentioned earlier, the battlefield of Waterloo to which tourists flocked from 1816 onwards. Seaton (1996) also suggests the destination of Pompeii, site of the one of the greatest volcanic eruptions in history, was 'the greatest thanatoptic travel destination of the Romantic period' (Seaton, 1996). He goes on to argue that dark tourism is the 'travel dimension of thanatopsis' (hence thanatourism), defined as 'travel to a location wholly, or partially, motivated by the desire for actual or symbolic encounters with death, particularly, but not exclusively, violent

death' (Seaton, 1996:1). Importantly and, again, challenging Lennon and Foley's position, Seaton also proposes that:

- dark tourism or thanatourism is essentially a behavioural phenomenon, defined by the tourist's motives as opposed to the particular characteristics of the attraction or destination, and

- thanatourism is not an absolute form; there exists a *'continuum of intensity'* dependent upon the motive(s) for visiting a site and the extent to which the interest in death is general or person-specific. Thus, visits to disaster sites such as Ground Zero are a 'purer' form of thanatourism (as long as the visitor was not related to a victim) than, say, visiting the grave of a dead relative.

Based on this behavioural perspective, Seaton suggests five categories of dark travel activities:

- Travel to witness public enactments of death – though public executions now occur in relatively few countries, Rojek's (1997) sensation tourism at disaster sites or Dunkley et al's (2007) extreme thanatourism may fall under this heading.

- Travel to see the sites of individual or mass deaths after they have occurred. This embraces an enormous variety of sites, from battlefields (e.g. Gallipoli), death camps (e.g. Auschwitz) and sites of genocide (e.g. Cambodia's 'killing fields') to places where celebrities died (such as the site of James Dean's death in a car crash referred to above), the sites of publicised murders (e.g. the California house where Nicole Simpson, the estranged wife of O.J. Simpson, was found stabbed to death in 1994), or the homes of infamous murderers.

- Travel to memorials or internment sites, including graveyards, cenotaphs, crypts and war memorials. The reasons for such visits are diverse, from an interest in brass rubbing or epitaph collection (Seaton, 2002) to pilgrimages to resting places of the famous, Père Lachaise cemetery in Paris being an oft-quoted example.

- Travel to see evidence or symbolic representations of death at unconnected sites, such as museums containing weapons of death (e.g. the Royal Armouries in Leeds,

UK) or attractions that reconstruct specific events or activities. As Dann (1998) observes, these 'morbid museums' may focus on selected themes and, thus, be 'less concerned with historical accuracy'.

- Travel for re-enactments or simulation of death. As Seaton (1996) suggests, this originally took the form of plays or festivals with a religious theme though, over the last century, 'secular derivations', such as the re-enactment of famous battles by groups or societies, have become increasingly popular.

Seaton (2009a) also confirms that, although 'thanatourism' has a long history, it has become increasingly popular over the last two centuries. Importantly, and reflecting Lennon and Foley's (2000) position, he suggests the role of the media has been central to this growth in tourism to sites and attractions associated with death. This is principally through increasing the geographical specificity of murder and violent death and, more recently, through global communication technology that transmits events almost as they happen into people's homes around the world.

2.4   Chapter Two Summary

Generally, then, two distinct bases for its analysis are evident in the emergent work on dark tourism. On the one hand, Seaton explores dark tourism, or thanatourism, as a behavioural phenomenon, pointing to the existence of the 'dark tourist' or 'thanatourist'. Thus, for Seaton, thanatourism is a form of tourism consumption. On the other hand, significant attention is paid to dark sites or attractions – the objects of dark tourism consumption in general, and their definition, interpretation and management in particular. In either case, however, little attempt is made to delve beneath the surface of these issues, to explore differing approaches to and meanings of both dark tourism demand and supply. More specifically, dark tourism, in its numerous forms and various guises, is evidently a function of both demand and supply (Miles, 2002). Moreover, given the complex, multi-dimensional nature of dark tourism, there is a need to consider both demand and supply, and the relationship between the two in more detail. However, before the demand or consumption of dark tourism, and its consequential interrelationships with the wider cultural condition of

society may be examined, it is important for such a relatively new academic subject to identify those objects of consumption. In other words, whilst the concept of dark tourism has largely been defined in broad terms, as noted earlier, the *typological* and conceptual foundations of dark tourism have yet to be extracted and interrogated. Therefore, the next chapter builds a conceptual framework of dark tourism supply. This is not only important to locate conceptually particular types of dark tourism sites, attractions and exhibitions, but also perhaps more importantly and, as subsequent chapters will reveal, to create a systematic process to reveal and identify specific types of consumption and its consequents.

Chapter Three

Dark Tourism:
Towards a Typology

…if a dark tourism continuum of intensity does exist,
then we may all travel to the edge of darkness.

(Stone, 2007a: 1)

3.0   Typological foundations: a need for dark tourism classification

A realistic typology, that is, the systematic classification of characteristics or traits in common, is essential if dark tourism is to be explained, understood and, indeed, predicted. If this is combined with other factors, such as the motivational and/or consequential aspects of dark tourism visitation, then a broad foundation for understanding the phenomenon of dark tourism may be provided. Whilst some attempts have been made within the literature to formulate dark tourism typologies, as revealed shortly, a number of limitations remain of tourism and tourist typologies generally and, which may have direct bearing upon any specific dark tourism typology. These limitations include:

- Most general tourist typologies 'are static and do not take into account variations in tourist behaviour or experience over time' (Sharpley, 1999:124). Thus, the static nature of typologies ensures a notion of stagnation and, as a result, constrains both people and sites to particular categories, regardless of maturity or product life cycle. In short, it is evident that much more dynamism, mobility and 'fluidity' should be incorporated in any conceptual typology, allowing categories of both people and place to move between classifications, according to temporal, spatial, ideological or motivational aspirations. For instance, when Princess Diana was killed in a road accident in Paris in 1997, 'mass floral shrines' soon appeared at places such as Kensington Palace in London. These floral memorials quickly became a focal point for other 'pilgrim-like' visitors to lay their own offering of flowers, or for them to simply gaze and contemplate the tragedy. However, within a relatively short period, the informal floral shrines had been removed and structured fee-paying exhibitions, such as the one at Althorp House, emerged to commemorate the life and death of Princess Diana. Hence, it is feasible that the same individuals who may have been classified by the media as 'pilgrims' at Kensington Palace, became 'tourists' at Althorp House; yet whilst the temporal and spatial dimensions of the place and event may have changed, the context remained the same, that is, the death (and life) of a particular celebrity figure. Thus, Lowyck et al (1992:28) argue, it 'must be questioned whether it makes sense at all to divide people into different types without taking into account their full life spans'.

- Sharpley (1999:124) suggests that 'most typologies are isolated from the wider social context of the tourist'. As a dark tourism example, visitors to Ground Zero may simply wish to validate the tragic events of 9/11 through consuming the actual place (experience) in New York; however, some visitors, particularly Americans, may wish to reaffirm their cultural and national identity by visiting places such as Ground Zero. It is here where both the social and political differences are identified, and which any (fluidic) typology needs to address and incorporate.

- Many general typologies, especially those concerned with tourist roles and behaviour, employ various terms to describe a greater or lesser number of classifications (Sharpley, 1999). However, whilst in the absence of a universal set of parameters to incorporate all types of tourism and tourist roles, scholars are often culpable of creating descriptions and classifications of 'different' types of tourism and tourists according to their own research agenda or sphere of professional interest. Thus, Sharpley (1999: 125) notes that 'some typologies, though looking different, say the same thing', and it is important, for a subject such as dark tourism, which remains in its analytical infancy, does not fall victim to any future 'typological surfeit'.

- Finally, tourist and tourism typologies tend to be *etic*; in other words, classifications tend to reflect a particular scholar's point of view, values and perspective, rather than focusing on the research object (that is, people and/or place), or in sociological terminology, the *emic*. To address this issue, future dark tourism typological research should adopt methodologies that are based upon empirical findings. However, that does not suggest conceptual typological frameworks have less value; only that conceptual frameworks require operationalising and testing at some point in order to generate a greater sense of rigour and validity.

Consequently, because of these issues, Sharpley (1999:125) argues that whilst typologies tend to be descriptive, yet interesting in terms of highlighting the diversity of tourism types,

they 'fail to be of direct relevance to a better understanding of the demand for tourism'. The important point, therefore, is that in order to locate the consumer – ultimately, to understand better particular consumption issues and consequences – we first need to reveal the locales and supply of dark tourism objects. The rest of this chapter is dedicated to this task, drawing upon extant concepts within the literature and, subsequently, constructing a new typological framework for the study of dark tourism. Firstly, however, an overview of the dark tourism typological debate now follows.

3.1   Dark Tourism Typologies: concepts and debates

Developing Seaton's (1996) notion of a 'continuum of intensity', reflecting the extent to which an interest in death is general rather than person specific, there evidently exists an almost infinite variety of dark tourism forms. Undoubtedly, morbid curiosity, voyeurism or 'schadenfreude' may be a principal driver of tourism to certain dark sites, such as visits to Rojek's (1997) 'sensation' disaster sites. For example, Cole (2000:214) argues that 'there can be little doubt that an element of voyeurism is central to 'Holocaust tourism', whereby it is the ultimate rubbernecker's experience of passing by and gazing at someone else's tragedy'. Conversely, at other sites, an interest in death may be minimal or non-existent or the association with death may be of little relevance. For example, it may be argued that the thousands of visitors who annually gaze upon William Wordsworth's grave at Grasmere in the English Lake District are more interested in his life and poetry, not his death. Similarly, the draw of the Taj Mahal in India is most likely to be its iconic status rather than its function as a tomb (but, see Edensor, 1998). Moreover, there may be a variety of motivations amongst different tourists to the same site. Therefore, the existence of different *'shades of darkness'* with respect to tourists' consumer behaviour and, indeed, to various dark tourism suppliers may occur (Stone, 2006; Jamal & Lelo, 2010). Hence, in developing a typology of dark tourism consumption, Sharpley (2005) draws upon Holt's (1995) earlier typology of consumption practices, in which four 'metaphors' of consumption are proposed. Applying these to dark tourism in particular, Sharpley (2005) suggests varying 'shades' of dark tourism emerge, namely dark tourism as experience, play, integration, and as classification.

3.1.1 *Dark tourism as experience:*

A wide variety of dark tourism consumption practices may seen as being defined by or related to the social world of the tourist; that is, dark tourism experiences may be consumed in order to give some phenomenological meaning to tourists' own social existence. Included in this category are visits to: war cemeteries/memorials; battlefields; other war-related museums or attractions, such as the Death Railway and Khwae (Kwai) Bridge at Kanchanaburi in Thailand; holocaust sites; the sites of assassinations – Dallas (JFK) or Sveavägen in Stockholm, where Olof Palme was shot dead in 1986; and, the sites of disasters (though some time after the event). Thus, rather than the manner of death, it is the meaning of individual/mass death that is fundamental to the experience. Such forms of dark tourism consumption fall, arguably, around a central to 'darker' position on the continuum. This category also embraces implicitly paler 'fantasy' experiences, such as the 'Grave Line' tour in Hollywood where the interest is more in the lifestyle (and death) of celebrities (Ash, 1988; Barrier, 1996).

3.1.2 *Dark tourism as play:*

Representing 'paler' experiences, consumption as play focuses upon the shared, communal consumption of dark tourism sites or experiences. That is, although it is the death of an individual or group of people, that is the initial driver, it is the collective celebration, remembrance or mourning that is the dominant factor. Thus, dark tourism becomes pilgrimage, or a journey followed by the experience of 'communitas', either at 'one-off' events such as the funeral of Princess Diana or at annual celebrations (for example, the anniversary of Elvis Presley's death at Graceland). Such play may also be sensed rather than actual, inasmuch as an individual pilgrimage to, say, the grave of a celebrity is given extra meaning by the knowledge that many others have shared, and will share, the same experience.

3.1.3 *Dark tourism as integration:*

There are two levels (and shades) of dark tourism as integration. On the one hand, and with evident links to the notion of consumption as fantasy, tourists may integrate themselves into the object of consumption, the fascination not being in death itself but the broader

context within which death occurs. Henderson (2000), for example, cites the example of the Cu Chi tunnels near Ho Chi Minh city in Vietnam, where it is possible to crawl through the tunnels used to great effect by the Viet Cong and to fire replica AK-47 rifles on a nearby firing range, enabling tourists to 'become', temporarily, a soldier. On the other hand, the darkest or most intense form of dark tourism is where tourists seek to integrate themselves with death, either through witnessing violent or untimely deaths (travelling, for example to the scene of disasters or murders) or, in the extreme perhaps, travelling in the knowledge or expectation of death. In the former case, Dann (1998) refers to tours organised to Sarajevo during the Balkan conflict, the motivation for which may have been status enhancement or, perhaps, witnessing the death and destruction associated with war. In the latter case, the practice of terminally ill people travelling to Switzerland to take advantage of the services offered by Dignitas, an organisation that assists legal euthanasia, could be regarded as the most intense form of dark tourism (Bunyan, 2003).

3.1.4 Dark tourism as classification:

Travel has long been a marker of social status – the history of tourism is little more than the story of how tourists have sought (and continue to seek) social status through emulating the touristic practices of others (Urry, 2003). In context of dark tourism, such status may be sought through travelling to places or undertaking forms of travel (and, in either case, surviving to tell the tale) that are dangerous for the tourist. For example, some years ago, El Salvador was considered a particularly perilous destination for backpackers, with those having been there anxious to wear 'I survived El Salvador' T-shirts. Equally, visits to dark tourism sites or attractions in more exotic destinations, such as the 'burning Ghats' at Varanasi in India or the 'Killing Fields' of Cambodia, may be motivated more by the potential status of having visited such locations rather than any specific fascination with death. Thus, this form of consumption falls towards the paler end of the dark tourism continuum.

3.2   Shades of Dark Tourism: a matrix approach

Inevitably, the above analysis is open to criticism, particularly as different tourists may consume any dark tourism site in different ways. However, Sharpley (2005) also proposes a 'continuum of purpose' of supply of dark tourism attractions or experiences. These vary from 'accidental' supply (that is, places that have become tourist attractions 'by accident') to supply that is directly intended to exploit, for profit or otherwise. Consequently, it becomes possible to construct a matrix of dark tourism demand and supply (Figure 3).

Demand
(palest)

Pale tourism   *Grey tourism supply*

Supply
('accidental')   Supply
                                          (purposeful)

Grey tourism demand   *Black tourism*

Demand
(darkest)
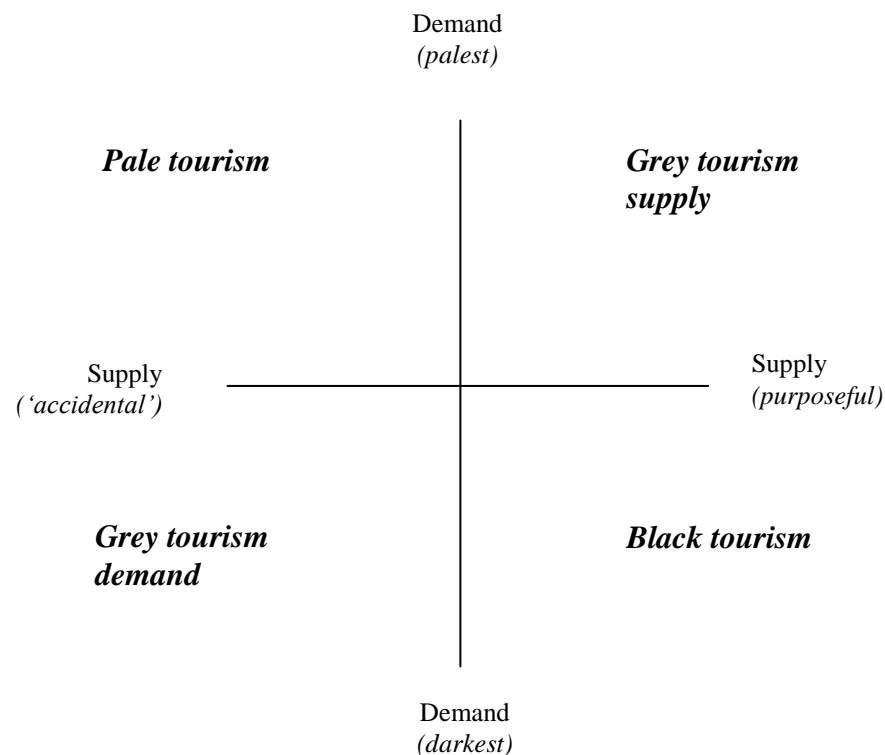
Figure 3: A matrix of dark tourism
(Sharpley, 2005)

Within this matrix, dark tourism attractions or experiences are measured by the extent to which both a fascination with death is a dominant consumption factor and the supply is purposefully directed towards satisfying this fascination. As a result, Sharpley (2005) identifies four possible 'shades' of dark tourism:

- *Pale tourism* – minimal or limited interest in death when visiting sites unintended to be tourist attractions.
- *Grey tourism demand* – tourist with a fascination with death visiting unintended dark tourism sites.
- *Grey tourism supply* – sites intentionally established to exploit death but attracting visitors with some, but not a dominant, interest in death.
- *Black tourism* – in effect, 'pure' dark tourism, where a fascination with death is satisfied by the purposeful supply of experiences intended to satisfy this fascination.

Within these shades, it is possible to locate specific attractions or experiences. For example, the 'Flight 93' tour referred to earlier in this thesis may be most appropriately placed in the 'black' quadrant, whilst visits to the graves of well-known people (motivated by an interest in their lives rather than their death) may be categorised as pale tourism. However, just as the consumption of dark tourism experiences may vary, particularly with respect to the intensity of interest in or meaning of the death-associations, so too can it be argued that, given the diversity of dark tourism attractions, there also exist various forms of supply. In other words, as dark tourism products are multifaceted, complex in design and purpose and diverse in nature, 'the term "dark" does not readily expose the multi-layers of dark tourism supply' (Stone, 2006:150). That is, a number of fundamental issues remain, not least whether it is actually possible or justifiable to collectively categorise a diverse range of sites, attractions and exhibitions that are associated with death and the macabre as 'dark tourism'. Alternatively, it is questionable whether identifiable degrees or 'shades' of darkness can be attributed to a particular type of dark tourism supplier (Miles, 2002; Strange & Kempa, 2003; Sharpley, 2005). Evidently, in order to address these questions, it is necessary to possess some understanding of how and why particular 'dark' visitor sites, attractions and exhibitions exist and whether certain 'dark suppliers' share particular attributes and product traits. Therefore, in order to construct a holistic approach to the diverse and fragmented nature of dark tourism supply, the thesis argues certain suppliers may indeed, conceptually at least, share particular product features, perceptions and characteristics – which, then can be loosely translated into various 'shades of darkness'.

Drawing upon issues revealed in the literature, the study proposes a theoretical 'spectrum' of dark tourism supply. Here, comparisons between, for example, site objectives (education or entertainment), perceptions of authenticity, temporal issues and spatial aspects of the locale, and so on, provide a basis for locating dark sites on a *darkest-lightest continuum*. As a result, dark tourism products may lie along a rather 'fluid spectrum of intensity whereby particular sites may be conceivably *darker* than others, dependent upon various defining characteristics, perceptions and product features' (original emphasis – Stone, 2006:146). Consequently, the following section outlines a conceptual framework entitled 'A Dark Tourism Spectrum', where it is argued the task of theoretically measuring the extent of 'darkness' and the multi-hued nature of dark tourism spaces and places can begin. From this, a typology of seven 'dark suppliers' is then proposed, from 'Dark Fun Factories' as the lightest through to 'Dark Camps of Genocide' as the darkest. Though perhaps over-simplifying the complexity of influences on dark tourism supply, it nevertheless provides a useful conceptual framework to commence the exploration of different modes of dark tourism supply and, consequently, a broader base for understanding the phenomenon of dark tourism as a whole. In short, it is perhaps this fundamental requirement of 'understanding the underside' and extricating consumption issues and their consequential relationships with the wider cultural condition of society that is propelling the current dark tourism debate (Stone 2005a; 2006).

3.3   Dark tourism: a spectrum of supply

With respect to identifiable product traits, characteristics and perceptions, it is prudent to argue for an analysis that accounts for multiple shades of dark tourism. Indeed, one such study that has begun this task is Strange and Kempa's (2003) examination of two former penal institutions-cum-attractions, and the specific influence of political and cultural ideology upon interpretation of these sites. In particular, they examine the former US penitentiary of Alcatraz, a prison immortalised in popular culture and cinematic history, and which FBI chief J.Edgar Hoover once boasted would punish the 'worst of the worst' (Felchner, 2008). Famous gangsters, such as Al Capone, Doc Barker, Machine Gun Kelly, and Alvin 'Creepy' Carpis, declared 'public enemies' by the State (thus turning them into

'public figures') enhanced Alcatraz's notoriety, (also Ruth, 1996). Accordingly, as Strange and Kempa (2003:390) state, 'a symbolic relationship evolved between Alcatraz's mythic status and its unique population long before the island became a tourist site'. Today however, where infamous criminals were once incarcerated, Hollywood tutored visitors now consume a product fondly known as 'the Rock'. In comparison, Strange and Kempa also analyse Robben Island in South Africa, a former penal complex for political prisoners of the apartheid era, including Nelson Mandela, Ahmed Kathrada, Walter Sisulu, and Govan Mbeki. In contrast to Alcatraz's inmates, their crimes and the penal philosophy that determined their punishment, Robben Island's captives were self-declared and officially branded political prisoners (Strange & Kempa, 2003).

Despite the two former penal institutions having certain product design features in common, that is, both being former penal institutions, both sites are an integral part of local tourism industry and destination promotion, both admit visitors, and both now offer 'prison experiences'. Strange and Kempa (2003) intimate that the political and cultural agendas that surround the two sites have a profound influence upon 'memory managers' who seek to interpret the sites' dark pasts. They suggest that, whilst Alcatraz's presentation is already overshadowed by commercial and entertainment values, Robben Island has yet to succumb to its 'theme park marketing potential' (Shackley, 2001) and possesses a higher degree of political influence in its message design and interpretation. As such, Strange and Kempa suggest Robben Island as a (dark) visitor site is a product of remembrance, commemoration, education and optimism for a better political ideal and national governance. Conversely, 'unlike the genesis and development of Alcatraz's representations over the past forty years, the transition of Robben Island from prison to museum was conducted rapidly in a national context of nearly calamitous political circumstances' (Shackley, 2001:356). In short, since Robben Island had played a pivotal role in the legacy and ultimate collapse of apartheid in South Africa, there was 'little question in government circles that Robben Island was an apt symbol of hope and reconciliation' (Strange and Kempa, 2003:394). Thus, the implication is that Robben Island is perceived a 'shade more serious' in its contemporary representation of penal (in)justice than its Alcatraz counterpart, and has greater political expediency attached to the site as a result. Indeed, Strange and

Kempa (2003:401) suggest that simply to describe 'prison tourism as "dark" is too stark'. Evidently then, it can be argued that (dark) visitor sites with a greater political influence and ideology attached, thus inherently politicised within their interpretation strategies and overall 'message design', may be classified as 'darker', or put another way, are perceived as 'more serious' in their raison d'etre.

Consequently, despite the main draw of these products being a highly emotional and politically charged heritage product – easy to market yet tricky to interpret (Shackley, 2001; Strange, 2000) – some commentators suggest the heritage sector in general is an inappropriate and even immoral vehicle for the presentation of death and human suffering (Hewison, 1987; MacCannell, 1992; Walsh, 1992; Urry, 1995). As a result, questions have been raised about the distinction between authentic and inauthentic history (Olsen, 2002). One of the main contentions is how the (re)presentation of 'dark history', especially at those visitor sites (e.g. Auschwitz-Birkenau) with a dominant conservational, educational and commemorative ethic is portrayed as *real*. Conversely, it is the heritage (tourism) industry, with entertainment and commercial orientations and a tendency to seemingly romanticise and, thus, potentially distort past dark deeds (e.g. Galleries of Justice, UK), that is often seen as the *guardians of the real* (Stone, 2006). Thus, it is, perhaps, reasonable to argue those dark tourism sites which are perceived as real, and possess some kind of perceived product authenticity, may be viewed as 'darker' than those sites with much less perceived product authenticity, and which have essentially been (re)created for touristic and commercial purposes. That said, however, Macdonald (1997:156-157) calls for more attention to be paid 'to the authorial intentions and authenticating devices at work in heritage sites'. However, despite the notion of entertainment and commodification of (dark) history for mass consumption (e.g. London Dungeon, UK), which often leads to the charge of trivialization and product inauthenticity, it does not preclude the presentation of counter-hegemonic stories, tales of injustice or dark deeds committed in recent or distant memory.

Similarly, Sharpley and Stone (2009b) examine the (re)presentation of dark tourism and the process of interpretation in creating identity. They note how interpretation plays a key role in the 'filtering' of emotion, understanding and meaning. In particular, they suggest that

dark tourism interpretation and consequent authenticity dilemmas, including notions of selectivity, trivialisation and distortion can result in the kitschification of dark tourism. In other words, death and disaster events can be 'packaged-up' and commodified which, in turn, can generate feelings of comfort, safety and hope. Consequently, 'death and disaster are inevitably vulnerable to kitschification, as they require inoculation and thus rendering into *something else* that is comfortable and safe to deal with and to contemplate' (original emphasis – Sharpley & Stone, 2009b: 127). Subsequently, the production of the dark and disturbing past is not only driven by consumer tastes, which are often media influenced, and by commercial marketing ploys on behalf of the supplier, but is also subject to changes in the wider political and cultural climate (Seaton, 1999). Therefore, any *shades of darkness* within the dark tourism product can shift, hence are dynamic and fluid, as events (such as wars, acts of terrorism, or the fall of a regime) transpire, and as new 'files of representation' (movies, novels, memoirs, etc.) lend moral meanings to sites of death and the macabre (Rojek & Urry, 1997).

Further to this notion of the potential fluidic nature of 'darkness' between dark tourism products, Miles (2002:) suggests that a 'darker-lighter tourism paradigm' does indeed exist. Taking Holocaust memorial construction within the visitor economy as a context, and building upon earlier works of Holocaust commemoration and Auschwitz 'tours' (Miles, 2000, 2001), he argues there is a distinction between *dark* and *darker* tourism; that is, a greater or lesser perception of the macabre and the morose can exist between sites. Certainly, in an age of ever-more demanding museology and interpretative experiences, and a move towards more relevant and interactive visitor pedagogy, Miles suggests that 'visual interpretation has emerged as a new framework' for museums, attractions and their scholarly critics (2002:1175). Hence, based upon the temporal dimension and spatial affinity with a particular visitor site, he suggests there is a crucial difference between visitor sites associated *with* death and suffering, and sites that are *of* death and suffering. Therefore, according to Miles, the product (and experience) at the Nazi death camp site at Auschwitz-Birkenau is conceivably darker than the one at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC. The main contention here, of course, is that the US Holocaust Memorial Museum is merely *associated with death*, whilst Auschwitz-Birkenau *is of death*

and, thus possesses a crucial locational authenticity (and spatial advantage) within its product design (Miles, 2002). Importantly, whilst Auschwitz-Birkenau as a visitor site/museum does not provide the kind of historical contextualization that the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington does (Bollag, 1999), the site at Auschwitz is essentially a mass graveyard. However, where killing was implemented with ruthless efficiency and death treated as an industry, Auschwitz is a 'cemetery without tombstones, a graveyard without graves' and is a 'location where the dead literally went up in smoke' (Miles, 2002: 1176). Conversely, the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, like many other Holocaust exhibitions across the world, simply replicates this through its museology, whereby the atrocities of Auschwitz (and other aspects of the Holocaust) are transported and then reconstructed and packaged up in a sanctioned space for contemporary consumption.

Miles was not, however, the first to highlight the spatial aspects of memorials and their commodification. Indeed, Young (1994), whilst examining the historical context of Holocaust memorials, suggested a defining difference exists between 'memorials removed from the sites of destruction' and 'sites of destruction *per se'*. Nonetheless, in response to Young, Miles (2002:1175) suggests that '*darker tourism* is conceptually and linguistically preferable' to a previous 'unintentionally reifying polarity' between sites of real and recreated (Holocaust) death. Consequently, he suggests dark touristic sites must engender a degree of empathy between the sightseer and the past victim (i.e. 'product'). This empathy, as maintained by Miles, is amplified through the spatial affinity in the dark tourism product design. In addition, he advocates the temporal distancing of dark sites will also add to the empathy of visitors, and, thus, is important in how the product is perceived, produced and ultimately consumed. In particular, and supporting the notion of 'chronological distance' as outlined by Lennon and Foley (2000), Miles suggests that recent death and tragic events that may be transported in live memory through survivors or witnesses are perhaps 'darker' than other events that have descended into the distant past. Particularly, he notes that an existential gap is apparent between the here-and-now of the tourist and the event (or events) of history and, consequently, goes on to state that dark tourism 'must convert the memorial *thing* into a live *memory*… this is a major challenge for all dark tourism' (Miles, 2002:1176 – original emphasis). Thus, dark tourism that seeks to represent recent death/disaster events

that have influenced a collective sensibility and can be validated by visitors may evoke a greater sense of empathy. Therefore, these sites are, perhaps, 'darker' than those that represent distant tragedy and which have faded out of living memory and into inevitable history.

In a similar vein, Sharpley (2005) suggests that, based upon differing intensities of purpose with respect to both the supply of and consumption of dark tourism, then different 'shades' of dark tourism may be identified. Here, it is suggested that supply that is non-purposeful, that is, the original intent of the site was not to attract visitors and as such provides a comparably limited tourism infrastructure (e.g. the sites of murder such as in Soham, UK) may be considered 'darker'. This is a notion that supports Miles (2002) claim that sites' spatial affinity and ultimately 'purposefulness' may be correlated to perceived 'darkness' within a (dark) product design (also Jamal & Lelo, 2010). Thus, embracing the idea that some visitor sites may now offer a darker product (and experience) than others, depending upon particular product traits and perceptions, it is possible to begin to formulate a conceptual framework in which to locate various types of 'dark suppliers'. The model of a 'spectrum', as outlined in Figure 4, takes into account possible shades of darkness – that is, a perceived level of 'macabreness' within a overall dark tourism product. Ranging from 'darkest' through to 'lightest', site design features such as education or commercialism, political influence and ideology, spatial affinity with the death/disaster event it seeks to represent, and so on, one is be able to locate a product and typify it. As a cautionary note, however, this classification occurs in a rather 'loose' and fluid manner.

Greater Political
Influence & Ideology

Less Political
Influence & Ideology

**'Sites *Of* Death
& Suffering'**

**'Sites *Associated* with
Death & Suffering'**

Darkest	Darker	Dark	Light	Lighter	Lightest

Education Orientation

Entertainment Orientation

History Centric
(Conservation /
Commemorative)

Heritage Centric
(Commercial /
Romanticism)

Perceived Authentic
Product Interpretation

Perceived Inauthentic
Product Interpretation

Location Authenticity

Location Inauthenticity

Shorter Duration
to the Event

Longer Duration
from the Event

Non-Purposeful Supply

Purposeful Supply

Less Tourism Infrastructure

Greater Tourism
Infrastructure

DARK TOURISM
VISITOR SITE

Figure 4: A Dark Tourism Spectrum:
Perceived product features of dark tourism within a 'darkest-lightest' supply paradigm
(revised from Stone, 2006)

Whilst the limitations of this 'spectrum of supply' are outlined later, it is nevertheless possible, using the parameters of the conceptual framework, to commence the task of building a typological classification of dark tourism supply. Consequently, the next section reveals a taxonomy of 'Seven Dark Suppliers'.

3.4   Dark Tourism Products – 'Seven Dark Suppliers'

Drawing upon issues and concepts revealed earlier, that is, the nature, diversity and scope of the dark tourism concept and the various types of visitor sites, attractions, and exhibitions that have emerged, the study has compiled a conceptual classification that reflects the current composition of dark tourism supply (also Stone, 2006). Seven fundamental types of dark tourism 'supplier' are identified with their relative 'position' on the Dark Tourism Spectrum model (Figure 11).

3.4.1   Dark Fun Factories

A *Dark Fun Factory* alludes to those visitor sites, attractions and tours that predominately have an entertainment focus and commercial ethic, and which present recreated or fictional death and macabre events. Indeed, these types of products possess a high degree of tourism infrastructure, are purposeful in their design and are in essence 'fun-centric'. Consequently, this classification of dark tourism may occupy the lightest edges of the 'dark tourism spectrum'. Dark Fun Factories offer sanitized products in terms of representation and are perhaps perceived as less authentic. For instance, the Dungeon concepts now being rolled out across Europe by Merlin Entertainments Ltd is a classic Dark Fun Factory. Perhaps most famous of the Dungeon attractions, the London Dungeon, has long drawn visitors to its doors with the promise of ghouls and displays of morbidity. With gruesome and highly visual, yet 'family friendly' exhibits portraying less savoury aspects of (past) life, such as the Black Death or Jack the Ripper, the London Dungeon offers a socially acceptable environment in which to gaze upon simulated death and associated suffering.

Another example of a Dark Fun Factory was the proposed 'Dracula Park' at Snagov, near Bucharest in Romania (BBC News, 2003), where plans for the 460-hectare theme park

were cancelled on environmental grounds rather than actual product content (Luxmoore, 2006). Indeed, this was a project that revolved around the real-life 'Vlad the Impaler', a fifteenth century Transylvanian Count who allegedly tortured his prisoners by impaling them on spikes and then leaving them to die. His subsequent fictional incarnation by Bram Stoker's 1897 novel 'Dracula', in which Stoker popularized the myth of a bloodsucking aristocrat, has fuelled an entire industry ever since. This aside, 'Dracula Park' in Romania was to be an entertainment-based product, with a core product focused upon the macabre, fictional or otherwise. Indeed a consultation and feasibility study on the project suggested:

> …driven by the need to build a post-communist economy, Romania has moderated its previous rejection of Dracula as a vampire and shifted its focus to leveraging the Transylvanian myth for economic gain. Dracula Park will sport vampires, a Center for Vampirology, a golf course with scary encounters, a Medieval food court, Draculabilia such as stakes, fangs, watches, and visitor portraits drawn with your own blood — all within a Medieval fortress (KLM Management Consultation, 2001:10).

3.4.2   Dark Exhibitions

Dark Exhibitions refer to those exhibitions and sites that essentially blend the product design to reflect education and potential learning opportunities. With a Dark Fun Factory offering a commercial and more entertainment-based product, Dark Exhibitions offer products/experiences which revolve around death, suffering or the macabre, and which often possess an inherent commemorative, educational and reflective message. Thus, these products are perhaps perceived as more authentic and 'serious' and hence retain a 'darker edge'. For that reason, these types of dark tourism may be typified towards the darker periphery of the dark tourism spectrum model. Yet despite these product types possessing a conservational ethic, they encompass a degree of tourism infrastructure and some commercial focus. Incorporating both purposeful and non-purposeful elements for dark tourism, Dark Exhibitions are manifested within an eclectic product range and are often located away from the actual site of death or macabre event. Indeed, the multitude of museums that display death and associated suffering with an educative or commemorative focus may be classed as Dark Exhibitions. For instance, the Smithsonian Museum of American History recently constructed an exhibit that displayed images and artefacts of the September 11 terrorist attacks under a banner of capturing history and instilling a sense of

veneration for the victims. However, the exhibit, entitled 'September 11: Bearing Witness to History', purposely sanitized the product content with only forty-five objects on show. The scant number of exhibits was intentional with curators draining the emotional content of displays because, as Robinson (2003) notes, 'visitors bring their own emotional baggage to the story'. Indeed, the Smithsonian museology is so hypersensitive to the possibility of emotional overload that the more grisly and macabre photographs of the dead and dying are omitted. Even the images of the jet approaching the Twin Towers are sequestered from general view. Consequently, images of horrified onlookers tell the story, with the product designed to provoke rather than narrate.

This provocative aspect of Dark Exhibitions is taken a stage further with the Body Worlds exhibitions, which have attracted over seventeen million visitors across the world with anatomical displays of real human bodies (Body Worlds, 2009). The bodies, which are preserved through a technique called plastination, allow the visitor to gaze upon preserved corpses under the guise of health education, anatomy and physiology. Whilst educative elements of the exhibition are undoubted, the commercial machine that now surrounds the show, in addition to the ethical debate about entertainment and the alleged increase in trade of body parts, have perhaps tainted the original exhibit objectives (Searle, 2002: Harris & Connolly, 2002). Other Dark Exhibitions which trade on this mix of 'macabre education' include the 'Catacombe dei Cappucini' in Palermo, Italy (de Lanza, 2001). The catacombs date back to 1599, when priests mummified a local monk and displayed him on the wall like a three-dimensional cadaver piece of art, and were used as a place for the dead until 1920, when a small child became the last person to use the crypt as a final resting place. Hundreds of people are now displayed in some kind of macabre 'human library' whereby corpses, some still in decaying clothes, are preserved for the living. Indeed many corpses are contrived to give the impression of enjoying a joke with their deceased peers, while others look less cheerful!

3.4.3   *Dark Dungeons*

Dark Dungeons refer to those sites and attractions that present bygone penal and justice codes to the present day consumer and, subsequently, revolve around former prisons and

courthouses. These product types essentially have a combination of entertainment and education as a main merchandise focus, possess a relatively high degree of commercialism and tourism infrastructure, and occupy sites that were originally non-purposeful for dark tourism. Consequently, it is suggested that Dark Dungeons may occupy the centre-ground of the dark tourism spectrum paradigm, with a mixture of dark and light elements. For instance, the Galleries of Justice visitor attraction, based in Nottingham UK, suggests in its marketing literature that it is the 'only site in the country where you could be arrested, sentenced and executed' (Galleries of Justice, 2005). Promoted as the 'Family Attraction of the Year' under marketing strap-line 'Feel the Fear', the Galleries of Justice site is created from buildings originally used as prisons and courts from the 1780's until as recently as the 1980's. With a representation of harsh penal codes from days gone by, the attraction seeks to entertain the visitor through heritage whilst promoting educational and historical content. The 'Crime and Punishment Tour' promotional flyer states:

> Travel with us on an atmospheric tour over three centuries of crime and punishment. Witness a real trial in the original Victorian Courtroom and put your friends and family in the dock, before being sentenced and 'sent down' to the original cells… Prisoners and gaolers will act as your guides as you too become part of the dramatic history of this unique site (Galleries of Justice, 2005).

Of course, this type of promotion, as with a Dark Fun Factory, raises questions of product representation and authenticity. Nevertheless, other examples of Dark Dungeons which present penal codes and justice from a bygone age include the Bodmin Jail Centre in Cornwall UK, where visitors are invited to 'dungeons below ground to find out just some of the crimes and punishment of our unfortunate ancestors' (Bodmin Jail, 2003). Similarly, the Old Melbourne Gaol in Australia promotes itself as a 'chilling environment' and as a 'custodian of a grim, yet fascinating collection of prisoner death masks and special exhibitions relating to the art of hanging' (National Trust of Australia, 2003; also see Wilson, 2008).

Whilst Dark Dungeons, such as the Bodmin Jail Centre and Melbourne Gaol, seek in their product design to represent penal codes from the 'distance' past, other Dark Dungeons exist to represent a more recent past and, consequently, have attached a higher level of political

influence and ideology. As already discussed with regards to Strange and Kempa's (2003) analysis of 'shades of dark tourism', Robben Island, the former prison of Nelson Mandela located off the Cape Town coast in South Africa, is inextricably linked to the struggle against colonialism, the fight for freedom, democracy and peace in South Africa. With a shorter period to the actual 'event' or, in other words, the relatively recent incarceration of political prisoners, Robben Island possesses a higher degree of conservationism and commemoration in it product design and is, perhaps, perceived as more authentic. Indeed the South African government stated, whilst putting forward Robben Island as a World Heritage Site, that the site should be 'turned around into a source of enlightenment and education on the dangers of myopic philosophies, and social and economic practices whose primary and sole objective is the oppression of one group by another' (Government of South Africa, 1999:4). Therefore, with a desire to represent the struggle for social justice, and for Robben Island to act as a symbol of freedom, the fundamental product design of this Dark Dungeon is that of education. Yet, as Shackley (2001:359) notes, 'Robben Island is part theme park, part shrine and part museum… and a location with the potential to make a great deal of money'.

3.4.4   Dark Resting Places

Dark Resting Places focuses upon the cemetery or grave markers as potential products for dark tourism (Seaton, 2002). Consequently, the cemetery within contemporary society acts as a romanticised, if not rather macabre, urban regeneration tool. In particular, tourism planners often use the cemetery as a mechanism to promote visitation to an area, conserve the structural integrity of landscape and architecture, and sustain the ecology of local environments (Meyer & Peters, 2001). With an increasing infrastructure being built around these Dark Resting Places, mainly through association groups, the use of the internet and dedicated guide tours, the cemetery is fast becoming a place where the living are 'charmed' by the dead, and thus may be plotted left of centre on the Dark Tourism Spectrum' with both dark and light characteristics. Hence, Dark Resting Places may be perceived as history-centric and authentic with a conservational and commemorative ethic. Indeed, according to the Association of Significant Cemeteries in Europe (ASCE), cemeteries are

an integral component of cultural heritage and those cemeteries with historical or artistic significance should be conserved (ASCE, 2005).

The rationale for the majority of Dark Resting Places is the promotion and conservation of Romantic and Gothic architecture and sculpture, through the maintenance of gravestone, tombs and mausoleums. In addition, the sustainability of local ecological landscapes is a primary concern. For instance, the famous Père-Lachaise cemetery is the largest park in Paris and attracts over two million visitors a year and, beyond its primary function of interment, the cemetery has evolved into an open-air museum and pantheon garden (Northstar Gallery, 1998). On a less grand scale is the development of Weaste Cemetery in Salford, UK. As part of a wider urban regeneration programme, local tourism planners are attempting to amalgamate history and ecology as distinct product features and to encourage visitation to this Dark Resting Place. Salford City Council states:

> Weaste Cemetery is primarily a place to respect and commemorate the loved ones we have lost. People also visit cemeteries for exercise and relaxation, and to study nature and local history. It is our aim to offer a fitting environment for the bereaved and also to enhance the life of the community (Salford City Council, 2004).

However, whilst Dark Resting Places offer serenity and the opportunity to both commemorate and pay respects to the deceased, this particular classification of 'dark supplier' is increasingly beginning to take on a more commercial and entertainment based ethic. Further to this, this classification has the potential to 'shift' along the spectrum of supply to become a Dark Fun Factory. For instance, products such as the Hollywood based 'Dearly Departed' tours, which are fuelled by internet sites promoting aspects of death and dying, and media interest in celebrity death, allow visitors to be taken through a journey of 'death, murder and just plain fun' (Michaels, 2005), whilst gazing upon graves of the Hollywood elite. Indeed, the product is promoted as 'fun-led' and its promotional literature suggests that the visitor 'will be treated to the most tickling tales of tinsel town tragedies, in the cool comfort of the luxurious Dearly Departed Tomb Buggy' (Michaels, 2005), which incidentally resembles a hearse.

3.4.5 *Dark Shrines*

Dark Shrines are those sites that 'trade' on the act of remembrance and respect for the recently deceased. Hence, Dark Shrines are often constructed, formally or informally, very close to the site of death and within a very short period of the death occurring. Thus, it is suggested that Dark Shrines may occupy the darker periphery of the dark tourism spectrum. Additionally, these types of events dominate the media agenda for relatively short periods of time, hence attaching a higher level of political awareness and influence to a particular Dark Shrine site during the 'media period'.

Quite often, a mass of floral tributes will signify the Dark Shrine site where a death-event has occurred, providing a marker for other 'mourners,' who often have no direct relationship with the victim, to follow and lay their own flowery symbols of respect. Whilst the media reports these events, and perhaps 'emotionally invigilates' the consumer to react in a particular manner (Walter, Littlewood and Pickering, 1995), Dark Shrines offer a semi-permanent and tangible focal point for the 'bereaved'. Indeed, most Dark Shrines are non-purposeful for tourism and thus possess very little tourism infrastructure due to their temporal nature. For example, the Dark Shrine, which was constructed in the now usual floral edifice around the gates of Kensington Palace at the time Diana, Princess of Wales was killed in 1997, became a focal point for millions of people. Yet, within a relatively short period this Dark Shrine had been dismantled and reconstructed at Althorp House, the site of Diana's internment. Interestingly, more than a decade after her death, the business of remembering Diana is doing well, with tourism infrastructure at Althorp House evolving to include award-winning exhibitions illustrating Diana's death and subsequent tributes (Merrin, 1999).

This evolution of tourism infrastructure around temporal Dark Shrines which, again, perhaps allows 'movement' or a shift along the Dark Tourism Spectrum to the category of Dark Exhibitions, thereby creating a more permanent presence, is beginning to manifest itself at Ground Zero, a site of atrocity in New York on September 11, 2001. Indeed, Blair (2002:1) notes the advent of a formal tourism infrastructure, as the events of 9/11 become chronologically distant. Increasingly however, Dark Shrines are being forged for those with

a seemingly morbid curiosity. Whilst under the pretext of respect and reverence, Dark Shrines are serving as a focal point whereby rubbernecking is quickly becoming a recreational activity within contemporary society. This is best illustrated, perhaps, by the small town of Soham in the UK when it became a temporary tourist destination in the wake of the (highly publicized) murder of two young schoolchildren. Allegedly, coach trippers turned up to gape at reported sites of abduction and murder, whilst visitors to the town were apparently seen eating sandwiches in the local graveyard (O'Neill, 2002). However, as Seaton and Lennon (2004:65) point out, 'there was little follow-up on the story (in the media), and no hard evidence about the scale or duration of Soham's status as a tourist destination'.

3.4.6   *Dark Conflict Sites*

Smith (1998) suggests that activities, sites or destinations associated with warfare are a major component of the wider tourist attraction market. Thus this category, termed here *Dark Conflict Sites*, revolves around war and battlefields and their commodification as potential tourism products. Indeed, Dark Conflict Sites essentially have an educational and commemorative focus, are history-centric and are originally non-purposeful in the dark tourism context. The literature is often contentious on the discord between memorial, commemoration and the nature of interpretation at Dark Conflict Sites (Edwards, 2000) whereby notions of 'dissonant heritage' (Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996) and political ideologies are often the root of interpretive concerns. Whilst these are beyond the scope of this thesis, it is perhaps worth noting that Dark Conflict Sites are increasingly becoming more commercialized and, as a result, have an increasing tourism infrastructure. For instance, in terms of formalised infrastructure, a number of dedicated tour operators now offer trips to various battlefields, either specifically or as part of a wider holiday itinerary. These tours, which essentially bring organised violence back to life, often focus upon battlefields of World War One. Indeed, the Western Front Battlefield Tours organisation offer the discerning visitor an opportunity to tour battle sites such as Ypres and the Somme in small groups complete with trench maps, war diaries and in-depth commentary (Western Front Battlefield Tours, 2005). With the recent opening of a purpose-built visitor centre

near the Memorial of the Missing at Thiepval in northern France, the business of remembrance has taken on a more structured focus.

Whilst World War One tour products are well established, other Dark Conflict Sites are beginning to realise their dark tourism potential. For example, the area in the Solomon Islands where the Battle of Guadalcanal was fought during World War Two may become an established site on future holiday itineraries. As Squires (2004:1) suggests, 'along with stunning paradise beaches, many of the islands and the surrounding seas are still littered with the detritus of war, something the government and local businessmen have realised is a potential tourism goldmine'. Of interest however, is the difference in product design between those battles that are more recent and those that are chronologically distant. In other words, whilst Dark Conflict Sites throughout the world are numerous, as are the wars which furnish them, those battles which are beyond living memory often take on a more romanticised and cinematic orientation, and, as a consequence, may occupy the lighter end of the dark tourism spectrum. This is often manifested through real-life battle re-enactments, whereby an entire industry has emerged to bring history to life and make brutal battlefield killing attractive to the living. Ritual events, often against a backdrop of village fetes and rural festivals, such as the Battle of Bosworth Re-enactment Weekend in the UK, serve to make light of bygone battles.

3.4.7   *Dark Camps of Genocide*
Dark Camps of Genocide represents those sites and places which have genocide, atrocity and catastrophe as the main 'product theme', and thus occupy the darkest edges of the dark tourism spectrum. Mercifully, genocide sites are not particularly common, but do exist in places such as Rwanda, Cambodia, and Kosovo. Dark Camps of Genocide are 'produced' to provide the ultimate emotional experience whereby visitors 'sightsee in the mansions of the dead' (Keil, 2005:479). With a product message designed around education and commemoration and, unlike Dark Exhibitions, being located at the actual site of the death-event, Dark Camps of Genocide tell the terrible tales of human suffering and infliction and, consequently, have a high degree of political ideology attached to them. Thus, Dark Camps of Genocide are those sites that mark a concentration of death and atrocity, and a

concentration of death is no more apparent than that committed throughout the Holocaust. Hence, Auschwitz-Birkenau, now a visitor site and example of a Dark Camp of Genocide, represents most the Holocaust for the scale of atrocities committed there (Gilbert, 1986), and symbolically for the way it still haunts contemporary imagination.

As a result, the manner in which the Holocaust is manifested in product terms is through the rather supercilious label of 'Holocaust tourism' or 'Genocide tourism' (but, see Beech, 2009). It is the Holocaust and its contemporary touristic representation that often dominates the wider dark tourism agenda – especially within the media (Stone, 2006b). Frequently, media reports and special features refer to the Holocaust as a key term of reference for the broader dark tourism concept. For instance, O'Donoghue (2002:1), writing about the various sites which make up so-called Holocaust tourism, including visitor sites at Dachau, Treblinka and Auschwitz, explicitly states that 'dark tourism, as it's been dubbed, is on the increase, as people around the world fight to ensure the sins of the past are not forgotten'. This interchange of the broader term 'dark tourism' and its connections with the Holocaust, and the connotations it entails as a result, perhaps skews the wider meaning of dark tourism and other product subsets it incorporates.

However, the Holocaust as an iniquitous period of history is 'a past that will not pass away (yet)' (Kershaw, 2005), and 're-packaged' Dark Camps of Genocide sites, such as the Auschwitz-Birkenau death-camp, remain universal symbols of evil. Consequently, the Holocaust and the Nazi doctrine that underscored it is a pervasive feature of the collective consciousness. Whilst there is debate over distorted and selective interpretation and presentation of particular Holocaust sites, memory and experience of the Holocaust has become institutionalised (Stone, 2005b). This is partly through the establishment of Dark Exhibitions suppliers, such as the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, the permanent Holocaust display in the Imperial War Museum in London, or the Jewish Museum in Berlin, in addition to the genocide camps themselves such as Auschwitz-Birkenau. It is these Holocaust based sites and exhibitions that often dominate general dark tourism discussions (e.g. Barton, 2001), whilst the mass media exploits the seemingly lurid interest in the Holocaust, which they themselves may have helped create in the first place

(Schwabe, 2005). When discussing dark tourism generally, Dark Camps of Genocide act as an extreme, thus positioned at the 'darkest' edge of the Dark Tourism Spectrum. Therefore, Dark Camps of Genocide (particularly those representing the Holocaust) perhaps anchor the wider dark tourism concept, rightly or wrongly, within the public and media psyche. However, as this thesis has already demonstrated, the concept and, indeed, practice of dark tourism is multi-faceted and multi-tiered, and goes beyond, yet includes Holocaust sites.

3.5   Chapter Three Summary

This chapter has attempted to construct a conceptual framework in which the supply of a diverse and fragmented dark tourism product may be located. Taking the idea that dark tourism possesses varying 'degrees' or 'shades' of intensity of darkness, and building upon the work of Strange and Kempa (2003), Miles (2002) and Sharpley (2005), a 'spectrum of supply' paradigm was outlined with a subsequent seven type categorisation of dark tourism supplier. The dark tourism spectrum model is a fluid and dynamic continuum of intensity, which is anchored by various, though not necessarily exclusive, product features and characteristics. That is, it would be naive to suggest all dark tourism sites possess all of the defining traits all of the time that would allow them to be plotted precisely on this 'spectrum of supply'. Quite simply, they do not. Indeed, it is accepted that many sites/products will be multi-layered, and will be perceived differently amongst different groups of people in different parts of the world. In addition, as noted by Seaton (1999), changes in the micro and macro environments, such as the manipulation of 'dark heritage' for political purposes or the selective interpretation of particular events (Wight & Lennon, 2007), may cause 'shifts' in how a product is both supplied and thus perceived (and experienced) by the consumer. As a result, this may potentially cause 'suppliers' of dark tourism to 'move' and 'slide' along the dark tourism spectrum, from darker to lighter, and vice versa. Moreover, many products may display a hybrid of characteristics outlined in this chapter, and thus may not fit easily within the overall supply framework and the subsequent product typology.

Nevertheless, despite these evident limitations, it is suggested that the dark tourism spectrum framework, and the subsequent 'seven dark supplier' categorisation, does allow much needed clarity and a setting of parameters that may be applied to the eclectic dark tourism product range. Further to this, concern has been expressed on the terminology used by academia and the media to describe diverse facets of dark tourism supply, and the implications this may have upon the wider dark tourism market (Dunkley, 2007; Stone, 2005c). In particular, those practitioners who supply dark tourism sites, attractions and exhibitions may dislike the actual term 'dark tourism' being applied to them, perhaps because of *ethical* undertones and *morality* subtexts. They may even dismiss the view that they belong to the wider tourism industry. Of course, further research will clarify this position. Even so, the implications of using emotive terminology should be readily apparent. Specifically, if one considers the implications of using terms to describe a particular industry, with some aspects of that industry not readily accepting or fully understanding its meaning and connotations, then dark tourism research and the field exercises it must entail is made all the more difficult. Freeman (2005:2), whilst interviewing those who have led the dark tourism debate thus far, suggested that 'not even the experts believe it's a case of one size fits all.' Accordingly, therefore, it is suggested that the framework of supply outlined in this chapter has clarified the parameters of the term 'dark tourism', and it to the moral dimensions of dark tourism that this study now turns.

Chapter Four

Dark Tourism:
Morality and New Moral Spaces

Everything's got a moral, if only you can find it.

(Lewis Carroll, 1865)

**4.0	Dark Tourism and Moral Quandaries: an introduction**

The anxiety over the phenomenon of dark tourism and its subsequent moral quandaries has received increasing media attention, especially with regard to the ethical dimensions of exploiting tragic history (Lennon, 2005; Stone, 2007). Indeed, much of Western media reporting of dark tourism has focused upon moral facets of visitor sites and attractions that offer a (re)presentation of death and the macabre, and the individuals who visit them. So much so, that Marcel (2004: 2) proclaimed in The American Reporter that 'death makes a holiday' and, as such, dark tourism is 'filled with moral ambiguities'. Marcel (2004: 1) goes on to state:

> [dark tourism] seems to be the *dirty little secret* of the tourism industry (emphasis added). It thrives at the Texas School Book Depository and the 'grassy knoll' in Dallas, where you can buy a coffee mug decorated with cross hair rifle-sights, at Auschwitz and in Holocaust Museums around the world, in cemeteries where celebrities are buried, and at the site of Princess Diana's tragic car crash in Paris. Tourists visit places of public executions, like the Place De La Guillotine, sites of mass death like museums and memorials like the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, and battlefields like ancient Troy, Gettysburg, Pearl Habour and Omaha Beach. Does it sound crazy to think of death as a niche market? Then what do you make of the 'Titanic cruises' offered by chartered companies, where tourists eat meals identical to those served on the ship, and hear music identical to the music played on the ship, as they travel to the precise spot where the ship lies at the bottom of the ocean.

Of course, whilst Marcel raises valid concerns about the ethical exploitation of tragedy, other more dogmatic media reports, such as Avis (2007), focus upon the morality of so-called dark tourists. In particular, she offers a rather stark and bleak assessment of dark tourism and the individuals who consume dark experiences:

> These dark humans presumably are thrilled at witnessing killings and extreme human suffering, perhaps under the influence of the violent media-driven culture in which humanity lives. We find all this as a negative aspect of humanity and urge governments to do everything possible to abolish this sick kind of tourism. Otherwise, you may find yourself in the situation that wars and misery are created for potential dark tourist benefits. And that would signify the moral end of humanity (Avis, 2007: 1).

Accordingly, Seaton and Lennon (2004) have questioned the accuracy of media reporting of tragic events and the subsequent (supposed) arrival of 'dark' or 'grief' tourists in the

aftermath of tragedy. Specifically, they raise concerns over apparent dubious press reporting of events that followed the tragic murders of two young girls, Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman, in Soham (UK) in 2002. Whilst some individuals certainly did visit Soham in the immediate aftermath of the murders, no doubt validating their media interest of the crimes, the claims that mass 'hordes of grief tourists' (O'Neill, 2002) visited the site 'turning murder into a shameful entertainment' (Masters, 2003) are perhaps unfounded. In particular, Seaton and Lennon (2004: 65) suggest 'there was little follow-up on the story (in the media), and no hard evidence about the scale and duration of Soham's status as a tourist destination'. Evidently, this may simply illustrate selective and, thus, potentially divisive reporting by particular media institutions. Whilst the media and its relationship with dark tourism as a mediating institution is explored further by Walter (2009), it is worth noting here that media narratives often perpetuate notions of a grief-stricken and morally barren (Western) society. For instance, Halley (2004), writing in The Sunday Independent, reports how individuals use Soham and, previously, the death of Princess Diana, as 'vessels to expel our own miseries' (Reid, 1998). Halley (2004: 11) goes on to write:

> We now have a grief industry. Grief is the new opium of the masses and there's a diverse range available. So jump aboard the grief bandwagon, Atocha station awaits. We can all have therapeutic blubber without the debilitating side-effects of having experienced actual tragedy.

Patrick West (2004) elaborated on this theme of so-called 'grief tourism' with his controversial monologue *Conspicuous Compassion*, in which he dismisses (Western) explosions of grief and emotional hysteria as 'mourning sickness' and 'manufactured emotion' and nothing but an exercise in narcissism. West draws upon Thorstein Veblen's seminal work *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, and in particular, how Veblen purported that the powerful and rich demonstrate their wealth and 'superiority' through the 'conspicuous consumption' of material goods and the pretentiousness of showing off such wealth (see Mitchell, 2001). Consequently, utilising Veblen's critical machinery, West suggests that we now live in an age of 'conspicuous compassion' with the affectation of displaying emotion in public becoming increasingly prevalent in Western societies, (as was Veblen's notion of displaying income within the public realm). West (2004: 1) goes on to suggest:

We are given to ostentatious displays of empathy to a degree hitherto unknown. We sport countless empathy ribbons, send flowers to recently deceased celebrities, weep in public over the deaths of murdered children, apologise for historical misdemeanours, wear red noses for the starving of Africa… we feel each other's pain. [However] Our culture of ostentatious caring concerns, rather, projecting one's ego, and informing others what a deeply caring individual you are. It is about feeling good, not doing good, and illustrates not how altruistic we have become, but how selfish.

Despite West's journalistic analysis of public grief, Walter's (2007) scrutiny of the 'new public mourning' suggests the showing of grief in public, and its consequential moral dilemmas for doing so, is in fact grounded in wider historical, socio-cultural and political concerns; a point that West fails to recognise. Consequently, the (selective) coverage of tragic events by the media, which attracts 'dark tourists' to sites of tragedy, and the subsequent alleged moral panic this causes, whereby individuals are seemingly 'emotionally invigilated' by television and newspaper reporting (Walter et al, 1995), ensure moral dimensions of dark tourism are never far from media commentary and academic discourse (Stone, 2009b).

These moral dimensions often focus on particular types of dark tourism sites, attractions or experiences. For instance, the representation of the Holocaust, perhaps the epitome of dark tourism, is accused regularly of being trivialized, merchandized and Americanized through its ephemeral touristic consumption. As a result, questions have been raised about the morality of both producing and consuming the Holocaust at various memorials and museums throughout the world and, in particular, what has been termed 'Auschwitz-land' at the former Nazi concentration camp in Poland (Cole, 1999b). For that reason, Dery (1999: 4) suggests Auschwitz-Birkenau is now a repackaged death camp resulting in the 'evisceration of history in a made-for-TV world where the past is increasingly experienced as a whirl of free-floating images, cut loose from context and complexity' (see Stone, 2006b). Whilst the portrayal of the Holocaust in numerous museums and exhibitions pervades a contemporary moral consciousness, as it is a 'past that will not pass away (yet)' (Kershaw, 2003), other moral issues are often raised about the darker side of travel. For instance, the relationship between tourism, tourists and host countries that have recently

experienced war has received an increasing amount of commentary. The journalistic article by Atiyah (1999: 1) queries the ethics of tourists who visited the former Yugoslavia immediately after the Bosnian War:

> At the end of the Bosnian War, bus-loads of morbid visitors were taken into Sarajevo for the thrill of looking at bombed out buildings and of daring to tread in the footsteps of war reporters… But what kind of tourists, you may ask, would get their kicks from visiting countries on which one's own bombs have just been raining?

Atiyah may, of course, be another example of selective media reporting and unable to substantiate the claim that 'bus-loads' of visitors did indeed visit Bosnia in the aftermath of the conflict. Nevertheless, dark tourism has evolved in Bosnia, with former battles and atrocities now packaged up and offered through dedicated 'war tours' in Sarajevo (Hawton, 2004; Kampschror, 2006; Zimonjic, 2006). Other dark tourism sites which have attracted 'moral criticism' include Ground Zero and the amount of visitors it has received since 9/11. Blair (2002: 21), writing in The New York Times, condemns the morality and subsequent ethical conduct of those sellers and sightseers at the former site of the World Trade Centre in New York:

> Remember when it was just hallowed ground? Ground Zero is now one of the most popular tourism attractions in the city…. The proud can buy Twin Towers T-shirts, the angry can buy toilet paper bearing the face of Osama bin Laden and the curious can climb up the fence to take the perfect picture of what is now just a big hole. The hustle of commerce hawking to the crush of sightseers has prompted some to call it September 11 World.

Similarly, Crohn (2007) observes the 'unease' some individuals have when gazing upon Ground Zero. Whilst he acknowledges the wider implications of identity building and mythmaking for the collective self, which individuals may draw from sites such as Ground Zero, Crohn also notes that visiting the site 'as an onlooker can be an ethically treacherous position' (2007: 2). That moral position is also replicated on the other side of the Atlantic by Wall (2004), who writes in The Guardian about Chernobyl, the site of the world's worst nuclear reactor accident, becoming a tourist attraction. Wall's article, provocatively entitled *Postcard from Hell*, outlines her trip to the Ukraine where Kiev-based tour operators run regular excursions into the former disaster zone. Commenting on a post-apocalyptic

landscape of rusting metal and a concrete sarcophagus embedding the former nuclear reactor, and stating she feels 'uncomfortable' being photographed posing on the perimeter of the 'dead zone', she offers a brief insight into the undertaking of dark tourism. Even her Chernobyl tour guide suggests it was 'not a right place for tourism' and goes on to state it was 'a place of tragedy and is a place of tragedy still. Chernobyl is not a historical place. It is a sleeping lion. And when the lion is sleeping, you don't open the cage' (Wall, 2004: 3-4). Of course, the economic imperatives of the local community allied to an influx of 'curious' visitors ensured the 'Chernobyl cage' has been opened and dark tourism now flourishes in the region (Schutz, 2006).

What these dark tourism examples illustrate, whether grieving en masse for murdered schoolchildren we did not know personally, or for dead celebrities with whom we had a pseudo-relationship, or consuming atrocity experiences in exhibition spaces around the world, or gazing upon sites of former disasters and tragedy, is that dark tourism in both its production and consumption generates a significant amount of moral commentary. Despite the fact much of this commentary may originate primarily from a bourgeois press and media, it remains nevertheless difficult to ignore. That said, many media 'moral comments' about the practice of dark tourism appear superficial and selective, and are seemingly based upon journalistic hunches, speculation and unfettered emotion. Of course, some of the recent moral commentary about dark tourism is inevitable considering such a provocative (recreational) activity. This raises valid questions of whether it is right, or indeed just, to exploit and thus capitalize upon tragedy, and whether it is morally acceptable to partake in such experiences. However, whilst the dark tourism literature often remarks on various moral perils as an apparent consequence of these dark sites, and offers a rather parochial view of morality and ethics, it has yet to date to engage seriously with the broader socio-religious aspects of morality, and to clarify the potential role of dark tourism within an emotion-morality framework.

Thus, Uzzell and Ballantyne (1998: 152), in their critique of a *Heritage that Hurts*, contend that 'to deny the emotional side of our understanding and appreciation of the world and our relationships is to deny the very humanity that makes us part of the human race'. Similarly,

within the context of tourism studies, Robinson (2005: xx) suggests that 'superficial and mechanistic studies of tourism have long given way to more penetrative analyses of what is now recognized to be a highly complex aspect of human life. Indeed, it is human life but in a temporary context, a different place, a different time; but human life all the same with all its attendant experiences and impacts, subtleties and sensitivities' (also see Fennell, 2006). Therefore, it is on this very premise of attempting to understand and appreciate the emotional and moral aspects of human nature, applied within the dimensions of dark tourism and its fundamental relationships with both the individual and collective self that an endeavour is now made to clarify moral ambiguities within dark tourism practices. In particular, the remainder of this chapter theorizes how secular society has cultivated a process of individualization, whereby the individual self feels isolated and morally confused due to the negation of dominant religious and moral frameworks. Consequently, as individuals attempt to seek (moral) meaning on their own terms and from alternative sources, the result is what Durkheim termed *collective effervescence*; the construction of new moral orders mediated by collectivities of embodied individuals who are emotionally engaged with their social world. It is these morally relative individual experiences within a collective environment, namely dark tourism, which adds to a potential resurgence of moral vitality within new contemporary spaces. Hence, it is to these issues that this chapter now turns.

4.1 Secularisation, individualism and moral confusion

The issue of morality, as defined by good or bad conduct, has been subject to increasing scrutiny by those interested in its purpose, especially within the ambivalent character of contemporary society (Selznick, 1992; Stivers, 1994, 1996; Smart, 1996). In particular, concepts such as 'post-modern ethics' (Bauman, 1993), 'dialogical democracy' (Giddens, 1994a), and 'inhumanity' (Lyotard, 1991; Tester, 1995) have all contributed to morality discourse. Subsequently, an increasing secularization of modern (Western) societies, that is, the transformation by which society migrates from close identification with religious institutions to a more separated relationship, has given rise to fundamental questions of religion, morality and the moral frameworks in which we reside (see Berger, 2000; Bruce,

2002; Taylor, 2007). A particular question revolves around the notion of religiosity and how the moral well-being of the individual self can be met within an ever fragmented world. Indeed, on a recent papal visit to Australia, Pope Benedict XVI warned of society turning into a 'spiritual desert' due to materialism and an increasing consumer culture (Pullella and Perry, 2008). In a rather melancholic assessment of the present-day, the Pope urged individuals to reject the 'indifference, spiritual weariness and blind conformity' of the times (Eccleston, 2008: 1), going on to state that:

> In so many of our societies, side by side with material prosperity, a spiritual desert
> is spreading: an interior emptiness, an unnamed fear, a quiet sense of despair…
> [we require a] new age in which hope liberates us from the shallowness, apathy
> and self-absorption which deadens our souls and poison our relationships.

Moreover, politicians, most notably in the UK, have capitalized on this theme of narcissism, the mainstream political parties warning the British electorate of a 'broken society' and 'moral neutrality', before going on to suggest politicians can help 'mend' such societies (Cameron, 2008; Helm 2008). Hence, it appears that where religious institutions have seemingly failed, for some at least, to provide a perceived sense of moral guidance, politicians are adopting a 'politics of fear' (Furedi, 2005), where the task of morally policing secular society is built upon individuals' sense of moral confusion and ineptitude. Consequently, as 'secularization is an evitable outcome of social processes, which causes a realignment of the entire social fabric' (Oviedo, 2005: 359), the sacred canopy (after Berger, 1967) which once enveloped modern society and thus provided an overarching meaning system in terms of moral endeavours, has become fractionalized. However, secularization is not a simple, one-dimensional transformation of a sacred world-view into a profane one. Instead, it is a 'complex process of reconfiguration that re-invents, translates, or cites moments of sacrality in a new concept' (Skolnick & Gordon, 2005: 7). Certainly, one key aspect of contemporary society and the secular values attached to it has been to detach individuals, or at least loosen them, from any sense of obligation that they may have felt towards traditional and organised religious institutions that previously had provided a dominant framework in which to find solace, meaning, and moral guidance. Indeed, individualization is regarded as one of the most important processes to have dramatically changed society (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). As a result, the individual self has

become free and independent from traditional, social and religious foundations. Thus, the emphasis on individual freedom lessens the control and influence of traditional institutions upon society, whereby institutional religion has become marginalised and personalised. As Halman (1996: 199) states, 'religious and moral values are no longer imposing themselves on societies'. However, individualization should not be confused or equated with individualism; as Halman (1996: 198) points out, 'individualization denotes a process in which traditional meaning systems and values diminish in importance in favour of personal considerations and decisions concerning values, norms and behaviours.' Individualism, meanwhile, focuses upon the individual's self-development, convictions and attitudes as the basis upon which to make decisions, where individual ethics are (morally) relative (Harman, 1975). However, it may be argued that increased individualism that has resulted from individualization, combined with a reduced scope of the sacred, has resulted in moral confusion for the individual self. In other words, the lack of a consistent framework of substantive norms, values or moral principles to define and understand personal identity leaves many individuals feeling disoriented. Indeed, as the process of individualization has made people more reliant upon themselves for moral instruction, and less dependent upon traditional institutions, this raises the issue of how individuals within contemporary society seek and utilize (moral) meanings from non-traditional institutions.

Moreover, Stivers (1996: 2) suggests that 'religion is but one organized form that the collective sense of the sacred may assume'. Another organized form, of course, is tourism, and especially when travel is linked with the spiritual dimensions of faith (Shackley, 2001b; Sharpley & Sundaram, 2005). In particular, Reader (2007) highlights pilgrimage growth in the modern world, where consequent meanings and implications for both the pilgrim and the actual pilgrimage site can occur. He goes on to suggest that some 'modern pilgrims appear to repudiate organized religion even while visiting sites normally associated with established religious traditions' (Reader, 2007: 210). In short, rather than implying some form of religious revival, contemporary pilgrimage travel may, then, be viewed as evidence of an increasing turn away from traditional religion as an organized entity. The desire to discover alternative meanings, moral or otherwise, combined with the desire to escape an increasingly rationalized society, allied to the notion there is a general

detachment of religious traditions has, perhaps, fuelled the growth in pilgrimage travel (Digance, 2003; Heelas & Woodhead, 2005; Reader, 2007). This growth in pilgrimage travel may also be mirrored by growth in 'dark travel' (Sharpley & Stone, 2009a). That is, as sites of memorial, tragedy or reconstructed death increasingly enter mainstream tourism, the issue of how these 'traumascapes' can project moral meaning or why individuals may extract meaning, is fundamental to understanding dark tourism as a new moral force.

Hence, if we accept the individual self, because of secular inspired individualism, is experiencing moral confusion and disorientation, then the self must begin to seek meanings and identity formulation in a complex and fragmented world. Conventional religious institutions that once provided moral space, both in the mind of the individual self and as a physical outlet for moral reflection and guidance, have largely been negated. In their place is a post-conventional society that demands 'an open identity capable of conversation with people of other perspectives in a relatively egalitarian and open communicative space' (Hyun-Sook, 2006: 1; also Habermas, 1990). We must consider these new communicative spaces in framing contemporary approaches to morality. Above all, if we view dark tourism in its various manifestations as contemporary communicative spaces that interpret tragic events and, subsequently, convey morality, then we can adopt a multidimensional approach towards a morality of dark tourism. Ultimately, however, these 'new dark tourism spaces' and the ensuing ethical dilemmas which surround them result in a vitalization and often vibrant discussion of moral concerns about the (death) subject or (tragic) event dark tourism attempts to (re)present, as well as the actual (re)presentation itself. This, in turn, could potentially inform contemporary moral instruction to the individual self.

4.2   Revitalisation of Morality: Moral Panics and New Moral Spaces

A morality of dark tourism can greatly benefit from engaging with the philosophy of Durkheim. In his seminal text, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, Durkheim developed a deep concern with society as a moral, religious force which stimulated in people an effervescent 'propulsion' towards actions productive of either social cohesion or dissolution (Durkheim, 2001; see also Bougle, 1926; Caillois, 1950; Collin, 1988). In other

words, Durkheim is concerned with both the asocial capabilities of the embodied individual, as well as the potentialities of embodied humans at the collective level. As Shilling and Mellor (1998: 196) note, 'it is the collective effervescence stimulated by assembled social groups that harnesses peoples' passions to the symbolic order of society'. Thus, the emotional experience of these assembled social groups allows individuals to interact based on shared ideas and concepts. Fundamentally, the concept of effervescence and its consequent emotional 'rush of energy' (Durkheim, 2001: 215) permits social gatherings to infuse individuals and, thus, for people to become embodied and informed about particular tragic events that may have perturbed their life-world. Hence, collective effervescence has the potential to substitute the world immediately available to our perceptions for another, more moral world (Durkheim, 1984). It is these gatherings of social groups, often in socially sanctioned (or even politically sanctioned) environments, such as in the case of dark tourism sites, that a contemporary reality of *la société* is observed. In particular, the social binding of individuals in (emotional) effervescence influences and informs moral conversations about death or disaster, where the self can extract individualized and thus morally relative meaning about a particular tragic event (Harman, 1975). Indeed, in the case of violent events, or where communities have suffered disaster, Durkheim (2001: 302-3) suggests a collective response has implications for the individual:

> When emotions are so vivid, they may well be painful but they are not depressing. On the contrary, they indicate a state of effervescence that suggests a mobilization of all our active forces and even an influx of external agencies. It matters little that this exaltation was provoked by a sad event; it is no less real and does not differ from the exaltation observed in joyous festivals…. Just by being collective, these ceremonies raise the vital tone of the group…. thus they are reassured, they take heart, and subjectively it is as though the rite really had repelled the dreaded danger.

Consequently, a Durkheimian perspective allows for an understanding of the construction of moral orders as mediated by collectives of embodied individuals who are emotionally and cognitively engaged with their social world (Shilling and Mellor, 1998; Shilling, 2005). However, whilst Durkheim's insight of morality was an expression of what was perceived to be sacred, a contemporary application of Durkheim's work goes beyond that of the

relationship between religion and morality. When applied to contemporary assembled social groups, such as those which exist within a variety of dark tourism environments, it is suggested that individual 'dark tourists' may become influenced and informed and, thus, embodied about the tragic event which they are consuming. This may result, in relative terms at least, in a transformation of their emotional structure and moral order. By way of contextualization, a visit for many Americans to the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre, or what has been termed Ground Zero, will no doubt collectively bind individuals to a loss of not just human life, but also to a loss of confidence and realization that the capitalist American Dream is not a universal 'dream' shared by all world cultures. Consequently, the atrocity on 9/11 that left thousands of people dead ensured a degree of self-reflection for many Americans. This self-reflection included the premise that secularization as an ongoing process included competing global voices and religious forces (Habermas, 2003). Hence, individuals required not only a physical outlet for memorial and commemoration of the 9/11 deceased, but an official space to project morality and reaffirm American Christian morals and values (Plate 3). Additionally, the social binding of people in emotion (that is, *collective effervescence*) at the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre, allows the individual self to become embodied and to offer formally their own morally relative discourse about 9/11 and its consequences. Specifically, visitors are encouraged to write and record their own thoughts and emotions about the attack in a dedicated 'remembrance room' within the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre (Plate 4). These individual 'moral judgements' are then recorded and displayed collectively against official interpretation of tolerance and courage (Plate 5). It is here where sacrality and morality is reconfigured against a backdrop of political terrorism, and where the physical space of the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre offers a (new) vitalized place to espouse and communicate individual moral and ethical opinion. Consequently, the formal and official interpretation offered by the (political) 'authorities' at the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre (for example, Plates 6 & 7), combined with the informal and unofficial interpretation offered by individual visitors (as in Plate 5), ensures a collective constitution of a morality which is enlightened by the tragedy of 9/11. This, in turn, generates debate from the media and literature as well as amongst individuals themselves. Of course, this so-called 9/11 morality has wider implications for how people interact with different faiths and creeds, and the political responses to such interactions. On

a more general level, however, it is here where Durkheim's concept of effervescence is revealed, as collectivities of embodied individuals are both socially and emotionally bound within a dark tourism space and, in turn, consume tragedy that may have adversely affected their intrinsic sense of morality.
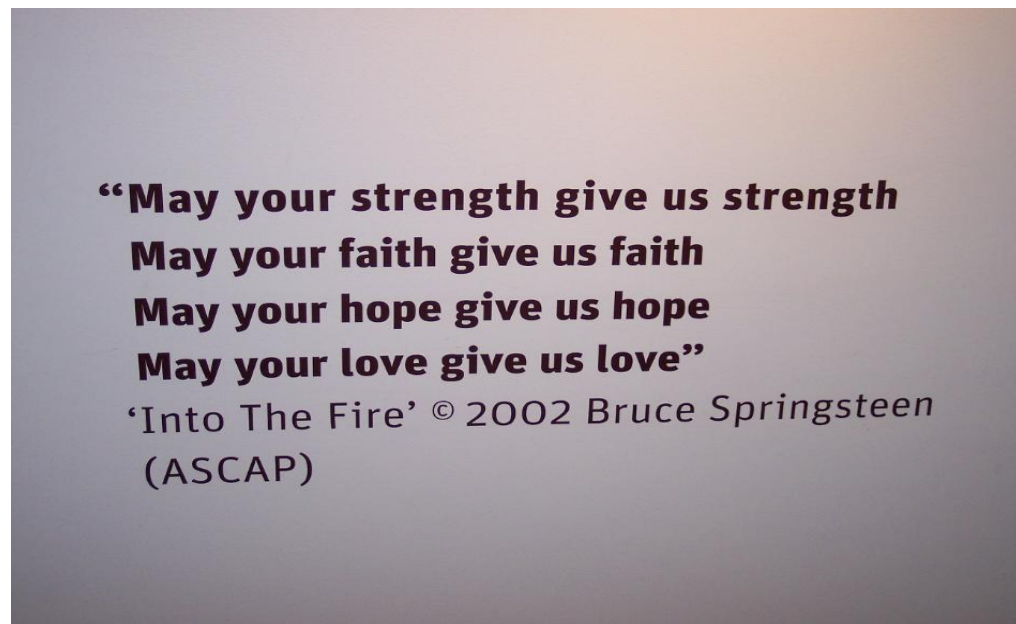
Plate 3: A 'prayer' displayed on a wall inside the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre at Ground Zero (New York)

Plate 4: Visitors gather to record 'moral judgements' on postcards inside the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre at Ground Zero (New York)
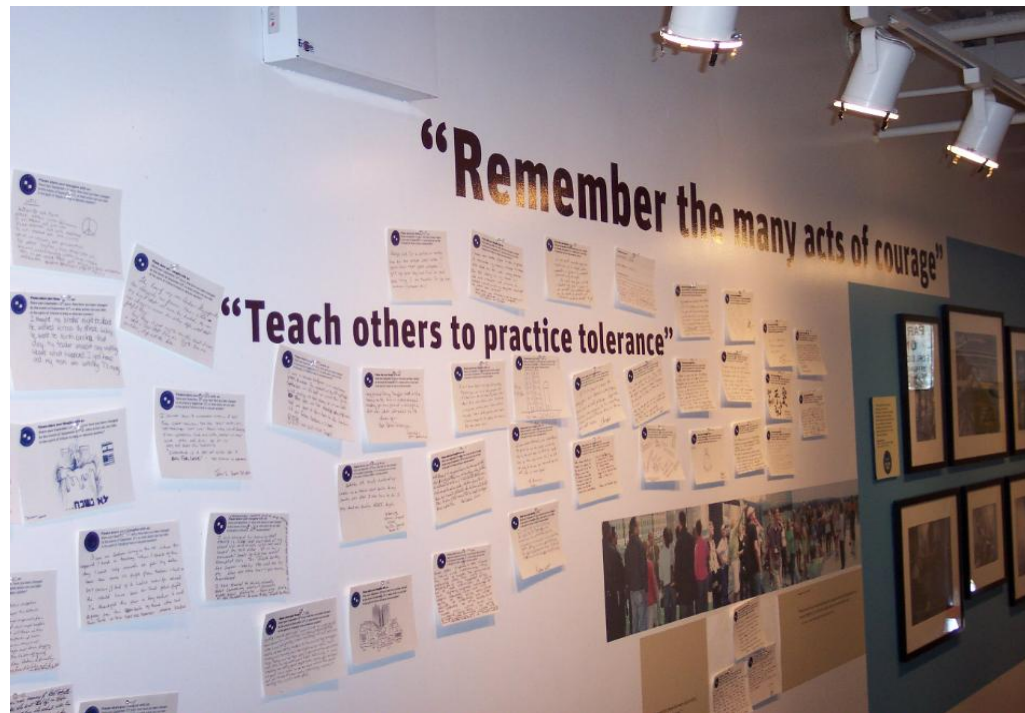
Plate 5: Visitor 'postcards of morality' inside the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre at Ground Zero (New York)

Plate 6: Audio interpretation from those who directly experienced 9/11 events
- Tribute WTC Visitor Centre at Ground Zero (New York)

Plate 7: Visitor reading an 'official narrative' at the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre
at Ground Zero (New York)

Of course, the example of the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre at Ground Zero, as a dark tourism case, is indeed specific to the events of 9/11 and its aftermath. Nevertheless, the principle of collective effervescence and its emotional and socially binding of individuals potentially (re)invents dark tourism spaces into contemporary places to reflect, record and interpret moral concerns. However, the incidence, intensity and scope of collective effervescence will vary according to the relationship and activities characteristic of social groups (Collins, 1988). This may certainly be true of dark tourism, with its diverse and eclectic mix of sites, attractions and exhibitions, and the individuals who may visit them. In particular, the perceived 'shade of darkness' within any given dark tourism experience, as discussed earlier in the thesis, will dictate the level of emotional (re)structuring for the individual and, of course, any subsequent moral instruction and meaning will differ invariably within different socio-cultural groups and geo-political contexts. Furthermore, as noted by Shilling and Mellor (1998: 197), the effects of collective effervescence since they are rooted in emotion, are 'characterized by ephemerality and must be recharged if it is to have enduring social significance'. This may explain, in part at least, the exponential growth of dark tourism in its various guises as the recharging effect occurs, and different dark tourism experiences inform a broader morality framework. Even so, Durkheim warned of non-traditional institutions, or what he termed professional organisations as modern associational forms, performing the socially binding functions previously undertaken by religion (Durkheim, 1958, 1984). Consequently, the processes of effervescent vitalism within contemporary society and subsequent new moral spaces, such as those found within dark tourism, and its resultant binding effect of individuals in moral reflection, can be problematic. Certainly, Graham (2007) notes the ambiguity in Durkheim's theory of social effervescence and its lack of distinction between different types of social bonding. It is here where the diversity of dark tourism and its ability in both scope and generation of moral conversation is complex. For instance, a visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau will no doubt provide a more intense emotional experience and subsequent rational turn to collective moral issues than, say, a visit to a 'lighter form of dark tourism', for example to the York or London Dungeon visitor attractions (Stone, 2009c). Nevertheless, whilst the self may extract profound moral meanings, and indeed raise further ethical questions about the human capacity to act inhumanly at Auschwitz-Birkenau, different, but equally valid, moral issues

may surround the Dungeon visitor attractions and the role of torture, punishment and retribution, both in the past and its ethical implications for penal justice in the present. In both examples, as with the earlier Ground Zero illustration, morality is generated, maintained, challenged or confirmed within these new vitalized contemporary spaces, albeit with varying degrees of intensity, through embodied individuals who are engaged with their (moral) life-world. In turn, this stimulates a kind of collective emotional energy, or effervescence, which socially binds individuals through their consumption of dark tourism. However, that is not to suggest dark tourism places encourage or indeed openly permit the kind of Durkheimian effervescence that may be witnessed in, say sporting events (see Jarvie & Maguire, 1994), but, rather, a kind of emotional effervescence that is subdued, quiet and reflective, yet still allows for the animation of the (moral) senses.

Consequently, it is this, the fact that individuals collectively assemble in seemingly 'dark spaces' and gaze upon sordid human activity, or collectively consume grief and tragedy, that is often reported upon by the media as 'moral panic' (Seaton & Lennon, 2004). Fundamentally, however, these so-called moral panics are not as unequivocal as media reporting might assume. Indeed, when examined from a Durkheimian perspective, the moral panic dark tourism seemingly provokes, both through its production and consumption, might be viewed as ethically relative to the individual but, at the collective level, has profound implications for society as it attempts to create and maintain new moral frameworks. In other words, perceived moral panic is the consequence of the process of interpretation and debate generated by dark tourism. Moral panic is not the result of dark tourism, but merely a symptom of secular society attempting to negotiate and communicate morality in new contemporary spaces. Indeed, it is against a backdrop of individualization and construction of new secular moral orders, that the communication and negotiation of 'moral meaning' within collective contemporary 'dark spaces' is often misconstrued as moral panic. There is *no* moral panic because of dark tourism, only *talk of* panic. Indeed, the *talk of panic*, conveyed by media reporting of dark tourism is an integral element of the social effervescence revitalising moral arguments that surround contemporary consumption of death, disaster and tragedy.

4.3   Chapter Four Summary

Despite an increasing ethical commentary on dark tourism, either from media reporting of specific sites or experiences or within broader academic discourse, the analysis of morality and dark tourism has, to date, been rather descriptive and one-dimensional. Additionally, for the most part, and in the media at least, dark tourism has largely been accused of trivializing death and exploiting tragedy for mercantile advantage or for political gain, whilst dark touristic experiences have often been dismissed as unethical and voyeuristic (Garrett, 2008). This chapter, therefore, set out to enhance the theoretical foundations of the dark tourism phenomenon by considering it within a broader framework of emotion and morality. In so doing, it has not only developed a conceptual basis for the future empirical testing of ethics and morality within dark tourism practices, but has also contributed to a wider social scientific understanding of morality within contemporary societies (Stone, 2009b).

Thus, a number of key issues have emerged from the preceding discussion. Firstly, secularization and the negation of religion as a traditional dominant framework, in which meaning and moral guidance is provided, has seemingly left some individuals isolated, disoriented and morally confused. Secondly, as post-conventional societies cultivate a process of individualization and moral confusion, individuals seek morally relative meaning on their own terms and from non-religious and non-traditional institutions, enabling dark tourism places to become contemporary communicative spaces. Thirdly, individuals collectively assemble in these new communicative (dark) spaces, resulting, potentially, in both the provision and extraction of moral meaning about a particular tragic event, which in turn allows the self to become embodied. Finally, collective effervescence and its resultant emotional energy is discharged through and by embodied individuals within these new socially sanctioned dark spaces, whereby morality is conveyed not only by official interpretation of the death or tragedy, but also by the actual presence and emotional engagement of the individual visitor. The media and other commentators, in turn, can interpret this as moral panic, which, to them at least, means an apparent dissolution of ethics at the collective level. In short, dark tourism may provide new spaces in which not only is immorality (re)presented for contemporary consumption, but also in which morality

is communicated, reconfigured and revitalized. This reconfiguration and revitalization of moral issues in dark tourism spaces is not moral panic, nor should it generate moral panic, but instead it should be viewed as a process of contemporary society in which we renegotiate moral boundaries and ethical principles and, stimulate new moral conversations. Therefore, it is the process of dark tourism, which attracts individuals to consume death in new insulating spaces that generates a perceived moral panic, in addition, or even rather than, the actual death, disaster, or tragedy that dark tourism aims to represent.

In conclusion, however, it would be naïve to advocate that the process of dark tourism, both in its production and consumption, provides a defining communicative space for contemporary moral instruction. It does not. Given the extensive and complex array of dark tourism sites and experiences in a variety of social, cultural and political contexts, actual dark tourism spaces will no doubt both provide and be provided with a myriad of potential moral meanings. Nonetheless, locating dark tourism within a broader conceptual emotion-morality framework allows for moral orders and their construction within contemporary society to be interrogated. Whilst future empirical research will no doubt test the theory of dark tourism and its potential role in the effervescent vitalization of morality, other conceptual issues deserve attention.

In particular, issues of moral fragility and dark tourism, as a source of moral communication require further scrutiny. Whilst dark tourism has been conceptualised here as a source of morality in society's collective engagement with the emotional capacities of people, the 'sequestration of morality' as advocated by Giddens (1991, 1994b), may augment any theory of dark tourism and morality. Specifically, Giddens argues that moral questions have been sequestered into the back-regions of life, and that 'direct contact with events and situations which link the individual lifespan to broad issues of morality and finitude are rare and fleeting' (1991: 169). Whilst dark tourism may provide direct contact with death, for Giddens there is no subsequent 'moral impulse' or collective effervescence that stimulates moral conversations. At most, he suggests a reflexive recognition of the limits of contemporary society and a rational turn to moral questions. Whilst a Giddensian perspective of morality and the potential role of dark tourism may be an avenue for future

academic inquiry, other conceptual issues should also be explored. For instance, the notion of an 'ethics of aesthetics', as outlined by Maffesoli (1991), perhaps has some relevance to how death and disaster is portrayed and presented within dark tourism. Likewise, the issue of moral relativism and individual's behaviour, values and emotions is a potential area for future research when considering the ethical dimensions of individual visitors at particular 'dark sites' (Beesley, 2004; Harman 1975). Additionally, this chapter has suggested a largely positive view of effervescent gatherings and the identification of dark tourism as a spatial opportunity for this social vitalism, engaging the work of Meštrović (1991, 1993, 1997) also offers a future research avenue that may explore dark tourism as an effervescent manifestation of fear and hatred. Adopting Meštrović's stance, then, it could be argued dark tourism and its potential inauthentic or sensational representation of tragedy and the macabre may actually heighten individuals' sense of fear. Nonetheless, whilst these research issues remain untapped, dark tourism and its relationship with contemporary morality is undoubted. As Wilson (2008: 6) aptly notes, 'society is identified, or rather identifies itself, at least as much by what it reviles as by what it embraces'. So much so, that we appear to have an innate need to formulate moral stories about ourselves that locate us in the world, and the moral stories about the world that locate us within ourselves. To that end, dark tourism sites as contemporary communicative spaces of morality, and the individuals who consume those spaces, means that dark tourism may not only act as a guardian of history in heritage terms but also as moral guardians of a contemporary society which appears to be in a midst of a resurgence of effervescent moral vitality.

Evidently, then, dark tourism may provide a contemporary vehicle to convey and mediate morality, both despite of and because of wider political and religious issues. However, as the research has argued, a central tenet of moral concern (and discourse) is often focused upon the defining feature of dark tourism, that is, *death* and its representation for the contemporary visitor. Throughout this thesis, the notions of real or reconstructed death have been referred to as the essential apparatus for both dark tourism design and experience. It is to the fundamental aspect of death and dying and its thanatological analysis, within the context of dark tourism, which the study now turns. Thus, the next chapter reveals a contemporary sociology of mortality and its relationship with dark tourism.

Chapter Five

Dark Tourism:
Death and Mortality

Memento Mori' – Remember that you must die…

5.0   Death, Taboo and Mortality Moments: an introduction

In May 2008, the 25th million visitor was welcomed by Gunther von Hagen's Body Worlds, a travelling show of anatomical donor bodies which have been exhibited in forty-seven cities across the globe since 1996 (Institute for Plastination, 2008). Using a method for preserving putrefiable biological specimens called plastination, where structural elements of cadavers are fixated, dehydrated and then, under vacuum conditions, saturated with reactive polymers such as silicone rubber, the end result is a human corpse cured for public display (for example, Plate 8). A divisive exhibition experience that has inserted the post-mortal body into the cultural landscape and contemporary consciousness, Body Worlds has forever changed our notions about conception and death by provoking philosophical and religious reflection in visitors (Stone, 2009a). As a self-proclaimed modern-day Leonardo da Vinci, Gunther von Hagens positions himself as rediscovering the Renaissance mission to educate the layperson by dissecting cadavers, and then adopting anatomical artistic license to exhibit preserved corpses in a variety of playful poses.

Plate 8: Visitor gazing upon plasinated pregnant cadaver with dead fetus - Body Words exhibition
(Source: Timeturk, 2009)

Anatomy, which was once the preserve of medics and health professionals, is now sold to the masses as visitors gaze upon plasinated anatomical cadavers, ensuring millions of lay people now have the opportunity to view death (and the dead body) close up. Indeed, Body Worlds and its show of anatomical awe is now marketed with the strap-line *'The Original Exhibition of Real Human Bodie*s', an acknowledgement by von Hagens, perhaps, that other copycat exhibitions are tapping into the commercial value of 'death displays'. Nevertheless, despite the ethical, legal and religious concerns surrounding this 'dark exhibition' (Stone, 2006), different cultural attitudes to the event have been noted. For instance, Schulte-Sasse (2006) suggests the intense legal, ethical and cultural controversy that surrounds the European experience of Body Worlds has not informed American discourse of the same event. Consequently, an affirmative American response to Body Worlds has conferred a new respectability on the exhibition and suppressed a critical engagement with its ethical, aesthetic, ideological and economic implications (Schulte-Sasse, 2006).

All the same, critics have been forthcoming with regard to the ethics of the show and the dignity of body donors who now rest in plastic rather than peace. Most notably, Burns (2007) argues the exhibition's educational objectives are ambiguous and that the presentation of cadavers in artistic mock-ups strips the donors of dignity. Likewise, opponents who are more outspoken include the Bishop of Manchester (UK), who called the display a 'body snatch show in which exhibitions such as Body Worlds have their origins in the now long-banned Victorian freak shows' (Ottewell, 2008). Additionally, debate and controversy have surrounded the source of body donors, allegedly many of them Chinese, and the potential illegal trafficking in bodies and body parts which 'supply' the various Body Worlds exhibitions across the globe (Barboza, 2006). However, despite the controversy that surrounds this dark tourism attraction, a particular reason why Body Worlds is successful, in visitor footfall at least, is that it touches upon the taboo of death. As Kriz (2007: 6) notes in the official Body Worlds catalogue, visitors 'overcome the taboos that surround human corpses… and this transition from expecting revulsion to looking at the specimens freely and uninhibitedly amounts to a personal break with these taboos'. Similarly, where in most societies dead bodies are deemed problematic objects that

are dealt with through ritual (Metcalf and Huntington, 1991), Walter (2004) suggests Body Worlds has become a contemporary ritual which allows the dead to be transformed, taboos confronted, and for the lay person to become emotionally detached through a clinical gaze.

Similarly, Whalley (2007), who conducted empirical research at Body Worlds and explored various individuals' personal consequences of visiting the exhibition, suggests the actual exhibition had an affirmative influence upon visitors. Indeed, Whalley notes a 'substantial proportion of visitors stated that they had been affected by the Body Worlds exhibition on fundamental questions in conjunction with their own death' (2007: 303). Likewise, Lantermann (2007) examines the consequents of visiting a Body Worlds exhibition, suggesting that visitors had an enriching experience in which they became more contemplative about their own life and death and more concerned with the vulnerability of their own human body. More importantly, however, Lantermann outlines a five-phase model of a visit to the Body Worlds exhibition (Figure 5), in which he highlights broad conditions, factors and processes that are involved in this particular dark tourism experience. Accordingly, the model which formulates visitor opinion not only presents itself as a heuristic strategy for planning and implementing a dark tourism survey but also for managing experiences and evaluations of various visitor groups.

Whilst the exploration of specific push and pull motivating factors is beyond the scope of this thesis, the consequential aspects of the visit, as suggested in Phase Five of Lantermann's model, are important. In short, he proposes the consequences of a 'dark tourism' visit, such as that to the Body Worlds exhibition, have profound implications for the visitor within the near future of the actual visit. In particular, Lantermann (2007) suggests that, following a visit to Body Worlds, people are likely to experience greater interest in and concerns about health and the vulnerability of the body, especially because of the exhibition awakening a greater interest in the juxtaposition between life and death and the ultimate demise of the human being. Of course, whilst the Body Worlds exhibition is a specialist or niche example of dark tourism, it nevertheless illustrates key thanatological aspects of the wider dark tourism phenomenon. That is, it exemplifies a
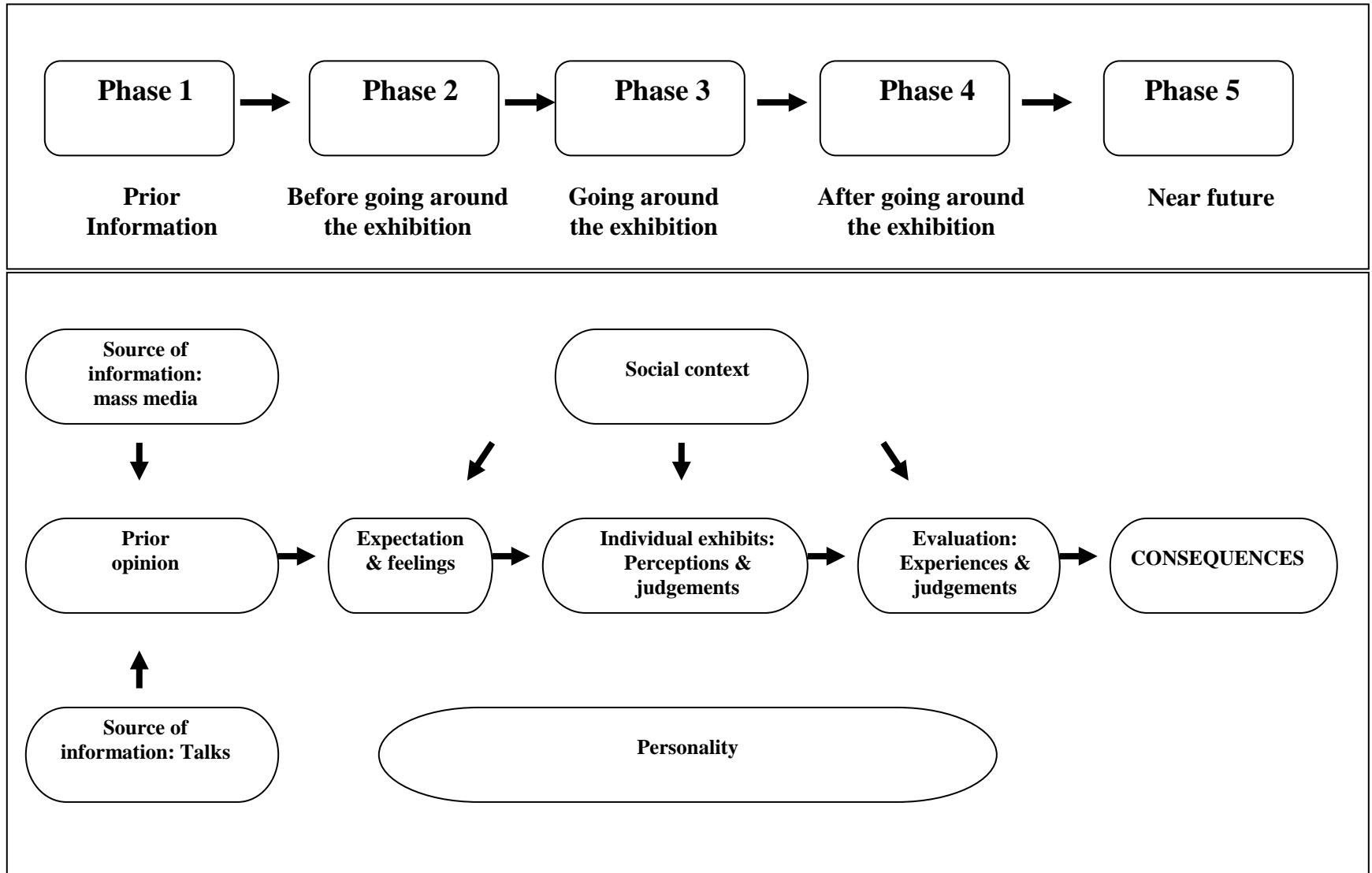
Figure 5: The five-phase model of a visit to a Body Worlds Exhibition
(Source: Lantermann 2007)

number of fundamental issues that revolve around mortality within Western-centric societies, including the apparent taboos that surround modern-day morality, and the consequential aspects of confronting and contemplating these 'death taboos' within the public domain. Thus, drawing upon work elsewhere by Stone (2009a) and Stone and Sharpley (2008), it is these aspects of death and the confrontation of so-called 'mortality moments' and, the consequential role which dark tourism may potentially play that this chapter now reveals. Specifically, the chapter explores death and its contemplation in contemporary societies as a basis for developing a model of dark tourism consumption within a thanatological framework; but firstly, a brief outline of thanatology and its relevance to the study of dark tourism in contemporary society.

5.1   Thanatology: an interdisciplinary approach

La Rochefocuald's famous seventeenth century quote, *'One cannot easily look directly at either the sun or death'* (Charmaz, 1980: 84) perhaps still holds true, in part at least, for the present-day. However, whilst astrophysics has now revealed the intricacies of our nearest star, something that provides for the basis of all life, because of the intellectual rationale founded in psychoanalytic theory, facing or contemplating death still elicits a natural fear. According to Harrison (2003), it is this natural fear that results in a denial of death for the individual self. The psychology of this latter point is beyond the scope of this thesis, though the actual implications are not. In short, it is the contemporary inability to 'look directly' at death, which occupies a curious position within sociology. Consequently, studies of death and death anxiety have provided one of the building blocks for the field of inquiry that is often referred to as *thanatology* (Kastenbaum, 1996). It is thanatology that draws upon the study of death and mortality within discipline areas such as medicinal technologies, philosophy, the arts, political science, history, religion, and sociology, which is allowing an interrogation of death as a central dynamism underlying life, vitality, and the structure of social orders. Thus, it perhaps makes sense to examine dark tourism, with its central features of death and mortality, within a thanatological framework. Put another way, dark tourism, despite its typological, interpretative, political, and moral dilemmas, as discussed

in previous chapters, has (real and reconstructed) death at its nucleus. Hence, it is death and its contemporary depiction that calls out for further scrutiny and academic inquiry (Stone, 2005a). Of course, death is not only the muse of our religions, philosophies, arts, political ideologies, or medical advancements, but also death and mortality pervade our culture in various guises and pretexts, including, but not limited to, dark tourism representations. Death is pervasive within our living world. For instance, death sells newspapers and books, yet we guard against it through (life) insurance policies; death invigorates television and cinematic production and, indeed, is a staple ingredient of contemporary news reporting. Death is also used as a barometer to measure the adequacy of social life and progress. Indeed, death in the form of murder rates can infer the stability of social structures, whilst cross-socio/cultural comparisons of mortality can ascertain social inequalities. Conversely, death, especially untimely or violent death, can influence political policy and governance in the form of official enquiries and subsequent report recommendations (for example, mortality incidences because of domestic violence, child neglect, or accidents).

Evidently then, death is a fundamental underpinning to life and to the order of life. As Metcalf and Huntington (1991: 2) aptly note, 'life becomes transparent against the background of death'. In short, death (and its thanatological analysis) can reveal the most central social and cultural processes and values and, consequently, becomes a catalyst that, 'when put into contact with any cultural order, precipitates out the central beliefs and concerns of a people' (Kearl, 2009: 1). On a more individual level however, death exposures (or *mortality moments*) can crystallize and invigorate the self's own life pathway (Kearl, 2009). Hence, for the purpose of this thesis, it is assumed that individuals' death anxiety and experience of dying and grief are strongly structured by their own social environment and personal life-worlds (Tercier, 2005). Thus, the logic moves from the cultural order, that is, the broad realm of social reality that augments and shapes our collective cognitions, emotions, and behaviours, to that of the institutional orders, such as religion, politics, mass media, or indeed dark tourism. It is these institutions that (in)directly filter and mould our (mortality) experiences and actions, and which directly influences the individual order. The institutional influence on death (or indeed, lack of it) is discussed in detail later in the chapter, especially in relation to how the individual self

begins to contemplate the contemporary deathbed. However, it is on this note of the 'deathbed' or, in other words, a combination of mortality-related physical, social, and spiritual factors, that a historical context must be set. In short, throughout history, individuals *do not* know when or how they are to die (though this may be changing somewhat through the recent practice of euthanasia), but *do* know that they will die. Therefore, the next section outlines a brief history of death, which will subsequently inform contemporary approaches to mortality, including that of dark tourism.

5.2   Conceptions of the Deathbed: a short history

Allan Kellehear in his book *A Social History of Dying*, a major historical review of the human and clinical sciences literature about human dying, suggests our experiences of mortality have been shaped by ancient concepts about death and social responsibility at the end of life. He goes on to analogise:

> The study of dying is like gazing into a reflecting pool. The waters there reflect back to us the kinds of people we have become. Behind the fragile and temporary images of our individual selves that appear on its surface exist suggestions of less familiar company – strange tides of history, cultural undertows that sweep in and out of our lives. The ripple of these forces tug and work at our identities, at first to create them, and finally to test them before their eventual dismissal at death. These are influences so subtle, indeed so intimate in our day-to-day lives, that we often barely notice their workings underneath the modern obsession to present ourselves to others as distinct and individual (Kellehear, 2007: 1).

Kellehear's essential point here is that the historical conceptions of death and dying and, more importantly, the treatment of mortality, are fundamental to a contemporary understanding of how death pervades the human consciousness. Of course, the ways in which individuals conceptualise death are, perhaps, as diverse as conceptions of life (Charmaz, 1980). Whilst some may perceive death as a mystery, an unknown that cannot be explained, others have developed intricate conceptions. These conceptions are varied and often contradictory, but have evolved over the course of time and have been influenced in no small part by religion, faith and political culture. Whilst beyond the scope of this chapter to examine in any depth, it is worth noting key discernible themes that constitute major conceptions of death.

Firstly, the notion of death as an *event* encompasses divergent meanings about the nature and character of the death event and what, if anything, will follow. The event perspective means the cessation of biological life which ends at specific point in time, though some scholars are now suggesting that the death event is an (ageing) process possessing duration but, with ambiguous boundaries (Lloyd, 2004; Kellehear, 2005). Nevertheless, death as an event may be simply viewed as the ending of biological life and the completion of a person. On the other hand, dying (or social death) may be viewed as a *transition*, where death represents a passage, departure, or a shift into nothingness. The conception of death as transition also elicits a verdict on the lives of the deceased, in which their actions are reviewed, appraised and thereby judged (Howarth, 2007). Thus, while some view death only in relation to the dying process or, in simple terms, as a release, others see death in largely personal terms, where death is represented as a 'day of judgement' followed by eternal rewards or punishments.

In contrast to death as an (transitional) event, other conceptions of death view it as a *state*. Whilst death as an event usually refers to a point in time, death as a state infers infinite time. Consequently, the state of death may be perceived as sequential to earlier transition; in other words, something that follows the death event, either a void or emptiness, or a continued existence, which assumes death as a state of being. Additionally, death conception may be broadly cast in terms of *purpose*. In short, the purpose of death is given to both the effects of dying and what it presumably accomplishes. Thus, depending upon individuals' proclivities and other beliefs, the purpose of death may be seen as peace, reward, unification, or an elevation to a higher place. Of course, the effects of any purposes attributed to death have been *personified*. Throughout history, death has taken on a number of mantles and personifications. These personifications are deemed external forces and are often referred to as the 'great destroyer' or 'grim reaper' (death as hostile), 'gay deceiver' or 'lover' (death through chicanery), or 'comforter' (death as a peaceful departure). Whilst personifications of death may be attributed to specific periods of history, contemporary personifications view death as the 'enemy', and something that requires fighting (and beating – hence, perhaps, a modern emphasis on medical advancements and health education).

Another conception of death was that of *equalizer*. Where death was once seemingly ubiquitous in times of war, plagues, epidemics, and so on, a uniquely social construct of death emerged that obliterated worldly social distinctions at the time of death. Hence, death humbled the rich and powerful and accomplished equality hitherto unknown in everyday life. The final category of death conceptions is based upon *ideals*, *hopes*, and *wishes*. Simply put - what individuals think death *should be*. Consequently, death becomes idealized and romanticised, or what is often referred to as natural death or a 'good death' (Aries, 1974, 1981). In other words, dying and subsequent death is seen as correct, that is, a perceived correctness of death occurs in its timing, nature, and place. Evidently then, death is synthesized from a fluctuating mix of biological reality, social order and structure, and ontological (or spiritual) belief. Conversely, the deathbed is triangulated between the borders of life and death 'by bringing into congruence the somatic, the social and the ontological' (Tercier, 2005: 246).

Of course, the various conceptions of death, as briefly noted above, have all evolved over a period. Indeed, Phillippe Aries' classic history of death, The *Hour of Our Death* (1981), describes dominant deathbed paradigms in Western societies and cultures since the Middle Ages. Whilst Aries work has come under scrutiny and criticism since its publication (Stone, 1978), especially in relation to questions of cultural diversity of the deathbed experience (Charmaz, Howarth and Kellehear, 1997), Aries has also drawn trenchant responses because of his chronology (Porter, 1999a). Particularly, whilst critics have complained of Aires' failure to address the dynamics behind the sequence of his deathbed phases, as revealed shortly, he has also been treated unfavourably because 'his views appear to reflect his Catholicism, his reactionary politics, and his apparent luddism' (Porter, 1999a: 85). That said, a particular issue posed by Aries's approach to the history of death is that he did not offer a simple linear periodization (though it is often presented that way), but a *melanque* of the synchronic and the diachronic (Porter, 1999). Arguably though, whilst Aires does not fully engage with the medical aspects of the deathbed, particularly in relation to medical reasons being a powerful attraction to abandon religious rituals, his work remains, nevertheless, valid and a useful point of reference when examining the history of the deathbed (Walter, 1994; Campany, 1996; Seale, 1998; Tercier, 2005). To that

end, Aries (1981) delineates five phases of death, corresponding to particular historical epochs, which are briefly outlined in the following sections (Figure 6), though it should be cautioned that there is not one single history of death, but many histories which overlap with one another (Porter, 1999a).

5.2.1   The Tame Death

Aries' initial stage of the deathbed was characterized by a oneness between the living and the dead. Thus, for Aires, death was *tame* and individuals yielded to its inevitable arrival as if to sleep. Certainly, this kind of death was typical of primitive societies, and proved compatible with early Christian doctrine. As Aries notes, the tame death 'stretched from antiquity to the early sixteenth century, [and] was medieval Catholicism's great ritual edifice of the sacramental deathbed' (1981: 5). Hence, the Christian West, for the majority of its history, constructed (biological) death not as an ontological cessation, but as a commencement of a transcendent journey to a 'better world'. Therefore, the tame death did not erase the being; instead the soul lived on in heaven (or hell) forever. Consequently, this was viewed as a natural or measured death, which in turn allowed for a social death. In other words, death was a process that occurred over a lifetime, with the cutting of ties to the living being a consciousness of life itself. Indeed, sociality even extended beyond biological death, as the living could continue to affect the fate of the deceased through prayers and their intercessions as saints (Davies, 1997). Ultimately, the tame death offered a contented disjunction of biological, social, and spiritual death, in which the finality of death could be legitimately denied (Houlbrooke, 1989).

To antiquity	16th Century 1500's	17th Century 1600's	18th Century 1700's	19th Century 1800's	20th Century 1900's	To present 2000's
The Tame Death	**The Death of Self**		**The Remote Death**	**The Romantic Death**	**The Invisible Death**	
Death defined by transcendence	**Death defined by eternal damnation**		**Death defined by rationality**	**Death defined by dignity**	**Death defined by institutionalisation**	
Pagan / Religious Influence	**Religious Influence**		**Religious / Secular Influence**	**Secular / Religious Influence**	**Secular / Medical Influence**	

THE DEATHBED

Figure 6: A timeline of the history of death (after Aries, 1981) with key defining features and influences

5.2.2 *The Death of Self*

The tame death was superseded, according to Aries, from the high Middle Ages up until the seventeenth century by a new death – *death of the self*. Brought about by the combined intrusions of humanist individualism and Salvationism of the Papacy, the death of the self was a deathbed of declarations of faith, examinations of conscience, the settling of accounts and affairs, and the preparation of the soul for heaven. Indeed, this became a time when death took on the mantle of an enemy, rather than a release, as 'the Reformation closed down purgatory and cut the ties between the living and the dead' (Tercier, 2005: 11). This was also a time when the Church encroached upon the nature of dying and, in doing so, promised Last Judgement deliverance and salvation from eternal damnation. Hence, as Porter (1999: 84) suggests, the death of the self became terrifying and dying itself was 'the finale in a liturgical melodrama of sin, penance and absolution, stage-managed by the priesthood.' Thus, the death of the self was a time when one's behaviour in life determined one's fate after death, and when burial moved from open-field sites (characteristic of the tame death) to the protective confines of the Church. Here, grisly effigies were created to serve as *memento mori* reminders to the living, espousing a message of holy living essentially amounted to a holy dying. However, the period of Death of the Self was itself divided, with the peasants continuing to accept a natural (tame) death, whilst the political and landed elite, still passionately attached to worldly delights and pleasures, were becoming terrified of the Beyond. With offers of salvation from the Church in return for repentance of sin, the Death of the Self allowed ontological death to be forestalled, yet social and biological death began to coincide.

5.2.3 *The Remote Death*

The third period, which Aries cryptically entitled 'La mort longue et proche' ('protracted and imminent death'), has been often referred to as the *remote death*. Assigned to the eighteenth century, this was a period where the spiritualization of the deathbed was beginning to be questioned. Indeed, the scientific revolution, rationalism and secularism of the Enlightenment diluted religious ritual structures of mortality and, consequently, began to define death as a biological and medical phenomenon. However, these (minority) views were only in so far that the reality and transcendence of the soul was queried but, nonetheless, biological and ontological death began to coincide. Thus,

the remote death offered the living little or no influence over the dead, as was the case of the preceding death of the self. For this paradigm, the dead had no place to be, but perhaps more fundamentally, for the dead there was no *'to be'*. Whilst most medical practitioners of the day continued to believe in God and priests continued to bless the dying, the Enlightenment's revised perspective of nature (and God's and man's respective place within this revised nature) was eroding an established religious dominion and casting hesitation on traditional political and intellectual hegemony. Thus, the remote death allowed the possibility of examining life and death empirically through a lens of reason and rational thought, where the dying process could be materially affected by acquired medicinal knowledge and practice (Porter, 1993). Essentially, death could be meddled with and manipulated, to an extent at least. Whilst the dying process, of course, could not be reversed or even halted, the eighteenth century medical practitioner, with the aid of narcotics in the form of opium (widely available since the sixteenth century), conferred unprecedented control over the processes of biological and social death (Porter, 1999b). It is this control and manipulation that, perhaps, represents the beginning of the modern flight from death (Porter, 1999a) which culminated in a contemporary absent death as discussed later in this chapter.

5.2.4   *The Romantic Death*

The *romantic death* of the nineteenth century, termed by Aries as 'thy death' (or 'the death of the other'), evolved through both a waning of eternal damnation messages prescribed by priests, and advancements in the management of pain or medicines prescribed by doctors. Moreover, with the emergence of the modern family and its new structures of feeling (Porter, 1999a), attention became fixed not on the decedent, but on those who continued to live. Influenced through Romanticism, including the quixotic depiction of death in art, literature and poetry, the rituals of death became much more sentimental (if not morbid), and mourning became a family concern which perpetuated the memory of the deceased. The Romantic death became a death-with-dignity, a 'good death' where calmness prevailed in readiness for a dignified departure from the mortal world. The good death was an illustration of how man paid respectful deference to the laws of nature, and how the time of passing became an opportunity to put 'things in order'. Indeed, the Romantic death was signified by the writing of wills with final

bequests bestowed, sanctimonious instructions given to survivours, forgiveness sought both from companions and God, promises of reunions made, and final words spoken. As Tercier (2005: 12) notes, 'the business of the [romantic] deathbed became just that: the tidying and tying up of unfinished business'. Hence, the Romantic ideal of the Victorian deathbed was reconstructed as nothing more distressing than a final, peaceful sleep. With a darkened room, family and loved ones at the bedside, affairs in order, peace made with both survivor and God, and with a few gentle and quiet farewells, the decedent would dignifiedly drift off into an eternal slumber. Of course, this Romantic death was an ideal in the minds of a Victorian society who came to think of death as simply as a way of 'expiring consumption' (Jalland, 1996). Additionally, in its ideal form, the Romantic good death appeared to be a perfect coincidence of both social and biological death that did not rely (solely) on ontological continuity. However, whilst spiritual aspects were still important to the 'good death' and religious forms of the death-with-dignity still embraced the hope of an eternal existence, its more secular forms found comfort in relief from pain and discomfort.

5.2.5 *The Invisible Death*

Aries termed the fifth and final phase of his deathbed history as the *invisible death* or 'forbidden death', which was symbolic of the twentieth century (and to an extent, still is a feature of the present). It is within this phase that Aries reveals his revulsion for modern developments and suggests that a waning of faith, especially in an afterlife, marks modernity. With the full onset of secularization, the invisible death was signified by the role of institutions, especially the medical establishment, where increasing bureaucratization and hospitalization, as Aries alleges, 'robbed the dead and dying of all dignity' (1981: 559). The invisible or forbidden death, where death 'disappeared' from the community gaze, is blamed on medicalization (which is discussed in more detail in the next section). Certainly, the position of the physician at the nineteenth century (Romantic) deathbed became entrenched and consolidated through advancements in therapeutic techniques and pathophysiology, as well as an expanding pharmacopoeia (Porter, 1999b). Augmenting the position of the physician as an 'authority over death' were technical advances and acceleration of the bureaucratic super-structure that became the foundation of the modern state. With increasing numbers of hospitals (and later hospices) and dispensaries, combined with the professionalisation of disposal of

the dying through regularization of death certificates, post-mortems and the storage of corpses, the invisible death became almost just that; concealed and obscured behind the façade and machinery of the (new) death, dying and disposal industry. Consequently, with increasingly industrialization being applied to the deathbed in terms of both processes and procedures, Porter (1999a: 84) notes, 'rather as the *philosophes* rationalized death, modern man has in effect denied his own mortality, and death has become taboo' [original emphasis]. Hence, as the twentieth century progressed, the physicians' control over the process of dying increased, and the death was essentially move out of the familiar environs of the family and community to become institutionalised under a medical gaze. Thus, the shift of power and emphasis from priest to doctor is now almost complete, as secularizing processes have allegedly made the world (post)modern. Notwithstanding, the care of the soul and body has gone from post-mortem religious ritual to ante-mortem medical protocol. As Tercier (2005: 13) notes:

> In the ideal modern death, biological, social and ontological death not only coincide but are meant to occur in such an instant that, perhaps, the whole business [of mortality] can be ignored, allowed to slip past unnoticed. Hence the invisibility of death.

This theme of 'invisible death' is explored further in remainder of this chapter. In particular, it is argued that despite death being 'hidden' or sequestered within contemporary society, it is nevertheless undergoing a period of revival within the public domain. It is here, crucially, that dark tourism has a potential mediating role to play within the contemporary deathbed.

5.3   Death and Contemporary Society

The establishment and evolution of sociology has been concerned almost exclusively with the problems of life, rather than with the subject of death (Mellor and Shilling 1993). However, over four decades ago, Berger's (1967) seminal text suggested death was an essential feature of the human condition, requiring individuals to develop mechanisms to cope with their ultimate demise. He went on to suggest that to neglect death is to ignore one of the few universal parameters in which both the collective and individual self is constructed (Berger 1967). Hence, where death and the discussion of

death within the public realm was once considered taboo (DeSpelder and Strickland 2002; Leming and Dickinson 2002; Mannino 1997), or at least proclaimed to be taboo (Walter 1991), scholars are now challenging death taboos, exploring contexts where the dead share the world with the living. Indeed, as the philosopher Nietzsche (1974: 168) once declared, 'let us be aware of saying that death is opposed to life. The living is merely a type of what is dead, and a very rare type'.

Accordingly, Harrison (2003) examines how the dead are absorbed into the living world by graves, images, literature, architecture and monuments and, subsequently, offers a humic foundation to examine life-worlds. In other words, Harrison suggests a humic basis to study life, where contents (i.e. the dead) have been buried so they may be reclaimed for the future, and which is key if we are to retrieve the past in order to move forward. In particular, Harrison notes how living is simply an extension of death (interestingly, rather than death being an extension of life), and he goes on to argues that only the dead can grant the living legitimacy. Specifically though, Harrison argues, cultures are perpetuated through death and the living are compelled to serve the interests of the dead. He goes on to suggest:

> Left to ourselves we are all bastards. In exchange for legitimacy, which humans need and crave more than anything else, we surrender ourselves to their [the dead] dominion. We may, in our modern modes, ignore or reject their ancient authority [the dead]; yet if we are to gain a margin of real freedom – if we are to become *absolutely modern* (original emphasis) – we must begin to acknowledge the traditional claims that such authority has on us (Harrison, 2003: x).

Similarly, Lee (2002) reviews the disenchantment of death in modernity and concludes that death is making its way back into social consciousness, suggesting that the time has come to dissect death without prejudice. He goes on to advocate that death is 'coming out of the closet to redefine our assumptions of life' (2004:155), thus breaking the modern silence (and taboo) on death, which itself perhaps comprises a defence mechanism for individuals against their inevitable passing. Therefore, although the inevitability of death continues to be disavowed, particularly in contemporary society, it can never be completely denied (Tercier, 2005). Indeed, contemporary society increasingly consumes, willingly or unwillingly, both real and commodified death and suffering through audio-visual representations, popular culture and the media, a fundamental point that is returned to shortly.

Importantly, however, Giddens (1991) points to a particular characteristic of people living in modern contemporary society that correlates with death and mortality. Namely, the individual self has perceived erosion of personal meaningfulness and rational order, which in turn, is propelled by the privatisation of meaning and sequestration of death within public space. The significance of this is revealed shortly but, firstly, when discussing mortality and its contemplation, a critical feature of contemporary (Western) society may be seen in the extensive desacralisation of social life which has failed to replace religious certitudes with scientific certainties (Giddens, 1991). Instead, whilst the secularising negation of religion, as discussed previously, and an increased belief in science may have provided people with the possibility of exerting a perceived sense of control over their lives (though, crucially, it has not conquered death), it fails to provide values to guide lives (after Weber, 1948). This, according to Giddens (1991), leaves individuals vulnerable to feelings of isolation, especially when ruminating the prospect of death and an end to life projects. As with morality and the issue of moral confusion, as argued earlier, secularization has played a principal role in the orientation and direction, or lack of it, for both the individual and collective self. Hence, that the 'secularization of life should be accompanied by the secularization of death should come as no surprise: to live in the modern is to die in it also' (Tercier, 2005:13). Further to this, Giddens (1991) suggests a privatization of meaning in contemporary society, especially that which revolves around mortality (and morality), where both experience and meaning have been relocated from public space to the privatized realms of an individual's life. Consequently, this has served both to both reduce massively the scope of the sacred and to leave increasing numbers of individuals alone with the task of establishing and maintaining values to guide them and make sense of their daily lives. Ultimately, therefore, people require a sense of order in relation to their daily social lives, to which Giddens (1990, 1991) refers to as 'ontological security', or in other words, a 'stable mental state derived from a sense of continuity and order in events' (Bilton, 1996: 665).

5.3.1   Ontological Security: Meaning and Mortality

A distinctive feature of contemporary society, Giddens (1991:156) argues, is the 'purchasing of ontological security' through various institutions and experiences that protect the individual from direct contact with madness, criminality, sexuality, nature

and death. Giddens, who associates contemporary society with an 'exclusion of social life from fundamental existential issues which raise central moral dilemmas for human beings' (1991:25), suggests that ontological security is anchored, both emotionally and cognitively, in a 'practical consciousness of the meaningfulness' of our day-to-day actions (1991:36). Put simply, the individual self within a collective framework, that is society, requires confidence, trust and stability in their world in order to lead a contented and fulfilled existence. Ontological security or the *security of the self, which*, in turn, provides for a sense of meaning of why individuals exist and for what purpose, can be obtained from diverse sources. These include but are not limited to, family structures and health (Gregory, 2005), community involvement (Walklate, 2007), political systems (Mitzen, 2006), religious institutions (Kinnvall, 2004), education levels (Shyu, 2002), and even the nature of housing accommodation (Hiscock et al, 2001; Dupuis and Thorns, 2002).

However, this sense of meaningfulness or ontological security is constantly threatened by the angst of disorder or chaos. In a fractious and fragmented world that appears to spin ever faster, Mellor (1993:12) notes, 'this chaos signals the irreality of everyday conventions; since a person's sense of what is real is intimately associated with their sense of what is meaningful.' Giddens, drawing upon Kierkegaard's (1944) original concept of dread, argues that individuals are faced with a seemingly ubiquitous danger of being besieged by anxieties concerning the ultimate reality and meaningfulness of daily life. Hence, contemporary societies strive to address this sense of dread by 'bracketing out of everyday life those questions which might be raised about the social frameworks which contain human existence' (Giddens, 1991:37-38). Consequently, the notion of *bracketing* will involve, to a greater or lesser degree, an element of denial or disregard to those things that will cause existential anxieties to both the individual and collective self.

In particular, death is clearly one such issue that raises uncertainties and anxieties and, hence, becomes a major issue to bracket out (or deny) of everyday consciousness. It could be argued, of course, this bracketing out process has resulted in the contemplation of death becoming taboo and the claim that contemporary society is a 'death-denying' society (Kubler-Ross, 1997; Kastenbaum, 2001). Indeed, Pagliari (2004), writing from a

Catholic perspective, laments that whilst the self has been *death-denying* due to attitudes towards medicine and mortality, society has, as revealed shortly, subtly transgressed to an era of *death-defying*, where the emphasis on health education (and beauty products) carry promises of corporeal extension. Furthermore, Pagliari argues that contemporary society is now entering a *death-deriding* age, where death is 'mocked', commercialized and sold for the sake of art and entertainment, a point that is discussed in more detail later.

Nevertheless, as Mellor (1993) suggests, the denial of death and its subsequent bracketing process is not always successful. Indeed, bracketing is continual as it is contingent upon societies to be able to control factors that offer pertinent threats to ontological security. This level of control will vary from society to society but, regardless of the cultural condition of society, death is a potent challenge to the bracketing process in all societies (Mellor and Shilling, 1993). Therefore, the existential confrontation of the human demise has the potential to expose the individual to dread, the inevitability of death causing the individual to question the social frameworks in which they live and participate. As Giddens (1991:162) notes:

> Death remains the great extrinsic factor of human existence; it cannot as such be brought within the internally referential systems of modernity… death becomes the point zero: it is nothing more or less than the moment at which human control over human existence finds an outer limit.

Therefore, death becomes a psychological and problematic issue for both the collective and individual self. People must face up to their inevitable demise, yet the social systems in which they reside must allow them to live day-to-day with some sort of commitment and, thus, to a certain extent deny death, as suggested earlier (Dumont and Foss, 1972). Consequently, modern ideology espouses a celebration of life and living, amplified by a post-modern focus on youth, beauty and the body – hence, thoughts of death as an inevitable event are repressed and bracketed (Lee, 2004). It is, perhaps, for this reason that both Giddens (1991) and, previously, Berger (1967) associate death with those 'fateful moments' and 'marginal situations', whereby individuals have to confront problems which society has attempted to conceal from public consciousness. As Berger (1967:23) suggests, 'death is the most significant factor individuals can encounter in marginal situations'. This is because death has the potential to undermine

radically an individual's sense of meaningfulness and reality of social life, thus calling into question ontological security and even the most fundamental assumptions upon which social life is constructed (Mellor, 1993). Indeed, for Berger, death is an unavoidable characteristic of the human condition, and one that all societies, contemporary or otherwise, inevitably have to address. Hence, if death and mortality are not dealt with by adequate confrontation mechanisms, not only will the individual self have to face up to challenges of personal meaningless and a significant loss of ontological security, but the collective social framework as a whole becomes vulnerable to collapse into chaos. However, in a contemporary age defined by rapid technological, economic and scientific progress, a cultural milieu remains that challenges the maintenance of ontological security. In this context, death is difficult to deal with, especially when values and meanings are constantly reappraised and reflected upon, thus aiding a sequestration or separation of death from civic discourse and public space.

5.3.2   *The Sequestration of Death: An Absent-Present Paradox*

Giddens expresses one of the fundamental discontinuist impulses of the contemporary age is the pervasiveness of 'reflexivity' – that is, the systematic and critical (re)examination, monitoring and revision of all beliefs and practices in the light of changing circumstances. Similar to Schelsky's (1965) notion of Dauerreflexion, or 'permanent reflection', contemporary societies continuously examine and re-examine meaning and values. However, this never-ending process of systematic and potentially radical reappraisals of contemporary life can sentence the individual to a pervasive 'radical doubt'. This in turn can lead to a perceived reduction in an individual's sense of ontological security (Giddens, 1991: 21). Whilst this constant re-evaluation of social life may be profound and liberating for some, especially those with a 'narcissistic personality type' (Lasch, 1991), it is unclear how reflexivity can ultimately help individuals deal with the phenomenon of death. More specifically, death 'is a universal parameter within which reflexivity occurs, rather than an object to which reflexivity can be convincingly applied' (Mellor, 1993:18). Nonetheless, it can be argued that contemporary societies are sufficiently culturally diverse and flexible to permit individuals to draw and reflect upon a variety of cultural resources to deal with death, thus creating multiple mechanisms to confront mortality.

Even so, this diversity may compound the difficulties that individuals may experience when death (and dying) is encountered. As Mellor (1993:19) argues, 'reflexivity may be increasingly applied to death in a multitude of ways, but this multiplicity of particular approaches to death accentuates the reality-threatening potential of death in general'. In other words, the more diverse (and reflexive) the approaches to death in contemporary societies, the more difficult it becomes to contain death within social frameworks and, thus, limit existential anxiety and the level of ontological security it potentially offers to the individual. This apparent cultural diversity, reflexivity and flexibility, Mellor argues, in contemporary approaches to death 'can therefore be [partly] explained as being consistent with the *sequestration of death* from public space into the realm of the personal' (Mellor, 1993: 19). Essentially, therefore, death has been removed from civic discourse and public space and relocated as a personal issue. Mellor (1993: 12, 19-20) notes:

> This sequestration is manifest as the privatisation and subjectivisation of the experience of death, which in turn results in the increased presence of considerations *for individuals*… [In contemporary societies], individuals must create their own identities, drawing upon the reflexive mechanisms and socio-cultural resources available to them, but ultimately having to take individual responsibility for the construction of meaning as well as the construction of identity. In this context, death is particularly disturbing because it signals a threatened 'irreality' of the self-projects which modernity encourages individuals to embark upon, an ultimate *absence* of meaning, the *presence* of death bringing home to them existential isolation of the individual [in contemporary society].

Further to this, Mellor and Shilling (1993) conclude that public legitimisations of death are becoming increasingly absent, thus ensuring the challenge of death to an individuals' sense of reality, personal meaningfulness and, ultimately, ontological security. This ostensible absence of death from the public realm may help explain the 'intense confusion, anxiety, and even terror which are frequently experienced by individuals before signs of their own mortality' (Giddens 1991:160). Thus, reviews of contributions to the sociology of death and dying have drawn attention to the (institutional) sequestration of death in contemporary society. Most notably, these contributions concentrate on the privatisation and medicalization of death (Mellor, 1993; Shilling, 1993; Mellor & Shilling, 1993; Wilmott, 2000; Winkel, 2001) whereby death, rather than being an open, communal event, is now a relatively private experience. Indeed, death is now marked by an 'increased uneasiness over the

boundaries between the corporeal bodies of the living and dead' (Turner, 1991: 229; Howarth, 2000, 2007). Hence, society's (modern) denial of death and the sequestration of the deathbed have been blamed for death's removal from daily life (Tercier, 2005); whilst grief is denied its due place in the psychology of the individual and mourning in the social relations of culture (Walter, 1994; Davies; 1997; Seale, 1998).

A full analysis of death sequestration from public space is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, it is worth noting fundamental changes within contemporary society towards mortality. As Mellor and Shilling (1993: 414) point out:

> …these changes have themselves been affected by a gradual privatisation of the organisation of death (or a decrease in the public space afforded to death); a shrinkage in the scope of the sacred in terms of the experience of death; and a fundamental shift in the corporeal boundaries, symbolic and actual, associated with the dead and living.

Therefore, the absent death thesis, it is argued, is most notably conspicuous by the demise of communal and social events which, when combined into a series of ritual actions, contained death by ensuring it was open or public, yet subject to religious and social control. Consequently, whilst death in pre-contemporary society was just as or even more unpleasant than it is now, the omnipresent religious order that encompassed human finiteness ensured mortality was meaningful (or even 'tame'), thus augmenting a sense of ontological security for the bereaved who would inevitably become, in time, the deceased. However, it is suggested that death, and the prospect of dying, is now unprecedently alarming because secular contemporary society has deprived increasing numbers of people with an overarching, existentially meaningful, ritual structure. Indeed, in relation to mortality, it can be argued that contemporary society has 'not just emptied the sky of angels, but also has emptied tradition, ritual and, increasingly, virtually all-overarching normative meaning structures of much of their content' (Mellor & Shilling, 1993: 428). Thus, the reflexive deconstruction of religious orders, that promised post-corporeal life after death, and the lack of stable replacement meaning systems, has tended to leave contemporary individuals isolated and vulnerable in the face of their inevitable end. Similarly, Jean Baudrillard, in his influential work on semiology and mortality, *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, argued that 'little by little the dead cease to exist. They are thrown out of … symbolic circulation' (Baudrillard, 1993: 126). Put another way, (religious) symbolism of the dead, and the ontological power it

may convey, has been negated as contemporary communities concentrate on individualized health promotion, thus extending lives in practice, but also, and perhaps more fundamentally, symbolically extending life itself. Moreover, Zygmunt Baumann, in another influential work, *Mortality and Immortality*, playfully suggests that 'whereas people in traditional societies ate their enemies, incorporating them into the life of the living, modern society vomits them out, designating them as *Other*' (Baumann, 1992a: 131).

Furthermore, augmenting this perceived sense of individualisation and privatisation of death, which itself is resultant of secularisation, is the increased medicalisation of the dying process. Essentially, medicalisation is a sociological concept in which social life comes to be viewed through a medical framework (Zola, 1972; Illich, 1976), and one that influences a power/knowledge relationship (see Foucault, 1973). Put simply, the relationship between power and knowledge are inextricably linked and, in terms of medicine, this means that those with medical knowledge are able to exert power over those without it. Therefore, the doctor has replaced the priest at the contemporary deathbed (Howarth, 2007) and, consequently, shifted the balance of power from traditional religion to that of contemporary medical practitioners. For some, however, it is not medicalisation that is an issue, but the seemingly 'over-medicalisation' and the resultant 'social iatrogenesis' (potential harm) it may cause (Illich, 1976). In particular, Illich was extremely critical of not medical advancement per se, but where medicinal technology becomes too invasive and threatens to invade all aspects of individuals' lives (and their deathbeds), and where psychological or emotional impacts may be discounted. He goes on to state:

> …health care is turned into a standardized item, a staple; when all suffering is 'hospitalized' and homes become inhospitable to death; [and] when suffering and mourning outside the patient role are 144abelled a form of deviance… [as such] the medical establishment has become a major threat to health (Illich, 1976: 3/41).

In other words, the medical professional and the hospice movement have helped relocate death away from the community and into a closed private world of doctors, nurses and specialists (Byock, 2002). As Elias (1985:85) notes, 'never before have people died as noiselessly and hygienically as today, and never in social conditions fostering so much solitude'. Indeed, in the guise of medical parlance, death is often

represented in terms of its causes, (e.g. lung cancer, cardiac arrest, brain tumour), so that we no longer hear or perhaps think of people 'dying of mortality' (Bauman, 1992b:5). Therefore, based upon medical disciplines of anatomy and pathology as a way of analyzing both life and death, dying has become a tool of probability analysis, where in an age of a more sophisticated understanding of risk (Giddens, 1984), mortality has enabled analysts to generate statistics to predict incidence, occurrence and likelihood of death according to health, gender, ethnicity, social class and location, and so on. These factors have been significant in the increased medicalisation of the deathbed in contemporary societies. Indeed, Howarth (2007) asserts that mortality as a phenomenon can, to some degree, be controlled by medical science, and that professional expertise has resulted in death becoming the exclusive preserve of the medical profession. Consequently, dying has become dehumanised, causing dying people to become isolated and disempowered (Illich, 1976; Elias, 1985). 'Natural' death has disappeared and been replaced by a 'hi-tech' death (Tercier, 2005) within the confines of medical institutions, determined by the exigencies of medical technology. Illich (1976: 207-8) sums up this dramatic shift for the contemporary deathbed:

> The medicalisation of society has brought the epoch of natural death to an end. Western man has lost the right to preside over his act of dying. Health, or the autonomous power to cope, has been expropriated down to the last breath. Technical death has won its victory over dying. Mechanical death has conquered and destroyed all other death.

Further to the notion of medicalisation and its role in the contemporary sequestration of death, the professionalisation of the death industry has also added to the disjunction of death and its 'invisibility' within the public realm. Here, dedicated business organisations provide 'a la carte menus' of funeral services where death and the management of disposal is largely relocated away from a 'front region' of the community gaze and safely into a 'back region' space occupied by 'death-workers' (Walter, 2005, 2009; Mellor & Shilling,1993). Here, death-workers, such as funeral directors, funeral celebrants, coroners, pathologists, obituary writers, and so on, offer a triadic information service, where they mediate (life) stories about the deceased between the survivours, the disposal industry, and the wider (grieving) public (Walter, 2005). Indeed, a great deal of innovation has been witnessed within (Western) funeral practice as it has reformed itself from the flamboyance customs of the (romantic) Victorian period. Instead, the contemporary 'death-disposal industry' has adopted the rhetoric of

public health and protection, and as with the medical profession, they have exposed death to scientific developments. As Howarth (2007: 132) notes, that in terms of death, 'the funeral industry have sanitized it, rather than tamed it'. Therefore, those who work in the death-disposal industry have aspired to achieve a level of professional respectability that, in turn, adds to sense of control over death and its rituals, whereby death appears confiscated and its power confined.

However, this cumulative effect of the institutional sequestration of death, that is, by the negation of religious structures combined with both medicalization and professionalisation of the death industry, is not to resolve the problem of death by neutralizing its implicit threat and sense of dread. Ironically, sequestration potentially leaves many people uncertain and socially unsupported when it comes to dealing with mortality as a transpersonal, existential phenomenon (Willmott, 2000; Shilling, 1993). For this reason, Walter (1991:307) suggests that the meaning of mortality in contemporary societies 'points to death being highly problematic for the modern individual, but not at all problematic for modern society – hence the lack of ritual surrounding it today'.

In spite of this, to suggest death is totally absent from the contemporary public domain would be naïve and would deny the pervasiveness of death within popular culture and media output (Durkin, 2003; Walter, Littlewood and Pickering, 1995; Kearl, 1995). As Berridge (2002: 3) aptly notes, 'a society which has for so long averted its gaze from death cannot [now] stop staring at it'. Indeed, death has long been present within wider popular culture and the media, so much so that Geoffrey Gorer first brought society's apparent fascination with the 'pornography of death' to academic attention in the 1950s (Gorer 1955, 1965). Gorer asserted that the demise of social and religious rituals surrounding death and dying resulted in mortality resurfacing in society through the seemingly obsessive 'pornographic' media coverage of death, whereby 'death became removed, abstracted, intellectualised, and depersonalised' (Walter 1991:295). Similarly, Tercier (2005: 234) notes that 'the televised pornography of death, with its slippages of reality and representation, is no more likely to replace the experience of the deathbed than the dirty movie is likely to replace sex'. Moreover, Hume (2001: 1), reviewing Kate Berridge's book, *Vigor Mortis: The End of the Death Taboo*, teasingly suggests

that whilst 'death [may have] replaced sex as the focus of the new permissiveness, second-hand grief certainly seems to be giving some an emotional hard-on!'

Essentially, though, Gorer argued that death repressed in real life returns in the media as 'pornography'. Here, he utilises the concept of pornography as requiring two key things; firstly, repression, and secondly a medium for the return of the repressed (Gorer, 1965). Of course, repression (as a form of bracketing referred to earlier) occurs because something is deemed to cause distress or is considered obscene, and thus is forbidden and not fit for the public gaze. Sexual activity is one such thing that may fall into this category, and it is around sex and its obscene representations that most arguments of pornography occur. However, as Tercier (2005) points out, the term 'obscene', from the Latin *obscaena* – meaning 'off-stage', originally referred specifically to death. Indeed, in ancient times, Greek tragedy plays were awash with death, especially the portrayal of violent death, though importantly, the ancient playwright Aeschylus, often known as 'The Father of Tragedy', condemned the actual moment of death on stage. However, in contemporary times, as opposed to Greek tragedy, 'there has been a reversal of obscenity – it now real-life death that is obscene, not its representation' (Tercier, 2005: 212). Hence, for Gorer, the use of the term 'pornography of death' was an attempt to synthesize an apparent contemporary denial of death with its seemingly ubiquitous representations within popular culture. Thus, in the context of mortality, Gorer's pornography was the explicit portrayal of death in the media (the private made public), which provided for a representation (that is, a mediation) of a forbidden act of dying (the transgression of social norms) for the purpose of entertainment. Indeed, as Bryant and Shoemaker (1997:2) observe, 'thanatological themed entertainment has been and remains a traditional pervasive cultural pattern, and has become very much a prominent and integral part of contemporary popular culture'. This is no more so than within the realms of dark tourism, but thanatological themes are also evident in television news and programming (Walter et al, 1993; Merrin, 1999; McIlwain, 2005), cinema production (Mortimer, 2001; Gibson, 2001), music (Wass, Miller & Redditt, 1991), print media (Trend, 2003), the arts (Davies, 1996), and through jokes often referred to as 'gallows humour' (Sayre, 2001; Thorson, 1993). Indeed, death can be traced back through popular culture to folklore, in which folklorists have maintained an interest in the cultural aspects of death for many years (Bennett & Round, 1997).

It is here, therefore, where an apparent paradox of death sequestration lies. As Barthes (2000: 92) points out, 'death must be somewhere in society; if it is no longer in religion, it must be elsewhere; perhaps in images which produce Death while trying to preserve life'. Consequently, on the one hand, *absent* death through privatization of meaning and a reduction in the scope of the sacred, the medicalization of dying, and the professionalisation of the death process is evident. Yet, on the other hand, death is very much *present* within popular culture, and of course *very present* since death is the single most common factor of life. It is perhaps because of this paradoxical position that death appears (institutionally) hidden rather than forbidden, invisible rather than denied. Additionally, to paraphrase Tercier (2005: 22):

> The contemporary deathbed is very different from those that have gone before. Religious ritual has declined. Existential anxiety finds little release in fantasy. For many, the soul persists only as the dim ghost of memory. Biological death is sequestered behind closed doors. Social death is imposed prematurely in retirement villages and nursing homes. The aspiration for instantaneous extinction attempts to mask perpetual loss. The physical real-life experience of the deathbed is replaced by representations of it on television and movie screens. As true as these things are, the contention that death has disappeared from cultural discourse is nonsense: *All this sounds like a society obsessed with death, not one that denies it… Death and our feelings about death are no longer taboo but a radical new chic'* (Italics – Walter, 1994: 1-2 as quoted in Tercier, 2005).

Furthermore, Durkin (2003) offers two salient explanations of this absent-present paradox. Firstly, he suggests that whilst contemporary society brackets out and insulates the individual from death, it is this very insulation that leads us to crave some degree of information and insight concerning mortality. Secondly, he suggests that the presence of death themes in popular culture and the treatment of mortality as an entertainment commodity is simply a way of bringing death back into the social consciousness. Moreover, Couch (2000: 25) intimates that popular culture serves as a type of collective vision by which meanings are socially and culturally constructed, which in turn, 'greatly influences our norms, beliefs, and subsequent actions'. Durkin notes this social and cultural construction of death within popular culture and the media, and goes on to state, 'by rendering death into humour and entertainment, we effectively neutralize it; it becomes innocuous, and thus less threatening, through its conversion and ephemerality' (2003:47). Further to this, Bryant (1989:9) suggests that 'death, dying and the dead are traumatic and anxiety producing topics, and can be better confronted if they are socially neutralized'. In other words, with popular culture socially neutralizing death, or

reconceptualising death, dying, and the dead into something Other that does not simulate anxiety or terror, mortality can become camouflaged. Thus, as Bryant further notes, 'individuals can more comfortably indulge their curiosity about and fascination with [death]' (1989: 9). Hence, it could be argued that popular culture provides socially sanctioned spaces and mediums in which mortality is (re)communicated and mediated.

Of course, such socially sanctioned (and, thus neutral) spaces call for some detachment on the part of the individual observer. Indeed, it may be necessary for the individual self to 'suspend belief' (Weaver, 1991) in the face of thanatological themes, in order to maximize any potential meaning or moral instruction, as discussed earlier. However, some scholars may argue that the seemingly excessive exposure to popular culture (re)presentations of mortality may in fact make individuals more accepting of the death, disaster or tragedy being (re)presented (Oaks and Ezell, 1993). Of course, the actual representation of the death/disaster event, in terms of dark tourism at least, with its resultant authenticity dilemmas, together with any attached political or moral imperatives, as deliberated upon in earlier discussions has further consequents. Additionally, the saturated thanatological themed environment within popular culture may function to inure individuals to mortality, thus diluting or counteracting any social neutralization effect (Durkin, 2003). Put simply, over-exposure to loss of life themes and issues has the potential to desensitize individuals to death and dying. However, notwithstanding these concerns, it is the social neutralization of death and the role dark tourism potentially plays within broader popular culture, which is now evaluated.

5.4   Making Absent Death Present: Dark Tourism and De-sequestration
The social neutralization of death, which itself may be considered as a form of bracketing dread and, thus boosting personal meaningfulness and ontological security, can help to assuage the disruptive impact of death for the individual. Dark tourism, with central facets of death and dying as outlined earlier in this thesis, is an increasingly pervasive feature in the popular cultural landscape (Atkinson, 2005; Express India, 2005; Friends of Scotland, 2006; Lonely Planet, 2007). Indeed, the dark tourism phenomenon may be considered fascinating, educational and even humorous, depending upon the social, cultural and political context (Stone, 2006). However, whilst the

consumption of death appears to be in inverse ratio to our declining direct experience of death itself, dark tourism, within a thanatological framework, may help explain contemporary approaches to mortality and its contemplation and vice versa.

The manner in which this may occur is summarised in the conceptual model in Figure 7. Drawing on the preceding death sequestration and ontological security debates, the model demonstrates how, in general, dark tourism may provide a means for confronting the inevitably of one's own death and that of others. More specifically, dark tourism allows the reconceptualisation of death and mortality into forms that stimulate something other than primordial terror and dread. Despite modern society's diminishing experience with death as a result of institutional sequestration, Tercier (2005:22) suggests that, whilst people are now spectators to more deaths than any prior generation, driven by both real and represented images, 'we see death, but we do not 'touch' it'. As previously argued that the individual self is required to seek moral instruction from non-traditional sources because of contemporary moral confusion, it is now argued that the same individuals are left isolated (again). Consequently, the isolation that the Self may feel is with the prospect of mortality because of the institutional sequestration of death. Thus, individuals have to call upon their own resources when searching for meanings to cope with the limits of personal existence.

Therefore, dark tourism, in its various guises, and with its camouflaged and repackaged 'Other' death, allows individuals to (un)comfortably indulge their curiosity and fascination with thanatological concerns in a socially acceptable and indeed often politically sanctioned environment, thus providing them with an opportunity to construct their own contemplations of mortality (Stone, 2009a; Stone and Sharpley, 2008). With a degree of infrastructure and normality that surrounds the supply of dark tourism, albeit on varying scales (Stone, 2006), the increasingly socially acceptable 'morbid gaze' upon death and its reconceptualisation either for entertainment, education or memorial purposes offers both the individual and collective self a pragmatic confrontational mechanism to begin the process of neutralizing the impact of mortality.

Death & Contemporary Society

Absent Death

Privatization
Medicalization
Professionalisation

Absent / Present Death Paradox

Present Death

Popular Culture
Collective Grief
Mortality

Institutional Sequestration of Death

Creates Ontological Insecurity

Allows Concept of Dread to Develop

Acceptance

Need to Adopt Bracketing Process

Confrontation

Consumption of the Dark Tourism Experience

Social Neutralization of Death
Contemplation of Mortality Moments

De-sequestration Occurs
Making Absent Death Present

Personal Meaningfulness and Understanding Enhanced

Purchase / Maintenance of Ontological Security

Consequential to the Experience

Figure 7: Dark Tourism Consumption within a Thanatological Framework
(Source: Stone, 2009e – originally adapted from Stone and Sharpley, 2008)

Consequently, this may help minimise the intrinsic threat (or dread) that the inevitability of death brings. This neutralizing effect is essentially facilitated and sustained by dark touristic exposures to death, where the process of continued sensitization of dying ultimately results in a sanitization of the subject area. This may create a perceived immunity from death for the individual tourist, in addition to an acceptance, potentially, that death will ultimately arrive to them. Thus, both sensitizing and sanitizing death allows individuals to view their own death as distant, unrelated to the dark tourism product that they consume, and with a hope that their own death will be a 'good' death (Littlewood 1993; Hart et al 1998; Tercier 2005; Stone & Sharpley, 2008).

Furthermore, it may be argued that dark tourism further individualizes and, thus, fragments the meaning of death and in doing so, adds to the multiplicity of reflexive cultural devices that the individual self may draw upon to contemplate mortality. Indeed, whilst consuming the dark tourism experience, people are generally exposed to the causes of death and suffering of individual people, in individual circumstances, thus perhaps encouraging the view of death as avoidable and contingent. As Bauman (1992:6) points out, these kind of deaths are 'therefore reassuring rather than threatening, since they orient people towards strategies of survival rather than making them aware of the futility of all [life] strategies in the face of mortality'.

Of course, given the enormous diversity both of dark tourism places and of the needs, experience and expectations of visitors, in addition to various socio-cultural circumstances of individuals, the potential effectiveness of dark tourism as a *mediating* mechanism for confronting, understanding and accepting death will vary almost infinitely. It may be argued, for example, that war cemeteries, sites of mass disasters, memorials to individual or multiple deaths / acts of personal sacrifice and so on may be more powerful and positive means of confronting death than more 'playful' attractions, such as 'houses of horror' (but, see Stone 2009c). Certainly, a visit to Gallipoli, where the mass graves of the fallen (including that of a young British soldier who died before reaching his 17th birthday) lie above the beaches and cliffs, is an inevitably emotive and meaningful experience, verifying, perhaps, the cultural and popularised representations (both visual – the Mel Gibson movie Gallipoli – and musical) of that tragic event. Similarly, the proposed Tsunami

'Mountains of Remembrance' memorial in Khao Lak-Lam Ru National Park in Thailand may provide a focus for contemplation, mourning, hope and survival (Gerfen, 2006). Conversely, contemporary visitors to places such as Auschwitz and other Nazi death camps, perhaps the epitome of a dark tourism destination, may come simply 'out of curiosity or because it is the thing to do' (Tarlow, 2005:48) rather than for more meaningful purposes (but, see Marcuse, 2001). Importantly, this latter point may result in any potential meaning of mortality within contemporary society as *consequential* to the visitor. In other words, and as suggested by Lantermann (2007) earlier in this chapter, so-called 'dark tourists' may implicitly extract consequential meanings of mortality from their visit, rather than explicitly seeking to contemplate death and dying as a primary motivation to visit any dark tourism site. Additionally, the level of mortality meaning to the individual self will no doubt depend upon individuals' own socio-cultural background or perceived relevance to their own life-world, and of course, to the varying 'intensities of darkness' perceived in any given dark tourism product and/or experience (Stone, 2006; Sharpley, 2005).

Nevertheless, as the thesis has already suggested, the present cultural condition of contemporary (Western) society calls for a revaluation of meaning systems which, in general, permit individuals to confront mortality. Hence, it is argued that the reconceptualisation of death through dark tourism allows for the reconstruction of a replacement meaning system, whereby the reflexive deconstruction of religious orders are being relocated and reconstructed by the consumption of image and the pseudo (Stone, 2009a). Accordingly, dark tourism may offer a revival of death within the public domain, thus de-sequestering mortality and ensuring *absent* death is made *present* in which (private) death is turned into public discourse and a communal commodity upon which to gaze (Stone & Sharpley, 2008). For this reason, dark tourism may offer a new social mediating institution whereby the functional value of death and mortality is acknowledged, its precariousness is appreciated, and efforts to assure ontological well-being and security become a source of not only playfulness, humour and entertainment but also memorial and contemporary moral instruction. Indeed, consuming dark tourism may allow the individual a sense of meaning and understanding of past disaster and macabre events that have perturbed life projects. This new understanding may, in turn, help shore up the fragility of the self's survival strategy. Thus, dark tourism can potentially transform the seemingly meaningless (for

instance, mass murder at Ground Zero) into the meaningful, by commodification, explanations and representations of darkness that have affected the collective self. This, in turn, allows the individual to confront and contemplate their own mortality, through some kind of thanatopsis (Seaton, 1996) and therapy by gazing upon macabre illusions and images. Subsequently, confrontation with death and contemplation of mortality, within a socially acceptable dark tourism environment, may potentially bracket out some of the sense of dread death inevitably brings, by insulating the individual with information and potential understanding and meaning. Of course, it may be also the case where particular dark sites do not provide the sense of 'meaning' that a particular visitor may be seeking, for whatever reason, thus negating the effectiveness of the overall bracketing process and the ability to keep any 'dread threats' at bay. Nonetheless, within dark tourism, death becomes real (again) for the individual. Consequently, the real is represented so that the represented might become real. In other words, real actual death is (re)presented and commodified within dark tourism sites in order for it to become existentially valid and therefore inevitable for the individual who wishes to gaze upon this 'Other' death.

5.5   Chapter Five Summary

Despite increasing academic attention paid to the subject, the analysis of dark tourism has, to date, adopted a largely descriptive, parochial perspective whilst questions surrounding the consumption of dark touristic experiences have, for the most part, been avoided. This study, therefore, set out to enhance the theoretical foundations of dark tourism by considering the phenomenon within a broader thanatological perspective, exploring in particular the relationship between dark tourism consumption and contemporary social responses to death and mortality. In linking the concept of dark tourism with the sociology of death, this chapter has not only developed a model that provides a conceptual basis for the further empirical study of the consumption of dark tourism, as revealed shortly, but has also contributed to wider social scientific understanding of mechanisms for confronting death in contemporary societies.

A number of key points have emerged from the preceding discussion. Firstly, dark tourism allows death to be brought back into the public realm and discourse, thus

acting as a de-sequesting mechanism or mediating device that allows absent death to be made present. Secondly, the consumption of dark tourism may aid the social neutralization of death for the individual, either implicitly or explicitly, thereby potentially reducing the sense of dread that death inevitably brings and, consequently, permitting a search for, and a purchase of, ontological security through a new social institution. Finally, this new social institution (dark tourism) facilitates the reconstruction of a meaning system for individuals in the face of reflexivity, desacralisation and institutional sequestration, thus creating an opportunity to confront and contemplate 'mortality moments' from a perceived safe distance and environment. This, in turn, allows for some immunity and reassurance from the actual death or macabre event, which has been (re)produced through dark tourism.

In conclusion, however, it would be naïve to suggest that the consumption of dark tourism rests solely upon a theoretical notion of providing individuals an opportunity to contemplate death and mortality. Whilst the concepts outlined in this chapter are operationalized and empirically tested later in this thesis, other conceptual issues undoubtedly deserve consideration. In particular, dark tourism production is multi-faceted, multi-tiered and exists in a variety of social, cultural, geographical, and political contexts (Stone, 2006). Thus, the demand for such products will no doubt be equally as diverse and fragmented, pointing to the need for further targeted empirical and theoretical analysis. In addition, dark tourists' motives will probably have varying types and intensities of meanings for various individuals within various social networks. Indeed, an awareness of mortality and the anticipation of death will differ amongst various social and cultural groups. It is also highly likely that dark tourism consumption will rest on numerous disparate factors, including, but not limited to, the contemplation aspects of death and dying. In particular, other aspects of the 'consumption jigsaw' may lie within grief and therapeutic discourse (Davies, 1997); conspicuous compassion and narcissism (West, 2004); media induced emotional invigilation (Walter et al, 1995); and schadenfreude (Seaton & Lennon, 2004). In short, the consumption of dark tourism, largely justified on the basis of untested assumptions in the extant literature, is a complex process.

Nevertheless, this study has commenced the interrogation and grounded dark tourism within a broader thanatological framework. In so doing, the research has suggested

that consuming dark tourism can help individuals, within a social framework, to address issues of personal meaningfulness – a key to reality, thus to life and sustaining social order, and ultimately to the maintenance and continuity of ontological security and overall well-being. It is with this latter point in mind that dark tourism may have more to do with life and living, rather than the dead and dying.

5.5.1 'The Story So Far': a synopsis

The 'story' of dark tourism as put forward by this thesis has focused upon the phenomenon of depicting death, disaster, and the seemingly macabre for the visitor economy. Whilst dark tourism has a long history, certainly in practice, but also as a feature of other scholarly disciplines, it is only relatively recently that academic attention has been paid to the commercialization and touristic commodification of death, tragedy and atrocity. The early stages of this thesis noted philosophical and social science implications of tourism generally, but specifically, themes, issues and consequences of dark tourism were evaluated. These addressed ethical and moral dilemmas, media and promotional aspects, interpretation and political issues, management and governance matters, and socio-thanatological concerns. To a certain extent, these areas formed the agenda for a review of the extant literature, subsequently building a theoretical analysis of dark tourism. Hence, the study has:

- Formulated a conceptual model to identify dark tourism. That is, Chapter 3 introduced a typology in which a model was constructed to locate commonality between dark tourism products. In turn, the model created a conceptual 'continuum of intensity' in which diverse representations (and experiences) of dark tourism can be positioned and compared.
- Synthesized the diverse nature of dark tourism and subsequent interpretation of death for touristic consumption with intrinsic (perceived) moral perils. In particular, Chapter 4 argued dark tourism offers a revitalised spatial opportunity to convey contemporary moral instruction, especially in light of secularising processes within contemporary society;
- And finally, the thesis has argued that the nature of secularisation and other contemporary aspects, including but not limited to medicalisation, signifies dark tourism as a mediating institution between not only morality, but also, and importantly for this research, that of mortality. Hence, Chapter 5

integrated a broader thanatological framework to create a paradigm in which to suggest dark tourism has a fundamental interrelationship with the contemporary contemplation of death.

Thus, whilst the conceptual frameworks of this thesis have been formulated and grounded within broader sociological and thanatological concerns, the task now is to empirically examine the extent of the representation of death, disaster and the macabre for the contemporary visitor economy. That is, there is a need to empirically explore dark tourism and its potential mediating effect between contemplation of mortality and the individual self. Hence, it is to this that the thesis now turns. Volume 2 of this study begins by outlining the research methodology and subsequent empirical findings.

VOLUME TWO

Dark Tourism in Contemporary Society

An Empirical Analysis

Chapter Six

Methodology

Who knows the minds of men and how they reason and what their methodology is?

Walter Martin

6.0   Introduction

Tourism as an activity constitutes 'ceremonies of life' that have the capacity to expand boundaries of the imagination and to provide the contemporary visitor with potentially life-changing 'points of shock' (Botterill, 2003). Indeed, tourism may be perceived as a rite of social passage, given its transitional elements (Robben, 2004) and its potential to influence the psychology and perception of individuals (Walter, 1993). Furthermore, tourism occurs within liminal time and space (Sharpley, 1999) and, as such, locates the activity within constructivist realms of meaning and meaning making. Therefore, tourism in general, and dark tourism in particular, provide a lens through which life and death may be glimpsed, thus revealing relationships and consequences of the processes involved that mediate between the individual and collective self.

In order to view and elucidate upon these relationships between life and death, this study assembled a methodology that allowed the researcher to extract opinions narrated by specific respondent experiences of dark tourism, as well as discovering individuals' attitudes towards life, death and dying. For sake of expediency, the research aim, question and objectives are outlined again in Table 4. The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to outline and justify the methodological philosophy adopted by this study and the research instruments used. In doing so, subsequent sections illustrate the research strategy and design, as well as highlighting data collection methods and analysis techniques. The chapter concludes by noting specific determinant factors upon the conduct of the research, including particular limitations.

Research Aim	To appraise dark tourism consumption within society, especially within a context of contemporary perspectives of death and, in doing so, offer an integrated theoretical and empirical critical analysis and interpretation of death-related travel.
Research Question	Within a thanatological context, what fundamental interrelationships exist between visitors and sites that offer a (re)presentation of death, disaster or the seemingly macabre?
Research Objectives	6. To critically evaluate the concept of *death-related travel*, known as dark tourism, and its socio-cultural, and historical origins. 7. To compile a conceptual *typological framework* in which to locate diverse visitor sites of death, disaster and the seemingly macabre. 8. To explore contemporary aspects of *morality* and dark tourism experiences and meanings. 9. To synthesise potential relationships between *mortality* and the contemporary consumption of dark tourism. 10. To compare and contrast a range of dark tourism *empirical experiences* within a framework of society's perceptions of and reactions to morality and mortality.

Table 4: Research Aim, Question and Objectives

6.1   Research Philosophy

The practice of social research does not exist in a vacuum, 'hermetically sealed off from the social sciences and the various intellectual allegiances that their practitioners hold' (Bryman, 2004:4). Instead, methods of social research are closely allied to different visions of how social reality should be studied. As Bryman (2004:4) states, 'methods are not simply neutral tools: they are linked with the ways in which social scientists envision the connection between different viewpoints about the nature of social reality and how it should be examined'. Thus, this research arises from a simple, yet fundamental interest in the social reality of death, and how mortality is not only manufactured within contemporary society but also how modern death and dying is contemplated. Therefore, this study adopts an inductive phenomenological research philosophy with the overall aim of better understanding the consumption of dark tourism within contemporary perspectives of death. Gilgun (2001) suggests that induction is centred upon the belief that research should come before theory and that

it is from collected data that theories are generated. With an inductive stance, the generation of theory is the ultimate outcome, whereby the process of induction involves drawing inferences out of the empirical data. Furthermore, Brotherton (2008) notes that the inductive approach is generally regarded as one that favours the use of 'ideographic methodologies', such as case studies – which are discussed later in the chapter. In essence, an inductive research approach is rooted in a philosophical view of the world that emphasises social construction, perceptions, meanings and subjectivity as important in understanding and the development of knowledge – often referred to as phenomenology or interpretivism.

Meanwhile, the alternative research philosophy is that of deduction. Often adopted by archetypal scientists who believe that the world and knowledge are factual and objective, deduction is based upon a set of beliefs known as positivism. In short, deduction takes the existing body of theoretical and empirical knowledge as its primary starting point. However, as Bryman (2004:9) notes, 'just as deduction entails an element of induction, the inductive process is likely to entail a modicum of deduction'. Indeed, Veal (2006) argues that most research is partly inductive and partly deductive because data is rarely collected without some explanatory model or at least some initial information on the subject. Hence, this study, through a theoretical analysis of dark tourism and the building of original conceptual frameworks, as well as subsequent empirical investigations, ensures the research philosophy was in fact partly inductive and partly deductive. Ezzy (2002) advocates support for any research philosophy that utilises both inductive and deductive approaches. He suggests that theory is not arrived at solely through logical derivations from abstract principles, nor is theory developed solely through objective observation of an empirical world. Rather, the development of theory is through an ongoing dialogue between pre-existing understandings and the data – derived through participation in the (real) world (Ezzy, 2002). Thus, this research is primarily concerned with the analysis of relationships between dark tourism and its real-world consumption. In this respect, this study is driven inductively and adopts the principles of grounded theory.

6.1.1 Grounded Theory Principles

Grounded theory follows an inductive philosophy to research (Charmaz, 2000; 2004). The grounded theory approach, which was first outlined by Glaser and Struass (1967) has become a popular, if not contested, choice of methodology for social scientists engaged in qualitative research projects which study human interaction within particular environments. Regarded as especially strong in terms of generating theories out of data (Bryman, 2004), grounded theory contrasts with the nature of many supposedly inductive studies, which generate interesting and illuminating findings but whose theoretical significance is not entirely clear (Glaser, 1992). Essentially, grounded theory is a philosophical research approach that is concerned with generating theories rather than testing them. It is an approach that emphasises the importance of empirical fieldwork and the requirement to link any explanations very closely to what happens in the *real world*. In short, 'grounded theory is *what is*, not what should, could or ought to be' (Glaser, 1992: 840). With this approach, unique concepts and theories emerge from the data through a persistent process of comparing ideas with existing data and new data collected specifically for the purpose.

Importantly, however, this study does not employ a full-grounded theory approach. Indeed, Charmaz (2000) suggests there is considerable controversy about what grounded theory actually is and entails. Furthermore, the presence of 'competing accounts of the ingredients of grounded theory does not make it easy to characterize it or to establish how to use it' (Bryman, 2004:407). Charmaz (2000) adds to the confusion by suggesting most early grounded theory is objectivist and that an alternative constructionist (she terms it *constructivist*) approach is preferable. Her argument is that objectivist grounded theory has often been associated with aims of uncovering social reality that is external to social actors. Conversely, Charmaz (2000:521) suggests a constructionist version 'assumes people create and maintain meaningful worlds through dialectical processes of conferring meaning on their realities and acting within them... Thus, social reality does not exist independent of human action'. This position contrasts with earlier grounded theory, such as by Glaser and Strauss (1967), which 'imply that categories and concepts inhere within the data, awaiting the researcher's discovery... Instead, a constructivist approach recognises that the categories, concepts, and theoretical level of analysis emerge from the researcher's interaction within the field and questions about the data' (Charmaz, 2000:

522). Of course, there are difficulties with this assumption – not least because the two meanings of constructionism appears to be conflated. That is, Charmaz refers to constructionism as an ontological position in relating social objects, as well as implying that constructionism is the nature of knowledge of the social world. Nevertheless, despite these issues, 'grounded theory probably represents the most influential strategy for conducting qualitative data analysis, though how far the approach is followed varies from study to study' (Bryman, 2004:408).

With this in mind, this study adopts key principles of grounded theory in the sense that theory is derived from empirical data, which was systematically gathered and analysed through an explicitly defined research process. Importantly however, the study did not strictly follow grounded theory 'rules', including the notions of theoretical sampling or theoretical saturation (see Bryman, 2004). Nonetheless, by adopting the broad principles and orientation of grounded theory, data collection, analysis, and eventual theory stand in close relationship to one another (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The issue of data analysis is examined later, but firstly, the next section presents the research strategy.

6.1.2   (An Integrated) Qualitative Research Strategy

A qualitative research strategy was adopted by this study to gain insight into the relationships between dark tourism and issues of death and dying within contemporary society today. Crucially, however, the qualitative research strategy is integrated with quantitative research instruments in a mixed method approach that complement each other rather than seeking mutual validation. In other words, the study uses 'mixed method inquiry as an approach to investigate the social world that ideally involves more than one methodological tradition and thus more than one way of knowing, along with more than one kind of technique for gathering, analysing, and representing human phenomena, all for the purpose of better understanding' (Greene, (2006:94; also see Section 6.3).

Moreover, the connection between research strategy, on the one hand, and epistemological and ontological commitments on the other hand, as revealed shortly, is not deterministic. In short, there is a tendency for quantitative and qualitative research to be associated with particular epistemological and ontological positions

(Bryman, 2004). Moreover, all research methods carry with them inherent epistemological and ontological obligations. For example, quantitative survey research is frequently viewed within a science model and objectivist worldview. Similarly, the use of qualitative participant observation is often taken to imply a commitment to interpretivism and constructionism. However, such a view implies 'research methods are imbued with specific clusters of epistemological and ontological commitments' (Bryman, 2004:443). Bryman goes on to note that 'the difficulty with such a view is that, if we accept that there is no perfect correspondence between research strategy and matters of epistemology and ontology, the notion that a method is inherently or necessarily indicative of certain wider assumptions about knowledge means that nature of social reality begins to founder' (2004:443). Fundamentally, therefore, research strategies and the methods that they employ are much more dynamic in terms of epistemology and ontology than is often supposed (Bryman, 2004). Hence, it is within this deliberately fluid context of a social research strategy, with the purposeful utilisation of integrated research instruments, which this study is conducted.

Whilst the epistemology and ontology of the research is discussed in the next section, the thesis relies upon interpretivism as a general guiding philosophy or paradigm (Jamal & Hollinshead, 2001; Guba & Lincoln 1994; Sparkes, 1992). Consequently, interpretivism 'looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world' (Crotty, 1998:67). Qualitative research often uses an integrated multi-method focus that involves interpretative and naturalistic approaches (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Jamal & Hollinshead, 2001), both of which are appropriate for the research question outlined for this study. Indeed, emergent and dynamic understandings within tourism studies generally, and dark tourism in particular, are optimised through integrated multi-method research strategies that take full advantage of innovative methods available, many of which remain under-utilised in tourism research (Hollinshead, 2004a,b). Indeed, Hollinshead (2004a:65) calls for research that provides 'genuine cross-disciplinary coverage of the tacit, the subjective, the discursive or the interpretive' in order to address the omission in our understanding of the perspectives of tourists and their experiences. This cross-disciplinary coverage together with the call by Stone (2005) for dark tourism research to be located within a thanatological framework, ensures the thesis is based upon a definition of tourism as a

set of activities and relationships occurring in spaces that are constructed with temporal and consequential socio-cultural meanings. In essence, this study relies upon emerging ways of conceptualising and undertaking integrative investigations as to the relationships between types of dark tourism, dark tourist activities, and the experiences and understanding of those involved (after Tribe, 2005).

Further to the notion of an integrated qualitative research strategy, Denzin and Lincoln (2000) categorise the history of qualitative research into 'five moments' which operate simultaneously in the present. The *first moment*, often referred to as the 'traditional moment', is associated with the positivist paradigm (1900-1950). The positivist paradigm asserts that objective accounts of the world can be given. The *second moment*, also known as 'modernist' or the 'golden age' moment (1950-1970), and the *third moment* – or 'blurred genres' moment (1970-1986) – are both associated with the appearance of post-positivist arguments. The latter claim that partially objective accounts of the world can be given. Consequently, the second and third moments are influenced by new interpretative, qualitative perspectives such as hermeneutics (whereby prior understandings and prejudices shape the interpretative process), and cultural studies (an interdisciplinary field that merges critical theory, feminism, and post-structuralism). The fourth moment reflects the 'crisis of representation' (1986-1990) and is a reflection of the struggle researchers' deal with in locating themselves and their subjects in reflexive texts (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Finally, the fifth moment, or the post-modern or present moment (1990-present), is 'characterised by new sensibility that doubts all previous paradigms' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:2).

Hence, according to this categorisation, this research is located within the *third and fourth moments*. Consequently, within the blurred genres (third) moment, the researcher is a *bricoleur* and borrows from different disciplines (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The interpretive bricoleur produces a *bricolage* – that is, 'a pieced together set of representations that are fitted to the specifics of a complex situation' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:4). The bricolage is an emergent construction and the qualitative researcher deploys diverse and integrative strategies, methods, and empirical techniques. In essence, the researcher as bricoleur engages with the research and the iterative process at work with the subject matter under investigation. The blurred

genres approach reflects the belief that research can benefit from a flexibility and pragmatism that allows the researcher to adapt, if need be, the research design, the methods, and theoretical underpinnings to changing circumstances – as well as his own understanding of a phenomena or situation. This flexibility also allows the researcher to engage in 'an interactive process shaped by [the researcher's] personal history, biography, gender, social class, and ethnicity' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:6). Furthermore, Hollinshead (1996:69) suggests that the bricolage provides tourism research with 'a ventilated approach to social and human enquiry that seeks to combine the intellectual stimuli of post-modernity with the necessary practicalities involved in knowing local/grounded/population specific situations'.

Similarly, Goodson and Phillimore (2004) claim that the traditional (first) and modernist (second) moments dominate tourism research. They suggest that this may be due to a reliance on earlier and more familiar methods influenced by anthropology and sociology. They also suggest that there is an increasing reference to the fourth and fifth moments in tourism research. The fourth moment, or crisis in representation, is relevant to this study for three key reasons. Firstly, dark tourism research located in the fourth moment considers as a central theme the diverse and complex dimensions of people and place. Indeed, Goodson and Phillimore (2004:38) note that 'some of the key debates central to the fourth and fifth moments have formed the focus of a number of discussions, with key considerations including the social construction of tourism space, place, reality and knowledge; the conceptualisation of the 'self' in tourism; and issues of subjectivity and embodiment'.

Secondly, this research conceptualises dark tourism as relationships and interaction, and through this conceptualisation critically examines the relationship between the Self and the Other (or subject / object dichotomy) that has been commonly applied to tourism research. Consequently, a possibility arises to reconceptualise tourism relationships and tourist experiences, including those who visit and those who are visited (Goodson & Phillimore, 2004). Therefore, it is suggested that dark tourism research in the fourth moment is better understood as it lends itself to the perspective of the both the visitor and the visited. Finally, whilst the third (blurred genres) moment provides more attention to methodological, epistemological and ontological issues than do the first or second moments, the fourth moment attends to issues that

revolve around participants' voices, including their personal and intellectual biographies (Goodson & Phillimore, 2004). Therefore, the fourth moment makes room for researcher reflexivity as a legitimate way of creating knowledge. Moreover, reflexivity is defined as more than a self-indulgent practice, but rather it relates to the researcher's 'ability to look and reflect inwards upon themselves as researchers, and outwards upon those that they *research* (original emphasis – Tribe, 2005:6). This raises broader notions of epistemology and ontology, as now considered.

6.1.3 Epistemological and Ontological Considerations

Epistemology is concerned with the nature of knowledge and deals with 'how we know what we are' (Crotty, 1998:8). This integrative study adopts a *constructivist-interpretive* epistemology. Constructivist or constructionist epistemologies are based upon the fundamental belief that 'human beings do not find or discover knowledge so much as we construct or make it' (Schwandt, 2000:197). Indeed, constructionism challenges objectivist epistemologies in its rejection of the idea that there exists an objective truth waiting to be discovered. Consequently, knowing is not passive and humans do not simply reflect or mirror what occurs around them: they filter what occurs through their collective understandings of the world and the practices that are a consequence of this understanding (Schwandt, 2000). Similarly, Crang (2003:494) advocates that the constructionist agenda view 'people discursively creating their worlds'.

In contrast to positivist epistemologies which were utilised in much of the qualitative research that occurred in the first (traditional) and second (modernist) moments, 'truth' of constructionism reflects an epistemology of the third (blurred genres) moment. It proposes that 'truth' is produced and unveiled through interpretive practices. It is here that 'knowledge of what others are doing and saying always depends upon some background or context of other meanings, beliefs, values, practices and so forth' (Schwandt, 2000:201). In short, constructionist perspectives adopted by this study assert that knowledge imposes a subjectivist epistemology that is based upon co-created understandings – that is, between researcher and respondent (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Indeed, all research findings approximate the truth at a particular moment in time (Middleton, 2010). Thus, the approximations in this study

represent an accurate appraisal and analysis for those tourists set in diverse, yet related, sites, sights and their desired cognitions.

Matters of ontology relate to questions of seeing, experiencing, meaning, being and identity. In essence, ontological considerations 'help determine or designate the nature of the knowable (or otherwise, the nature of reality in terms of concerns of *being*, *becoming* and *meaning*, etc)' (original emphasis and parenthesis – Hollinshead, 2004a:75). Therefore, constructionism is ontologically relativist and does not operate within the confines of a singular reality – it also assumes that research occurs in the natural world, thus is naturalistic (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Hollinshead (2004a:77) argues that ontological relativism seeks to 'understand the identities of, the meaning attributed by and the experiences of different populations, against a background of competing perspectives of life and the world, within the setting being investigated'. Consequently, this relativism is seen as critical to what differentiates constructivism from other paradigms – for instance, positivism, post-positivism, and critical theory (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

According to Hollinshead (2004a), ontological reflections are particularly significant in tourism research because tourism, by its nature and processes, implicates interactions between individuals and places. His review of ontological matters in tourism, drawing upon the work of Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1992), suggested tourism research is limited by its inability to embrace the 'ontological *madeness* of places' (original emphasis – Hollinshead, 2004a:66). Hollinshead goes on to suggest that this limitation has had significant consequences for tourism scholarship given that tourism is the quintessential 'place-maker'. With this in mind, challenging the idea of objective knowledge can facilitate researcher capacity to 'try and understand the contextual realities and subjective meanings that shape people's interactions with their world' (Samdahl, 1998:126). Hence, such epistemological and ontological considerations make it possible to view the original contribution to knowledge by this study, as having being filtered through the researchers' own experiences, as well as being co-created with research respondents.

Furthermore, Ley (1988) reflected upon the nature of people and place, and the construction of meaning, and advocated the epistemological and ontological

requirement to grant it more respect because of it complexity. He called upon researchers to interpret the complex relations between people and places with a methodology of engagement: one that involves informal dialogue as well as formal documentation. Thus, it within a commitment to understanding the manifestations of this complexity, and how it works in dark tourism places, that the study adopted a constructionist epistemology and ontology.

6.2   Research Design

Research designs are blueprints that connect researchers to research philosophies, strategies and methods for collecting and analysing empirical data. Consequently, the research design comprises the 'skills, assumptions, and practices that the researcher employs as he or she moves paradigm to the empirical world' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:22). This research uses a *comparative multi-method case study* design. Put simply, the study utilises a research design that entails a range of identical methods to compare and contrast multiple cases – as revealed shortly. Thus, the design embodies the logic of comparison, whereby the implication is a better social understanding of dark tourism and life and death relationships.

Hollinshead (2004b) stresses that 'a gap' is clearly evident between the positivist and interpretative traditions. He suggests that this could be addressed through the enablement of a deliberately designed integrative multi-method research approach. Thus, it is in this 'gap' that the study is firmly located in seeking to overcome the profound yet perennial problem of seeking to appraise human subjectivity. Therefore, this research design seeks to elucidate upon subjective understandings that emerge from an exploration between specific physical environmental locations of (dark) tourists and the emotional responses those settings may evoke. However, as Middleton (2010) notes, human subjectivity continues to embody a composite process. In other words, human subjectivity both constructs and assimilates a series of sensory and intrinsic perspectives that occur in response to the extrinsic surroundings and the temporal situations they depict. Consequently, as revealed shortly, this study deliberately implemented a research design that embraced a specific range of compatible and complimentary techniques through a progressive and sequential manner within a variety of case study environments.

Stake (2000) refers to the case study as an established research tool that is used for theory building as opposed to theory testing (Merriam, 1998; Kitchin & Tate, 2000). The case study is used to gain in-depth understanding of a situation (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 2000), and is particularly appropriate for the study of events, roles and relationships, including specific encounters (Kitchin & Tate, 2000). Hence, case studies focus upon meaning and relationships (Veal, 2006; Merriam, 1998) and are both a process of inquiry and a product of that inquiry (Yin, 1994; Stake, 2000). Merriam (1998) suggests case studies should be focused on processes, context, and discovery rather than outcomes, specific variables, and confirmation. Additionally, as 'bounded systems', case studies possess three key dimensions;

- firstly, case studies are *particularistic* – that is, they focus upon a particular event or phenomenon;
- secondly, case studies are *descriptive* whereby the end result is a so-called 'thick' and 'rich' description of the phenomenon;
- and finally, case studies are *heuristic* in the sense they illuminate understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

Whilst there is no singular pertinent research modality to tourism research (Ritchie et al., 2005), the case study is particularly suited to this inductive research due to the flexibility not evident in many other alternative research modes (Jennings, 2001). However, case studies have been broadly criticised as speculative, unreliable and too specific to be replicated or applied generally (Beeton, 2005). It has also been argued that case studies tend to reflect the bias of the researcher. Indeed, Hoaglin *et al* (1982) suggest that the value system of the researcher tends to influence the presentation of the facts as well as analysis. They go on to suggest that the usefulness of a case study can be also be influenced by the value system of the reader, who 'tends to remember results that support his/her values, rejecting the others that do not fit as neatly' (Beeton, 2005:39). Nevertheless, whilst the possibility of bias in the case studies is recognised, bias is not restricted to a case study design (Bryman, 2004). Even so, 'criticisms of case studies are valid and cannot simply be passed off as mere historical or etymological aberrations' (Beeton, 2005:39). Indeed, according to Yin (1994: xiii), 'investigators who do case studies are regarded as having deviated from their

academic disciplines, their investigations as having insufficient precision (that is, quantification), objectivity and rigour... [Yet] case studies continue to be used extensively'. Beeton (2005) suggests this continued use of case studies is due to the inherent development of the human psyche. In other words, the case study is a process that provides instant recognition and understanding, as people 'learn from analysing and processing our observations of the world around us, from both direct and vicarious experience' (Beeton, 2005:39).

Therefore, in recent years a number of scholars have argued for a greater use of case study research that includes the investigation of more than one case (Bryman, 2004). The key argument being is that multi-case study research improves theory building. As Yin (1994) suggests, by comparing two or more cases, the researcher is in a better position to establish the circumstances in which theory will or will not hold. Indeed, the comparison may itself suggest concepts that are relevant to an emerging theory (Bryman, 2004). Consequently, the guiding principle to the study's research design is the ability to allow the distinguishing characteristics of the selected case studies to act as a springboard for theoretical reflections about contrasting (or similar) findings.

6.2.1   Case Study Selection

Case studies allow for research flexibility and acknowledge the iterative process at work in qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The researcher can make changes to the research design based on the need to take advantage of changing opportunities and to adjust theoretical or practical concerns as they occur (Yin, 1994). Hence, a criteria was established to select the case studies for this research. Specifically, the conceptual framework outlined earlier in the thesis, that is – The Dark Tourism Spectrum taxonomy – guided the selection of particular cases. Of course, obvious practical constraints, such as travel funding and time, played a role in the selection, but the guiding principal was to select the case sites according to the parameters set out in The Dark Tourism Spectrum. In other words, in order to provide a contrasting but interrelated set of empirical exemplars of dark tourism and thanatological relationships, case sites were selected according to their perceived level of 'darkness' as suggested by the typological model. Thus, a fundamental consideration of the juxtaposition of various potential case sites *of* death and suffering against potential case sites *associated with* death suffering was undertaken.

Originally, seven case studies which represented the 'seven dark suppliers' of The Dark Tourism Spectrum – as outlined earlier in this thesis, was considered. However, due to reasons of potential overlap between prospective types of sites (e.g. dark exhibitions and dark conflict sites or dark shrines and dark resting places), as well as issues of researcher access and financial costs, a range of case sites was filtered to four representations of dark tourism.

The case sites chosen were *Auschwitz-Birkenau*, *Ground Zero*, *Body Worlds* exhibitions, and the *Dungeon* visitor attractions. The case sites were perceived to range from *lightest* dark tourism to *darkest* dark tourism, according to the strictures set out by the Spectrum model. However, the specific criterion used to select the case studies was not only informed by parameters set out by The Dark Tourism Spectrum, but also those sites which are familiar and which (re)present death and dying. In short, case sites were chosen for not only their familiarly within the broader dark tourism literature and media, but also because they represented specific dimensions of death – especially, sites *of* death and sites *associated* with death. Hence, Auschwitz-Birkenau and Ground Zero as sites *of* death were chosen to represent the darker periphery of The Dark Tourism Spectrum, whilst Body Worlds and the Dungeons as sites *associated with* death were chosen to represent 'lighter' dark tourism. Other case sites were considered; including the Killing Fields in Cambodia, Stirling Jail, Bodmin Gaol, Glasgow Necropolis, and Lancaster Castle. However, because of either financial costs or sites that did not satisfy the broad familiarly criterion meant that case site selection was undertaken within a deliberate framework of financial costs to travel, access to the actual site, familiarly of the site, and specific dimensions as set out in The Dark Tourism Spectrum. Whilst the context of each respective case study is discussed later, Figure 8 illustrates how the case sites are perceived or 'plotted' against The Dark Tourism Spectrum typology. Meanwhile, Table 5 shows details of research site visits and the duration spent undertaking research activities. Table 5 also provides, where applicable, details of prior exploratory site visits. The purpose of the exploratory visits was to aid familiarisation of on-site issues specific to this study. Consequently, each exploratory visit provided a basis to consider research methods and to refine research issues/questions.

Greater Political
Influence & Ideology

Less Political
Influence & Ideology

↑

↑

**'Sites *Of* Death
& Suffering'**

**'Sites *Associated* with
Death & Suffering'**

Darkest		Darker	Dark		Light	Lighter	Lightest

↓

↓

Education Orientation

Entertainment Orientation

↓

↓

History Centric
(Conservation /
Commemorative)

Heritage Centric
(Commercial /
Romanticism)

↓

↓

Perceived Authentic
Product Interpretation

Perceived Inauthentic
Product Interpretation

↓

↓

Location Authenticity

Location Inauthenticity

↓

↓

Shorter Duration
to the Event

Longer Duration
from the Event

↓

↓

Non-Purposeful Supply

Purposeful Supply

↓

↓

Less Tourism Infrastructure

Greater Tourism
Infrastructure

Auschwitz-Birkenau

Ground Zero

Body Worlds

Dungeons

Figure 8: Case studies 'plotted' against The Dark Tourism Spectrum conceptual framework

Case Study	Location	Date of Exploratory Visit	Date of Research Visit	Research Visit Duration (Hours)
WTC Tribute Visitor Centre (at Ground Zero)	New York, USA	Feb 2008[*]	17/02/09 – 23/02/09	24
Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum & Memorial	Oświęcim, Poland	n/a [**]	15/03/09 – 20/03/09	29
Body Worlds	O2 Arena, London	Apr 2008[***] (MOSI, Manchester)	20/04/09 – 22/04/09	18
London Dungeon	London	Dec 2008[****] (York Dungeon)	22/04/09 – 25/04/09	12

[*]Exploratory visit to Ground Zero, New York
[**]Due to prohibited costs, no exploratory visit was undertaken to Auschwitz-Birkenau (though additional hours were spent on site during the actual research visit).
[***]Exploratory visit to Body Worlds exhibition at Museum of Science & Industry (MOSI), Manchester, UK.
[****]Exploratory visit to York Dungeons as part of Stone (2009c) research.

Table 5: Case Study Sites: Visit Dates and Duration of Research Activity

6.3   *Research Methods*

Methods are instruments and techniques used for data collection. Denzin and Lincoln (2000:3) refer to research methods within integrative designs as 'a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible'. Consequently, with methods that seek to represent the world, 'the researcher can study things in their natural settings [and] attempt to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:3). Hence, the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection in case study research whereby an integrative multi-method research strategy can be utilised (Merriam, 1998). The principal methods used for this study were a purposeful integration of *covert participation observations*, *semi-structured interviews*, and *survey questionnaires*. Additionally, supplementary research instruments included a *focus group* for the Dungeons case study, and a *diary account* of a companion who accompanied the Auschwitz-Birkenau field visit(s). Originally, the focus group was to feature as a key method for the study; however, access issues to participants and the cost of organising focus groups across the entire case study range proved insurmountable. Nevertheless, a focus group was included in the Dungeon case study design because earlier published work relating to this thesis

(Stone, 2009c) lent well to the research objectives of this specific study. Therefore, to augment this study, findings from the focus group were both pertinent and relevant. Equally, the opportunity to incorporate a diary account of a companion who accompanied the researcher to Auschwitz-Birkenau was taken. Again, whilst not an integral component of the other case study designs, the unique opportunity to gather 'thick' and 'rich' data from such a valuable source was captured. As Sarsby (1984:96) aptly notes:

> Every field situation *is* different and initial luck in meeting good informants, being in the right place at the right time and striking the right note in relationships may be just as important as skill in technique. Indeed, many successful episodes in the field do come about through good luck as much as through sophisticated planning, and many unsuccessful episodes are due as much to bad luck as to bad judgement.

Ultimately, the design of empirical methods was in two progressive and sequential component stages and applied to each case study. The first stage constituted an ethnographic design which comprised covert participation observations and semi-structured interviews (with the additional focus group and diary account as discussed above). The second stage of the empirical research was a survey design that sought to illuminate findings from the first stage ethnographic research. The second stage comprised questionnaires, which were distributed both at the actual case sites, as well as through an online mechanism. The rationale and criteria for each method, including sampling strategies, as well as particular advantages and disadvantages are discussed in the next sections, but, in the meanwhile, Figure 9 schematically illustrates the methods and their relationship within the overall research design and subsequent analysis.

As discussed earlier in Section 6.1.2, the integrative nature of a mixed-method approach utilised in this study was to address different aspects of the research aim, in order that a fuller picture be developed and which may be regarded as complementary. However, as Wollney (2009:87) points out, 'because competing claims for the justification of mixed methods studies currently abound in the literature, some of which are highly contestable, this [complementary aspect] is an important point'.

CASE STUDY

Stage One: ETHNOGRAPHIC DESIGN

Covert Participant Observations

Semi-structured Interviews (n= 64)

*Focus Group
(Dungeons ONLY)*

*Diary Account
(Auschwitz ONLY)*

Broad Data Clusters

Subject Themes

Interpretation & Narrative

Stage Two: SURVEY DESIGN

On-Site Questionnaires
(n= 195)

Online Questionnaires
(n= 224)

Analysis & Narrative

Discussions & Conclusions
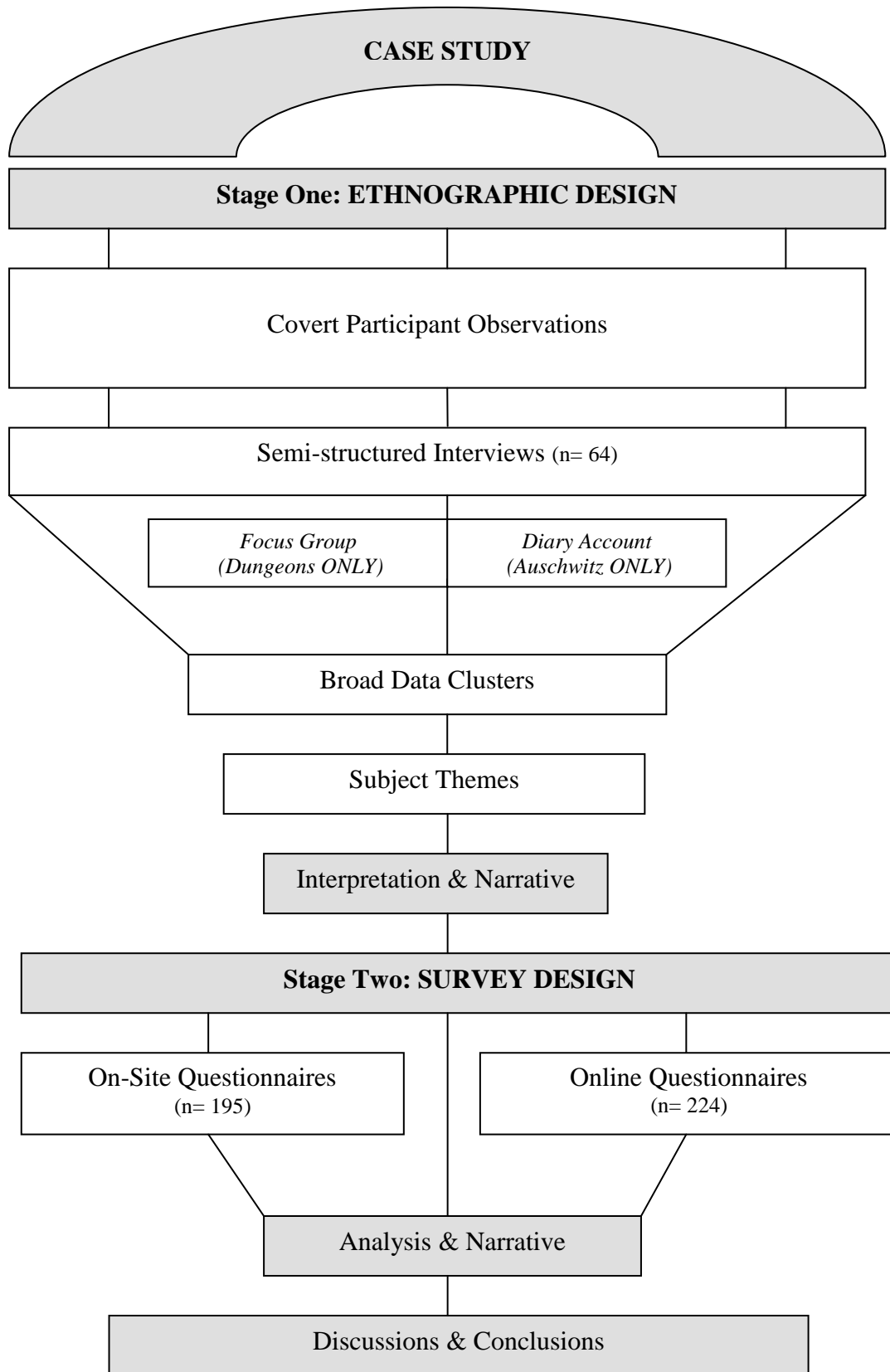
Figure 9: A Schematic of Empirical Methods and Research Design

Hence, according to Johnson and Turner (2003), in what they called the *fundamental principle of mixed research*, researchers should collect multiple data using different strategies, approaches, and methods in such a way that the resulting mixture or combination is likely to result in complementary strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004:18) also suggest that 'effective use of this principle is a major source of justification for mixed methods research because the product will be superior to monomethod studies'. They go on to propose that mixed method research is a 'research paradigm whose time has come' (2004:14). Sells, Smith and Sprenkle (1995:203) also advocate this potential superiority of integrative qualitative and quantitative research methods and suggest that they 'build upon each other and offer information that neither one alone could provide'.

Consequently, Yin (2006) suggests that integrative mixed method research embraces much more than the traditional dichotomy between qualitative and quantitative research. As discussed in Section 6.3, this dichotomous perspective disguises the reality that there can be different mixes or combinations of methods (Yin, 2006). However, Yin outlines criteria for integrative research, and notes it is critical that mixed methods should be within a *single* study with a defined research question. In particular, he suggests that for integration, the following five procedures should be addressed, either separately or in tandem with each other:

- Research question
- Units of analysis
- Samples for study
- Instrumentation and data collection methods
- Analytic strategies

Firstly therefore, and applying Yin's framework, the range of methods used within this study related to a single research question – in this case, *within a thanatological context, what fundamental interrelationships exist between visitors and sites that offer a (re)presentation of death, disaster or the seemingly macabre?* All methods used within this study addressed this question in a purposeful, sequential and complementary manner. In other words, the study was construed as a single study but, within a multiple case study design that addressed a specific research question.

Secondly, 'every study has an implicit if not explicit unit of analysis [which] holds a study together' (Yin, 2006:43). However, as Yin also notes, 'the challenge in using mixed methods arises because different methods inherently favour different units of analysis – leading to another threat to the integrity of a single study' (2006:43). However, to mitigate any threat to this study's integrity, the research consistently maintained a point of reference as a 'unit' of analysis. Put another way, the research makes persistent reference to death and dying and its relationship with touristic consumption as a unit of analysis. Subsequently, 'such persistent reference to this unit of analysis created the needed integrative force to blend all of the methods into a single study' (Yin, 2006:43).

Thirdly, sampling procedures need to be considered carefully in maintaining a single study. Whilst sampling techniques are discussed in more detail shortly, the principle adopted within this integrative study was for the samples of each method to be nested within that of the other (Yin, 2006). In short, 'fieldwork samples may be nested within survey samples' (Yin, 2006:44). Thus, and notwithstanding the online survey sample, on-site survey samples were nested within interview samples, whereby for the purposes of convenience and to help maintain the notion of a single study, various respondents were both interviewed and surveyed. However, as Yin (2006) points out, the nesting arrangement is an ideal when using mixed methods, although in practice it is not always achievable. Hence, for this reason, particular limitations are recognised within this study (see Section 9.5.1).

Fourthly, as mixed method research use an array of different data collection instruments, which in turn, can 'contain directly analogous variables, if not actual items', [then] the more that the items overlap or complement each other; the more that the mixed methods can be part of a single study' (Yin, 2006:44). Thus, the data collection methods used in this study were deliberately designed to create directly comparable items, although by design they also had many non-overlapping items. This, in turn, added to the richness of data within the confines of this study.

Finally, analytic integration within a mixed method approach, which can be the most problematic, relies on determining a counterpart relationship between the differing method analyses. As Yin (2006:45) states:

...the goal is not to force the mixed methods into the exact same analytic routines. Rather, the goal is to design and carry out what might be 'counterpart' analyses. Such analyses should be formulated in directly analogous fashion, although they may use entirely different methodological techniques.

Thus, whilst specific analytic techniques are discussed in more detail shortly, the overriding principle for this study was to formulate analogous counterpart relationships within and between the analyses and respective methods, and to offer an interconnected narrative that addressed the research question within the confines of a single study. As Bryman (2007) notes, it is the conjunction of interpreting mixed method data with writing a narrative which is crucial in any integrative research method approach.

6.3.1   (Covert) Participant Observations

The terms *participant observation* and *ethnography* are often used interchangeably and thus are very difficult to define (Bryman, 2004). Both draw attention to the fact that the observer/ethnographer is immersed within an environmental setting for a period, and observes interactions and behaviours, listens to what is said in conversations – both between others and with the researcher – and asks questions. Additionally, ethnography may simultaneously refer to both a method of research, including participant observations *and* the written product of the research. Indeed, ''ethnography' frequently denotes a research process and the written outcome of the research' (Bryman, 2004:292). Thus, for clarity, this study adopts the term *ethnography/ethnographic* to mean both the actual research method of participant observations and 'talking/listening' with research respondents (that is, through interviews and the focus group as well as through diarist discourse) and, the subsequent writing-up of the research findings. This latter point is discussed in more detail later.

Meanwhile, participant observation is an ethnographic method used to seek understandings of place and context of everyday life (Hay, 2000). Indeed, it is a particularly effective method for researchers who intend to collect data that arrives from local perspectives, through community involvement, or by recurrent contact with people and relatively unstructured social interactions (Hay, 2000). Thus, this study

adopted the *covert* role of participant observation within an *open/public* environmental setting. Participant observations served two essential functions. Firstly, they informed the research process and design and, in particular;

- facilitated access to the research participants and informed the general interview selection;
- facilitated dialogue between research participants and researcher (see Belsky, 2004);
- assisted with the formulation of interview questions and follow-up questions whilst conducting interviews.

Secondly, by directly, and covertly, experiencing the activities under observation – what Scott and Usher (1999) identify as 'direct experiential value' – participant observation provided opportunities to gain insights into actions of visitors whilst they consumed/experienced particular dark tourism products. Hence, participant observations were used inductively to build or guide explanations on the behaviour of people within dark tourism environments. Table 6 shows the duration of time spent on participant observations at respective case sites, as well as specific activities.

Case Study	Participant Observational Activities
WTC Tribute Visitor Centre (at Ground Zero)	- Observed visitors in and around Ground Zero and Lower Manhattan; - Observed visitors at the Centre (both inside and immediately outside); - Observed staff/tour guide interactions with visitors; - Observed visitor interactions with each other and with the actual site; - Made notes of 'actual experience' and formal interpretations on offer at the Centre; - Made notes of visitors actions and interactions; - Took a range of photographs of site and visitors; - Listened (discretely) to visitors' conversations when perceived relevant to research objectives; - Made specific notes from the visitor comment book(s)
Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum & Memorial	- Observed visitors in and around Auschwitz and Birkenau; - Observed visitors at both Auschwitz and Birkenau (both inside the perimeters of the site and within the immediate vicinity); - Observed staff/tour guide interactions with visitors; - Observed visitor interactions with each other and with the actual sites; - Made notes of 'actual experience' and formal interpretations on offer at sites; - Made notes of visitors actions and interactions; - Took a range of photographs of site and visitors; - Listened (discretely) to visitors' conversations when perceived relevant to research objectives; - Made specific notes from the visitor comment book as well as evident visitor graffiti.

Table 6: Participant Observation Activities

Case Study	Participant Observational Activities
Body Worlds	- Observed visitors in and around the Body Worlds exhibition and the general O2 Arena vicinity; - Observed visitors at the exhibition (both inside and immediately outside); - Observed staff interactions with visitors; - Observed visitor interactions with each other and with the actual site; - Made notes of 'actual experience' and formal interpretations on offer at the exhibition; - Made notes of visitors actions and interactions; - Took a range of photographs of site and visitors; - Listened (discretely) to visitors' conversations when perceived relevant to research objectives;
London Dungeon	- Undertook the Dungeon tour on three separate occasions; - Observed visitors within the Dungeon attraction; - Observed staff/actors interactions with visitors; - Observed visitor interactions with each other and with the actual site; - Made notes of 'actual experience' and formal interpretations on offer at the attraction; - Made notes of visitors actions and interactions; - Took a range of exterior photographs of site and visitors; - Listened (discretely) to visitors' conversations when perceived relevant to research objectives;

Table 6 Cont'd: Participant Observation Activities

Observations were 'unstructured' and 'naturalistic' (Veal, 2006) as the researcher, posing as a visitor, was immersed within the case sites and gazed not only upon the gazer but also consumed the touristic interpretations on offer. Consequently, there are few systematic guidelines for participant observation given that every observed situation is relative and unique (Hay, 2000). Indeed, 'the strict application of rules has less to do with the approach than does the researcher's high capacity for introspection with respect to his or her relationship to what is to be (and is being) researched' (Hay, 2000:109). However, given the diversity of insights gleaned from observations, and the classification of field notes offered by Lofland and Lofland (1995) and Sanjek (1990), the following process of recording was adopted:

- *Mental notes* – particularly useful when it was considered inappropriate to be seen taking written notes. Examples of this were in the gas chambers at Auschwitz or in the WTC Tribute Visitor Centre gallery areas.

- *Jotted Notes (or Scratch Notes)* – brief notes were taken in small notebooks in order to 'jog the memory' about events that were written up fully later. Lofland and Lofland (1195:90) suggest scratch notes as being made up of 'little phrases, quotes, key words, and the like'. Scratch notes were considered more appropriate (and discrete) than digital voice recorders to record initial feelings and ideas. Additionally, photographs were taken at respective sites (within the confines of tourist photography), to aid memory and subsequent analysis.

- *Full Field Notes* – these were comprehensive annotations, taken both from mental and scratch notes, which served the purpose as the main data source for the participant observations. Field notes strategically written up at periodic intervals throughout the observations (either in cafes, on benches, in the car, or just somewhere that offered privacy and discretion), were then filtered and augmented to full field notes at the end of every 'observational day'. The full field notes also made comments about emergent themes, as well as offering direction for subsequent interview questions and probing.

6.3.2   Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are methods that seek to understand key informants in complex social and cultural situations (Hay, 2000). More importantly, semi-structured interviews allow flexibility to change the wording and sequence of questions once the interview has been initiated (Hay, 2000; Kitchin and Tate, 2000). Consequently, 'the interviewer has much greater freedom to explore specific avenues of enquiry, and logical gaps within data can be anticipated and closed (Kitchin and Tate, 2000:214). Indeed, new lines of enquiry that emerged out of the interview process were pursued, and interviews often evolved into conversations, which points to Kvale's (1996) claim that interviews often transpire as 'co-authored narratives'. In essence, interviews were characterised 'by the interplay of interviewee and interviewer in the interview process' and included an appreciation for the interviewee's statement as 'a joint social creation' (Kvale, 1996:183). Thus, it was within this context of *narrative conception* and *flexibility* that the interviews were conducted. A brief interview guide, the purpose of which was to augment and probe further the issues revealed by participant observations, was created for each respective site (Appendix 1). Indeed, each

subsequent field visit, as outlined earlier in Figure 23, allowed a grounding of key issues and themes to emerge.

As the types of questions asked in qualitative research are highly variable (Bryman, 2004), the researcher adopted the framework offered by Kvale (1996), whereby interviews included a specific combination of introducing questions, follow-up questions, probing questions, specifying questions, direct questions, indirect questions, and interpreting questions. Thus, the essential objective of the interviews, within the context of specific visitor experiences, was to discover and reveal respondent values, beliefs, behaviour, insights, encounters and emotions of consuming dark tourism. Interview selection was conducted using a purposeful sampling strategy. Such sampling 'is essentially strategic and entails an attempt to establish a good correspondence between research question and sampling' (Bryman, 2004:333). In other words, the researcher sampled individuals on the basis of wanting to interview people who were considered relevant to the research. Indeed, a specific and purposeful criteria was adopted for interview selection. Firstly, respondents had to be over the age of sixteen – given the emotive nature of the subject, and the fact that the study is essentially about the 'adult relationship' with death and dying. Secondly, respondents could not have any direct relationship with any of the deceased that may have perished at respective case sites. This was particularly relevant to Auschwitz-Birkenau and Ground Zero. Indeed, this corresponded with the overall research aim of discovering visitor relationships with dark tourism – rather than family members or of loved ones. Finally, interview respondents were only approached if they were not visibly upset by their respective dark tourism experience. Whilst the general goal was to achieve a balanced cross-section between age and gender of respondents, as well as an international profile, due to the nature and subject of the research, and the willingness of respondents, sampling occurred within the confines of convenience rather any specific quota-based approach. Table 7 illustrates the number of interviews at respective case sites, as well as the geographical profile of respondents.

Case Study	Gender		Interviewee Country of Origin	Total Interviews	Interview %
London Dungeon	Male	5	UK (4), USA (1), Ireland (1), France (1), Germany (1), Australia (1), New Zealand (1), China (1)	11	17%
	Female	6			
Body Worlds	Male	8	UK (12), USA (3), France (1), Poland (1)	17	27%
	Female	9			
WTC Tribute Visitor Centre (at Ground Zero)	Male	4	UK (5), USA (4), France (1), Australia (1), Ireland (2), Finland (1), Canada (1), Chile (1)	16	25%
	Female	12			
Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum & Memorial	Male	8	UK (4), USA (6), Czech Republic (2), Australia (2), Canada (1), Latvia (1), New Zealand (1), Poland (1), Holland (1), Austria (1)	20	31%
	Female	12			
Total Interviews	**Male**	**25**	**UK (25), USA (14), Australia (4), Ireland (3), France (3), Czech Republic (2) New Zealand (2), Poland (2), Finland (2), Canada (2), Germany (1), Chile (1), Latvia (1), Holland (1), Austria (1),**	**64**	**100%**
	Female	**39**			

Table 7: Number, Gender and Geographic Profile of Interviewees

Interviews were conducted 'in situ' of the immediate vicinity of the case site, either on the street (Dungeons, Ground Zero) or in sheltered spots adjoining the site, such as a cafe (Auschwitz) or inside the O2 Arena (Body Worlds). An initial brief explanation of the research project was given to interviewees with informed consent as to publication of responses was attained. As part of the consent process, anonymity was guaranteed whereby a respondent number and/or gender and country of origin would identify published responses. It should be noted, however, that the order of respondent/interviewee numbering within the analysis does not necessarily relate to

the actual order of interviews conducted (see Chapter 7). Rather, a respondent/interviewee numbering system was created to simplify, code and expedite the analytic process. Additionally, to capture 'not just *what* people say but also in the *way* that they say it' (original emphasis – Bryman, 2004:329), the plan was to audio-record all interviews. However, it became very apparent early on in the empirical process that many respondents did not feel comfortable being recorded talking about death, dying or their dark tourism experiences. Many simply refused at each of the sites – especially in London and New York – to proceed once the notion of audio recording was suggested. Indeed, Bryman (2004:330) points out that 'the use of a recorder may disconcert respondents, who may become self-conscious or alarmed at the prospect of their words being preserved'. Consequently, in order to overcome an obvious resistance barrier to the conduct of interviews, the decision was taken to deliberately keep interviews very brief in order to transcribe conversations by hand, in note form, and which recorded the essence of the point being made. Importantly, therefore, interview quotes that appear in subsequent analyses are an interpretation of the interview exchange, and though accurate, are not a *facsimile* of the actual conversation.

6.3.3   *Focus Group*

The focus group is 'a popular method to examine ways in which people in conjunction with one another construe the general topics in which the researcher is interested' (Bryman, 2004:347). Whilst the focus group method, as discussed earlier, was only utilised for the Dungeon case study, it proved particularly useful in an exploratory sense. In other words, the focus group as a supplementary method not only allowed a better understanding of some key research issues, but it also aided the development of subsequent research methods. Indeed, whilst the findings cannot be generalised, the inherent 'retrospective introspection' (after Bloor et al., 2001) of the focus group illuminated valuable insights into relationships between (lighter) dark tourism and contemporary perspectives of death and morality. On December 8, 2008, a focus group was conducted which sought to develop a deeper understanding of consumer experiences/perceptions of dark tourism, within the specific context of the Dungeon visitor attractions. The focus group, facilitated by the researcher and audio-recorded to a MP3 file, was carried out at the University of Central Lancashire, with

eight participants drawn from the university's undergraduate community. The criteria for participants to take part was:

- To have visited at least one Dungeon visitor attraction as a customer, either in the UK or Europe, within the preceding two years;
- To be eighteen years of age or over;

The focus group lasted one hour and a transcription of the conversations was made to not only to aid analysis, but also to provide synthesis with other findings – particularly from interviews at the London Dungeon visitor attraction.

6.3.4   Diary Account

As highlighted earlier, an opportunity presented itself during the field visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau for a diarist to keep an account of his 'dark tourist' experiences. Thus, within the confines of a 'free text diary' (Corti, 1993), Mr Keith Myerscough – a sports history academic in his early fifties (Myerscough, 2009) – accompanied the researcher on his field visit to Poland. Myerscough rigorously maintained a diary as a method of empirical data collection, with a purpose to record rich and thick descriptive accounts of specific experiences, emotions and feelings. Thus, a *researcher-driven diary* (Elliott, 1997) was kept for the whole duration of the trip, which recorded accounts of feelings pre-visit, during the visit(s) and post-visit. A criteria was established for Myerscough, namely;

- explicit instructions were provided as the nature and purpose of the diary;
- a diary entry had to be recorded within two hours of any visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau – (Myerscough made three separate visits to the camps);
- diary accounts should be recorded in rhetorical prose rather than simply indicating the amount of time spent on different kinds of activity.

6.3.5   Questionnaires

The second stage of the empirical process comprised social survey research. The purpose was to provide synthesis to first stage ethnographic methods, thus complementing the integrative research design and to augment the findings, whilst addressing the overall research aim. In short, the survey was used as a progressive instrument to supplement data from the extrinsic first stage of the research, that is – an environmental appraisal through ethnographic methods – to the second stage, which

was intrinsic and sought to ascertain how people felt. A survey is defined 'as an inquiry which involves the collection of systematic data across a sample of cases' (Marsh, 1982: 9). Thus, for the purpose of this study, a survey refers to an investigation where:

- systematic measurements are made over the series of cases which, in turn, yields data;
- variables within the collected data are analysed to see if they show any discernible patterns;
- the subject matter is social – that is, the survey seeks to measure individual thanatological relationships but, may have broader implications for society.

A *self-completion questionnaire* was the principle research instrument of the social survey – an example of which can be found in Appendix 2. Questionnaires are considered economical in the sense that they can provide a considerable amount of research data for a relatively low cost of materials, money and time (Bryman, 2004). Additionally, the development of questionnaires to supply standardised data (Ritchie et al., 2005) was an important consideration for this multiple case study design and integrative research, where respondents across the four case sites were asked the same, or very similar, questions. Importantly, the questionnaire was designed to elicit responses that would locate specific dark tourism experiences against a broader social and cultural context of death, dying and grief. In other words, the aim of the survey was to reveal dark tourism experiences within the thanatological condition of society. In particular, the design of the questionnaire sought to not only gauge site-specific experiences, but also to reveal the extent of respondent perceptions that surround commemoration, grief, and religion, as well as issues of morbidity and mortality. The questionnaire, which was purposefully designed to be replicated across all case sites – with only minor adjustments to questions and potential responses – included an adaption of the well established *Revised Collett-Lester Fear of Death Scale* (Question 30a to 30r of the survey – see Appendix 2; Collett & Lester, 1969; Lester, 2007). The purpose of using the scale was to measure the general level of death anxiety amongst respondents and to provide a broad context when examining dark tourism experiences and notions of mortality. In short, as informed by the earlier theoretical analysis in Chapter Five, a Giddensian perspective suggests that individuals have a pervasive

anxiety of mortality due to a sequestration of death paradigm. In turn, this anxiety manifests itself as dread, whereby personal levels of ontological security are affected. Crucially, however, the *Revised Collett-Lester Fear of Death Scale* adapted for this study does not correlate *specific* dark tourism experiences and anxiety with a particular site –that is, suggest a causal relationship of the dark tourism experience with death anxiety – but rather provides a general context of mortality and dread in which those experiences are consumed. Of course, future research could address the extent of how and why specific dark tourism experiences may heighten anxiety of death, or even assuage any sense of dread (see also Section 9.2.2).

The questionnaire utilises the Likert scale of measurement, which consequently allows for a pre-coding of responses and subsequent ease of analysis. A pilot test of the questionnaire was carried out on February 2, 2009, with a convenience sample of twenty-three final year undergraduate students at the University of Central Lancashire. To ensure respondents had 'recentness of experience' of dark tourism, the pilot sample had all visited a dark tourism site (Ground Zero) within the preceding twelve months. Face validity (Bryman, 2004) of the questionnaire was also sought from the researcher's supervisory team. Consequently, appropriate alterations were made to the questionnaire to minimise issues of question bias, misapprehension, or cultural misunderstanding (Oppenheim, 1992).

The survey research comprised a dual sampling strategy. The first stage of the survey involved the distribution of a paper questionnaire by the researcher to respondents at the actual case site, through a convenience technique (Bryman, 2004). This approach deliberately sought to optimise upon a high completion rate, limited only by the number of questionnaires distributed or those willing to complete them. Each respondent who gave an interview also completed a questionnaire. This augmented the 'nesting sampling technique' discussed in Section 6.3, which in turn, helped maintain the integrative design of the research. However, in order to expand the overall sample size, and to aid the validity of findings, a second sampling stage was initiated. Questionnaires were electronically converted and distributed via a dedicated website. Specifically, questionnaires for each case site were replicated using the Bristol Online Survey (BOS) service, a dedicated survey software package designed and hosted by Bristol University with access under licence to the University of

Central Lancashire. The online sampling strategy combined both purposeful and snowball techniques to aid methodological rigour (Bryman, 2004), and the survey was both hyperlinked and promoted via www.dark-tourism.org.uk, a dedicated Facebook page as well as various academic JISCmail list servs. Similar to the criteria set for interviews, a specific criteria for survey completion was set, whereby respondents had to be sixteen years or over and have no direct relationship with any of the deceased at the case sites. Crucially, however, and to address an issue from the pilot survey as discussed earlier, online respondents had to have 'recentness of experience' of dark tourism. This was in order to ensure online respondents could recall the 'emotional stimuli' of their respective dark tourism encounter, but without the dilution of emotion or reflection caused by 'chronological distance'. This notion of chronological distance is important for two key reasons. Firstly, as on-site survey respondents had immediate emotions and reflections from their respective dark tourism experience, these emotions and reflections could arguably be perceived as 'raw' and more susceptible to so-called 'emotional skew'. Secondly, online respondent had to remember how they felt during and after their dark tourism experience, and to be able to recall sufficiently that emotional experience for the purpose of this survey.

Hence, an important issue that arose from the pilot survey, whereby the criteria was for respondents to have visited a particular dark tourism site within the preceding two years, it became apparent that the time scale was too distant. In short, pilot respondents suggested they did not have enough 'recentness of experience' in order to fully extract the emotional stimuli they had felt during their respective dark tourism experiences. Thus, in order to address this issue for online respondents, the 'chronological distance' between completion of the questionnaire and actual experience at any of the four case sites was set at six months. It was considered that the six-month window criterion to be adequately short enough for respondents to be able to recall any emotional stimuli of respective dark tourism experiences, whilst long enough to be able to capture a reasonably sized sample. Specific limitations and implications of recentness of experience are discussed further in Section 9.2.1. Meanwhile, however, the research purposefully sought to address the recentness of experience issue and, to moderate any potential emotional skew between on-site and online populations through a deliberate criteria of ensuring online respondents had dark tourism experiences within a sufficient 'chronological window'. Of course, it is

recognised that on-site and online survey populations were not the same in terms of replicating exactly the level of *emotional stimuli* caused by the recentness of experience, (though the two populations are considered similar – see Section 8.0). Quite simply, it would have been extremely difficult to do so, and for the purposes of this research, is unnecessary. In other words, the research aim was to appraise dark tourism consumption and its relationship with the thanatological condition of society. Consequently, the survey analysis reveals in Chapter Eight a *moderated narrative* between those who had immediate familiarity of dark tourism and those who relied on recall of their experiences (but, within an intentional six-month window). However, as a cautionary note, whilst sampling criteria could be enforced by on-site distribution (that is, by the researcher), completion by 'eligible respondents' of the online version could not be controlled. Therefore, a chi-square test to determine the extent of similarity between on-site and online populations was carried out. The test suggested there was no statistical significance between the distribution of on-site and online populations (Section 8.0 and Appendix 3).

Consequently, all data capture instruments remain subjective to the co-operation and participation of respondents. Arguably, within a written narrative analysis, as revealed shortly, those who voluntarily wish to share them best express the intrinsic views and values of people. Individuals across the global population, who demonstrate an active interest in dark tourism and its associated components, must reflect directly and indirectly a deeper knowledge and insight to the topic under scrutiny. Indeed, some would refer to this form of data capture as enhancing expert cognition and its derived meanings (Middleton, 2010).

Despite potential bias of academics or students dominating the online sampling population, follow-up emails were periodically sent to the distribution lists to promote completion of the survey, as well as specifically requesting recipients forward (or snowball) the email and questionnaire hyperlink to potential respondents. Additionally, in an attempt to increase response rates, the researcher offered potential participants an opportunity to enter a prize draw to receive a copy of the DVD *Dark Tourism: Turning Points of History*. The online questionnaire was open for completion during April 9, 2009, until May 22, 2009. Sample sizes for both on-site

and online survey are shown in Table 8, whilst Table 9 summarises the guiding principles adopted for this survey research.

Case Study	Number of Respondents (On-Site)	Number of Respondents (Online)	Total No of Respondents	% of Total Respondents
The London Dungeon (DA)	46	43	nDA = 89	21%
Body Worlds Exhibition (BW)	42	48	nBW = 90	22%
Tribute WTC Visitor Centre (Ground Zero) (GZ)	49	52	nGZ = 101	24%
Auschwitz-Birkenau (AB)	58	81	nAB = 139	33%
Total Sample(s)	**195**	**224**	**n = 419**	**100%**

Table 8: On-site and online survey sample sizes

Guiding Principle	Comment
Cost of Administration	- questionnaires were distributed on-site during field visits whilst the researcher also undertook ethnographic research, thus incurring no additional costs; - questionnaires were distributed online through University funded software.
Speed of Administration	- questionnaires were quickly distributed on-site in person and collected with ease; - online distribution allowed speedy distribution of questionnaires to large potential samples.
(Non-Probability) Sampling Strategy	- on-site questionnaires used a convenience sampling technique, whereby the sampling population were present during field visits at specific sites (that is, the sampling frame); - purposeful and snowballing sampling strategies were used for online questionnaires, which utilised specific sampling frames (email distribution lists and hyperlinked websites) that represented larger sampling populations.
Issues of Bias	- both on-site and online questionnaires were self-completed, thus reducing interviewer bias and variability; - question design attempted to minimise issues of bias and cultural misunderstandings, through face validity and pilot testing.
Response Rate	- on-site questionnaires had a guaranteed response rate limited only to the number of distributed surveys; - follow up emails and website announcements were used to increase online questionnaire completion; - a free prize draw was incorporated in an attempt to bolster online response rates; - online questionnaire design incorporated optional responses, which in turn allowed progression to other parts of the survey, thus allowing a greater overall response rate.

Table 9: Guiding principles for survey design

6.4   Research Analysis

Interpretive analysis embodies an iterative process, involving both inductive and deductive logics. Analytical processes can move from description to explanation, as well as from explanation to description. Thus, analytical activities undertaken within this research hinged upon the constant (grounded) interaction between research design and data collection (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996). Consequently, analysis is not separate from other features of the research process – including writing. Richardson (1990, 1994) suggests writing up social research is a 'way of knowing' as well as a method of discovery and analysis. Meanwhile, Coffey and Atkinson (1996:109) claim

that writing 'actually deepens our level of analytic endeavour'. Similarly, Parker (2004:163) proposes that academic writing is an intrinsic part of the analytical process: one that involves 'the construction of a narrative that presents persuasive themes and story lines, argues influences, connections and outcomes, and develops wider implications for the discipline in which the study is situated'. Therefore, this study deliberately utilises *rhetorical* strategies in the writing style – that is, rhetoric that is designed to convince and persuade – and is apparent not only in the case study ethnographies, but also in survey interpretations. Consequently, the aim is for 'the conventions of text and rhetoric to be among the ways in which reality is constructed' (Atkinson, 1990:2), and for writing to be cathartic that involves a journey of discovery and meaning.

Specifically, however, the research employed analytic strategies that extracted key research findings in a methodical and disciplined manner. The first stage of the empirical research, which comprised participant observations and interviews (as well as the focus group and diary account), employed the strategy of narrative analysis. Whilst computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), such as NVivo, were considered, because of the relatively small data set and the lack of universal agreement about the utility of CAQDAS (Hesse-Biber, 1995; Weaver and Atkinson, 1995; Catterall and Maclaran, 1997; Fielding and Lee, 1998), the coding and narrative flow of field notes, transcriptions and the diary account was manually undertaken to ensure 'rich and thick' description (Bryman, 2004).

Thus, narrative analysis was employed to aid the comprehension of interpretive processes involved within the qualitative context. This approach allowed for the revelation of narrative structures imbued within respondents' meaning-making processes, as well as the identification of narrative devices employed by individuals in recounting their dark tourism experiences (after Polkinghorne, 1995). The analysis commenced with a prolonged review of observational field notes, interview and focus group transcripts, and the diary account, with the goal of gaining an understanding of overall meanings while concurrently preserving a holistic image of dark tourism consumption (after Hall, 2004). This stage entailed identifying narrative structures that aided respondents in making sense of their experiences and, it also enabled the documentation of recurrent elements. In other words, all the transcripts and notes

were iteratively reviewed from numerous horizontal passes, which required not only (re)reading the documents from beginning to end, but also the assembling of narratives by themes (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996). Therefore, the coding procedure described by Miles and Huberman (1994) was employed to identify emergent themes. Within the theme identification process, words, phrases, sentences, or paragraphs that were affiliated with the same theme were clustered together, facilitating the classification of the theme. Thus, via a thorough review and coding process, key emergent themes were identified, and a rhetorical interpretation offered.

The second stage of the empirical process comprised survey research. In order to determine the extent of relationship between dark tourism and the contemplation of mortality, as well as determining the level of death anxiety amongst respondents, electronic interpretation was undertaken. Computer software such as SPSS was considered and discounted. As Ryan (2010) notes, 'essentially the best tool you have is your own ability and awareness of the data collection process – the software packages provide a tool – not a strait jacket'. Therefore, for ease of use and access, EXCEL software was chosen as a mechanism to collate survey data, as well as to analyse and present the data. The use of software to present data included frequency analysis as well as diagram and chart displays, which aimed to build a 'picture' of dark tourism experiences and relationships within the broader thanatological condition of society.

6.5   Research Determinants, Conduct and Ethical Considerations

Both the third and fourth moments in research history emerged from challenges made to positivism (Denzil & Lincoln, 1994; 2000). For positivism, research trustworthiness hinges upon criteria of internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity, and subsequently locates the concept of triangulation at the centre of trustworthiness issues.

Thus, this research, which adopts a constructivist paradigm, attends to issues of trustworthiness primarily from the requirements of the third (blurred genres) moment and, in doing so, utilises the tools made available to qualitative researchers operating in the post-positivist moment. Post-positivists such as Decrop (2004) assert that positivist expectations of triangulation assume a 'fixed-point', and affect how, and

even if, a multiple range of interpretations can be sought and investigated. Hence, for Janesick (2000) removing the expectation that there is one correct interpretation necessitates that validity has more to do with description, interpretation and explanation. Furthermore, Decrop (2004) refers to trustworthiness in the third moment by drawing upon the work of Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria-based typology for trustworthiness in qualitative research. In particular, their typology is formulated from a re-assessment of validity, generalizability, and reliability. In turn, they suggest four reformulated criteria which parallel an equivalent criterion in quantitative research (see also Guba and Lincoln, 1989; Crang, 2002);

- credibility or truthfulness (which parallels internal validity);
- transferability (which parallels external validity);
- dependability (which parallels reliability);
- and, confirmability (which parallels objectivity).

This reformulated approach to trustworthiness hints at Kvale's (1996:231) concept of a 'moderate postmodernism', whereby the rejection of an objective universal truth opens up the possibility of 'specific local, personal, and community forms of truth, with a focus on daily life and local narrative'. Thus, drawing upon suggestions by Silverman (2006) that combining methods and comparing and contrasting data contributes to data credibility, this study used a triangulated multi-method strategy within a research design that required constant interaction between analysis and findings. This grounded interaction led to opportunities that confirmed, supported, or challenged insights, and opened up new analytical avenues. Additionally, in addressing canons of good research, the submission of research findings extrapolated from this study has resulted in numerous peer-reviewed articles and other publications. Arguably, therefore, in terms of credibility, this provides confirmation that the researcher has understood the social world and, therein, specific relationships of dark tourism.

Transferability is achieved through 'referential adequacy involving the provision of contextual information that supports data analysis and interpretation' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985:160). In other words, this study adopts what Geertz (1973) called *thick description* – that is, rich and rhetorical accounts of the details of an investigation.

Consequently, Guba and Lincoln (1994) argue that a thick description provides others with what they refer to as a database for making judgements about the possible transferability of findings to other milieu. Meanwhile, dependability as a parallel to reliability in quantitative research relies upon notions of auditing raw data. However, as Bryman (2004:275) notes, 'auditing has not become a popular approach to enhancing the dependability of qualitative research'. Nevertheless, through the certification of the supervision process of this study together with related publications, dependability may be validated. Finally, confirmability is concerned with ensuring that, while 'recognising that complete objectivity is impossible in social research, the researcher can be shown to have acted in good faith' (Bryman, 2004:276). In short, the researcher has not overtly or manifestly allowed personal values or theoretical inclinations to sway the conduct of the research and the findings derived from it.

Considering both the research design and the evocative nature of the research subject, ethical considerations were a key feature of this study. The empirical design was submitted to the University of Central Lancashire's *Research Ethics Committee* within the Faculty of Management in June 2008. Whilst the method of covert participant observations was initially queried, mainly around the notion of informed consent, the research was granted approval. This was on the basis that participants would not be harmed, that their privacy would not be invaded – as the research was conducted in an open/public setting, and obvious deception was not involved. Generally, however, the researcher abided by the *BSA Statement of Ethical Practice* which advocates researchers need 'to anticipate, and to guard against, consequences for research participants which can be predicted to be harmful [and] to consider carefully the possibility that the research experience may be a disturbing one'. This latter point became a guiding principle in the ethical conduct of this study, which involved both a great deal of candour, respect, and sensitivity.

6.6   Chapter Six Summary

The next chapter begins the task of analysing and interpreting empirical findings that resulted from the methods outlined. Firstly, however, Table 10 summarises the research methodology.

Research Philosophy	Inductive / Phenomenological
Research Approach	Grounded Theory Principles
Research Strategy	Qualitative
Research Epistemology	Constructivism
Research Ontology	Interpretive / Ontological Relativism
Research Design	Multi-Method Case Study
Research Methods	*Integrative Methods*: *Stage One – Ethnographic Research* - Covert Participant Observations - Semi-Structured Interviews (Purposeful Sampling) - (Focus Group) - (Diary Account) *Stage Two – Survey Research* - On-site Questionnaires (Convenience Sampling) - Online Questionnaires (Purposeful & Snowballing Sampling)
Research Analysis	*Stage One* – Narrative Analysis *Stage Two* – Electronic Interpretation & Narrative Analysis

Table 10: Research Methodology Summary

Chapter Seven

Analysis: Ethnographic Research

The Dungeon Visitor Attractions
(York & London, UK)

Body Worlds Exhibitions
(London, UK)

Tribute WTC Visitor Centre, Ground Zero
(New York, USA)

Auschwitz- Birkenau State Museum & Memorial
(Oświęcim, Poland)

7.0   Empirical Illustrations: an introduction to the case studies

The etymological lineage of the term 'empirical' can be traced back to the Greek word *εμπειρισμός*, the Latin translation of which is *experientia*, from which we derive the word *experience*. Thus, the thesis is now concerned with the construction of potential meanings from *dark tourism experiences*. This chapter reveals the intricate relationships between the thanatological condition of society and contemporary touristic (re)presentations of death, dying and the dead. Moreover, it empirically illustrates these potential relationships within the confines of four interrelated, but distinct case studies. In short, the thesis presents data from primary sources and builds a thanatological narrative around the following contexts:

- *Case Study One* – The Dungeon Visitor Attractions (located in York and London);
- *Case Study Two* – Body Worlds Exhibition (held at the O2 Arena, London);
- *Case Study Three* – Tribute WTC Visitor Centre at Ground Zero (in Lower Manhattan, New York);
- *Case Study Four* – Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial & Museum (located in Oświęcim, Poland).

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the case studies, including a general background and context, and to outline the ethnographies. The chapter concludes by formulating a mapping process, which charts and amalgamates emergent themes and concepts. The composition of this chapter and its relationship with the remainder of the thesis is illustrated in Figure 10.

This thesis adopts a phenomenological philosophy and inductive approach, which in pragmatic terms means the study's observational research occurs in a 'naturalistic and less manipulated and controlled environment with the data recorded and analysed using more open-ended and less formal techniques' (Brotherton, 2008: 126). Thus, closely associated with the term 'ethnography', the research presented in this chapter is concerned with naturalistic enquiry that has the purpose of being able to depict and comprehend a particular social entity from the perspective of its inhabitants. In other words, the research(er) within a variety of case study environments attempts to develop an empathy with participants, and to view the dark tourism environment

through their eyes rather than trying to impose interpretations of outsiders on them. Consequently, Brotherton (2008: 127) suggests an 'ethnographic approach contends that it is only possible to understand the reality of a situation by looking at the ways the participants construct and give meaning to that reality for themselves'. It is to each case study that the thesis now turns.

Theoretical Analysis
Empirical Analysis

Data Analysis
Interpretive Narrative(s)

Mapping Process

Case Study (Chapter 7)	**Ethnography** (Chapter 7)	**Survey** (Chapter 8)
Introduction & Background	(Covert) Participant Observations	On-site Survey Analysis
	Interview Results	Online Survey Analysis

Discussions & Conclusions
(Chapters 8 & 9)

THESIS
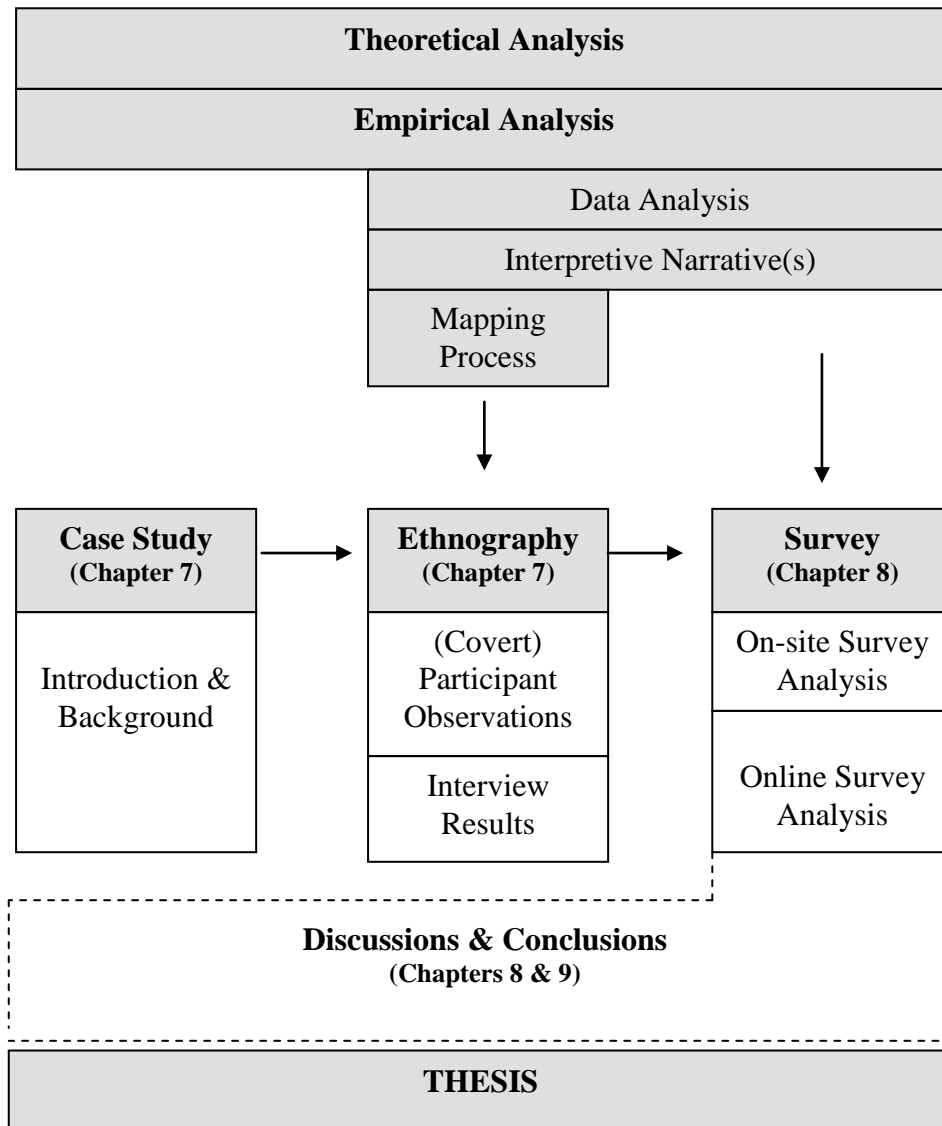
Figure 10: Structure of empirical analysis and its relationship with the study

7.1 The Dungeon Visitor Attractions - 'Dark vs. Light'

Stone (2009c) has already commenced the task of aligning dark tourism consumption with broader thanatological meaning. Indeed, he outlined an exploratory empirical study of what he termed a 'lighter side' of dark tourism, and its potential role in the psychosocial life-world of consumers. More specifically, within the context of the Dungeon Visitor Attraction in York, England he identified three substantive themes that emerged as a result of consuming commercialised representations of death and suffering. These themes revolved around *consumer expectations and performative experiences, moral dimensions and psychosocial connections*, and *mortality and relevancy to life-worlds*. Thus, the purpose of this section is to augment these initial findings and reveal subsequent empirical work that essentially focuses upon thanatological aspects of the Dungeon attraction experience and its consumption.

As discussed throughout this thesis, much of the dark tourism literature has, to date, focused upon sites that offer a representation of death and disaster that, in turn, may have had a profound moral bearing upon both individual and collective consciousness. Consequently, dark tourism that offers a greater perceived sense of 'darkness' has been increasingly scrutinized within the literature. More specifically, sites which generate moral discourse (and panic), possess greater political and commemorative dimensions, and are perceived as being historically selective in their representation, dominate the research literature. That said, however, official tourism marketing campaigns are progressively exploiting the commercial aspects of tragic history. Indeed, a recent online poll commissioned by the Czech Tourist Board sought to discover, and thus promote, the 'top ten *darkest* places of interest' within the Czech Republic (emphasis added - Šindeláøová, 2008). It is suggested, therefore, that those visitor sites which fall towards the 'darker' periphery of the Dark Tourism Spectrum model, a typology which locates dark tourism within a conceptual 'darkest-lightest' framework as discussed earlier, have received most attention in terms of critical analysis and commentary (Stone, 2006). For instance, specific manifestations of *darkest* dark tourism, such as the (re)packaging of genocide for tourist consumption, have been investigated by Simic (2008) who provides a feminist narrative of the advent of 'genocide tourism' in Bosnia and Herzegovina (also see Beech, 2009). Meanwhile, Cole (1999) discusses the historical perils of selling the Holocaust (also Mintz, 2001; Weissman, 2004), whilst Keil (2005) examines Holocaust sites and the

crossing of boundaries between conceptual domains of pilgrimage, commemoration and pleasure seeking (also Staines, 2002). Similarly, those *darker* sites which revolve around tragic accidents or intentional killing and which subsequently provoke dialogue with regard to commemorative politics and aesthetics, or private grieving in public place, have also received a significant amount of attention. For example, the death of Princess Diana in 1997, an event which appeared to inaugurate now familiar acts of private mourning in public spaces (see Walter, 2007), generated discourse which centred on 'dark shrines' (after Stone, 2006). Moreover, Merrin (1999) highlighted media involvement in both creating and perpetuating dark perceptions of temporary memorial shrines for contemporary consumption. Likewise, as revealed later in this chapter, memorial sites such as Ground Zero, the site of mass murder and carnage, and the commodification of tragedy post 9/11 most notably for political advantage and the management of collective memory, has been well documented (Bubriski, 2002; Heller, 2005; Simpson, 2006). Thus, whilst *'darkest/darker'* tourism appears to have received an increasing amount of academic attention, the *lighter* forms of dark tourism – that is, those commercial visitor sites and attractions which recreate and commodify death, suffering and the macabre, and which are entertainment-centric – have received limited attention within the (dark) tourism literature. Therefore, the purpose of this section is to outline a case study of a *lighter* form of dark tourism, namely The Dungeon visitor attractions which operate in the UK and Europe. In so doing, the thesis not only addresses a significant gap in the literature in terms of lighter dark tourism, but also places dark tourism entertainment within a framework of thanatology and psychosocial relevance to an individual's own life-world.

Stone (2006), in his classification of dark tourism, set the parameters for sites and attractions that offer a marketable reconstruction of death, suffering or the macabre. In particular, his conceptual taxonomy suggests that 'lighter' shades of dark tourism do indeed exist, and are dependent upon defining 'dark product features'. These revolve around the perceived intensity of politicization and commemoration, as well as temporal and spatial aspects of the 'death/disaster' site. In short, lighter forms of dark tourism are those commercial visitor attractions which trade on (re)created and (re)presented death and suffering, and are subsequently referred to as 'Dark Fun Factories' (Stone, 2006). Specifically:

> A Dark Fun Factory alludes to those visitor sites, attractions and tours which predominately have an entertainment focus and commercial ethic, and which present real or fictional death and macabre events. Indeed, these types of products possess a high degree of tourism infrastructure, are purposeful and are in essence 'fun-centric'' (Stone, 2006: 152).

The lighter side of dark tourism and so-called Dark Fun Factories that operate within this micro-niche (Novelli, 2005) have been scrutinised under various guises. For example, Inglis and Holmes (2003) consider the commodification of the supernatural and its role in constructing touristic landscapes. In particular, they observe the recreation of ghosts and other paranormal entities within a Scottish context and, specifically, they reveal shifting relationships between ghosts/haunted spaces and the development of 'dark fun factory' mechanisms to stimulate the wider tourism industry. They go on to highlight the rise of 'Ghost Walk' tours in Edinburgh, where history and the supernatural meet and where 'the threat of the phantom has been turned into a promise, and the fear of the spectral has been transformed into *fun*' (Inglis and Holmes, 2003: 57 – original emphasis; also see Gentry, 2007; Scotland Now, 2006; Mercat Tours, 2009). Similarly, Bristow and Newman (2004) explore lighter forms of dark tourism, subsequently termed by these authors as 'fright tourism'. They suggest, albeit rather simplistically, how the ostensible notion of fright tourism 'is a natural extension of risk recreation' (2004:220). They go on to compare both the commercialization of the Witch Trials of 1692 in Salem, Massachusetts, with the allegorical fictional incarnation of Count Dracula of Transylvania, Romania, and their respective economic and developmental roles within the mainstream tourism sector.

Examples of Edinburgh's Ghost Walk tours, the Salem Witches attractions and Dracula tourism are specific to geographical locations and may possess inherent cultural identity issues for those locations and populations (Light, 2007). More generally, however, *lighter dark tourism* occurs when narratives of fear and the taboo is extracted and packaged up as fun, amusement and entertainment and, ultimately, exploited for mercantile advantage. Consequently, the conception of fear within tourism promotional strategy, whereby notions of the sinister and the macabre are utilised to entice visitors, is an increasingly integral component of (dark) tourism marketing. Indeed, Neill (2001: 817) in his reflections on employing fear in the

promotional strategies of three urban centres, namely Belfast, Detroit and Berlin, suggests that 'fear is an inescapable dimension of the modern urban experience'. In short, excitement and a promise of adventure is offered to visitors to tourism destinations, in addition to disorientation and trepidation but also the possibility of discovering novelty. It is to these factors of excitement, novelty and trepidation that this section now turns within the context of a specific Dark Fun Factory, namely The Dungeon visitor attractions. Firstly, however, a brief outline of The Dungeon attraction establishes the context for subsequent discussion of the research.

7.1.1   A Dark Fun Factory: The Dungeon Visitor Attraction Context

The Dungeon visitor attractions are commercial organisations that operate within the mainstream tourist attraction sector, and are part of the Merlin Entertainments Group based in England, the second largest visitor attraction operator in the world (after Disney). Merlin Entertainments has fifty-eight visitor attractions in twelve countries across fourteen brands; served almost thirty-three million customers in 2007; employs up to thirteen thousand staff in peak season; and manages iconic UK leisure brands including The London Eye, Sealife Centres, Madame Tussauds, Warwick Castle, Legoland, and the Alton Towers Resort (Merlin Entertainments, 2009b). The Dungeon visitor attractions are located in London, York, Edinburgh, Amsterdam and Hamburg, where 'each Dungeon offers a horror fest linked to their location – highlighting the local history's horrible bits' (Merlin Entertainments, 2009c; also Tables 11 & 12). Indeed, as part of the Dungeons' marketing literature, consumers are forewarned in the visitor booklet, entitled *'It's a Bloody Guide'*, of the trepidations that form part of the experience:

> You are about to embark upon a journey that will take you through some of the darkest, bloodiest and most frightening times in history! On your journey you will witness some of history's most notorious and dangerous serial killers at work. You will hear the screams of the tormented, tortured souls, as unspeakable cruelty is committed. Smell the foul stench of death all around you, as plague-ravaged bodies are left in the street to rot and fester. Feel your way into the darkness as you try to escape the twists and turns of the underground labyrinth. Taste the fear, feel your hear pounding and your adrenaline pumping as you venture into your final journey on one of our terrifying rides… All this and more awaits you as you enter the Dungeons… will you escape? (The Dungeons, 2008).

Name of Exhibit, Show or Ride	Marketing Description
Boat Ride to Hell	Are you afraid of the dark? Are you petrified of drowning? Do you hate the feeling of falling backwards? Face your fears with the Traitor, Boat Ride to Hell at The London Dungeon!
Extremis: Drop Ride to Doom	You have been tried and sentenced, now you must accept your fate and let the hangman guide you to the end. A final rush of adrenaline as you plummet into the dark depths to embrace your doom!
Great Fire of London	The Great Fire of London rampaged through the city of London turning everything in its wake to cinders. Travel back to 1666 and experience the burning reality of the fire that left 200, 000 people destitute.
Jack the Ripper	The 1880's were a dangerous time for women to walk alone in London. A prolific killer frequented the dark alleys and quiet streets, preying on London's prostitutes.
Labyrinth of the Lost	One way in....but is there a way out? Experience the Labyrinth of the Lost at the London Dungeon.
Sweeney Todd	In need of a hair cut? Like it or not you're going to have one....Sweeney Todd style and there's always a pie if you're feeling hungry!
The Great Plague	1665, London is riddled with disease, thousands are dying in agony. Disgusting, gruesome boils, cries of panic and pain and shouts of "bring out the dead" fill the air.

Table 11: Types of Exhibits, Shows and Rides at *The London Dungeon* visitor attraction with marketing descriptions (Source: The Dungeons, 2008)

Name of Exhibit, Show or Ride	Marketing Description
Dick Turpin	Discover the true story behind the world's most famous highwayman, Dick Turpin, at The York Dungeon. Find out why the infamy of this daring criminal has lasted almost 300 years.
Ghosts of York	Afraid of Ghosts? You will be when you enter the Ghosts of York experience. A sense of malice and danger builds in the darkness around you before a pale, translucent figure suddenly appears!
Yorvik	The Vikings had in their ranks warriors known as Bezerkers, the most crazed and feared fighters whose frenzied nature in battle was thought to be drug-induced. Learn the terrifying story of the Vikings at The York Dungeon.
Guy Fawkes	Remember, remember the 5th of November; gunpowder, treason and plot! Follow the explosive story of Guy Fawkes, from the traitorous plotting of his accomplices to destroy king and parliament through to the relentless torture after his capture.
Implements of Torture	A mischievous torturer will put the fun back into pain! Stretching your imagination with some back-breaking interactive torture treatments! You may just laugh till your head falls off!
Judgement of Sinners	This 17th century judge knows exactly what you've been up to, the court isn't impressed and the punishments will be harsh! You could be left to languish in the rat infested Dungeon or be given a gruesomely fun task to perform...
Labyrinth of the Lost Roman Legion	Enter the Labyrinth of the Lost at your peril! Buried beneath York Minster, discover the ancient fortress of Roman York and Emperor Constantine.
The Black Death	The York Dungeon is host for the return of the most devastating and horrifying disease Europe has ever seen. The plague wiped out over 24 million people, almost half Europe's population at the time!!

Table 12: Types of Exhibits, Shows and Rides at *The York Dungeon* visitor attraction with marketing descriptions (Source: The Dungeons, 2008)

The Dungeon product concept is built upon instilling a sense of fear, trepidation, novelty and excitement into the customer experience. Revolving around the 'gruesome past', The Dungeons combine live actors, shows, rides and special effects to bring life to the dead as visitors move from exhibit to exhibit through well-designed rooms, each displaying a specific period of 'horrific history', whilst, at the end of the tour, they exit into a customary gift store. Subjects that may once have been

considered taboo within a museology/attraction environment, such as torture, execution, witchcraft or death, are now packaged up in The Dungeons through an amalgamation of kitsch artistic commodity and playful mirth (see Plates 9 – 12). Nevertheless, a fundamental feature of The Dungeon concept is the ability to tap into visitor emotions (see Best, 2007), with the sense of shock, horror and revulsion and to create a *safe* congregant space where *unsafe* ideas of the taboo may be inspected close up through a morbid gaze (after Urry, 2002; also see Cameron, 2003; Gurian, 2006). Indeed, in The Dungeons' own visitor survey, customers are invited to judge personal 'terror levels' at the end of their visit, rating their overall 'scare factor' on a scale from being *terrified* to *slightly nervous* to *not being scared at all* (The Dungeons, 2009). These issues of terror and perceptions of death as customers consume The Dungeon experience is now explored in the context of two specific attractions, namely, The York Dungeon and The London Dungeon.

Plate 9: Dungeon exhibit illustrating torture by bleeding (Source: The Dungeons, 2008)

Plate 10: Dungeon exhibit showing a medieval torture method whereby a caged rat is placed on a prisoner's abdomen and hot coal is placed on top of the cage; the only way for the rat to escape the hot coal is to knar through the victim's stomach (Source: The Dungeons, 2008)

Plate 11: Visitor waiting to be impaled as 'part of the horror show' by real life female actor at

The London Dungeon (Source: The Dungeons, 2008)
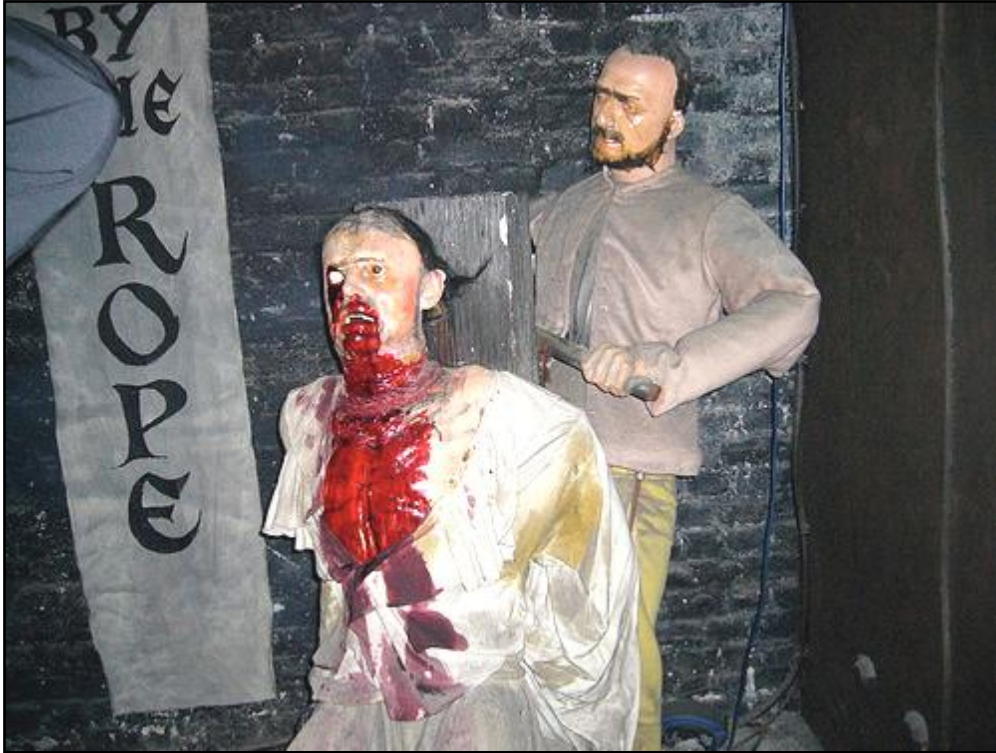
Plate 12: Torture method exhibit at the Dungeon Visitor Attractions (Source: The Dungeons, 2008)

The York Dungeon and its more famous sister attraction, The London Dungeon, are touristic examples of how death, suffering and the macabre have been packaged up for contemporary consumption. Whilst both sites share similar attributes in terms of their overall business model, each attraction is embedded within its locality as the product design seeks to maximize its locational (dark) history. Thus, it is perhaps worth highlighting, briefly, the context in which these two visitor attractions operate.

York is a walled city located in northern England and is a major tourist destination. The city, with its rich history spanning almost 2,000 years, originated in Roman times under the name of *Eboracum* and became associated with influential historical figures such as Constantine the Great. In 866, the Vikings captured the city and renamed it Jórvík. In later years, York became a centre for Christianity and, in particular, for the group of churches which comprise the Anglican Communion. The gothic York Minister, one of the largest cathedrals in Europe and itself a major tourist attraction, is the seat of the Archbishop of York, the second-highest office in the Church of England. Thus, York remains ecclesiastically important, representing one of the two provinces of the Church of England (the other being Canterbury in the south-east of

the country). The York Dungeon (Plate 13) is situated in a converted warehouse-style building close to the River Ouse in the city of York, and is an approximately ten-minute walk from the religiously emblematic York Minister. It is here where the juxtaposition of religion and the commercialization of the supernatural and malevolence are most prominent. Whilst the York Minister trades on its awe-inspiring architecture and the promise of redemption and salvation through religious and moral conduct, the York Dungeon trades on its technology and creativity to represent pain, malice and immorality for contemporary consumption. To illustrate this disjuncture, and by way of provocation, Webster (2006: 5), after her visit to a Dungeon attraction, states:

> …it is not the study or reenactment of the gruesome histories that I object to, it is the glorification of evil. If we say we're followers of Christ, why do we choose to amuse ourselves with Satan's triumphs?'

Plate 13: Visitors queuing outside The York Dungeon, York, UK.

Whilst the York Dungeon operates within a localised context of religious importance and prominence, the London Dungeon, the flagship and original of the Dungeon attractions, operates within a much more cosmopolitan arena. Its website welcomes potential visitors with the salutation: 'Transport yourself back to the darkest moments in the capital's history within the deep depths of the London Dungeon' (London

Dungeon, 2009). Opened in 1976 as a museum of 'horrible history', the London Dungeon evolved into an actor-led interactive visitor experience. Located in Tooley Street, Southwark, near to London Bridge railway station, the attraction is built into railway arches with trains running over the top of the actual visitor attraction (Plate 14). Consequently, the rumble of trains overhead can be heard inside the London Dungeon and, arguably, unintentionally adds to the heighten sense of macabre atmosphere.

Plate 14: The London Dungeon, London, UK. (Source: Powerlab, 2010)

Whilst the two Dungeon attractions may be distinct in terms of geographical location, they are very similar in terms of representing macabre subjects for contemporary consumption. Thus, for this reason, both the York and London Dungeon are utilised as interchangeable examples of 'lighter dark tourism, and it to the ethnographic research of the Dungeons that the subsequent section now turns.

7.2   The Dungeon Visitor Attractions Ethnography – 'Recreating Death'

In relation to the research aim, a number of significant issues emerged from the ethnographic fieldwork at the (York and London) Dungeon visitor attractions. Consequently, the ethnographic data provided discernible data clusters about the relationship of death to its touristic representation within contemporary society. These have been translated into broad subject themes with a corresponding narrative. Table 13 outlines the ethnographic subject themes for the Dungeon visitor attractions.

	Data Theme Title
The Dungeon Visitor Attraction	1. Consumer Expectations vs. Consumer Experiences
	2. Death Designs
	3. Perpetuation of Death Narratives
	4. Ethical Dimensions and Psychosocial Connections
	5. Mortality and Relevancy to Life-Worlds

Table 13: The Dungeon Visitor Attraction – Ethnographic Data Themes

7.2.1   *Consumer Expectations vs. Consumer Experiences*

The ethnographic data intimated an evident disjunction between consumers' *expectations* prior to the visit and their actual *experience* of the Dungeon attraction. For example, one female visitor remarked:

> Having not read anything about the tour we assumed that we were visiting a museum… we expected a theatrical set up and for the exhibits to be of a gory nature, but we also anticipated an educative/informative visit – historically relevant to York and relating to crime and punishment… Had we known what we were going to, we would have definitely given it a miss…We were not expecting what we got! The York Dungeon is entertainment and uses York's history to scare visitors' silly (DA Interviewee 1: Interviews, 2008a).

The issue of visitors not fully realising or appreciating what the Dungeon product/experience entailed was also confirmed by Dungeon staff who suggested 'a lot of customers come in thinking it is a museum, and soon discover it is not' (DA Interviewee 2: Interviews, 2008b). However, that said, a male interviewee at the London Dungeon who had visited the attraction at a time when the tourist site was initially a museum of 'horrible history', as noted earlier, commented upon the change of emphasis:

I visited some 20 years ago and recall it being interesting with historical facts and exhibitions, showing the visitor the hardships of old London. I visited again today for that reason, thinking it would be the same. But it has changed drastically and is now awful and embarrassing. There is no historical emphasis; it's like a panto performed by a bunch of trainee actors who are trying to be funny and are not witty or entertaining at all. If people like Pop Idol, then they will like this…. I wish the London Dungeon would revert back to its former historically interesting self (DA Interviewee 3: Interviews, 2009a).

The reference to Pop Idol, a television programme depicting the rise (and fall) of pop music hopefuls, has often been criticised for 'dumbing down' contemporary television output. It is apparent from the interview response that a perception exists between the seemingly superficial Pop Idol television show and kitsch representations of (dark) history. In turn, the attraction is viewed, perhaps, as trivial and inconsequential. Consequently, a female interviewee, who had also visited in the London Dungeon attraction in the 1980's said:

I've visited the Dungeon before its remodel, and had always enjoyed myself. However, today, I've found this once interesting, witty, and chilling torture museum to have become a dumbed down theme park museum of sorts. There are no more exhibits about different tortures (DA Interviewee 4: Interviews, 2009a).

A male interviewee was more forthright in his response when asked about his (historical) experience:

It's pretty much a load of bollocks really, isn't it? The truth is, if you have any interest in the historical facts they [the Dungeon] mention, you'd probably already know most of what they tell you, and yawn your way through it. Maybe I've just watched too many video nasties to stay awake for this. I just don't think it was worth paying for, and I personally would have been much more content with what some people would undoubtedly consider a more boring approach – more talk, less cheap tacky attempts to thrill or whatever. I guess I'm just more at home walking around actual historical sites hearing calm, relaxed people talking seriously about what went down in the place (DA Interviewee 5: Interviews, 2009a).

Accurate and appropriate portrayals of tragic and macabre periods of history the attraction seeks to represent, to some at least, are important in visitors' prior expectations. Indeed, during an observation at the London Dungeon, a female customer was overheard as saying, 'it [the experience] is moving too quickly and there is barely anything to read on the walls' (Obs, 2009a). She appears to make clear her disdain and disappointment based upon prior expectations of the live-actor

element, in addition to 'packs' of customers who are guided, at times very quickly, from one exhibit to another. An interviewee later suggested:

> I was expecting a kind of theme park where you can choose which rides and exhibits to go… however, it turns out that the Dungeon is just one big attraction that goes through in a linear fashion' (DA Respondent 6: Interviews, 2009a).

Another interviewee who playfully suggests 'the whole experience was shuffle, shuffle, wait… overacting, shrieking, shuffle, shuffle, wait...' (DA Interviewee 7: Interviews, 2009a), perhaps indicates the 'linear' design of the attraction, the acting skills of the staff, as well as the lack of time and space to actually 'take in' or contemplate the historically death-related representations on offer. The interviewee also notes this lack of time or space to contemplate or even 'learn' about macabre historical events. She states:

> The entrance was pitch black which nearly put me off right from the start and then you are herded in and shoved at great speed from one sketch to another without any time to look or ask questions… there were no exhibits to look at and no information to read on your way. The small amount there is to read is unreadable because it's so dark' (DA Interviewee 7: Interviews, 2009a).

The seemingly traditional 'museum' expectations of visitors, in terms of seeking to contemplate or understand (tragic) history, appear to be at odds with actual experiences. As a male interviewee noted:

> You don't really learn a thing from a historical point of view which was disappointing not only for us but I should imagine for those who have perhaps travelled from other countries. London has so much history…. I thought it would be an interesting and scary tour of what it would have been like back in the day. Instead, we were herded through room to room in a massive group and shown various scenarios acted out by people relating to deaths and murders by Jack the Ripper and Sweeny Todd (DA Interviewee 8: Interviews, 2009a).

Indeed, the exhibit's interactiveness, especially by the live actors, ensures the distinction between traditional museology and a tourist attraction is apparent early in the tour. For instance, one of the first exhibits/shows at the York Dungeon is an actor portraying a barber surgeon: a medical practitioner common throughout Europe up until the early 19th century. With exaggerated comical gestures and an embellished bloodied costume and make-up, the actor attempts to illustrate the perils of experimental anatomy in days-gone-by (Obs, 2008). With a plastic cadaver on his 'operating table', the actor humorously wrenches rubber intestines and a synthetic heart from his silent prop, as the visitor, now part of a shocked if not enthralled

audience, gazes upon this morbid show. In an attempt to add relevance to the present-day, the actor holds up a jar of leeches, used extensively in pre-modern clinical bloodletting, and delights in informing the audience that leeches are making resurgence within 21st century medicinal practice. The final act involves the actor choosing someone from the audience to conduct an 'experiment'. With nervous laughter, a chosen visitor is taken behind a partition curtain and, with the lights dimmed to create a silhouette, the audience watches on as the visitor/victim sits upon a stool and the actor surgeon holds a hammer above his head. As the hammer falls (with sound effects) and the lights go out, seemingly bludgeoning the 'victim' to death, the rest of the audience gasp and are told to leave the room and to continue their tour. Of course, the visitor who volunteered to be part of the experiment soon rejoins the tour party, and his Dungeon experience continues (Obs, 2008).

Whilst consumer expectations of the actual Dungeon product may be fragmented, perhaps due to a marketing mismatch, there was almost universal agreement from the focus group that the Dungeon concept was fun, comical and indeed clever, but yet artificial and kitsch and built around fear and fantasy (Focus Group, 2008). In particular, one focus group respondent suggested 'the Dungeon did not have any soul; it was fake and empty' (Respondent 1: Focus Group, 2008).

This is despite the claim from Merlin Entertainments that 'as you delve into the darkest chapters of our grim and bloody past, recreated in its dreadful detail, remember: everything you experience *really happened'* (emphasis added - Merlin Entertainments, 2009a). With indications of historical ambiguity in the Dungeon's representations of the past, one respondent suggested her initial perceptions to the Dungeon 'brand' was similar to that of 'Dungeon and Dragons', a fantasy adventure role-playing game first devised in the 1970s and subsequently the subject of television programmes and film animations. The respondent went on to note that, whilst she associated dragons as *unreal*, she also associated the Dungeon (visitor attraction) in a similar vein (Focus Group, 2008). Similarly, other respondents suggested the 'Dungeon' name was misleading as it implied a premise of crime and punishment, yet the actual attraction staged themes that went beyond penal codes and justice and included exhibits/shows depicting Hell, disease, anatomy, the supernatural, and death (Respondents 2, 5 & 8: Focus Group, 2008). Another respondent, who again was

confused, initially, about what to expect of the Dungeon attraction stated, 'essentially you have to pay your money to find out what is at the Dungeon' (Respondent 3: Focus Group, 2008). Of course, what visitors inevitably discover is that death is an intrinsic feature of the product design.

7.2.2   *Death Designs*

Death Designs as a perceptible theme from the ethnographic data refers to how the Dungeon product concept has been purposefully designed to instil a heightened sense of morbidity into the consumer experience. Whilst this may appear to be unsurprising, especially considering the rather morose marketing and promotional style of the Dungeons, as highlighted earlier, it does bring to the fore, perhaps, the issue of how a particular space is created to intensify notions of mortality. Though crucially, the visitor is allowed to symbolically 'live through and escape death'. Paradoxically, however, whilst death is inherent within the product design, as revealed shortly, because the space has been (socially) sanctioned as an entertainment place, confirmed by the animated screams and laughter of fellow customers, perceptions of death are negated and diluted, and made palatable by humour and mocking. A female interviewee (in her late twenties / early thirties) noted the communitas and childhood regression of her experience:

> You don't expect laughter from such a scary attraction, although I think laughter is a good way to deal with being frightened… my friends and I were running around screaming like children and we are not teenagers. We got [referring to her friends] totally wrapped up in the experience – I think the darkness helps – and you can forget to act like a grown-up for a while (DA Interviewee 9: Interviews, 2009a).

The 'death design' of the Dungeon product concept is readily apparent from first entering the site. Indeed, covert participant observations carried out at the London Dungeon were on two consecutive warm and sunny days, and upon entering the attraction the visitor is immediately greeted by a very dark and cold (air conditioned) space (Obs, 2009a). The contrast with the bright sunlight outside ensures a certain amount of disorientation, as customers literally feel their way into the attraction (and sometimes tripping over) as their vision adjusts to the gloomy light. One young female interviewee recounts her experience at the entrance and the impact upon her elderly relative who had accompanied her:

I've visited today with my 69 year-old Grandpa. When we got here, we were surprised because we thought there would be a ticket office in a lightened room at the entrance, but instead we had to walk through into another room that was pitch-black. I could just about make out a walkway around a part in the middle of the room that was chained off, so I started to walk around towards what looked like where we could buy our tickets, following the chain with difficulty. My old Grandpa, however, couldn't see anything because his eyes hadn't adjusted to the darkness after being in the bright sunlight. He made out some figures up ahead, and headed towards them – and tripped over the low chain and fell headfirst into the rocks and earth and gravestones behind the barrier. He was completely upside down and his legs were flailing – I was so shocked!! [original emphasis of tone]… I managed to pull him back up and back into the light outside, which is when we saw all the blood and black dirt all over his hands and legs – he could have died (DA Interviewee 10: Interviews, 2009a).

Combined with this sensory assault and, as in the example above, an unfortunate and unintentional physical 'ambush', the visitor is received with piped music of religious (Gregorian) chanting, creating an almost hypnotic atmosphere punctuated only by screams and bouts of laugher from customers who are already inside the attraction. Whilst chanting forms part of many religious rituals, diverse spiritual traditions consider the chant as a route to spiritual development. However, within this (dark tourism) environment at least, the chant allows individuals to make a psychosocial connection between religion and its intrinsic rituals surrounding death. By way of illustration, an American male customer who appeared in his mid-thirties, whilst waiting in the queue to pay admission to the attraction, made a causal comment to his female partner that the [en]chanting music always reminded him of monasteries, funerals and someone dying. He then jokingly quipped that he would like the music played at his own funeral (Obs, 2009a). Additionally, a female interviewee from New Zealand commented that the Dungeon atmosphere reminded her of an experience at the 'Corn Evil' attraction near Auckland, a horror visitor attraction set within a maize field, which is populated by actors dressed as ghouls, ghosts and zombies. She states:

We had to run for our lives that night; it was terrifying. I really thought I was going to die at one point when I tripped over in the field and this zombie bloke was chasing me… I know it was silly and all make-believe, but when I was in there with my boyfriend it was really horrible… I really wanted to leave, but my boyfriend kept laughing [at me] (DA Interviewee 9: Interviews, 2009a).

Here she makes a cognitive connection between the Dungeons with a previous experience that clearly had an unsettling influence upon her. Indeed, her recall of the Corn Evil experience and her perceptions of the Dungeon design create a reminder of

fear and demise. Design of death is further enhanced within the actual exhibit representations and actor portrayals. For instance, once inside the London Dungeon attraction, the first exhibit/show illustrates The Great (bubonic) Plague (later known as the Black Death), a disease which blighted Europe in the Middle Ages. As visitors walk through a mock-up medieval street, a rather unrealistic and kitsch looking mannequin dummy, dressed in rags with boils, sores on its face and forearms, lurches forward, and seemingly sneezes. A spray of fine water mist projects towards visitors from the mannequin, as the actor-guide shouts to customers to avoid the sneeze and therefore 'catching the Plague and your death' (Obs, 2009a). Of course, fleas spread bubonic plague, rather than bodily fluids such as those found in sneezing. Nevertheless, the (inaccurate) design of the product ensures that visitors actively avoid been 'touched by the sneeze', thereby symbolically, perhaps, avoiding catching their 'own death'.

This interactiveness of the 'death design' is also in evidence within other exhibits/shows at the London Dungeon. For example, the Sweeny Todd show, where visitors are told to sit in their own 'barber chair', are taken through an audio chronicle of the 'Demon Barber of Fleet Street', where Todd murdered male victims under the guise of offering them a shave. Individual barber chairs possessing audio speakers at ear level allow visitors to perceive Sweeny Todd to be situated behind them. Subsequently, with the story of Todd reaching the point where he is actually about to commit murder, a small soft protrusion is projected from the chair into the side of the visitors' neck, simulating an actual knife or other object upon the skin (Obs, 2009a). With a climax of light and audio effects, in addition to the 'knife replication', the barber chair tips forward at forty-five degrees, throwing visitors forward and emblematically casting 'your corpse' into the cellar below (Obs, 2009a). Again, it is this design of death and the explicit play upon all the senses that allows the visitor to experience, in a mischievous form at least, a pseudo *moment of mortality*. Hence, the purposeful design of death allows individuals to experience virtual-mortality, to be frightened of it, to consider it, but ultimately, to escape. Consequently, one female interviewee suggests:

> That Sweeny Todd show was the worst… it was kinda sick really, especially when that thing touched your neck and the voice of Todd behind you and the chair going forward, I really felt, just for a moment, that I was a goner. Stupid

really, I know, but it does make you think, doesn't it? (DA Interviewee 7: Interviews, 2009a).

Perhaps the unequivocal illustration of how death is designed into the visitor experience at the London Dungeon is Extremis: Drop Ride to Doom, a theme park style ride that replicates the act of hanging as a means of execution. Located at the end of the Dungeon experience, it provides a finale for visitors who at this point, for some at least, appeared weary and tired after almost ninety minutes of fatality-inspired entertainment (Obs, 2009a). The ride in which visitors are placed into individual seats and secured by an overhead locking bracket, similar to those used on fairground roller-coasters, ascends to approximately twenty-five feet. At the top is a mock courtroom complete with mannequin judges, hangman, execution scaffolding and real rope nooses. The male actor-guide in the room, in a seeming delighted tone, informs visitors that some sixty countries still use hanging today. He goes on to say that in almost every case, the neck is broken at once and death is virtually instantaneous. Similarly, the Dungeon guide book states:

> Embark upon your last journey on the brand new Extremis: Drop Ride to Doom! At the mercy of the hangman, you are at the very point of death and the end is drawing near… Taste the fear, feel the adrenaline pump and your heart shoot into your throat as you drop, screaming into the darkness below (London Dungeon, 2009).

As pseudo judges pass sentence upon visitors, the room plunges into pitch darkness and the ride very quickly drops to the ground – visitors scream and fall and the act of hanging is simulated. Again, the visitor escapes an ersatz death but leaves, perhaps, with a sense of morbid curiosity satisfied and with narratives of death firmly entrenched. Indeed, perpetuated narratives of *mortality moments* are captured for posterity as visitors are provided with a tourist photograph opportunity of them 'officially hanging'. As an interviewee noted, 'the drop ride was good fun and produces the funniest photo EVER!' (DA Interviewee 11: Interviews, 2009a – original emphasis of tone).

7.2.3   *Perpetuation of Death Narratives*

A third theme to emerge from the Dungeon ethnography was one of perpetuation of death narratives through the (repeated) reconstruction of morbid tales of killing – an illustration of Rojek's (1993) postmodern repetition of 'Black Spots' – as discussed

earlier. Specifically, at the London Dungeon attraction, the Jack the Ripper exhibit/show is a key part of the overall Dungeon visitor experience. The attraction tells the infamous Victorian murder episode not only from a perspective of what actually happened, but also a fictional account of what happened afterwards, in addition to allowing the visitor an opportunity to consider the 'true identity' of the Ripper. As visitors are led into the Jack the Ripper exhibit/show, they pass a female mannequin dressed as an apparent Victorian prostitute, lying on her back with her throat cut, her legs spread open and her dress pulled up, clearly representing a sexual attack victim. It is here where customers became quiet, their laughter fading and the atmosphere more subdued as they gazed upon this (recreated) victim of abuse (Obs, 2009a). Inside the Jack the Ripper exhibit is a large room with replicated buildings from Mitre Square, a location in London where Jack the Ripper murdered Catherine Eddowes (also known as Mary Ann Kelly) on 30th September 1888. Integral to the exhibit are photographs of the murdered female victims, such as the mortuary images of Catherine Eddowes in Plate 15, which eerily flicker against light boxes camouflaged as windows. A female actor begins to exaggerate a gory tale of 'orrible murder' by Jack the Ripper, and the horrific manner in which he killed his female victims. Consequently, it is this combination of real-life imagery of the dead with pseudo representations and kitschified depictions of the act of killing that allows death narratives of the unfortunate murdered woman to be perpetuated. One interviewee noted this mixture of real-life photographs with, what he called a tacky and funny story of Jack the Ripper. He goes on to say, 'I didn't think it was right of them [i.e. the Dungeons] to show real pictures of the dead women, but I supposed you have too to get the story of Jack across to people' (DA Interviewee 8: Interviews, 2009a).

In short, formulated touristic narratives around unsolved deaths are told and retold to entice contemporary visitors with intrigue, mystery, and ultimately, the gruesome reality of killing. Arguably, the London Dungeon representation of Jack the Ripper ensures the female victims can never be slain, ontologically at least, as their identities live on through semiotic representations, which are then consumed as contemporary entertainment.
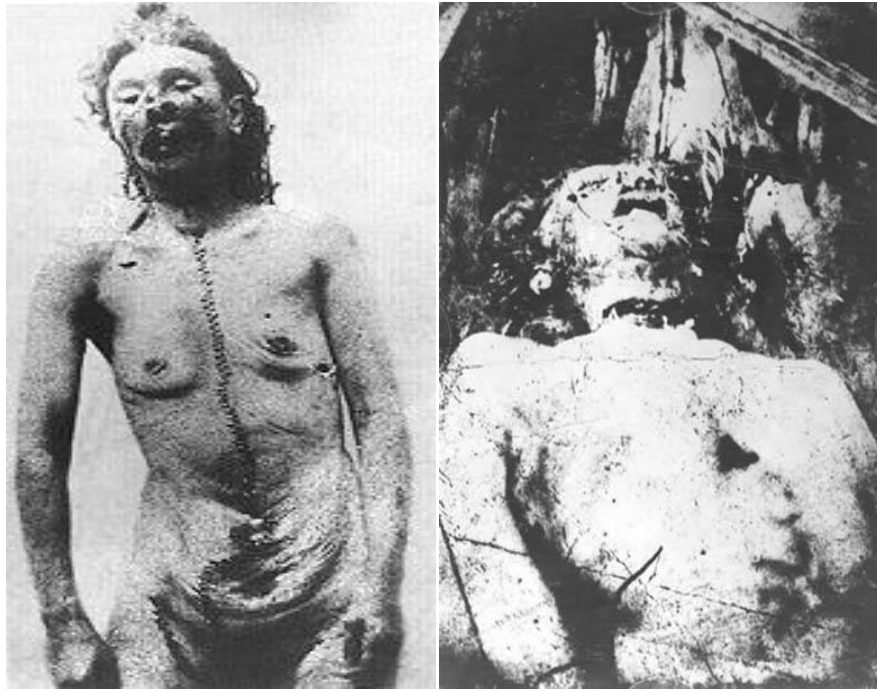
Plate 15: Mortuary photographs of Catherine Eddowes as shown at The London Dungeon

Another illustration of how death and narratives of (particular) deaths are perpetuated by touristic representations at the London Dungeon is the exhibit/show that depicts life in the east end of London immediately after the series of Ripper murders. After leaving the Mitre Square replica, visitors are guided into another room, this time made up to epitomize a public house called The Ten Bells located in the east end of London during the 1890's. Inside, a female actor is dressed as a barmaid who conveys a story of how the 'ladies of Whitechapel' are still terrified of the Ripper committing even more murders (Obs, 2009a). This tale of fictional fear meeting factual death embellished with narratives of other murders in the area, tells how Jack the Ripper who was still at large, could have committed these crimes. To aggrandize the account even further, the spectre of fear which would undoubtedly have existed in the community at the time after the murders is interwoven with the paranormal, as depictions of poltergeist activity in the public house add to the 'scare factor'. As lights flicker with ghostly movements of objects in the bar, the show climaxes with the room plunging into darkness. A male actor, dressed in a swirling black cloak and top hat, a recognisable popular cultural depiction of 'Jack', bursts into the room (and very quickly out again), lunges a knife (prop) towards a nearby visitor in a metaphorical stabbing motion. Again, it is suggested that not only has the contemporary visitor, in figurative terms at least, 'cheated and escaped' an incarnation of the murderous Jack

the Ripper, but also the narrative of death that surrounds this historical event is kept alive. Thus, death is perpetuated by (dark) touristic representations of the act of killing, ready to be 'enjoyed' and consumed by future generations.

Consequently, there is no sense of memorialisation of the murdered female victims, nor is there any evidence of acknowledgement to the prostitutes as real woman of a real community. Instead, the dead women at the London Dungeon are utilised as contemporary props to tell an old story of unsolved killing, which itself has been perpetuated by (re)presentations of real life facts embellished by popular culture myth-making. The London Dungeon as a (light) dark tourism attraction serves only to augment this perpetuation of a death narrative and, as a result, is devoid of any real sense of commemoration, which to some at least, may raise issues of ethics and moral judgements.

7.2.4   Ethical Dimensions and Psychosocial Connections

Ethical and moral dimensions of the Dungeon experience were another major theme of this ethnographic study. When questioned about their personal involvement in the Dungeon experience, many focus group respondents likened themselves to other visitors at the attraction and were non-judgmental about the ethical stance of fellow tourists. A respondent suggested, 'you can't judge someone, because you are in the same place as them – making a judgement on them is like making a judgement on yourself' (Respondent 4: Focus Group, 2008). Similarly, respondents empathised with other tourists and another respondent stated, 'I see myself as within a pack of tourists moving around. I don't look down on them, as I'm one of them' (Respondent 6: Focus Group, 2008).

Therefore, it appears, perhaps understandably, that visitors do not wish to be seen as partaking in a 'morally suspect' tourist activity and are, perhaps, altruistic in their views of the ethical codes of others. However, more fundamental is the suggestion that visitors to the Dungeon attraction are utilising the space and its contents moralistically and, consequently, making judgements about moral codes and standards within their own life-worlds. Indeed, one respondent suggested that punishment, torture methods from the past, and recreated at the Dungeon 'can be accepted more, because that was the way it was; it was part and parcel of the past'

(Respondent 7: Focus Group, 2008). However, the respondent went on to clarify that past methods of punishment 'had no political inference, unlike what happened at Auschwitz, therefore it makes it [the Dungeon] more morally acceptable' (Respondent 7: Focus Group, 2008). Here, a comparison is made with an episode of human history that still haunts contemporary imagination. Consequently, the respondent makes a *psychosocial connection* between what he gazed upon in terms of represented past torture at the Dungeon and Holocaust torture that is more recent and viewed as politically and racially motivated. In particular, the implication is that the gruesome past represented by the Dungeon is deemed as (morally) *acceptable* because that is how society was perceived to operate and, thus, considered as the norm. However, it becomes (morally) *unacceptable* when political dimensions are added and, in this case, the respondent compares 'immoral punishment' at Auschwitz with 'moral punishment' from a past penal system that is perceived as collective and thus socially sanctioned. As a result, the Dungeon attraction may act as a contemporary space to reflect and interpret moral concerns, especially by those embodied visitors/respondents engaged with the Dungeon's representation of torture, pain and suffering and, who seemingly make moral connections with recent tragic history and its (political) commemoration.

Another illustration of this emotional engagement with the Dungeon as a morally informative space is reactions to the level of (recreated) punishment meted out in relation to the crime. Certainly, within the torture chambers at the York Dungeon, some visitors flinched when they saw metal instruments designed intentionally to exact pain and death (Obs, 2008). During one observation, a female customer looked visibly sickened as an actor in the torture chamber demonstrated the 'Claw', a torture implement also known as the ungula or the 'Spanish Spider', the primary purpose of which was to inflict wounds to limbs, and in particular, used to mutilate the breasts of women (Obs, 2008). With this in mind, the focus group went on to suggest that present-day society would not accept punishment methods as represented by the Dungeon because 'we live in a better time' and 'we have been taught to accept that the law is right' (Respondent 1: Focus Group, 2008). Crucially, though, whilst focus group respondents recognized the evolution of society (for the better) and appreciated the nature of penal justice today, there were concerns that society could regress to methods of punishment as represented in the Dungeon torture chambers (Respondents

3, 5 ,7 & 8: Focus Group, 2008). Indeed, a respondent cited the allegation of torture by American military forces at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, where alleged terrorist suspects are still incarcerated, as a contemporary example of modern-day torture (Respondent 5: Focus Group, 2008; also Leung, 2005; AFX News, 2005). Again, respondents appear to make a psychosocial connection between their 'morbid gaze' at the Dungeon and an aspect of the Other, in this case alleged torture employed at Guantanamo Bay, which is deemed *relevant* to their own individual and collective life-world. In particular, respondents appear to fear the ethics of punishment methods employed in the past being resurrected to deal with modern-day crime, and thus influencing (negatively) on intrinsically held morals and standards.

7.2.5   *Mortality and Relevancy to Life-Worlds*

The issue of relevancy, especially with regard to mortality and its association to an individual's life-world was a final major theme from this ethnography. Specifically, the exhibit at York Dungeon which depicted the Black Death (as noted earlier), a plague spread by rats carrying the bacillus now identified as Yersinia pestis and which blighted much of Europe during the Middle Ages, was singled out by respondents as an event which generated most empathy. The Black Death exhibit portrays scenes of terror, loss of life, bereavement and graphic illustrations of the effects of bubonic plague on realistic life-sized mannequin models in medieval environments (Obs, 2008). Indeed, promotional material for the exhibit places the visitor within a recreated Plague environment:

> You are there, amid the horror… you could try drastic remedies – filling your house with smoke; smearing yourself with your own excrement; or even sucking the pus from the boils on the dead and dying. Fear grips you. Are you already infected? In desperation you seek out a Plague Doctor. Like some huge crow in his full-length cloak, thick goggles and a beak stuffed with spices and herbs, he is almost as terrifying as the disease itself. The wait is a nightmare. Death is everywhere. Will the Plague Doctor pronounce you the latest victim? (The Dungeons, 2008).

Focus group respondents stated they consciously thought of the actual victims of the plague, albeit briefly, and their own life position during their Dungeon experience (Respondents 2, 4 ,5 7 & 8: Focus Group, 2008). Subsequently, a respondent noted how she constructed meanings of randomness and indiscrimination of the Plague and the arbitrary manner in which the disease killed 'ordinary' people. This respondent in

particular, who was of Irish descent, linked her tourist experience of the Black Death at the Dungeon with that of the consequences of the Irish Famine of the 1840's, which she also perceived as another type of 'plague' and which, seemingly at random, affected the ordinary population. The respondent went on to suggest that, had she lived in these particular periods of history, she herself perhaps would have succumbed to a similar fate illustrated by the Dungeon (Respondent 2: Focus Group, 2008). Again, in terms of relevancy to life-worlds, the respondent made a psychosocial connection between the Dungeon exhibit and her own socio-cultural environment. Importantly, however, this respondent viewed the death of Plague victims as unfair, causing 'innocent people to die who have not done anything wrong' (Respondent 2: Focus Group, 2008), and empathized more with this exhibit as it 'de-sequesters death' and tapped into her consciousness of mortality, innocence and relevancy.

Interestingly, though, respondents suggested that, whilst the Black Death exhibit may make them consider their own mortality, especially within the context of 'ordinariness of victimhood', other displays, such as the Dick Turpin exhibit at the York Dungeon, did not. Indeed, Dick Turpin, the infamous horse-stealer and highwayman of 18th century England who has since become a 'concoction of fiction, folklore and borrowed glory' (The Dungeons, 2008), was executed at The Mount, on the Knavesmire, near York's famous racecourse. The York Dungeon, in its representation of Turpin's execution, now permits visitors to experience pseudo capital punishment, similar to the Extremis Drop Ride at the London Dungeon highlighted earlier. In a large dark room, illuminated only by a dimly lit image of Turpin's hanging scaffold and noose and by the faint yet comforting glow of mandatory fire-exit signs, instructed visitors sit in silence on pew-like benches. As an actor performs the role of Thomas Hadfield, Turpin's hangman, the 'voice' of Turpin's ghost booms out through audio speakers and the audience are subjected to Turpin's angry ranting as he famously launches himself off the scaffolding to his death. At the precise moment of execution, and with accompanying sound effects, the benches upon which the visitors are seated jolt and launch forward at forty-five degrees, symbolically allowing the visitor to experience Turpin's hanging (Obs, 2008). However, focus group respondents suggest exhibits that feature particular criminal personalities who were prosecuted for misdemeanours, were not relevant to their own life-world and, consequently, they did not empathize as much for their demise (Respondents 2, 6, &

8: Focus Group, 2008). Here, they make a distinction between innocent and ordinary people, as depicted in the Black Death exhibits, and the guilty and extraordinary 'mythical' characters such as Dick Turpin. In doing so, the implication is that levels of 'mortality contemplation' vary substantially according to visitor psychosocial perceptions of relevancy, empathy and virtuousness.

7.3   Summary of Ethnographic Research – The Dungeon Visitor Attractions

The Dungeon visitor attractions recreate death, dying and suffering as a commodity, which individuals consume as a contemporary tourist experience. Hence, a number of significant themes emerged from the ethnographic research at the attractions, represented by both the London and York Dungeons. Indeed, through a combination of covert participant observations, interviews, and a focus group, five perceptible themes were extracted from the data and subsequent interpretations were outlined with regard to each theme. These themes revolved around how death has been purposefully recreated within the spatial design of the Dungeon attractions, and how emotionally engaged visitors consume the space and construct meaning which not only focuses upon entertainment, but also upon historical interpretations of death and psychosocial connections with broader concepts of both morality and mortality.

To summarise emergent themes and to expedite the process of mapping similar themes across other case studies, Table 14 outlines a definitional statement of each ethnographic theme for the Dungeon visitor attractions. Themes are defined to succinctly capture the essence of discussions above, and are coded appropriately. The mapping process across all case study ethnographies is revealed later. In the meantime, the study now turns to the second case study of Body Worlds and The Mirror of Time exhibition.

Case Study	Theme Code	Theme Title	Theme Definition
The Dungeon Visitor	DA1	Consumer Expectations	'A disjuncture between what consumers expect and what they actually experience at the Dungeon Attractions,

Attractions (DA)		vs. Consumer Experiences	especially with regard to the (re)presentation of historical death events'.
	DA2	Death Designs	'The purposeful reconstruction of death designed to instil a sense of mortality, which visitors playfully consume (and escape)'.
	DA3	Perpetuation of Death Narratives	'Repeated representations which depict killing and, subsequently perpetuate a kitschified narrative of victims' deaths'.
	DA4	Ethical Dimensions & Psychosocial Connections	'The use of a recreated death space by emotionally engaged visitors to make ethical judgments and psychosocial connections which are deemed relevant to individual life-worlds'.
	DA5	Mortality and Relevancy to Life-Worlds	'An association of the represented death of ordinary Others with visitors' own notions of mortality'.

Table 14: Ethnographic Themes for the Dungeon Visitor Attractions: Definitional Statements and Theme Codes

7.4   The Body Worlds Exhibition - 'From Plastination to Fascination'

The Body Worlds exhibition as an example to contextualise potential thanatological relationships between death, the dead and touristic consumption has already been discussed, albeit briefly, in this thesis. Hence, the purpose of this section is to introduce the Body Worlds exhibition generally, and in particular, the Body Worlds exhibition at the O2 arena in London as an empirical case study.

With over twenty five million visitors to date, the Body Worlds exhibition (or Körperwelten in German) is the world's most popular touring attraction (Fox News, 2008). The exhibition utilises real human corpses and organs displayed in a variety of poses that depict anatomical intricacies of the human body, disease or specific causes of biological death. Using a process to preserve corpses called plastination – as discussed earlier, polymer chemistry is used to replace water in human cells with plastic material, which makes it possible to lend rigidity to soft body parts (including individual muscles and organs such as the lungs, or even single nerve tissue). Consequently, whole bodies of both humans and animals can be inherently stabilized and posed standing upright – a feature that was formerly restricted to skeletons.

Although first exhibited in Japan in 1995 at the National Science Museum in Tokyo as part of a centenary celebration for the Japanese Anatomical Society, Body Worlds' first commercial exhibition was in Mannheim, Germany, at the Museum for Technology and Labour and held during the winter of 1997/98. The initial exposition in Mannheim attracted almost 780,000 visitors and even stayed open twenty-four hours a day towards the end of its four-month viewing to accommodate consumer demand (Kritz, 2007). A combination of flouting social conventions, enthusiastic acceptance by some parts of the public, media and medical practitioners, and a vehement rejection by similar groups of people in perhaps equal measure are particular traits of this exhibition. Indeed, forceful condemnations by religious organisations and an often highly charged and emotional 'moral conversation' about the merits and rationale of displaying real human corpses has been conducted throughout the (European) media, as well as in internet chat-rooms, blogs and forums. Interestingly though, during a Body Worlds tour of Asia, including an exhibition in 2002 in Seoul, South Korea, there was apparently 'no public criticism whatsoever,

and to the contrary, the exhibition in Asia was even officially supported by science and education departments' (Whalley, 2007: 27).

The official aim of the exhibition, *'to inform visitors and to open up the opportunity particularly to medical laymen to better understand their body and its function'*, places emphasis upon health education whereby the exhibition's official marketing endorses a message of the 'naturalness of our bodies and recognition of the individuality and anatomical beauty inside' (Body Worlds, 2009). However, subsequent treatment of human corpses, which are voluntarily donated by the deceased (similar to an organ donation programme) through a scheme set up and run by the Institute for Plastination, an organisation located in Germany and created by Professor Gunther von Hagens, the inventor of the exhibits, has attracted a great deal of controversy. Much of this controversy is focused on the origins of donated cadavers, many of them allegedly of executed prisoners from China and Kyrgystan (Jacobs, 2005; Blackler, 2008), in addition to von Hagens' apparent refusal for the public to access donation documentation (Jeffries, 2002). Moreover, the technique of plastination, pioneered by von Hagens in the 1970's at the Institute for Anatomy and Cellular Biology at the University of Heidelberg to preserve corpses, has also attracted controversy. Because of the plastination technique, von Hagens has been likened to a modern-day Frankenstein or to Burke and Hare, grave robbers and murderers whom supplied corpses for medical dissection in Edinburgh in the late 1820's. Even more controversially, von Hagens has been compared, unfairly, to Josef Mengele, a Nazi doctor also known as the 'Angel of Death', who inflicted terrible pain, suffering, and death, especially to twin children, during his experiments at Auschwitz during the Holocaust (Blackler, 2008).

However, von Hagens, who has performed public autopsies for live television as well as crucifying a plasinated corpse on a British television programme to illustrate the death of Christ (Wilson, 2006), is quoted as saying *'it is an honour to cause this controversy'* (Jefferies, 2002: 2); an acknowledgment and a commercial recognition, perhaps, of the appeal controversy can bring to an exhibition such as this. He goes on justify the exhibition as '*demystifying the post mortem examination*' and likened the medical profession to *'medieval priests who would not allow ordinary people to read the Bible'* (von Hagens cited in CNN.com, 2009). Consequently, because of

continuing controversy in his home country of Germany, Gunther von Hagens is based largely in China where he holds a guest Professorship at the Dalian Medical University. It is here where 'Plastination City', as von Hagens has entitled it, is located and where actual plastination of corpses occurs (Whalley, 2007). In 2000, von Hagens established the Institute for Plastination at Dalian Medical University, a private venture that has generated over £50 million and employs approximately 200 people (Whalley, 2007; Jefferies, 2002).

Despite particular criticisms that focus upon the origin of the cadavers, the process of plastination, and Gunther von Hagens himself, means that controversy surrounds the portrayal of cadavers within the Body Worlds exhibitions. Human corpses, as well as animal cadavers arranged in 'recognisable' poses and situations, are given decipherable titles, including The Horseman, a rider with his skull chopped in two and his body flayed to show the underlying musculature. Consequently, as Jeffries (2002: 1) notes 'the Horseman sits with his brain in one hand and a whip in the other, astride the posed and flayed cadaver of a horse, frozen forever in its leap' (Plate 16).

Plate 16: The Horseman Exhibit, Body Worlds (Source: Life in the Fast Lane, 2009)

Other exhibit poses include cadavers posturing as sportsmen (Plate 17), a couple dancing, a parent and child walking (Plate 18), and corpses with skin left on or with intricate blood vessels revealed (Plate 19). A particular criticism has not only been levied at the artistic positioning of the cadavers, but also at the seemingly gender inequality between corpses. Specifically, Davidson (2009) notes the dominant masculinity of the cadaver exhibits, whilst Stern (2003) accuses Body Worlds of perpetuating conservative gender representations. Furthermore, Stern suggests male cadaver plastinates, or what Body Worlds refer to, in neutral terms, as 'anatomical specimens' (Body Worlds, 2009), are presented in 'heroic manly' situations. These include exhibits such the aforementioned *Horseman*, but also other 'masculine and intellectual exhibits poses such as *The Chess Player*, *The Muscleman and his Skeleton*, *The Fencer*, *The Runner* or *The Footballer.* As Berkowitz (2006) rather starkly suggests to potential visitors, 'be prepared to see a lot of penises; most of the full-body plastinates are male!'
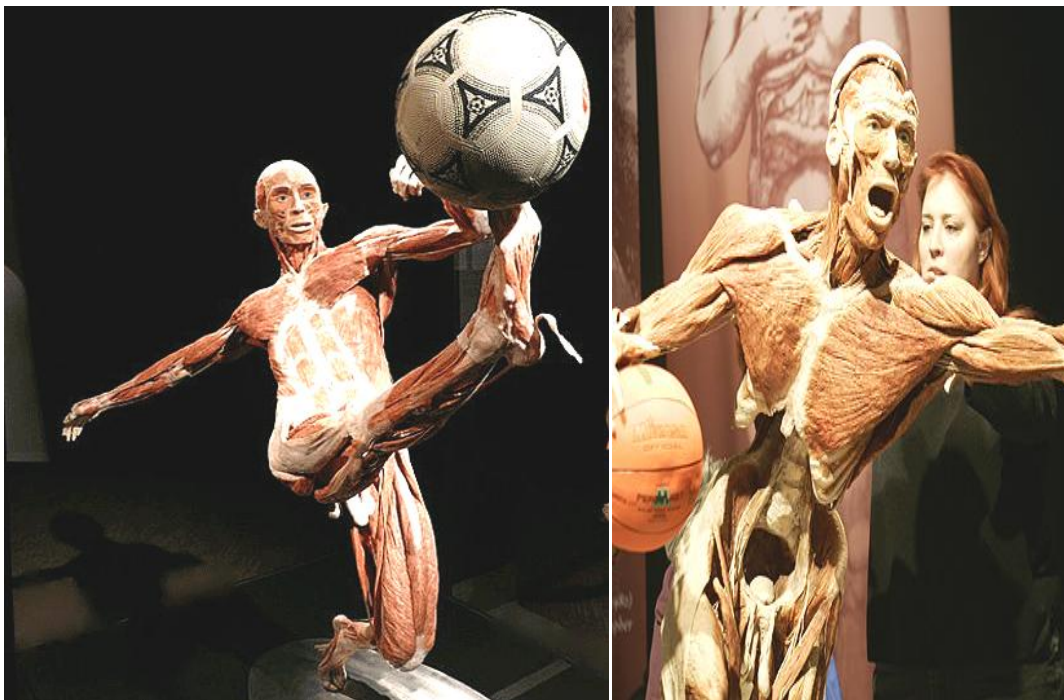
Plate 17: Male cadavers posing as a footballer (left) and basket ball player (right).
(Source: Life in the Fast Lane, 2009)
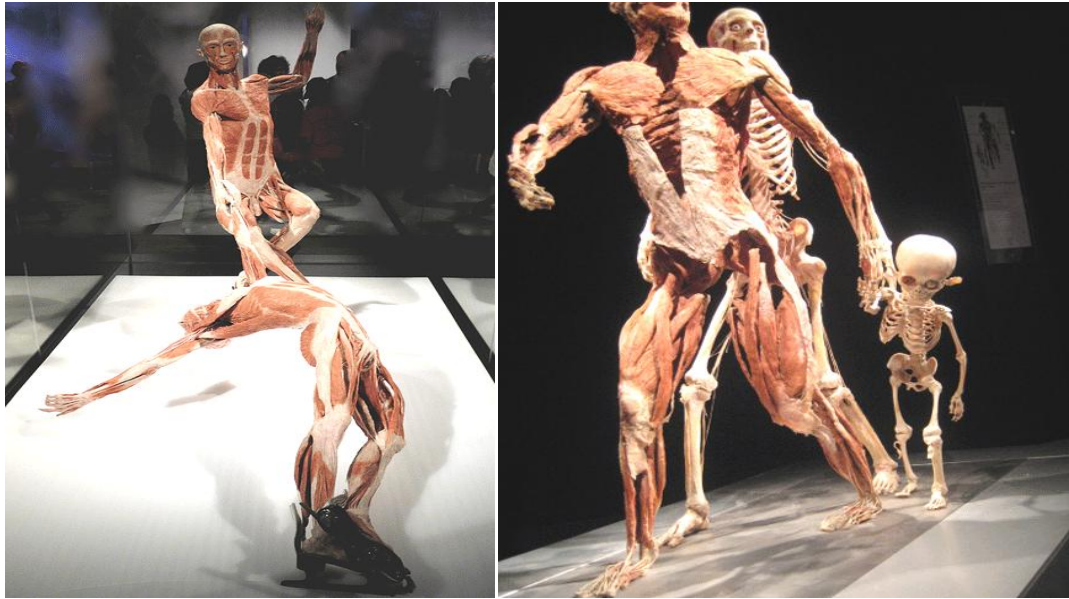
Plate 18: Cadaver couple adopting a 'dance' position (left); 'parent' and (dead) young child in walking position (right) (Source: Life in the Fast Lane, 2009)

Plate 19: Cadaver with skin left on and real eyes (left);
and corpse with blood vessels (right) at Body Worlds (Source: Life in the Fast Lane, 2009)

Meanwhile, Stern points out that female cadaver plastinates are portrayed in terms of beauty, passivity or reproduction, such as the *Reclining Pregnant Woman* (see Figure 17 in Section 5.0), a cadaver whose womb is exposed to show her (dead) unborn child and in a 'pose taken straight from pornographic cliché' (Stern, 2003:1). Furthermore, Body Worlds opened an exhibition in Berlin in May 2009 that shows plasinated

cadavers having sexual intercourse (Playboy, 2009; CNN.com, 2009; also Plate 20). von Hagens has defended the exhibition, which he plans to bring to London, by suggesting the 'exhibit combines the two greatest taboos of sex and death and is a lesson in biology [and] is not meant to be sexually stimulating' (von Hagens, cited in Connolly, 2009: 1). However, the exhibition has attracted protests from a cross-party group of politicians as well as church representatives, both in Germany and the UK, and they have called for the exhibits to be withdrawn, suggesting it was pornographic and an insult to the dead (Connolly, 2009).

Plate 20: Male and female cadavers posed having sexual intercourse (Source: CNN.cm, 2009)

Generally, though, von Hagens' philosophy of Body Worlds appears to derive from notions of how contemporary society addresses the issue of not only death, but how people may view their own life (and living) in the face of inevitable mortality through an anatomical, if not clinical, gaze. Indeed, von Hagens states:

> I want to bring the life back to anatomy. I am making the dead lifeful again. This exhibition is a place where the dead and the living mix. Yes, some of the specimens are difficult to look at. To see a mutilated body is hard because we have fears about our own integrity. We have a deep-rooted anxiety about when

we see the body opened up because in this way we have feelings about ourselves (Gunther von Hagens cited in Jefferies, 2002: 1).

However, despite the controversies that surround this (dark) exhibition, the success of Body Worlds has given rise to several copycat exhibitions that feature plasinated cadavers. Most notably, attractions such as BODIES Revealed and BODIES: The Exhibition, organised by the public traded US company, Premier Exhibitions Inc, replicate the technique and style of von Hagens' Body Worlds, but unlike von Hagens, Premier Exhibitions Inc do not have a body donation programme. Instead, 'unclaimed cadavers' are utilised and Premier Exhibitions Inc admit they are unable 'to demonstrate the circumstances that led to the death of the individuals [and are] unable to establish that these people consented to their remains being used in this manner' (Stone, 2007). Nevertheless, Body Worlds, as the original exhibition of real human bodies, continues to exhibit across the world. In particular, the exhibition has been a key attraction at the O2 arena in London during 2008 and 2009, and it is to this that the next section turns.

7.4.1   A Dark Exhibition: Body Worlds Context

Body Worlds and The Mirror of Time exhibition, held from 24th October 2008 to 23rd August 2009 at The O2 'Bubble' arena on the Greenwich peninsula in London, is von Hagens' first London exhibition since 2003, which the Atlantis Gallery in Brick Lane held. Classified as a 'Dark Exhibition' by Stone (2006: 153), Body Worlds and The Mirror of Time exhibition is defined as:

> An exhibition which essentially blends the product design to reflect education and potential learning opportunities. With a Dark Fun Factory offering a commercial and more entertainment based product, Dark Exhibitions offer products which revolve around death, suffering or the macabre with an often commemorative, educational or reflective message.

The Body Worlds and The Mirror of Time exhibition features over two hundred real plasinated human corpses, including whole-body plastinates, individual human organs, organ configurations, and transparent body slices. The exhibition also hosts the world's first plasinated giraffe. Body Worlds and The Mirror of Time has a dedicated focus upon health, well-being and the ageing process. In particular, the exhibition aims to illustrate how the human body develops through time; at its most radiant and as it changes, matures and finally dies. The exhibition, through the use of

displaying plasinated corpses, and formal partnerships with health organisations such as Heart UK, The British Lung Foundation or the British Red Cross, attempts to induce the visitor into sustainable lifestyle choices, and in doing so, portrays the anatomy of the dead in order to influence not only lives, but also actual living. Indeed, Gunther von Hagens, in a newspaper interview, sums up well the exhibition philosophy and rationale, as well particular consequences for individual mortality:

> The older I get, the more I realize that death is normal and that it is life that is exceptional. I hope this [Mirror of Time] exhibition will encourage people to strive to live with inspiration every day throughout their lives…. This exhibition is all about the cycle of life, from the spark of conception, to the development of a mature body, and it goes through to elderly people. It shows the whole spectrum of life. It shows how we develop and we age. We realise how our lifestyle entrances our organs, our body, and in this way, our capability in life, our length of life and how we feel. People will learn about the importance of their bodies. They will learn how fragile and strenghthful the body is. They will learn that they have to take care of their bodies, and eat less excessive food and smoke less, and refrain from drugs. It gives a strong message, it is a life-changing experience, and only the real is able to change our habits. [It helps visitors to] understand death…. Mortality is scary, but this exhibition is not scary. People are only scared when they hear about it, but not when they see it. When you understand death, you will live a healthier life and worship your life (Gunther von Hagens cited in The Telegraph, 2008: 1-2).

However, during the period before and immediately after the opening of The Mirror of Time exhibition in London, both von Hagens and Body Worlds attracted somewhat customary media commentary. As one British newspaper pointed out:

> [Gunther von Hagens] is part shaman and part showman; at once an anatomical scientist bent on shaking up a western society that he regards as living in denial of its corporeality and of death, and a PT Barnum basking in the media hoopla of his British reception, aware that part of the appeal of Body Worlds is the same as that which drew our ancestors to public executions and freak shows (The Telegraph, 2008).

The study now turns to the ethnographic findings at Body Worlds.

7.5 The Body Worlds Exhibition Ethnography – 'Real Death'

The Body Worlds and The Mirror of Time exhibition, as a visitor experience, is undoubtedly educational – if not macabre – in the sense that the exhibits allow the contemporary visitor to gaze not only upon the (real) dead, but also to get up close and personal to causes of death. Thus, ethnographic research at Body Worlds and The

Mirror of Time exhibition at the O2 arena in London revealed a number of significant issues relevant to this study. As with the earlier ethnography at the Dungeons, the ethnographic data for the Body Worlds exhibition offered discernible data clusters. These have been translated into broad subject themes and, from which a narrative is offered. Table 15 outlines these subject themes.

Body Worlds:	Data Theme Title	
	1.	Marketing the Macabre
The Original	2.	Promoting Life Narratives
Exhibition of	3.	Life / Death Reflections
Real Human	4.	Moral Conversations: Art of Dying vs. Death Education
Bodies		

Table 15: Body Worlds: The Original Exhibition of Real Human Bodies – Ethnographic Data Themes

7.5.1 *Marketing the Macabre*

Marketing the Macabre, as a distinguishable theme from the ethnographic data, refers to how the exhibition commercially perceived and how it is generally presented to the broader market, especially in relation to how the dead and their image are promoted for mercantile advantage. Hence, whilst Gunther von Hagens may purport an educational rationale for his Body Worlds exhibitions, as well as declaring an interpretive philosophy that appears to be grounded in traditional and conservative museology practice, his Mirror of Time exhibition in London evidently adopts commercial practices that are typically found with mainstream tourism. As the exhibition is co-organised and managed by AEI and AEG, two leading international entertainment and events organisations, David Campbell, Chief Executive of AEG Europe states:

> The Body Worlds series has always intrigued and proved irresistible to the public. This new seminal exhibition from Gunther von Hagens will no doubt become one of London's must see attractions and will appeal to anyone interested in how their body works (Body Worlds 2009a; also AEG, 2009).

Similarly, John Norman, president of AEI, referring to a previous exhibition held at The O2 arena pronounced:

> The bar has been set with the success of the Tutankhamen exhibition and we searched far and wide to make the next exhibition at The O2 as compelling and universal. We believe Body Worlds and The Mirror of Time will be London's next blockbuster exhibition (Body Worlds 2009a; also AEI, 2009).

Consequently, the commercial machinery of the exhibition, especially in terms of marketing and promotion, is evident to the visitor early in their event experience. For instance, the London underground railway or Tube station at Greenwich which is adjacent to The O2 arena and serves the exhibition as a primary mode of public transport, is garlanded with Body Worlds promotional material, depicting images of plastinated corpses and the words 'Tickets on Sale Now'. In particular, the passenger ticket barriers which separate the Tube station concourse from the public space outside, where passengers must enter through by pushing small 'saloon type' doors to reach the railway platforms, have been (re)decorated with images of Body Worlds cadavers (Obs, 2009b). Most travellers, as they push their way through the barriers, appear oblivious to the fact they are symbolically 'touching the dead'. However, a female commuter appeared angry at the marketing style of Body Worlds, and states:

> It's disgusting. I work over in Canary Wharf and use this tube station [Greenwich] all the time. Since the end of the summer last year [2008], they have put these horrible pictures of dead people up all over the bloody place. It's like a horror movie. I absolutely hate it! [original emphasis of tone]… and because you have to go through these barriers to get to the Tube, it's like walking through the dead. That doesn't seem right to me… it's just obscene the way they use dead guys and pictures of their corpses to make a quick profit (BW Interviewee 1: Interviews, 2009b).

Other evidence of this 'marketing the macabre' is evident within the actual O2 arena itself, where the public space inside the arena is designed to reflect a street with restaurants and other retail establishments. As visitors enter the street space, directional instructions to Body Worlds on lamppost style signs depict plasinated human carcasses, pointing the way for visitors to the exhibition hall, through a myriad of restaurants and other leisure space (Obs, 2009b). It is here that the dead, perhaps, begin to occupy the space of the living, as the deceased, or at least images or the deceased, perform functional tasks as they guide the living (visitors) to their temporary resting place.

Another example of how the macabre is marketed and the dead commercially utilised is the formal marketing alliance between von Hagens Body Worlds exhibition and the

Slug and Lettuce restaurant chain (Obs, 2009b). Located at The O2 arena itself, and with other restaurant locations throughout London, the Slug and Lettuce offers its customers a 15% discount off its menu prices if customers have visited the Body Worlds exhibition. Meanwhile, Body Worlds appear even more generous and offer Slug and Lettuce customers 25% off its exhibition admission charge, if customers present their 'drinks/meal receipt'. Of course, it may appear unsurprising that such reciprocal commercial partnerships exist, especially considering the inherent commercial focus of both AEG and AEI. However, with promotional vouchers and restaurant menus depicting images of plasinated corpses, whilst simultaneously offering a product that sustains life, that is, food and drink, it becomes evident that images of death have been designed explicitly, though perhaps with implicit meaning, as a backdrop to everyday living and activity. Asked what he thought of images of dead people used in menu promotions, a male customer outside the Slug and Lettuce restaurant suggested:

> Yeah, I had never really thought about it, but my girlfriend brought up the subject just now about it in there [Slug & Lettuce restaurant], and said - have you noticed all the dead people pictures around here? You've got Body Worlds stuff all over the place, on the Tube as we came in, on them lamppost things, on the menus in there, and on the massive posters outside…, and there are people down there giving out little Body Worlds vouchers – money off things - and that has a picture of the dead guy on… I guess I'm cool with it, because that is when I expect from somewhere like this, but when my girlfriend says they're real people, dead like, it does make you wonder – it's a bit creepy really (BW Interviewee 2: Interviews, 2009b).

Whilst the Body Worlds dead cohabit the living world with visitors, in an ocular form at least, individuals are, perhaps, unaware of the deeper meaning of commercially illustrating the dead until they begin to ponder their own mortality or reminded of what the marketing image actually consists of. Essentially, however, marketing images of plastinated corpses are not readily apparent as the actual dead. Instead, the dead appear camouflaged in anatomically acceptable layers of plastic; post-modernistically altered from their real appearance, and used as promotional photographs to entice the living in all their post-mortem glory.

7.5.2   *Promoting Life Narratives*

Promoting Life Narratives as a perceptible theme from the ethnographic data refers to how Body Worlds promotes life by displaying the dead. The exhibition conveys a

discourse of healthy living to individuals on how they might potentially extend their lives biologically as well as fulfilling them ontologically. Indeed, as previously discussed, von Hagens has explicitly stated that the exhibition is intended to promote the cycle of life, from birth to death, and in doing so, to create an awareness amongst visitors of how a wholesome lifestyle can be beneficial. Interestingly though, whilst religion and religious places may manipulate a message of spirituality to promote 'healthy living'; Body Worlds employs a space to promote a message of sound physical health, which consequently, according to the exhibition at least, promotes spiritual well-being. However, although Body Worlds uses plastinated cadavers to illustrate physical health, or indeed, lack of it, the exhibition also utilises philosophy to promote a narrative of a meaningful life and living (Obs, 2009b). With philosophical quotations by the likes of Kant, Ameil, and Plato that accompany the displayed corpses, strategically positioned within the overall textual interpretation of the exhibition, the visitor is greeted with not only a sense of visual awe of the cadavers, but also a sense of philosophical wonderment (Obs, 2009b). Accordingly, this exhibition takes on a reverend perspective and a more conservative stance, propelling the exhibition back to its museological origins and away from the touristic connotations that seemingly surround Body Worlds as a commercial entity. Indeed, by way of illustration, a philosophical statement by the Swiss philosopher, Henri Ameil, about the psychological nature and difficulties of aging is displayed prominently next to a plastinated corpse that has been posed as a chess player, a deliberate reference, perhaps, to how aging is about not only physical degeneration, but also intellectual insight (Plate 21):

> To know how to grow old is the master work of wisdom, and one of the most difficult chapters in the art of living (*Henri Ameil, 1821-1881*: quoted in Body Worlds and The Mirror of Time Exhibition - Obs, 2009b).

Other philosophical narratives displayed at the exhibition that focus upon the health of the body (and mind) include a statement by the Lebanese American artist, Khalil Gibran:

> Your body is the harp of the soul, and it is yours to bring forth sweet music from it or confused sounds (*Khalil Gibran, 1883-1931*: quoted in Body Worlds and The Mirror of Time Exhibition - Obs, 2009b).

Plate 21: Visitors examining a chess playing cadaver at the Body Worlds Exhibition

This promotion of health and life, through a combination of reverence and philosophical statements, together with displayed human corpses and organs, aims to encourage the visitor to consider sustainable and healthy living. For instance, in the Gibran statement above, he refers to a musicological analogy as the body as a harp of the soul playing sweet music or confused sounds. Put another way, the physical (body) as the manifestation of the spiritual (soul) requires appropriate living to provide good health (sweet music), because otherwise confused sounds (bad health) will ensue. Of course, this interpretive technique of utilising philosophy to enhance a life narrative within the visitor experience appears not to take into account intellectual capacities of individual visitors. As one male visitor after visiting the exhibition pointed out:

> To be really honest, I quite liked looking at the dead guys and all the different organ parts - you know the plastic people, and the hearts and diseased lungs and that – but all that stuff on the walls [referring to the philosophical statements], I didn't really get (BW Interviewee 3: Interviews, 2009b).

Another male visitor also noted the issue of philosophical information to promote the aims of the exhibition, 'I didn't really like it… too much information for me – I like people with clothes' (BW Interviewee 4: Interviews, 2009b).

Nevertheless, the use of philosophy is a prominent feature of the exhibitions' interpretation strategy. Similarly, the use of images and photographs, in addition to plastinated corpses and human organs and tissue, are used to illustrate ill health. In particular, the exhibit about blindness and the degeneration of eyesight uses real human eyeballs, dissected and displayed in glass cases to show the intricacies of both healthy and diseased eyes. Augmenting the interpretation of this exhibit is a story of artists, in particular Claude Monet and Edgar Degas, who both suffered eyesight and cataract problems in real life. The narrative here is what the artists actually saw of the subjects they were painting and how their failing eyesight may have affected their style of painting. The exhibit goes on to display copies of their original work, specifically the *Woman Dying Hair* by Degas and *The Japanese Bridge at Givery* by Monet, but also the exhibit shows technologically altered copies of the paintings of what the artist may have actually seen (Obs, 2009). In addition, an accompanying philosophical statement by Plato: – *'The spiritual eyesight improves as the physical eyesight declines'* perhaps indicates that whilst the physicality of vision will undoubtedly decline over the duration of life, the ontological aspects of living, with age, can be enhanced. Conversely, this particular exhibit is meant for visitors to learn not only about clinical aspects of human vision, but also to promote the need for health in general. This was made evident by a male visitor who was seemingly reminded of his personal circumstances and was overheard in the exhibition quietly saying to his female partner – *"I must go to the opticians!"* (Obs, 2009b).

Similarly, the notion of visitors learning from explicit promotion of life narratives is indicated by a female interviewee who recognised the exhibition as part of a broader pedagogical apparatus, and compared the collective consternation over ecological concerns as opposed to concern for the health of individuals. She states:

> This [exhibition] is a really good learning tool that we can share with this generation and the next… these are real people, real muscles, bones, organs that really exist inside all of us, and most of us make no effort to take care of our fragile bodies… so perhaps this [exhibition] will kick people into doing just that… preserving our health as opposed to the environment, which all that people seem ever to go on about nowadays (BW Interviewee 5: Interviews, 2009b).

Whilst idealistic and artistic promotion of life narratives is evident within the exhibition, consequently allowing learning to take place and (personal) meaning to be

constructed, other more rational endorsements of healthy living are apparent. In particular, the formal sponsor partnerships between Body Worlds and The Mirror of Time exhibition and national health organisations, such as Heart UK and Diabetes UK, promote healthy living in a pragmatic manner. In particular, an exhibit depicts individual specimens of both a healthy and diseased human heart, as well as displaying a whole plastinated corpse with a diseased heart. An internet portal placed next to the exhibit encourages visitors to access online tutorials about the heart, as well as to donate to relevant health organisations (Obs, 2009b). Ironically, though, at the time of observations, an 'out of order' sign was on the internet portal, denying visitors that day the opportunity to make additional learning connections (Obs, 2009b). Nevertheless, other Body Worlds exhibits that formalised life narratives with external health organisations include the British Lung Foundation. For instance, an exhibit of a plasinated corpse with a blackened diseased cancerous lung, evidently resulting from smoking tobacco, is compared with a healthy (deceased) lung from a non-smoker (Obs, 2009b). Again, the overall message is one of informed choice, but strong encouragement of the exhibit title 'Ditch that Pack, Kick the Habit' sponsored, incidentally, by the British Lung Foundation, clearly directs the visitor towards a smoking-free lifestyle. By way of illustrating visitor engagement with the exhibition, a female visitor, who appeared in her late forties, was witnessed staring intently at the plasinated corpse with cancerous lungs. She muttered quietly to herself – *'I'm definitely giving up'* – a reference, most probably, to her own habits and an apparent desire to relinquish smoking which, perhaps, is based upon her personal reflective experience at Body Worlds (Obs, 2009b).

7.5.3   *Death / Life Reflections*

Reflections upon life and death, particularly the nature of living and its inherent interrelationship with the inevitably of mortality, was a third major distinguishable theme from the Body Worlds ethnographic data. Closely related to the theme of *Promoting Life Narratives*, as discussed above, the theme of *Death / Life Reflections* was discernible by the notion of how the exhibition seemingly compels visitors to reflect upon their own particular life and, perhaps more importantly, their own life-end. This apparent obligatory attempt to provide a reflective space is, conceivably, a deliberate intention by von Hagens who accordingly entitled his exhibition 'The *Mirror* of Time'. Thus, the duration of life and the onset of mortality are viewed

through a reflective gaze. Consequently, the visitor, immediately upon entering the exhibition, is greeted by a quiet and dark exhibitory space, with walls and ceiling decorated in black (Obs, 2009b). Strategically positioned spotlights illuminate individual exhibits and certified interpretation boards and signage, ensuring visitors are directed to exhibits where they may commence their reflective experience. Indeed, a female visitor, whilst seemingly recognizing and appreciating the official aim of the Body Worlds exhibition stated:

> I was [emotionally] moved much more than I thought I would be, and I feel quite queasy now, especially after reflecting on what I've seen…. But I supposed that is what the exhibition is all about, so I don't think it is totally negative (BW Interviewee 6: Interviews, 2009b).

Similarly, another female interviewee in her mid/late twenties suggested her exhibitory experience and the persuasive nature of the exhibits would have a lasting effect, especially when it came to reflections on her own mortality:

> It's a really compelling exhibit, and it may well change how I think about things, especially about my own death – which is a bit creepy, I know… I'll certainly be thinking about this for a long time (BW Interviewee 7: Interviews, 2009b).

The reflective process of mortality commences very early in the visitor experience. At the beginning of the exhibition, visitors encounter a series of computer-generated images of a boy/man and a girl/woman morphing from their youth to maturity to old age and, eventually, to their demise (Obs, 2009b). Consequently, the visitor is summarily transported to a consciousness of mortality, whereby individuals consume death of the Other, not only through displayed plasinated human corpses, but also through images of the dead. For instance, the 'Emerging Skeleton', an exhibit of a plasinated male corpse seemingly emerging from his own skin and posed above a faux grave, with an associated interpretation board entitled 'When the Heart Won't Go On', illustrates the moment of biological death (Obs, 2009b). Moreover, separate photographs of a gravestone, a marker of the dead, and a dead (old) woman in an open coffin, accompany this exhibit, graphically implying that life will inevitably come to a natural conclusion. As a male interviewee pointed out:

> I think I walked around the exhibition with my mouth wide open. I couldn't believe some of the stuff…. It's made me really ponder my own mortality (BW Interviewee 3: Interviews, 2009b).

A key feature of the exhibition verifies this apparent 'pondering of mortality'. Particularly, the strategic placement of a single large mirror near to the exhibition exit, against an empty uncluttered black wall, with a spotlight illuminating it, coerces the visitor to gaze into the Mirror and upon themselves and reflect, perhaps, on what the exhibition had to offer, namely narratives of both (healthy) living and subsequent dying (Obs, 2009b). It is here, at the 'Mirror', that visitors have a *mortality moment* opportunity to consider, however briefly, their own personal circumstances. Indeed, a female visitor in her mid-sixties commented to herself as she approached the Mirror – *"What's that?"* She then looked into the Mirror for two or three seconds, and further commented to herself – *"Urrh, No!"* Of course, this could demonstrate her apparent discomfort at looking at herself. On the other hand, at a more fundamental level, it could demonstrate how she may have already considered her health (and mortality) within the exhibition space. Consequently, the Mirror as a device to enhance the mortal gaze was, conceivably, too cognitively difficult to generate a direct contemplative sentiment (Obs, 2009b).

Speculation aside, an elderly male interviewee did comment specifically upon his Mirror experience and his own notions of mortality:

> I don't what it was, but when I came to that big mirror at the end, and with the spotlight shining on it; it seemed to me that the spotlight was actually shining on me personally. When I looked into the mirror, I did think Oh My God, I don't have that long [he laughs at this point]… but it does make you think, doesn't it? (BW Interviewee 8: Interviews, 2009b).

Supporting this idea of 'the reflexive gaze' (Urry, 2002), research by Leiberich *et al* (2006) with a sampling population of 1,078 visitors, examined the emotional reactions of individuals at the 2003 Body Worlds exposition in Munich. They reported 40.6% of visitors were led to reflect upon their own mortality because of their Body Worlds experience. Additionally, 42.6% of visitors were resolved to pursue healthier lifestyles (Leiberich *et al.,* 2006). Considering this apparent self-reflection may occur both during, but especially after 'walking through the dead', contemplating notions of individual health and mortality, or put more simply, considering the reality of both life and death is largely generated by an engagement with real human corpses and their anatomical dissection. Of course, this raises issues of the extent of mortality contemplation from such dark tourism spaces. This fundamental point is explored in

more detail later in the thesis, especially in relation to individual death anxiety and the wider thanatological condition of society.

Whilst individuals reflect upon their own life/death at Body Worlds, they also appear to reflect on the death of Others. Put another way, visitors contemplate the mortality of those who either have had a direct or indirect relationship with them. Notably, visitors to the exhibition, who essentially take a self-guided tour through a temporary resting place of the dead, were witnessed speaking in hushed tones with their partners, friends, and fellow customers. In particular, three female visitors in their late-fifties/early sixties, whilst gazing upon the 'Emerging Skeleton' exhibit, talked quietly about a male relative who had recently passed on (Obs, 2009b). In particular, these visitors chatted amongst themselves about their relative who had died of a heart attack, and the causes of that cardiac arrest, and for these visitors at least, the exhibition illuminated a particular sad period of their lives upon which they appeared to reflect. Thus, it is here where the living seem to reconnect with the 'significant dead', as unidentified public cadavers permit a prompting of memories of those who had gone before and for tales of identifiable dead friends and relatives to be (privately) conveyed. However, it appeared that the exhibition not only stimulated a reflection of death (and lives) of those close to the visitor, but also provoked a consciousness of trauma and death that was much more remote. For instance, two female visitors in their thirties, whilst examining the 'Foetus' exhibit, where glass jars of preserved pre-term babies are stored and displayed (Plate 22), recounted to each other a story which had made media headlines (at the time) of a pregnant woman with twins who had collapsed in a hospital toilet and subsequently died (Obs, 2009b). Although the twin babies survived, the dead mother never saw her offspring (see Nugent, 2009). Hence, apparent is the triangulated psychosocial connections between the Foetus exhibit, the recent media portrayal of a tragic death (and birth), and evident empathy with a media reported trauma. This triangulation is triggered not only by the capacity of Body Worlds to project narratives of both life and death, but also by the visitors' apparent ability to absorb the experience and construct particular (personal) meanings with regard to mortality.

Plate 22: Visitor examining a preserved foetus in a jar at the Body Worlds Exhibition

However, whilst death/life reflections are perceptible within the visitor experience, whether through a philosophical acceptance of inevitable demise, regardless of lifestyle, or a conscious contemplative effort to follow healthy patterns of living as dictated by the exhibition, for example, stopping smoking, eating a balanced diet, or more physical exercise, some visitors appear to take a more pragmatic perspective. For instance, two elderly female visitors with London accents, whilst viewing a dissected plasinated cadaver who had suffered from obesity in life and, which was sliced open to show fat levels around his or her body, began to chat quietly to one another about their own diets (Obs, 2009b). Whilst gazing upon the effects of obesity, and reading an interpretation board entitled 'Battle the Radicals', a description of various 'bad chemicals' that are present in food, one of the elderly females commented to the other, 'you can't go through life without something happening to us; I'm still going eat me chocolate and crisps' (Obs, 2009b).

However, perhaps the ultimate reflective device employed by Body Worlds is at the very end of the visitor experience. As individuals leave the exhibition, a member of staff presents a 'Life Certificate' to departing visitors, tangible evidence which is designed to record a personal commitment to 'live a purposeful life in longevity' (Life Certificate, 2009). Consequently, the aim of certificating visitors seems to be a clear inducement of individuals to reflect further upon their life and healthy living and, in doing so, to help avoid the early onset of mortality. As von Hagens himself purports in a final philosophical proclamation on an interpretation board at the exhibition exit, (though curiously, it is placed on a wall directly opposite the exit door and where most visitors appear not to see it) (Obs, 2009b), which states:

> The presentation of the pure physical reminds visitors to Body Worlds of the intangible and the unfathomable. The plasinated post-mortal body illuminates the soul by its very absence. Plastination transforms the body, an object of individual mourning into an object of reverence, enlightenment and appreciation. I hope for Body Worlds to be a place of enlightenment and contemplation, even of philosophical and religious self-recognition, and open to interpretation regardless of the background and philosophy of life of the viewer (Body Worlds and The Mirror of Time Exhibition in Obs, 2009b).

Of course, the nature of interpretation perceived by the visitor/viewer appears to rest upon whether Body Worlds is a presentation of cleverly constructed and preserved anatomical specimens, designed to represent and educate clinical death (and healthy lives), or whether the exhibition is essentially a kitsch artistic attempt to display a macabre flair and pastiche to a paying public. This apparent disjunction between art and education, and the consequent moral conversations it seemingly generates, that is the focus of the next ethnographic theme.

7.5.4   Moral Conversations: Art of Dying vs. Death Education

The final evident theme, which emerged from the Body Worlds ethnographic data, revolved around two seemingly discordant perceptions, which in turn, generated *moral conversations* about the exhibition specifically, but also about wider concerns more generally. Some respondents viewed the exhibition as an artistic endeavour that was designed to show off human and animal corpses in all their post-mortem grandeur. However, in contrast, some perceived the exhibition as an educational mechanism that had been designed pedagogically to enhance learning of both life and death through the display of anatomical specimens. Whilst von Hagens positions

himself as a 'Re-discoverer' of the Renaissance anatomical artistic movement, the actuality of his exhibition is somewhat more nebulous (Obs, 2009b). In other words, it seems that reflective learning (education) especially that which focuses upon healthy living and eventual dying, is indeed apparent from the exhibition. Thus, in turn, the stated goal of the exhibition as a device to enhance learning and to promote understanding of the human body is achieved. That said, however, the nature of how the exhibition is actually staged creates disjuncture and a subsequent suspicion amongst some visitors as to the overall (real) rationale and purpose of the exhibition. As a male interviewee suggests:

> Hagens's configurations [referring to the poses and styles of plasinated corpses] are nothing confounding – they are simply inelegant displays of dead human bodies. In my opinion, they are neither artistic nor challenging, but merely clichéd presentations with no awareness of their surroundings and effect. If Hagen wants to call it art, then fine – but I think we all need to be a little savvier to his motivations (BW Interviewee 9: Interviews, 2009b).

For this visitor, at least, the exhibition was not art, nor indeed a challenging educational experience, as it was ostensibly too staged, kitsch and inauthentic. The reference to 'clichéd presentations' and '[un]confounding configurations' indicates, perhaps, perceptions of passé touristic representations of the dead, which are out of place with their environment and surroundings. Similarly, a female interviewee also noted the exhibition's overall milieu and subsequently called into question issues of taste and decently, particularly those that resonated from the (artistic) presentation of the plasinated corpses:

> [This exhibition] is simply a circus display – nothing more. If this person [referring to von Hagens] wants to declare it art, that is really silly. Posing corpses in hats, or playing basketball or chess, or any of the other life-like situations seems to me like a serial killer staging or posing a corpse after the crime (BW Interviewee 10: Interviews, 2009b).

Consequently, issues surrounding the exhibition motivations and, specifically those of the exhibition's founder, – Gunther von Hagens, are apparent. In particular, a more critical response is required to von Hagens' rationale of simply displaying anatomical specimens to educate laypeople. Most notably, issues of profit taking and financial imperatives and the perceived relationship with either art or education appeared to concern some visitors. As a male interviewee suggested, 'the very high price for tickets makes this [exhibition] seem more about profit than either art or education'

(BW Interviewee 9: Interviews 2009b). Similarly, another male interviewee also noted the perceived mercantile aspects of the exhibition by stating, 'I do feel a little uneasy with the thought of human corpses being on display for the sake of art and more importantly for financial gain' (BW Interviewee 11: Interviews, 2009b).

However, considering the exhibition is fundamentally a commercial venture, as suggested in *Marketing the Macabre* theme earlier, appropriate monetary returns for the event organisers and Gunther von Hagens himself is an undoubted and unsurprising objective. However, the contention appears to be visitors' perceptions of the apparent commercial exploitation of the dead. To some at least, this creates a disjunction within an individuals' view of why the exhibition exists: whether to entertain through artistic endeavour, to educate through anatomical enterprise, or simply to generate revenue through a commercial venture. The veracity of the situation, of course, may be a combination of all three factors; that is – entertainment through art, as well as education through anatomical displays, located within a commercial framework – consequently creating a contemporary form of 'edutainment' through dead people. However, as a female interviewee notes:

> I find the motives behind this exhibition more troubling than the exhibits themselves…. From what I've seen today, the bodies themselves appear to be made of plastic – so why use real bodies in the first place – unless part of the motive was to shock people and sell more tickets in the process? (BW Interviewee 12: Interviews, 2009b).

The implication here, of course, is the potential conflict of utilising real human bodies against employing pseudo techniques that may achieve the same or similar effect. However, as another female interviewee suggests, 'regardless of poor taste, the moral dilemmas and so on… there is something quite telling about plasinated human beings' (BW Interviewee 10: Interviews, 2009b).

Hence, despite apparent suspicions that seem to focus upon the exhibition motives and especially those which appear to centre on the commercialisation and financial exploitation of the dead, it is, perhaps, the prospect of satisfying a curiosity of examining the (real) dead close up and, within a socially sanctioned space, that drives an element of visitor demand. For instance, during the observations, several groups of people, both male and female, and probably within the ages of late teens to early

twenties, were witnessed drawing the plasinated corpses. Evidently, these were college or university students from either an artistic persuasion or medical background learning more about anatomy (Obs, 2009b). For these individuals, the exhibition seemed to represent an opportunity to get up close to the dead, and rather than capturing the moment through an otherwise obligatory tourist photograph or student textbook, they instead sketch the cadavers, first hand, for personal and professional reasons. As a female visitor in her teens, and one those who drew the exhibits, states:

> I plan on becoming a medical illustrator, which combines both art and science – two subjects I'm really passionate about… so I guess I'm pretty biased towards this exhibition. I know there has been some hoo harr about it, but I see the exhibits as artwork as well as anatomical tools…. I do understand why Body Worlds may be seen as gruesome and distasteful. You're viewing your own kind stripped away and just put on display, like in a shop; but he [referring to Gunther von Hagens] has done it as best as he could, I think, and it quite aesthetic really…. Personally, I'm really pleased for this collection, because it useful for my planned career… I can draw from life-like preserved figures instead of faded specimens, which I'm used to, which have been damaged over time due to oxygen contact (BW Interviewee 13: Interviews, 2009b).

Interestingly, for this visitor at least, the human corpses are referred to as 'life-like preserved figures' or 'faded specimens', established terminology within the parlance of anatomy, and she goes on to recognise the educational value of the exhibition:

> My teacher bought a DVD of the exhibits and showed it in my anatomy class. The DVD was good and I learnt a lot from it, but to actually see these fantastic displays magnifies their educational value (BW Interviewee 14: Interviews, 2009b).

A female life-drawing aficionado also recognised the educational value of the exhibition and, although she seemingly welcomed the artistic merits of the exhibits, she lamented allowing children into the exhibition:

> As a life-drawing enthusiast I find this [exhibition] very appealing, as text book illustrations do very little for the imagination… but, I can't help think that this exhibition should not allow children in. Our society's media exposure of death and murder can only have a detrimental impact on the minds of children, and without proper education into the subject of human anatomy, I don't think that this so-called art exhibition [referring to Body Worlds] is anything other than deeply disturbing for children… this [exhibition] should be treated as an educational exhibit and not a shoc-art that makes sensation of death (BW Interviewee 15: Interviews, 2009b).

It is here where *moral conversations* are generated by the disjuncture between the exhibition as art (of dying) and the exhibition as an education (of death). In other words, individuals who are embodied by their exhibitory experience (of the dead) often discuss the morality of Body Worlds through a lens of artistic skill and/or pedagogy, and which involves them being emotionally attached to a particular viewpoint. Thus, for the aforementioned visitor, the seemingly ambiguous nature of the exhibitions' official aims is at a discord between her own enthusiasm for life-drawing and appreciation of the value and appeal of the exhibits, and that of her views of children being allowed into the exhibitory space to inspect the dead (though, she did not specify children ages). Moreover, the ethical dimensions of Body Worlds appear not to be restricted to whether children are allowed in or not, or indeed, how the human corpses are posed. Indeed, some visitors appear to be well acquainted with debates surrounding the origin of cadavers, as highlighted earlier in the thesis, and are no doubt influenced by media commentary of the exhibition more generally. As a female visitor suggested, 'I did read in the [news] paper that the bodies are from Chinese criminals who were put to death. Sounds creepy to me…' (BW Interviewee 16: Interviews, 2009b).

Certainly during observations, this perception of plasinated corpses as 'foreigners', Chinese or otherwise, was evidenced by comments made by two elderly female visitors whilst they gazed upon a plasinated cadaver. Their conversation was recorded as:

> *"You got to remember these were once real people"* stated one elderly visitor.
> *"Yes"* replied the other elderly visitor. *"I think they were all foreigners you know"*.
> *"Why is that then?"* replied her friend.
> *"Because you can tell by the expression on their faces"* said the old woman, (Obs, 2009b).

Of course, anatomically at least, no inference is given to the colour or creed of the cadavers. Thus, a demonstration of ignorance on the part of these two elderly visitors is evident and, whilst the irony of their views is pronounced, an important point is nevertheless made. In short, (moral) suspicions are connected to the supply of people who have seemingly voluntarily donated their bodies, whether for art and/or education, and the perception of visitors who question the voluntary body donation scheme. As a male visitor pointed out:

I'm pretty sure the main controversy about this show is where Hagens exactly gets his bodies from. I think the whole body donation thing is a bit suspect. He [von Hagens] claims donations are documented, but I know he never shares this documentation (BW Interviewee 17: Interviews, 2009b).

Again, visitors appear to be engaged cognitively and emotionally in their (dark) exhibitory experience. Notably, visitors at the end of the exhibition are invited to record their views and experiences in a dedicated 'Customer Comment' book. Whilst the researcher was not allowed to access the book and systematically analyse comments made (but, see Walter, 2004), it is nevertheless suggested from rudimentary observations that a significant number of customer comments related to individuals' perceptions of exhibition ethics (Obs, 2009b). Hence, the exhibition permits moral conversations to be stimulated about a range of ethical issues, which seemingly focus on around the issue of death and the (commercial) showing of the dead. These issues may perturb the individual and undoubtedly have resonance with other people. Of course, this study does not seek to reconcile those ethical differences, or indeed, pronounce some kind of ethical code. Rather, the ethnographic data at the Body Worlds and The Mirror of Time exhibition has revealed the exhibitory space and its contents as a potential contemporary place for individual visitors to challenge, reaffirm, or to alter moralistic viewpoints about the subject that they are consuming. In doing so, visitors focus upon the exhibition and the exhibited dead from a variety of (ethical) angles, including but not limited to art, education, origin of bodies and body parts, and the commercial endeavours of displaying such human bodies.

7.6   Summary of Ethnographic Research – The Body Worlds Exhibition

Body Worlds highlights death and dying; the (real) dead are packaged up and sold as an exhibitory experience. Hence, a number of significant themes emerged from the ethnographic research at the exhibition, represented by the Mirror of Time event in London. Indeed, through a combination of covert participant observations and interviews, four perceptible themes were extracted from the data and subsequent interpretations were outlined with regard to each theme. These themes address how the dead cohabit a world with the living through their continued plasinated existence, and how human corpses are used artistically as well as educationally to convey (commercial) discourses of healthy living. Consequently, emergent themes focussed

upon how the exhibition place acts as a reflective space and how visitor experiences are inextricably connected with mortality reflections. Accordingly, a topic of morality emerged with evidence of moral conversations that were generated around broader notions of death (and life), but also included how the utilisation of the dead as artistic props or as pedagogical tools raise ethical tensions.

In order to expedite the theme mapping process across other case studies, and to summarise the Body Worlds ethnography, Table 16 defines and codes emergent themes. The next section now turns to the third case study of the WTC Tribute Visitor Centre at Ground Zero, New York.

Case Study	Theme Code	Theme Title	Theme Definition
The Body Worlds Exhibition (BW)	BW1	Marketing the Macabre	'The commodification of the dead, especially through promoting images of plasinated corpses to achieve mercantile advantage'.
	BW2	Promoting Life Narratives	'Exhibition narratives projected through the displayed dead that convey biological life extension as well as enhancement of ontological living by the adoption of healthy lifestyles'.
	BW3	Death / Life Reflections	'The provision of reflective space and devices for visitors which subsequently provides for a meditative experience between concepts of living and dying'.
	BW4	Moral Conversations: Art of Dying vs. Death Education	'An ethical disjunction between displaying the dead as artistic endeavour or as educational mechanisms'.

Table 16: Ethnographic Themes for the Body Worlds Exhibition:
Definitional Statements and Theme Codes

7.7   The Tribute WTC Visitor Centre – 'Ground Zero'

On the morning of September 11, 2001, the World Trade Centre (WTC) located in Lower Manhattan, New York, an extensive skyscraper office complex integral to the United States financial services industry and, often referred to as the Twin Towers, was attacked and destroyed by Islamic fundamentalists using hijacked aircraft. With four commercial airliners en route to San Francisco and Los Angeles departing from airports in Boston, Newark and Washington D.C., nineteen terrorist hijackers took control of the aeroplanes soon after takeoff with the intention of crashing the aircraft into the World Trade Centre in New York, and the Pentagon building in Virginia – headquarters of the US military. There is also speculation that the White House – home and office of the US President, or the United States Capitol building – seat of the US Congress and legislature of the federal government of the United States of America were also targets, though these were never attacked. The first aircraft, American Airlines Flight 11 crashed into the World Trade Centre's North Tower at 8.46am, followed by United Airlines Flight 175 that hit the South Tower at 9.03am (Plate 23). At 9.37am, American Airlines Flight 77 hit the Pentagon building, whilst at 10.03am, a fourth airliner, United Airlines Flight 93, probably en route to Washington D.C., crashed into a field near Shanksville in Pennsylvania after passengers engaged in an fatal altercation with the hijackers. Collectively, these events are known as *9/11* – the date on which the attack took place and which refers to the American calendaring system.

In total, three buildings in the World Trade Centre complex collapsed on 9/11 due to structural failure, caused by intense heat of resultant fires of the crashed airliners. The South Tower (2 WTC) collapsed at 9.59am, after burning for 56 minutes caused by the impact of United Airlines Flight 175, whilst the North Tower (1 WTC) fell at 10.28am after burning for 102 minutes (Plate 24). Additionally, when the North Tower collapsed, debris damaged a smaller adjacent skyscraper, 7 World Trade

Centre (7 WTC), causing its structural integrity to be compromised and that building collapsed later in the day at 5.20pm. Because of the airliners crashing and subsequent failure of the skyscraper buildings, 2,751 people died at the World Trade Centre, including 411 emergency personnel. The New York Fire Department suffered the majority of uniformed losses, with 341 fire fighters killed. An additional 146 people died instantly when the two planes crashed into the towers, including eight children aged between two years and eleven years. The average age of those killed in New York on 9/11 was forty years old (Beveridge, 2002).

Immortalized by film-makers and photographers, the twin towers of the World Trade Centre had dominated the Manhattan skyline since the early 1970's. Officially opened in 1973 as part of a skyscraper complex of office buildings in New York's financial district and an extensive retail centre including an underground shopping mall and, at the time, the world's tallest buildings at 1,368 and 1,362 feet respectively, the towers soon became pivotal in New York City's iconography. As Glanz and Lipton (2003: 234) point out:

> The twins had become one of New York City's most popular postcards. It was not just CNN that featured the towers. Almost every time movie and television directors need an *embellishment shot* [original emphasis] of New York, it was to the Twin Towers that they turned… these steel boxes, in all their severity and grandeur, had become a shorthand symbol for New York.

Consequently, in addition to a tragic loss of human life, the events of 9/11 also confirmed a detrimental semiotic loss of the Twin Towers, for not only New York as a city, but for the wider country of America. However, the attack on the World Trade Centre on 9/11 was not the first assault on the buildings. On 26 February 1993, a terrorist car bomb exploded in the underground car park beneath the World Trade Centre's North Tower, killing six people and injuring over a thousand. Ironically, a broker, Bruce Pomper who worked in the World Trade Centre complex described the 1993 attack 'like an airplane had hit the building' (Pomper quoted in BBC, 2009). In 1995, a granite memorial fountain honouring the dead victims was unveiled and located on the Austin J.Tobin Plaza, directly above the site of the explosion. Along with the names of the six victims, the memorial inscription read:

> *On February 26, 1993, a bomb set by terrorists exploded below this site. This horrible act of violence killed innocent people, injured thousands, and made victims of us all.*

The memorial fountain was later destroyed in the 2001 attacks.

Plate 24: The South Tower (2 WTC) collapsing at 9.59am on September 11, 2001.
The North Tower (1 WTC) on the right of the photograph collapses later at 10.28am.

Arguably, though, of all the images of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, it was the catastrophic structural failing of the Twin Tower skyscrapers and their resultant collapse, transmitted instantaneously and repeated *ad infinitum* through television and internet media, which ensured the event became indelibly imprinted into the collective consciousness. Conceivably, however, *if* the World Trade Centre towers *had* remained standing and the fires been extinguished, with a much-reduced loss of life, especially amongst emergency personnel, the (Western) cultural reaction to 9/11 and the American political/military response may well have been different. Notwithstanding this point, the attack on the Twin Towers, as symbols of a (Western) capitalist system and as icons of the United State's hegemonic power, up until the buildings fell, meant that America's hegemony, or at least its hegemonic image, was *wounded*. Crucially though, and speculation aside, the buildings did fail and the televised spectacle of the massive Twin Towers, constructed and maintained from modern techniques, collapsing into dust amounted no less to a *mortal wounding* of the hegemonic image of the United States of America. Hence, within a very short period of time of the buildings collapsing, creating a perception that America was under attack (Sturken, 2004), the term 'Ground Zero' was extracted from history and appropriated by the media as a term to describe the former World Trade Centre as a site of devastation and (attempted) annihilation (see Tomasky, 2003). Of course, the term 'Ground Zero' has its origins inextricably linked to the destructive power of nuclear bombs and their point of denotation. Nevertheless, the term has now entered a contemporary lexicon to mean destruction and the mortal wounding of (American) pride and innocence.

However, the term 'Ground Zero' also conveys the idea of a starting point – a blank canvas – which allows a rebuilding of not only the physical buildings, but also a restructuring of local, national and global narratives. As Kaplan (2003: 56) notes, 'we often use *ground zero* colloquially to convey the sense of starting from scratch, a clean slate, the bottom line,' a meaning she goes on to suggest 'resonates with the often-heard claim that the world was radically altered by 9/11'. Similarly, Sturken suggests the notion of Ground Zero as a blank slate enables a set of narratives about September 11 to be formulated – 'both the narrative that the site of Lower Manhattan

is the symbolic centre of that event and the narrative that September 11 was a moment in which the United States lost its innocence' (2004: 311).

Thus, in the years since 2001, Ground Zero in Lower Manhattan has become a (building) site of destruction and reconstruction (Plate 25), with immense emotional and political investments attached. In turn, this has resulted in a highly contestable space. Indeed, it is has become a place inscribed with numerous meanings and roles – as a *neighbourhood* of New York, as a *commercial district* of Lower Manhattan, and as a site of national and international *memory and mourning*. Hence, Ground Zero is a complex space, multi-layered with diverse political agendas and intertwined with notions of grief and memorialisation. Ground Zero is a spatial configuration (and opportunity) in the midst of one of the world's busiest and most densely populated urban metropolises. At the local level, there is contestation on how to maximize the space in a compact urban environment, especially in relation to commercial interests and urban design. Nationally, Ground Zero and its inherent meaning is important in projecting and affirming national identity, certainly within the global context of exporting revitalized hegemonic images of the United States of America. Crucially, however, since 2001, Ground Zero has evolved into a place where tensions in the practice of memory and mourning have become apparent, especially in relation to the aesthetics and touristic consumption of (temporary) memorial shrines, and it to this latter point that the next section turns.

Plate 25: Two views of Ground Zero as a building site in Lower Manhattan, New York
Left photo - view is facing north-east: Right photo – aerial view is facing north
(Photos: BBC, 2006)

7.7.1   A Dark Shrine: The Tribute WTC Visitor Centre Context

The Tribute WTC Visitor Centre is located at 120 Liberty Street, in Lower

Manhattan, New York and is directly opposite the south side of Ground Zero (Plate

26). Integral, spatially as least, to the actual Ground Zero site, the Tribute WTC

Visitor Centre has become a focal point for visitors to consume the tragedy of 9/11

(also Plate 26). Classified as a 'Dark Shrine' by Stone (2006: 155), the Tribute WTC

Visitor Centre is defined as:

> A site which essentially 'trades' on the act of remembrance and respect for the
> recently deceased. Hence, Dark Shrines are often constructed, formally or

informally, very close to the site of death and within a very short time period of the death occurring.

Plate 26: Map of the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre in relation to Ground Zero (*top left*): Exterior/entrance of the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre (*top right*). Visitors on the viewing platform (7 WTC) overlooking the Ground Zero site, New York, (*bottom*). (Map Source:Tribute WTC, 2009c)

A project of the September 11 Families Association, a non-profit organisation originating from a collective of relatives who directly suffered bereavement as a result of either the 1993 or 2001 terrorist attacks, the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre works in collaboration with the National September 11 Memorial and Museum. This is the private organisation responsible for oversight of the official memorial design, as well as fundraising and managing the Memorial and Museum which is currently being built at the Ground Zero site and is due to open in 2012. Thus, the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre is a temporary project, accommodated in the former Liberty Deli, a small delicatessen that served meals to rescuers on 9/11, often by celebrities, and later became a recovery distribution point for equipment such as gloves, socks, respirators, eye drops, and tools (Tribute WTC, 2009a).

The Centre is adjacent to the New York Fire Department's 'Ladder 10' firehouse, which sent the first wave of fire fighters to the World Trade Centre on September 11. The Centre also organises guided walking tours around the perimeter of Ground Zero, culminating in a dedicated viewing platform area providing visitors with a panoramic view of the building site (Figure 54). The Tribute WTC Visitor Centre is a mixture of gallery space and multi-media displays, depicting the events leading up to, during and after 9/11 (Table 17).

Charging an adult donation/admission entrance fee of $10 to the exhibition (at the time of writing), and in March 2009 welcomed its one-millionth visitor since its opening in 2006 (Furnari, 2009), the mission statement of the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre states:

> The Tribute WTC Visitor Centre was created by the September 11th Families' Association to share the personal stories of victims, survivors, rescue and recovery workers, volunteers, and residents of Lower Manhattan. By engaging visitors in the authentic experiences of those most affected by the events of 9/11, the exhibits convey multiple perspectives of courage, loss, heroism and grief. These personal experiences put a human face on the overwhelming events that shocked the city, the nation and the world. The Centre increases understanding of the humanity and community that was both lost and found. Throughout the Centre, interactive exhibits, personal greeters from the September 11th community and an environment for reflection, involves visitors in appreciating the scope and impact of the disaster as well as the enormous outpouring of compassion in response to that loss (Tribute WTC, 2009b).

Gallery Title	Brief Description
Gallery One Experience the memory of the lively community that was lost	Examines the World Trade Centre pre-9/11 attack, including retail, residential and commercial communities of Lower Manhattan.
Gallery Two Journey through the events of September 11, 2001	Outlines a timeline of the events leading up to the attacks on the World Trade Centre, including depicting the actual attacks themselves.
Gallery Three Rescue and Recovery	Highlights the initial rescue efforts by the uniformed services on 9/11, as well as subsequent recovery operations post-9/11. Includes hundreds of 'Missing Person' flyers which friends and family posted in the area in an attempt to locate victims in the aftermath.
Gallery Four Tribute	Exhibits symbolic objects of victims donated by family members, as well as photographs of the dead and a multi-media projection of the names of the deceased.
Gallery Five Voices of Promise	Dedicated space for visitors to enter into a dialogue with the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre, with an opportunity to write thoughts and opinions onto postcards. Additional gallery space promotes narratives of tolerance and generosity, as well as highlighting experiences of people who were present in Lower Manhattan on 9/11.

Table 17: Description of the five permanent galleries that comprise the
Tribute WTC Visitor Centre at Ground Zero.

The study now turns to the ethnographic findings at Tribute WTC Visitor Centre at Ground Zero.

7.8   Tribute WTC Visitor Centre and Ground Zero Ethnography – 'Reality Death'

The Tribute WTC Visitor Centre, as a visitor experience is undoubtedly emotional, especially with regard to how the exhibitory space inside the visitor centre interplays with the spatial site of Ground Zero itself. The visitor is granted an opportunity to access a 'traumascape' where thousands of people lost their lives, and to walk within (or, at least around) a place where thousands of human bodies essentially turned to dust in the crushing effect of the collapsing Twin Towers. Thus, a number of significant themes, relevant to this study, emerged from the ethnographic fieldwork at the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre at Ground Zero.

As with earlier ethnographies at the Dungeons and Body Worlds, analysis of the ethnographic data from the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre and Ground Zero provided discernible data clusters. These have been translated into broad subject themes (Table 18), and it is from these themes that a narrative is constructed.

	Data Theme Title	
Tribute WTC Visitor Centre and Ground Zero	1.	Spatial Scale and a Meditation of Mortality
	2.	Semiotics: Signs of Life (through Death)
	3.	Consuming Death and Disaster: Ethical Codes

Table 18: The Tribute WTC Visitor Centre at Ground Zero – Ethnographic Data Themes

7.8.1   Spatial Scale and a Meditation of Mortality

Despite the fact Ground Zero is a location of mass murder, the physical site and its proximate area is a collection of analogous commercial buildings, or buildings under construction, which serve (or, at least will serve) as integral components of a broader service sector economy. Arguably, therefore, Ground Zero as a space is slowly evolving from a space of tragedy and destruction that is occupied by mourners, into a place of trade and construction that will be (re)occupied by merchants. Presently however, a multitude of people coexist at Ground Zero, all with differing reasons for consuming and occupying the space at any particular time. Moreover, these disparate groups all intermingle with one another within the geographical confines of Lower

Manhattan – shoppers, tourists, office staff, relatives of the 9/11 deceased, emergency workers, street vendors, vagrants, commuters, and so on. Yet, this is a space designed not only for the living but also, as a site of homicide, a place of commemoration. Thus, it is not only a space *of* death but also, a place *for* the living.

Hence, an evident theme to emerge from the ethnographic fieldwork data at the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre related to how space, particularly the spatial scale of the Ground Zero site, appeared to act as a place of mediation between the dead of the past and the living of the present. Evidence emerged about how visitors triangulate their experiences between what they had previously heard, seen or read through media narratives of 9/11, with the sense of scale, and 'feel for the place' at the actual Ground Zero site. Additionally, emotional engagement at the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre allowed individuals to extract particular interpretations and construct subsequent meanings. As a French male interviewee states:

> We've come to the Twin Towers, and really we didn't expect the site to be so big… its massive…. it looked much smaller on TV… [However] Its not until you get here [referring to the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre) that you get a feel for the place…. Its an extraordinary feeling, we went on the audio tour around Ground Zero, and listening to that and those recollections of that fateful day and the days that followed, you really get a sense of the sheer scale of the devastation and the amount of people killed that day…. I've found the whole experience deeply moving (GZ Interviewee 1: Interviews, 2009c).

It could be argued that the site appears physically large, not only because of the spatially deceptive images of the site on television and in photographs, but also because of the compact design of New York City generally. In particular, urban planners have maximised the geography of Manhattan Island to include as many skyscrapers and other buildings as possible within any given space. This provides individuals, especially those visitors who are not from New York, a perception of an overwhelming sense of 'structural dominance' (Obs, 2009c). Hence, once the visitor enters the Ground Zero landscape, which is a large fenced-off building site (at present), the sense of scale in such a built-up and urbanised space is much more pronounced, than perhaps it might otherwise be in more open-planned urban environment. As an Australian female interviewee (a member of a group of four females) states:

> We're on a 5 day shopping trip, and we must admit we haven't visit this place on purpose [referring to Ground Zero] – we were actually going to Century 21

[a large retail department store on the east side of the Ground Zero site], but we walked out of the subway station and this vast space in the middle of the other skyscrapers just hits you… it's a very chilling and surreal experience (GZ Interviewee 2: Interviews, 2009c).

Whilst there is a notion of serendipity of the visit to Ground Zero for this individual (and her friends), perhaps caused by the spatial influence of the site, an American female interviewee suggested the (dead) space had to be formalised and built upon for the visitor:

I've not been down here since last year [2008], and I heard on the radio the other day that site is still basically a big hole in the ground. I know as a New Yorker that the authorities are pressing forward to see the construction completed as quickly as possible… I know it looks a big mess at the moment, but a place has to be built for the millions of us who want to see it and where those poor guys were murdered (GZ Interviewee 3: Interviews, 2009c).

It is here where the spatial junction of life and death becomes evident, where a locale such as Ground Zero, and its array of contested narratives, may arbitrate between those who survived 9/11, or least witnessed the events unfold, and those who perished in the attacks. Consequently, the construction of a place for the untimely, but significant dead, or in any case a place to remember their fate, must follow destruction (or mass killing) of the living. Arguably, therefore, Ground Zero as a space is as much about mediation, contemplation and reflection for life, as it is about remembering and commemorating the dead. Consequently, a British female interviewee suggests:

It's impossible to come here and not feel overwhelmed – both by the place and the actual size of it. My entire family fought back the urge to just stand in there [referring to the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre] and sob as we read the names and looked at the photographs and all those little personal items of the victims… we've come out here [outside the centre and across from Ground Zero] and took turns to peek through the holes in the fence at the construction site…we've also been peeking inside the fire station doors [referring to Ladder 10 Fire House adjacent to the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre] and looking at the memorials inside the fire station… then we walked around and looked at the bronze mural on the wall and all the names and photos of the firemen who died… got to say, we leave New York on Friday [20 Feb 2009] with an eternal imprint on ourselves… it's a really sad place, and it's made me think what I would have done if I was stuck up there [referring to the Twin Tower buildings] (GZ Interviewee 4: Interviews, 2009c).

Of course, it is suggested that 'peeking' inside the perimeter of the construction site or the fire station is simply a way of attempting to access the space and comprehend what was before, what is now and, what will follow. Conceivably though, the Ground

Zero space for this individual and her attempt to access it intercedes with her reflective account of *what she would have done* if she had been faced with a similar fate as those trapped in the Twin Towers on 9/11. It is here where her spatial experience of Ground Zero arbitrates in her own life reflections, in her own sadness of the event, and her pondering of a hypothetical *mortality moment*, that is – *if* she had been in the World Trade Centre on 9/11.

An Irish male interviewee who notes narratives of sacrality being attached to the Ground Zero space also indicates this reflective theme, generated by spatial awareness and locational authenticity of the Ground Zero site. He goes on to state:

> It's really interesting being here… its certainly worth a look just to see how horrible 9/11 really was, and the centre [referring to the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre] really put things into context for me…. but out here [Ground Zero] I can't believe how many buildings are still under renovation. I guess if people are interested in seeing the site, then they better hurry, because I imagine this place will soon be full of skyscrapers again…. Our guide said that they are not re-building on top of the World Trade Centre ground directly since its now sacred ground (GZ Interviewee 5: Interviews, 2009c).

Whilst contestability of the redesign of Ground Zero has often been protracted, especially during the planning stages in 2003 and 2004 (see Jacobs, 2008), the so-called *footprints* of the former Twin Towers – that is, the actual ground space that the buildings occupied, have taken on extra significance. Indeed, the September 11 Families Association campaigned for the actual footprint space not to be commercially developed, because to them this constituted a gravesite and thus sacred ground. Consequently, as part of the official WTC Memorial 'Reflecting Absence', which is due to partially open by September 11, 2011 and open fully by mid-2013, the footprints of the buildings will be filled with water. The planned memorial will create a symbolic and reflective mediating space (both cognitively and actual – through the water in the pools), where individuals may reconcile the events of 9/11 within their own psychosocial life-world, and where the dead, or at least memorisation of the dead is played out at the interface of everyday living and general commerce. (Plate 27). Importantly, however, it is the notion of sacrality of space that allows, for some at least, the process of arbitration between the dead and the living, which in a pragmatic sense, amounts to contemplation of relationships between past violence and hope(s) for a peaceful and secure future (Obs, 2009c). Presently however, there appears to be

a sense of frustration amongst some visitors whereby restricted access to Ground Zero and a desire to 'get up close and personal' to the actual site of death (i.e. the building footprints) are mitigating any potential mediating effects. As a female Finnish interviewee suggested:

> We've come here [Ground Zero] expecting to see the imprint area of the Twin Towers, but didn't realise that the entire area would be fenced off… its pretty difficult to see anything through the fences [that surround the perimeter of the building site]… this is such a historic and hallowed place and we really haven't experienced the impact of the site, which is a bit disappointing… I think it will be better to visit the site again when they've completed the building work…. and will be more suitable to pay your respects when it's completed (GZ Interviewee 6: Interviews, 2009c).

Plate 27: Artist rendering of the completed new WTC site: (clockwise from top) the Freedom Tower (SOM, 2011), 7 WTC (SOM, 2006), Tower 2 (Foster + Partners, 2012), Tower 3 (Richard Rogers Partnership, 2011), and Tower 4 (Fumihiko Maki, 2011). The buildings frame the 9/11 memorial, which utilizes the footprints of the original Twin Tower buildings. Source: (Jacobs, 2008)

Thus, perceptions of the space as a 'hallowed place' and subsequent notions of sacrality are again apparent. Yet, also evident are frustrations at the current state of the (building) project and disenchantment amongst some visitors of being denied access to the actual 'traumascape', that is – the actual site of destruction, the point of collapse – the 'true' *ground zero* (Obs, 2009c). As a Canadian male interviewee noted:

> I know we can't get to the actual site, but to be honest, this is close enough for me… I think we'll return when the Freedom Tower is completed and see the water features… but, today it's been great being here just to soak up the sadness of the whole place and reflect on what happened… its really put my life into perspective (GZ Interviewee 7: Interviews, 2009c).

Hence, the spatial aspect of Ground Zero does provide a contemporary mediating place to contemplate and reflect upon how people were killed, why they died, and what their deaths may mean – both individually and collectively. Ultimately however, the present condition of Ground Zero, both as a physical place of construction, but also and perhaps more importantly, as a psychosocial space with attached emotional and contested political narratives, is a site of mediation between the dead and the living. However, it is a site currently *in flux* through its emergent restitution, both as a mercantile place for the living, but also as a memory space for the dead.

7.8.2   *Semiotics: Signs of Life (through Death)*

The issue of various emotional, cultural, and political narratives invested in 9/11 as an historic event, both individually and collectively, together with a great deal of available 'signage' of the atrocity, either through written texts, audio accounts or visual images, ensures a particular semiology of Ground Zero. Thus, an evident theme emerged from the ethnographic data that focused on how individuals seemingly both provide and are provided with 'emotional markers' in order to utilise a site of death. In short, individuals consume Ground Zero and its inherent symbolism to construct meanings of past *death* in an attempt to comprehend present *life* and future *living*. Closely related to the theme of Ground Zero as a mediating space between the dead and living, the theme of semiotics indicates how individuals reflect upon official signs and interpretations of death and tragedy. In particular, these interpretations have largely have been formalised by the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre, and what is important for this study is how individuals translate their visitor experience of the

macabre and mass-mortality into a meaning of life and consequences for their own particular life-projects.

For instance, an exhibit at the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre which depicts heroism and courage, especially from the emergency services who attended the 9/11 attacks, also narrates tales of gallantry from ordinary civilians who were caught up in the events. Specifically, in Gallery 2, which takes the visitor through a 'Timeline' of 9/11 events, visitors are encouraged to learn of evidence of how ordinary people helped and supported one another in an extraordinary situation (Plate 28).

Plate 28: Part of the Timeline exhibit with quotations and photographs illustrating how people helped one another during the 9/11 crisis. (Source: Tribute WTC, 2009d)

Consequently, the Visitor Centre presents emotional markers to the individual through its representation of tragedy, and an opportunity for individuals to become embodied by narratives of valour and intrepidness, especially when faced with adversity and death. This, in turn, is meant to inspire (or, indeed, does inspire) the Other into a state of munificence. Consequently, a female interviewee who lived in New York notes acts of benevolence from the general public:

> My husband is a fire-fighter and attended 9/11, and my son has just graduated from the fire academy here in New York… so for me, this place is very emotional. My whole family and I were down here last anniversary… and all day people kept coming up and thanking my husband for being a fire-fighter… the people of New York City are wonderful… they come up on the street or in the subway while he [her husband] was in his uniform and wanted to shake his hand… I think this place [Tribute WTC Visitor Centre] is such an important reminder, and I'm glad we can come and recover… it's important to have a place set up to pay tribute to all the lives lost and never forget (GZ Interviewee 8: Interviews, 2009c).

Hence, as integral components in the construction of paying tribute, images and memorabilia of the Fire Department of New York (FDNY) are strategically displayed within the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre to invoke a sense of bravery and boldness of those who confronted death and disaster (Obs, 2009c). Whilst visitors do undoubtedly want to pay respect to the uniformed emergency services, there are indications that images of the disaster and subsequent narratives of heroism are manipulated to provoke (national) pride and a sense of duty (Obs, 2009c). Particularly, the photograph of three FDNY firefighters raising the USA flag on rubble at Ground Zero in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, which quickly became emblematic of US Marines planting the USA flag on Mount Suribachi in Iwo Jima in 1945 after defeating the Japanese (Plate 29), is displayed prominently within the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre. Consequently, the iconic image which has become metaphorical of a contemporary stoic American spirit plays a central role in (re)constructing official representations of (national) grief, hope and recovery from acts of terrorist atrocity and murder.

Plate 29: Photo (left) of US Marines planting the USA flag on Mount Suribachi at Iwo Jima in 1945. Photo (right) of three FDNY firefighters raising the USA Flag in the aftermath of the 9/11 at Ground Zero. (Source: Tribute WTC, 2009d)

It is here, encapsulating in celluloid the moment when 'ordinary heroes' reclaim Ground Zero by planting a flagstaff, a ritual often reserved for marking the capture of enemy terrain and where triumph or, at least the notion of a future victory, is signified. Thus, the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre describes narratives and displays symbols, through various artefacts, videos and photographs, and overall, recites tales of a group rescue effort on 9/11. However, the emphasis of American military might is transferred to the 'common man' (to a large extent, the fire-fighter) who works in concert with his neighbours and where 'victory' will ultimately prevail (Obs, 2009c). As an American female interviewee stated after her visitor experience:

> …the presentation [referring to the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre] did a beautiful job of telling the story of 9/11 through its videos, photos, the recovered articles and all those personal stories…. I really feel sorrow for all the families who lost loved ones and for the rescue guys who had to endure such horrific conditions to do their job… I tell you, I'll sleep more soundly in my bed tonight knowing those guys [referring to the emergency services] are out there… (GZ Interviewee 9: Interviews, 2009c).

As well as providing emotional markers of those who survived the events, which are essentially an assimilation of real-life (heroic) stories of people who faced death, or had to deal with the dead, the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre also offers signage of the actual dead. Specifically, the centre displays hundreds of actual 'Missing Person'

posters and flyers that relatives and friends spontaneously put up around the Ground Zero site in the immediate aftermath of the attacks, in an attempt to locate missing individuals (Obs, 2009c; see Plate 30). Indeed, Gallery 3 illustrates a montage of amateur flyers, clearly compiled in haste, all with various photographs of the victims and where they were last seen or worked together with a contact telephone number. The visitor is essentially not only provided with symbolic signs of hope (of finding the missing), but also 'real signs' of anguish from loved ones and friends whose purpose in originally displaying the flyers was to help locate missing people (Obs, 2009c). Invariably, however, many of the missing person flyers, which now have morphed into a collective epitaph, allow the visitor to gaze paradoxically upon despair and desperation, yet also hope and optimism of those who sought those missing.

Plate 30: Missing Person Flyers displayed in Gallery Three at the
Tribute WTC Visitor Centre, New York.

However, it is in Gallery 4 which is simply entitled 'Tribute', where the stark realisation that many of those who are depicted in the missing person flyers are in fact dead. The Gallery comprises a wall that is inscribed with names of thousands of people who were killed on 9/11 (as well as those killed in the earlier attacks on the World Trade Centre in 1993). Additionally, a roll call of victims' names, ages and occupations is scrolled on a large video screen on a continuous four and a half hour

loop, paying a perpetual tribute to the victims (Obs, 2009c). Piped music is also played quietly in the background which creates a reverend atmosphere, and with tissue boxes strategically placed around the Gallery space, the visitor/viewer is essentially 'emotionally invigilated' into sentimental reflection of those who died (Plate 31).

Plate 31: 'Tribute' (Gallery Four) with tissue boxes at the
Tribute WTC Visitor Centre, New York.

However, perhaps the most striking feature of the Gallery is the hundreds of photographs and personal items of the victims, donated by their families, and displayed against two walls. The photographs portray the dead in routine day-to-day activities and ordinary situations. For example, there are images of a father playing ball with his son, a young woman in her graduation gowns, a family on holiday on a beach, or a grandmother posing next to a Christmas tree (Obs, 2009c). Additionally, tangible items belonging to the victims, such as baseball gloves, football shirts, and other personal trinkets, add to a sense of loss. Perhaps one of the most poignant 'markers' displayed in the Gallery is a small hand-made heart-shape card which had been designed and coloured in with crayons by a pre-school boy named Kevin Hagg (Obs, 2009c). His father, Gary Hagg, aged 36, was Vice President for Marsh and McLennan, a US based professional services and insurance brokerage company,

located in the North Tower of the World Trade Centre. Marsh and McLennan offices suffered a direct hit when American Airlines Flight 11 crashed into the building. Gary Hagg was killed instantly. The emotive message on the card from his young son simply reads:

> *"To Daddy,*
> *I hope you are having a great time in heaven.*
> *I Love You.*
> *Love*
> *Kevin"*

It is perhaps this sense of ordinariness of the victims, that is, ordinary people in ordinary situations but who faced an extraordinary event, and of victimhood and innocence, that provokes sentiment in the viewer. Whilst the majority of visitors viewed the Tribute Galley in a solemn and respectful silence, there were visitors who were crying, some openly, whilst they looked at photographs and read personal messages, although whether these particular individuals had a relationship with the deceased were not clear (Obs, 2009c). Nevertheless, whilst emotional responses from a diverse range of people will invariably be different, the representation of the (ordinary, but significant) dead, in this particular exhibit at least, does seemingly provoke some reflection of mortality, as well as personal reactions and responses to life circumstances. As a female British interviewee pointed out:

> This place [referring to the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre] is both heart-warming and heartbreaking at the same time… it's very informative and seeing all the visual stuff of debris, memorabilia and photographs of the many people who passed away made me appreciate more the Ground Zero site, and I must admit of my own family…. But those missing person flyers and pictures of those who died with the names did it for me… I couldn't look at the missing person flyers on the walls for some reason. It was too hard for me and brought tears to my eyes. I had to turn away. To see that many people die was too hard… I kept thinking of what I would have done if my husband went missing - would I put a flyer up? I don't know, but it makes you wonder, which perhaps is the hardest part of it… (GZ Interviewee 10: Interviews, 2009c).

Similarly, another female interviewee (from Chile) suggested her visitor experience reminded her of the death of her father, who had not been killed on 9/11, but simply died of natural causes. She goes on to state, 'the whole thing just reminded me of my father; I don't know why, but looking at the people who died, I just kept seeing his face' (GZ Interviewee 11: Interviews, 2009c).

Official interpretation provides 'signs' of the deceased, which signifies a broader reflection for individuals' own personal circumstances. Indeed, visitors imagine themselves in the same or similar situations as those 'ordinary' people who have died, or reflect upon mortality within their own psychosocial world. Consequently, visitors are given an opportunity to express their own views and concerns (about the death event). As discussed earlier in the thesis, as way of contextualising the morality of dark tourism, Gallery Five in the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre provides an official space to record visitors' own 'signage' in the form of individual comment cards. In turn, these postcards have come to represent a kind of 'moral marker' (Obs, 2009c). Specifically, once the visitor leaves Gallery 4 and its portraits of the dead, they descend downstairs to Gallery 5 through a plethora of origami paper chains, donated by Japan as symbols of healing and peace. Hence, Gallery 5 – entitled 'Voices of Promise' – is valorised by the origami chains and their inherent symbolism and, consequently, the space is 'officially opened up' to promote peace and understanding. Thus, whilst the dead are left behind in the Galleries upstairs, the living descend downstairs to begin the act of communication of moral tales about 9/11 atrocity and its consequences.

Moreover, once inside Gallery 5, visitors are invited to read a collection of postcards left by other visitors that briefly provide an indication of views and opinions (Obs, 2009c). To continue the 'moral conversation', individuals are invited to write down their own views, to express how they feel and, ultimately, to leave personal moral markers for other visitors to read. Indeed, since 2006, 72,000 cards in 46 languages from 118 countries have been left at the centre (Obs, 2009c). Approximately 200 of these cards are displayed on a wall against an official message of tolerance and peace. It is here that moral conversations are not only sanctioned, but are encouraged as the living attempt to come to terms with life through death (and the dead). As a result, personal messages litter the Gallery space signifying and anticipating a better future.

During observations, an opportunity presented itself to undertake a rudimentary content analysis of fifty individual comment cards, located in a file in Gallery 5. Out of the fifty-card sample, all written in English, eleven keywords were extracted against a simple criterion that a single same word had to appear more than five times,

in order to confer a greater sense of validity through its repetition. The frequency of these keywords, as they appeared within the sample of comment cards is illustrated in Figure 11, whilst Figure 12 shows the percentage of keywords utilised.
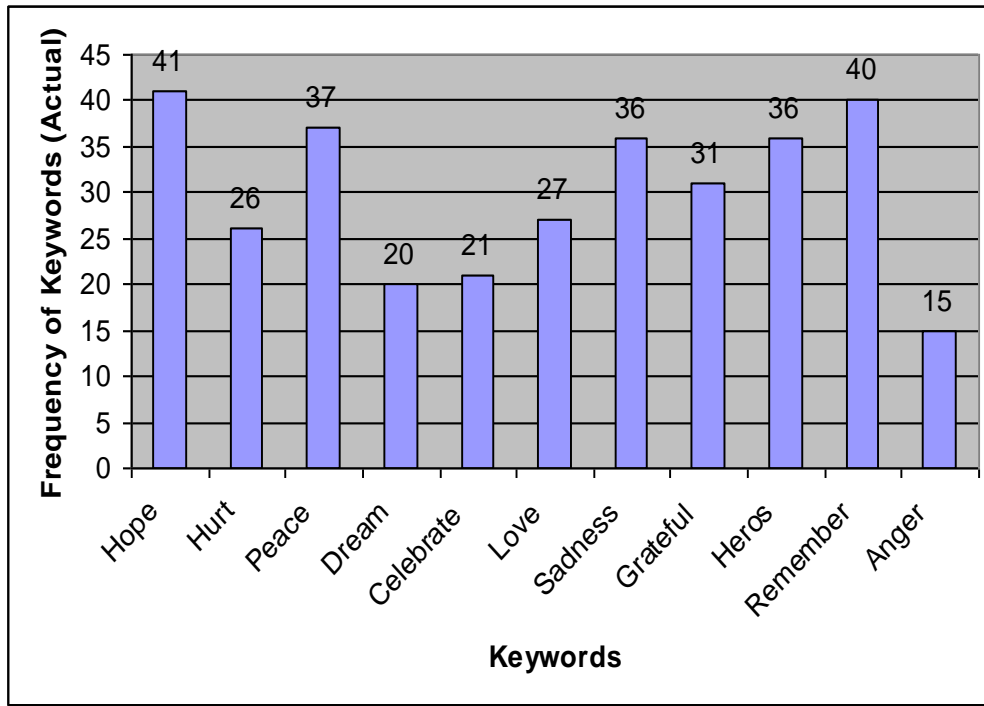
Figure 11: Graph showing the frequency of times a keyword appeared on visitor comment cards at the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre (n = 50).

Of course, this content analysis is limited in its design, simply due the opportune
discovery of the comment cards during covert participant observations, and the fact
that the cards were bundled and presented in a file for public viewing, thus providing
ease of access. Hence, the researcher only had concealed scrutiny of them for a very
limited period. Despite these limitations, the results do indicate a majority of
comments are positivistic in nature. In particular, words such as 'hope' (82%), 'peace'
(74%) and 'love' (54%), used in a visitor centre which showcases the murders of
thousands of people, suggest visitors are constructing meaning of mortality that
focuses not on the actual death itself, *but* on life, and upon future aspirations of both
individual and collective harmony. Of course, visitor comments illustrate a great deal
of 'sadness' (72%), but 'anger' (30%) as a corresponding feeling is less pronounced.
Additionally, comments that commemorate the dead through the word 'remember'
(80%) offer a paying of respect to the deceased and their families. However, the term
'remember' also suggests, perhaps, the notion of remembering events pre-tragedy and
post-tragedy, subsequently informing cultural and political responses of not only how
to deal with the atrocity but, importantly, for the atrocity not to occur again.
Significantly, however, and certainly within this theme of semiotics, are the positive
words that are written on visitor comment cards which provide 'signage' for other
visitors, consequently allowing a conveying of messages that signify broader concepts
of peace, hope and understanding. Future research should perhaps focus upon whether
any of the visitor comment cards are vetted or censored by the Tribute WTC Visitor
Centre. Even so, what is apparent is the Centre's interpretative philosophy of
communication, commemoration and education of (tragic) death, where individual
visitors play an engaging role through emotional embodiment with official
representations of 9/11. This ensures that dead (victims) provide signs for the living
(visitors), which, in turn, allows for aspirations of hope, peace and tolerance.

7.8.3   *Consuming Death and Disaster: Ethical Codes*

The theme of *Consuming Death and Disaster: Ethical Codes* emerged from the
ethnographic fieldwork as a discernible data cluster and centred upon perceptions of
ethics and moral codes of Others. Notably, it became evident that individual people

had concerns about the perceived behaviour of other people, particularly when that behaviour was framed within the context of respectability for the dead. Undoubtedly, whilst different people from different cultures pay homage to the dead in different ways, because a notion of sacrality has been attached to Ground Zero, consuming this disaster (site) in the public gaze seems to be fraught with ethical dilemmas – for some at least. A key dilemma appears, from observing the behaviour of various visitors and speaking with them about their experiences and concerns, to converge on how people perceive interactions of Others with the site and the type of (appropriate) behaviour displayed.

Additionally, some visitors appear concerned with the apparent 'touristification' process at Ground Zero, and how this may, perceptually at least, impact upon conceptions of memory and regard for the deceased (Obs, 2009c). In other words, moral concerns revolved around perceptions of the Other and their ethical code(s), that is – how individuals were perceived by different people to behave at the site, both in terms of their specific actions and general interactions. Furthermore, individual visitors appear to apply a set of inherent (moral) principles to the commercialisation of the site, most notably those principles that seemed to focus upon tragic death being exploited for profit. As a British female visitor (who was accompanied with by a male partner) pointed out:

> We've come down here and must admit we are truly disgusted with what we have seen… the whole area around here seems to be home to hordes of people selling twin tower pictures, tee shirts, statutes, flag and trinkets… And, I really dislike the conspiracy theory wackos giving speeches on how this was an inside job!! [original emphasis of tone]…. There is also an old tramp playing a version of the Battle Hymn of The Republic on his flute with his case open for tips… and then there is that huge sign stating 'Opening 2012' – I never thought New York would have allowed this cemetery to be disrespected after 9/11 (GZ Interviewee 12: Interviews, 2009c; also Plate 32).
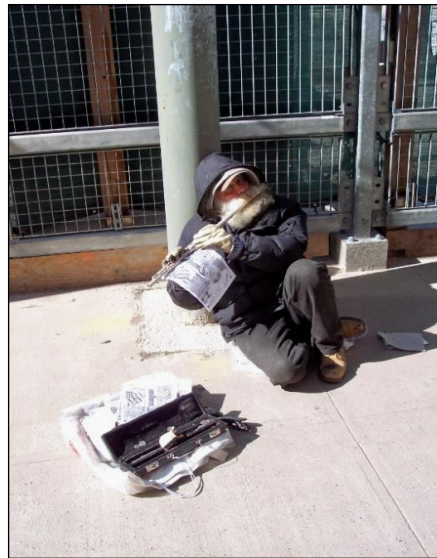
Plate 32: *Photo (top left):* Man selling photographs of the World Trade Centre at the PATH (subway) Station – Ground Zero (including images of the Twin Towers collapsing – Obs, 2009c). *Photo (top right):* Man playing flute for money at the PATH (subway) Station – Ground Zero (he has photocopies of a picture of the collapsing Twin Towers in his hand and near to his open flute case and visitors are invited to take one in exchange for a monetary tip – Obs, 2009c). *Photo (bottom):* man in blue cap (circled) at Ground Zero who was 'preaching' to visitors how 9/11 was a conspiracy of the US government (Obs, 2009c).

Whilst official signs from the New York authorities are displayed around the Ground Zero site, warning visitors not to purchase from illegal street vendors, visitors appear

to have their own ethical codes on the commercialisation of death. Indeed, as a French female interviewee stated:

> I had mixed emotions coming down here to Ground Zero – and I know I shouldn't call it Ground Zero, as some New Yorkers don't like the term apparently… but I remember seeing the awful events unfold on TV back home in France, so I thought it was only right to come down and pay my respects to those who lost their lives on that tragic day… when I came down here this morning, it was really quiet with only a few people around and I've been wandering around by myself just thinking and getting a bit emotional; but now its packed with all these guys selling things and getting in your face. It's really disgusting, but I guess that's what you get in America – everything is for sale, including death, but I think it's really sad to see (GZ Interviewee 13: Interviews, 2009c).

Whilst this individual acknowledges the capitalist nature of American society, a British female interviewee also suggests her Ground Zero experience was emotional, but the notion of commodifying the 9/11 tragedy compounded her overall feelings:

> … it's been an intensely moving experience and very emotional… I wanted to cry when I read and heard about all the stories… I must admit I feel heart-broken, crushed and empty after coming out of there [referring to the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre]; but what is really upsetting me at the moment is all these street vendors trying to sell you things, like tee shirts and little trinkets with the Twin Towers on and photographs of the Towers falling down… I really find that rather strange – you know, people died when those buildings collapsed, their bodies were in the dust, and they [referring to the street vendors] are really selling pictures of dead people as they fell to the ground and were killed. If people want to have postcards and photographs like that, then it's sick… (GZ Interviewee 14: Interviews, 2009c).

It is here where a disjunction is evident of how individuals, in their consumption of the site, respond to notions of *official* and *unofficial* 'memory management' of the dead. Whilst the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre may be deemed official in managing and projecting particular narratives of the atrocity, unofficial narratives which have not been formally sanctioned or vetted by the authorities include the many street vendors who, simply perpetuate the event through retailing stark photographs and kitsch trinkets and clothing which have been given an unendorsed '9/11 brand'. Hence, the authorised version of 9/11 is packaged up and implicitly sold for (mass) consumption via the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre – the centre charges a $10 (donation) for adults, whilst groups, senior citizens and military personnel are given discounts. However, those who explicitly charge for an unauthorised version of the atrocity – the street vendors and souvenir sellers, are castigated by some visitors, as

well as the authorities themselves, for being exploitative and unethical. Importantly, however, within the confines of this study, it is not whether the practice of selling unauthorised photographs and tourist trinkets of 9/11 is morally appropriate, it is the fact that these souvenirs *are* sold and, indeed *bought* by many visitors at Ground Zero (Obs, 2009c). Moreover, it is the amount of 'moral conversation' generated by the practice that is key, especially from visitors and their perceptions of ethical conduct of Others at a site of death and disaster.

These moral conversations also appear to centre on how Others conduct themselves during their 'consumption' of Ground Zero. Particularly, the issue of taking photographs, an ostensible mandatory practice undertaken by tourists all over the world, was single out as inappropriate and, indeed, offensive to some visitors, as individuals reconcile their own ethical code on how to consume a visitor death site. As an Irish male interviewee noted:

> There is nothing much to see beyond the fence – it's just a building site; yet it seems that all tourists around here want to do is to take pictures… Personally, I just don't think it's right doing that as this is where the remains of people's bodies have evaporated…. People should come here to pay their respects, not to take pictures or treat it like a tourist attraction (GZ Interviewee 15: Interviews, 2009c).

Similarly, an American female interviewee suggested that not only was the act of taking photographs offensive, but also how the photographs were actually taken. She notes, 'my teenage son was offended that some tourists were smiling in the photos they were taking of the site' (GZ Interviewee 9: Interviews, 2009c).

Conversely, a British female interviewee who had visited New York with her female companion as part of a shopping trip stated they had purposely not visited Ground Zero until the final day of their vacation. She states:

> We've been here for six days and we fly back this afternoon, but wanted to come down here [Ground Zero] on the last day to pay our respects and to say that we have been. To be honest, we've left it to the last day so as not to spoil our holiday… but we've taken a few shots [reference to photographs]… (GZ Interviewee 16: Interviews, 2009c).

The issue of respect for the dead at Ground Zero, or at least Western constructs of respect and how visitors capture their own moment of deference in a photographic

gaze is, undoubtedly, a complex issue and beyond the scope of this study. However, what is important is how (some) visitors perceive Others and the taking of photographs in a space where narratives of sacrality are becoming apparent. Consequently, Ground Zero as a place is beginning to assume quasi-religious nuances, whereby moral tales are (re)told and where a morality of a mass death event is being constructed and consumed in an almost simultaneous instance. Of course, whilst a multitude of socio-cultural factors and inherent moral relativism will determine an individuals' own ethical stance, the notion of taking photographs at a recent site of death does perturb some individuals, yet there is also tacit recognition that taking photographs may not be appropriate by the photographers themselves. For instance, an American female interviewee justified her own photograph (taking):

> We've come to Ground Zero, not to view it as a tourist attraction, but to try and make sense of the impact it has had on my country, the people of New York and people right across the world…. We have taken some photos, which I know some people don't approve of, but we didn't take them in a freak show kind of way – we just took them as reminders of what humans can do to each other. People shouldn't judge others that take photographs because photos don't have to be just about the good times or celebrations… you get photos in newspapers and magazines of war and poverty or abuse, so by taking our own photos, it's very similar – I can remember the effects of terrorism… (GZ Interviewee 3: Interviews, 2009c).

However, whatever the reason for taking photographs, whether it is for posterity or a kind of respectful memento, what is apparent is that the touristic act of photography at Ground Zero is creating a culture of celebrity (of death). In particular, this celebrity culture revolves around those emergency services who were directly involved in 9/11, and the military personnel who played a role (and continue to play a role) in the political aftermath. For example, during observations, the Ladder 10 Fire House, adjacent to the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre, answered an emergency call. Almost instantly, visitors to Ground Zero on Liberty Street gathered outside the Fire House and began to take photographs as the fire engine left the building (Obs, 2009c). As two fire-fighters posed for photographs and informed visitors of their own rescue deeds on 9/11, both through narrating particular accounts, but also by showing visitors dedicated scrapbooks of photographs and personal items of dead colleagues; a sense of the celebrity descended upon the place. Indeed, visitors competed with one another to have their photograph taken with the (hero) fire-fighters (Obs, 2009c; also Plate 33).

Plate 33: Photo (top left): Visitors crowd outside Ladder 10 Fire House. Photo (top right): Visitors pose with Firefighter (John) who had attended 9/11. Photo (bottom): Shrine inside Ladder 10 Fire House which FDNY has constructed to commemorate Firefighter victims of 9/11.

Similarly, when a cortège of American navy cadets in full uniform arrived at Ground Zero in order to ritually perform their own deference to the dead, tourists immediately

turned their cameras on the actual military, who themselves began to take photographs of the site (Obs, 2009c; also Plate 34).

Plate 34: Visitors mingle with American Navy Cadets under scaffolding at Ground Zero (Firefighter bronze mural – Ladder 10 Fire House).

Thus, in the absence of an official memorial, or at least in a memorial space that is currently under construction, real-life fire-fighters and the military become impromptu touristic symbols of the connection between Ground Zero as a place of death and Ground Zero as a tourism space to be consumed. These symbols in turn are captured in moments of photographic posterity, but it is this very act of tourist photography, together with perceptions of appropriate behaviour, that raises broader notions of how both moralities are constructed and mortality consumed within a contemporary visitor site of mass death.

7.9   Summary of Ethnographic Research – Tribute WTC Visitor Centre and Ground Zero

The Tribute WTC Visitor Centre commemorates recent atrocity that played out as 'reality death' on television screens throughout the world during the attacks on 9/11. Consequently, contemporary visitors now consume a 'traumascape' at the site of Ground Zero. A number of significant themes emerged from the ethnographic research at Ground Zero in New York. Indeed, through a combination of covert participant observations and interviews, three perceptible themes were extracted from

the data and subsequent interpretations were outlined with regard to each theme. These themes centred upon how spatial dimensions of Ground Zero and its formal representation to visitors at the temporary Tribute WTC Visitor Centre ensure the site remains a space of death as well as a place for the dead. Thus, it is suggested that Ground Zero acts a place of mediation between the dead of the past and the present living, with consequent notions of sacrality attached to a contested political space. Additionally, individual visitors emotionally engage with authorised as well as unauthorised narratives of Ground Zero, and as such, both consume and augment the semiotics of tragic death and an attack upon a hegemonic power. The final theme suggested tensions within the visitor experience at Ground Zero with regard to the perceived conduct of other individuals, especially when that behaviour was framed within a context of respect for the dead. Consequently, moral conversations were not only generated around ethical conduct of Others, but also centred upon the ethics of official and unofficial 'memory management' of the tragedy.

To summarise emergent themes from Ground Zero and to expedite the theme mapping process with other case studies, Table 19 outlines and code definitional statements of each theme for the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre at Ground Zero. Themes are defined to reveal the essence of discussions above. The thesis now turns to the final case study of Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum and Memorial in Poland.

Case Study	Theme Code	Theme Title	Theme Definition
The Tribute WTC Visitor Centre at Ground Zero (GZ)	GZ1	Spatial Scale and a Meditation of Mortality	'The contested sacral space of Ground Zero and its emergent restitution as a place of mediation between Dead Others and the Living Self'.
	GZ2	Semiotics: Signs of Life (through Death)	'Semiology of Ground Zero which individuals consume to construct meanings of past death in order to comprehend present life and future living'.
	GZ3	Consuming Death and Disaster: Ethical Codes	'The disjunction between perceived moral actions and interactions of Others and commemoration of the dead, which generates moral conversations about the memory management of tragic death'.

Table 19: Ethnographic Themes for the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre at Ground Zero: Definitional Statements and Theme Codes

7.10   Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum – 'A Residence of Death'

The Holocaust and its touristic representation is an oft-cited example of dark tourism. Indeed, earlier discussions have helped contextualize dark tourism by highlighting tourist visits to former Nazi death camps. Hence, the purpose of this section is to further introduce the Holocaust within the broader context of 'genocide tourism' (Beech, 2009), whilst also introducing Auschwitz-Birkenau as a specific visitor site and a case study for this thesis. That said however, this study does not seek to explore ideological origins of the Holocaust or to examine its perpetuators or consequences in-depth. Nevertheless, it is prudent to offer a brief historical account of the event, especially considering how the Holocaust is (re)presented for tourist consumption.

The Holocaust was an institutionalised state sponsored attempt by the Nazi regime in Germany (1933-1945) and their collaborators to exterminate the Jewish race during World War Two (1939-1945). The etymology of the term *holocaust* originally derived from the Greek word *holókauston*, meaning 'a whole (*holos*) burnt (*kaustos*) sacrificial offering to a god'. The Latin form – *holocaustum* – was first used with specific reference to a massacre of Jews by the chroniclers Roger of Howden and Richard of Devizes in the 1190s (Schama, 2000). For hundreds of years, the word *holocaust* was used within English to denote massive sacrifices and great slaughters or massacres, and more recently, as a term to denote mass death during a nuclear war. During World War Two, the term was used to describe Nazi atrocities regardless of whether the victims were Jews or non-Jews. Since the 1960s however, the term Holocaust (capitalized) has come to be used by scholars and the media to refer exclusively to the genocide of Jews (Niewyk, 2000). Additionally, the biblical word *Shoah* (also spelled *Sho'ah* and *Shoa*), meaning 'calamity', has become the standard Hebrew term for the Holocaust (Yad Vashem, 2009).

The Nazi Party, led by Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany in January 1933, and held the belief that Germans were 'racially superior' to Jews, who they deemed 'inferior'. Consequently, the Nazis perceived the Jewish race as an alien threat to the so-called Germanic (or Aryan) racial community. Whilst the persecution (and killing) of Jews was carried out in the years leading up to the outbreak of World War II, it was not until 1942 that the systematic planning of Endlösung *der Judenfrage* – 'The Final Solution of the Jewish Question' – was conceived, which some argue was the

beginning of the Holocaust (see Hilberg, 2003). On January 20, 1942, Reinhard Heydrich, Chief of the Security Police and Security Service, chaired a secret conference in Berlin-Wannsee, which became known as the Wannsee Conference. It was here that high officials from Hitler's Third Reich planned the logistics and coordination of the killing of up to eleven million European Jews. In reality, however, the extermination of the Jewish population had already begun. Deportations of Jews to ghettos in occupied Poland had been underway since 1940, and mass murder operations (by shooting) had commenced in the western part of the Soviet Union soon after Germany attacked the country in the summer of 1941. Gas had already been used to execute people in the Chelmno and Auschwitz concentration camps, whilst forced slave labour and subsequent starvation had already killed many thousands. However, the Wannsee Conference set out and approved a set of protocols to procedurally 'comb' all of occupied Europe (and parts of Europe the Nazi planned to conquer, including Britain) in order to apprehend, record and ultimately murder all Jews. The Wannsee Conference ultimately indicated that no Jewish community on European territory should be spared. Essentially, the bureaucratic systems and logistical power of the Nazis' ensured the systematic murder and genocide of a race of people, which one Holocaust scholar later referred to Germany as a 'genocidal State' (Berenbaum, 2006).

Thus, during the era of the Holocaust, which ended in 1945 at the close of World War II, Nazi authorities targeted not only Jews, but other groups of people because of their perceived racial inferiority, including the Roma and Sinti (Gypsies), the disabled, and some of the Slavic peoples (including Poles, Russians, and others). Other groups were also persecuted on political, ideological, and behavioural grounds, among them Communists, Socialists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and homosexuals. The total number of murdered holocaust victims has been approximated at between eleven million and seventeen million, including those of Soviet civilian deaths, whilst almost six million Jews perished during the Shoah.

Consequently, as the Holocaust still pervades a collective consciousness, signifying human acts of inhumanity, visitors are now invited to 'sightsee in the mansions of the [Holocaust] dead' (Keil, 2005) and to consume an 'atrocity experience' (Stone, 2005). Hence, visits to places associated with the Holocaust have often been labelled,

perhaps unhelpfully, as 'Holocaust tourism' (Ashworth, 2002; Schwabe, 2005) or 'Shoah tourism' (Dery, 1999; Cohen, 2009). In turn, this raises profound issues of how the atrocity is memorialized – that is, how to best to commemorate the dead, but also how to maintain the atrocity for contemporary consumption. Thus, nowhere are the Holocaust dead more commemorated or represented for consumption than at Auschwitz-Birkenau. Indeed, whilst the Holocaust represents catastrophe, it is the death camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau, perhaps more than any other site, which represents the Holocaust – both historically for the scale of atrocities committed there, but also symbolically for the way it still haunts contemporary imagination (Gilbert, 1986; Keil, 2005).

7.10.1 A Dark Camp of Genocide: Auschwitz-Birkenau Context

Following the invasion of Poland in September 1939, Nazi Germany annexed a small industrial town called Oświęcim in southern Poland, approximately 70 km south-west of Krakow, the cultural capital of Poland. The town was immediately designated the Germanic name of *Auschwitz* – a term which would become synonymous with terror, oppression and death. On the outskirts of Oświęcim were original buildings that formed part of a pre-war Polish Army barracks, as well as serving as Austro-Hungarian barracks for migrant workers (Charlesworth, 1994). It was within this building complex of twenty-two brick barracks that Auschwitz I – the base camp – was set up in 1940 and served as an administrative centre for the whole of the Auschwitz camp complex. Whilst the camp complex expanded significantly in spatial terms, Auschwitz I was initially planned as a concentration camp, similar to those which had been operating throughout Germany in the 1930's, and where slow extermination through forced labour and extreme conditions was the underlying rationale for their existence (Gilbert, 1986). Polish political prisoners were the first to be sent to Auschwitz I, where they and other prisoners were used as slave labour or for medical experiments (including woman and children), including the testing of gas as a method for execution. Indeed, the testing of Zyklon B, a highly lethal cyanide-based pesticide, as a method of extermination paved the way for the construction of a dedicated execution gas chamber and crematorium at Auschwitz I, which was converted from an air raid shelter for the SS guards. The gas chamber at Auschwitz I operated from 1941 to 1942, during which time some 60,000 people were murdered; it was then later converted to a munitions store. The gas chamber and crematorium at

Auschwitz I was destroyed by the SS as the Soviet army approached the camp and liberated the area in January 1945, but later reconstructed after the war using original building materials and blueprints, which had remained on site. Consequently, this reconstructed gas chamber and crematorium forms part of the present-day visitor experience to Auschwitz.

In October 1941, building work commenced three kilometres away from Auschwitz I at Auschwitz II – also referred to as Birkenau (the German translation of the Polish word *Brzezinka*, meaning birch tree), a small rural village near to the camp which was largely destroyed by the Germans but, subsequently rebuilt after the war (Figure 13). Both camps, Auschwitz I and Auschwitz II, were located within the *Auschwitz Intereessengebiet* – a forty square kilometre 'Interest Zone' that was under the direct control of the SS garrisons and camp commandant. Within the zone, forty sub-camps were set up, the largest of which was Auschwitz III at Buna-Monowitz, which served the nearby giant IG Farben chemical works with slave labour. Birkenau opened as a branch of the Auschwitz complex in March 1942 and essentially became a 'factory of death'. The purpose of Birkenau was both as a concentration camp and as an extermination centre, the latter being a pragmatic response to The Final Solution as explicitly formulated at the Wannsee Conference. Hence, Birkenau and other components of the Auschwitz complex augmented the functions of concentration camps like Mauthausen or Dachau with those of direct extermination centres like Treblinka or Bełżec. In essence, it represented a new category of a Nazi death camp, intended to carry out the economic policies and exterminationist tasks of the Nazi state simultaneously and in the most efficient manner possible. Thus Birkenau, like the whole Auschwitz complex, combined two functions in a single place and time. Firstly, as a concentration camp, that is, a place where various categories of prisoners were slowly exterminated because of deliberately created conditions that made long-term survival impossible. Moreover, secondly, as a direct extermination centre, where Jews, above all, were exterminated, although other categories of victims were also murdered on a smaller scale. Prisoners registered in the concentration camp died mainly of starvation whilst the direct extermination centre used large dedicated gas chambers for systematic killing. In total, 1.4 million people were murdered at Auschwitz-Birkenau, ninety per cent of them Jews (Auschwitz-Birkenau, 2009).
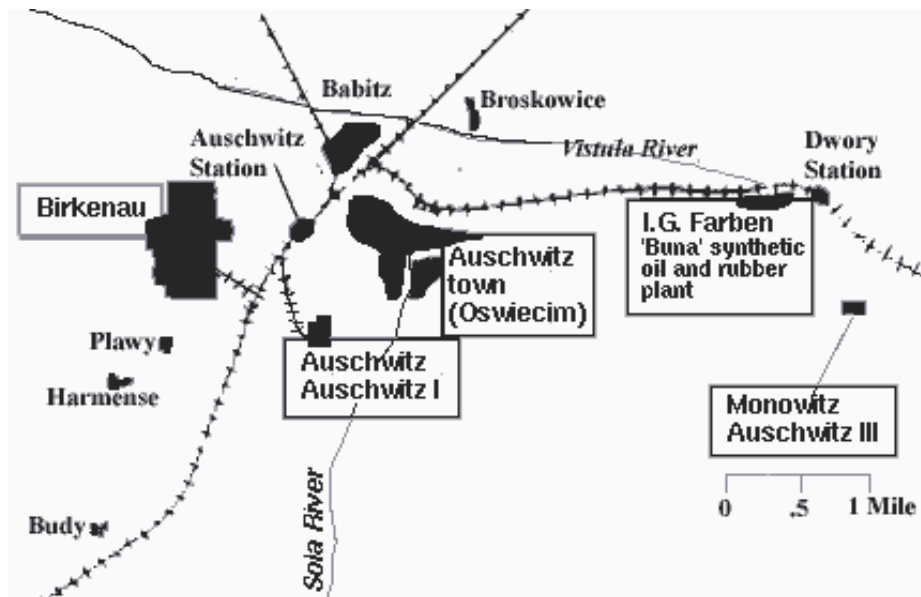
Figure 13: Map showing the geography between Auschwitz I, Auschwitz II (Birkenau) and Auschwitz III (Monwitz). Source: (isurvived.org, 2009)

Perhaps it is objectionable to describe or think of Auschwitz as simply an item on a tourist itinerary, or as a location for sightseeing or mass visitation. Yet, since the camps were liberated in 1945 and, subsequently, established as the Auschwitz State Museum in 1947 by a Polish Act of Parliament, in addition to the awarding of UNESCO World Heritage Status in 1979, the site(s) attracted 1.3 million visitors in 2009 (Auschwitz-Birkenau, 2009). Ironically, the main architect of the Holocaust, Heinrich Himmler, visualised Auschwitz after the war as a place of tranquillity as well as a centre of economic production (based upon slave labour). He even had plans drawn up by the Nazi architect and Auschwitz planner Dr Hans Strosberg to show hotels to accommodate tourists to the 'new Auschwitz' (see Gutman & Berenbaum, 1998; also Plate 35).

Plate 35: The envisioned plaza (Ringplatz) in Auschwitz. View of the market place and city hall. In addition to a new plaza, the new Auschwitz was to have, among other things, an athletic stadium, numerous schools, playgrounds, and even hotels along the Sola River to draw tourists. It was, in Stosberg's words, going to turn Auschwitz into 'a true cultural landscape'. Source: (Stosberg Plans, 2009)

Presently however, Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum and Memorial is divided between Auschwitz I (Plate 36) and Auschwitz II at Birkenau (Plate 37) where buses ferry visitors every twenty minutes between the two sites. Even though the site is open to visitors all year round, the buses only operate between April 15 and Oct 31, meaning that the two sites are essentially 'disconnected', in visitor terms at least, for a considerable period of the year. Classified as a 'Dark Camp of Genocide' by Stone (2006: 157) Auschwitz-Birkenau as a visitor site is defined as:

> A place which has genocide, atrocity and catastrophe as the main thanatological theme… [and] with a product design revolving around education and commemoration, and unlike Dark Exhibitions, are located at the actual site of the death-event, Dark Camps of Genocide tell the terrible tales of human suffering and infliction and have a high degree of political ideology attached to them.

Conseuently, Auschwitz I utilises each of the former barrack blocks that have been converted to accommodate various exhibits and museum administration facilities. Additionally, the former barracks include a cinema, toilets, a café, a fast food unit, a

small bureau de change and post office, as well as a shop selling postcards, books, posters, candles, handkerchiefs, and camera film, amongst other items. However, at Birkenau, the site has largely been left as it was found at the time of liberation, when the Nazis attempted to destroy the camp to hide evidence of the atrocities committed there. Nonetheless, customary visitor toilets have been installed within the main gatehouse, often referred to as the 'Death Gate', and visitors can access the top of the watchtower, providing a panoramic view of the entire camp that has generally remained untouched. However, some of the wooden barracks, which were used to house hundreds of prisoners, have been reconstructed and maintained, as over the decades the elements have taken a toll on these simple wooden structures. Additionally, a large concrete memorial to the victims of the Holocaust has been erected close to the ruins of the gas chambers and crematoria, which the Nazis blew up in 1945.

Plate 36: Visitor taking picture of interpretation board near to infamous camp entrance gate with the inscription 'Arbeit Macht Frei' (work makes one free). Visitors in the background are also taking photographs. The gate inscription was stolen in December 2009, but has since been recovered (see Boyes, 2009)

Whilst many tourists visit other tourism sites in Poland (Keil, 2005), it is undeniable that Auschwitz is explicitly marketed as a place to visit within the wider destination area of Krakow (e.g. AAA Krakow Tours, 2009). Notably, Auschwitz is often promoted as a site to visit with another UNESCO World Heritage Site – the Salt Mines in Wieliczka, an approximately two hour drive south from Krakow and one of Europe's oldest functioning mining complexes (see Auschwitz Tours, 2009). Additionally, the city of Krakow, a tourism destination in its own right, and which is often used as a touring base for people visiting Auschwitz, especially since the arrival of low-cost airlines to two nearby airports, has important medieval architecture, a royal castle and museums, and one of the largest plazas in Europe. Importantly, tours to Krakow's former Jewish Quarter of Kazimierz, which featured in Steven Spielberg's use of locality in the film *Schindler's List* – a story of industrialist Oskar Schindler who saved Jews from inevitable execution at Auschwitz by employing them in his enamel factory, have become increasing popular and even referred by some as 'Schindler Tourism' (Ashworth, 2003). Ultimately, however, visitors to Krakow not only have the option to take in the cultural aspects of the city, or to visit industrial heritage centres such as the Salt Mines, but also have the opportunity to visit a (grave)site of the greatest mass murder in history. The study now turns to the final ethnography.

Plate 37: *Photo (left):* Visitor car park opposite Birkenau's 'Death Gate'.
Photo (right): 'Instruction Signage' to tourists on gates at Birkenau

7.11   Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum and Memorial Ethnography – 'Manufactured Death'

Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum and Memorial (hereafter referred to as

Auschwitz-Birkenau) as a visitor experience is undoubtedly poignant. This is

particularly the case with regard to how the two separate camps of Auschwitz I and

Auschwitz II (Birkenau) counter one another in terms of reconstructing the apparatus

of Holocaust death and how the level of visitors' pre-conditioning of the Holocaust interplays with the spatial experience of the site(s). Ultimately, as with the Ground Zero case, the visitor is granted an opportunity to access a 'traumascape' where hundreds of thousands of people lost their lives through deliberate killing and systematic murder. Essentially, visitors are invited to sightsee in the one of largest cemeteries in the world.

As with earlier ethnographies, a number of significant themes relevant to this study emerged at Auschwitz-Birkenau. Table 20 delineates these themes, and an interpretive narrative is now offered to each theme.

		Data Theme Title
Auschwitz - Birkenau State Museum & Memorial	1.	Death (Pre)conditioning
	2.	Constructing a Narrative of Death (and Moral Tales)
	3.	Mortality: Personal Connections, Reflections & Associations

Table 20: Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum and Memorial – Ethnographic Data Themes

7.11.1 Death (Pre)conditioning

The ethnographic data intimated notions of pre-conditioning accompanied consuming the Holocaust and its dead at Auschwitz-Birkenau. In other words, visitors appear to bring with them, consciously or sub-consciously, a particular iconography of place that goes on to narrate and inform personal experiences. In short, the familiarity of the Holocaust within the mindset of visitors, often through media-induced images of Holocaust events and stories, is significant to how death and suffering at Auschwitz-Birkenau is ultimately consumed. As a Dutch female interviewee pointed out:

> I have been wanting to come to Auschwitz for most of my life since reading many Holocaust books growing up and watching World War Two documentaries…. everyone should know what to expect before they visit Auschwitz... (AB Interviewee 1: Interviews, 2009d)

Of course, this 'expectation' is grounded in a series of visual and narrative transformations that frame and, thus, condition subsequent visitor experiences to 'real-life' Holocaust death sites. Put another way, the pre-conditioning effect of how

the Holocaust is represented in both historical accounts and popular culture will influence how the physical site of Auschwitz-Birkenau is encountered. Consequently, the Holocaust and its iconic apparatus of death at Auschwitz-Birkenau have become firmly entrenched within the collective consciousness. Particularly, historical instruction of the Holocaust on educational curriculums – the large number of students at Auschwitz-Birkenau is perhaps testament to this (Obs, 2009d) – in addition to popular portrayals of Auschwitz-Birkenau is fundamental in building an indelible iconography. Visitors appear to consume these portrayals prior to their visit, which include depictions of Nazi atrocities in television documentaries, novels and other literature and, of course, cinematic representations. Indeed, Steven Spielberg's movie *Schindler's List* (Spielberg, 1993), together with a whole genre of Holocaust inspired films, including, but not limited, to *Life is Beautiful* (Benigni, 1997), *The Pianist* (Polanski, 2002), *Fateless* (Koltai, 2005), *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* (Herman, 2008) and the television production *Conspiracy* (Pierson, 2001), communicate to a contemporary generation Holocaust events which otherwise might be too austere or painful. As such, a (banal) familiarly with Holocaust emblems is the result. As a Czech female interviewee pointed out, 'being here [at Auschwitz-Birkenau] is like being in the movies; I recognised many of the buildings…' (AB Interviewee 2: Interviews, 2009d).

Even so, whilst the Holocaust may be seen as increasingly prosaic, perhaps as a consequence of continuous repetition of World War II television documentaries, for example on the History Channel, or the use of Holocaust *stories* to project a 'Hollywoodised' version of events that in turn allow for a particular conditioning of consumers, the actual being at Auschwitz-Birkenau does appear to strike accord for visitors. Indeed, an American male interviewee states:

> I've seen many television documentaries about the Holocaust, I've read plenty of books on the subject, but there are nothing compared to the feeling I've had today seeing the gas chamber and crematoria, the prison cells, the rooms full of hair and spectacles, and the rooms where children were killed and the execution yard (AB Interviewee 3: Interviews, 2009d).

Similarly, another American male interviewee also notes the distinction between what he has witnessed on television with regard to the Holocaust and correlates it with his visitor experience at Auschwitz-Birkenau:

… the enormity of it – you know, the death and suffering – really hits you smack between the eyes, especially at Birkenau. It is truly gruesome in the extreme and is something that I shall never forget. What has really hit me was the mass of human hair on display, which when you see that on TV, you just don't get the sense of scale or an appreciation of the texture or the different colours of the hair…. To me, that was almost like seeing a dead person… (AB Interviewee 4: Interviews, 2009d).

Interestingly, the human hair on display at Auschwitz I (Figure 47), now over sixty years old, is decaying almost beyond conservation, and a debate is currently underway as to whether to replace the hair with 'fresh' human hair to continue to illustrate the scale of atrocities (Stone, 2006b). Conversely, some of the human hair that is on display contains residues of Zyklon B, the poison gas used to execute victims, thus indicating the hair was shaved off after the victim died (Obs, 2009d). Notwithstanding the issue over the state of decay, it is the fact that the hair not only belonged to men, woman and children who were murdered, but also the fact human remains are exhibited and thus symbolically representing death and dying (through inhumane acts) to all those who gaze upon it. Other 'markers of death and dying', which collectively provide symbols of the Holocaust dead, include exhibits of large numbers of everyday personal items belonging to Holocaust victims, including shoes, spectacles, prosthetic limbs and suitcases (see Plates 38 and Plate 39).

Plate 38: Visitor with audio guide gazing upon exhibited human hair of Holocaust victims at Auschwitz I. The hair was shaved from victims and sold to industry for uses such as insulation

or making mattresses. The hair on display was found by the Soviet army after they liberated the camp in 1945. (Photo: Haines, 2009).

Plate 39: Visitor looking at a collection of confiscated suitcases with inscribed names and addresses of victims. Victims brought with them personal items, in suitcases, after being told by their Nazi captors that they were going to Auschwitz to 'work'.

These items, which in themselves represent ordinariness of the victims, form part of a collective iconography of death that is portrayed in history television documentaries and books, and subsequently consumed and validated by visitors at Auschwitz-Birkenau. Of course, these symbols of Holocaust death and suffering are not restricted to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Indeed, images of victims' hair or suitcases, and other personal items, including photographs of emaciated victims, have been reproduced and repeated in Holocaust exhibitions throughout the world. However, the actual Auschwitz-Birkenau site itself appears to form part of the ultimate Holocaust visitor experience, as a Canadian female interviewee goes on to suggest:

> We've brought our 14 year-old daughter to see the site [Auschwitz-Birkenau] at her request after she has been studying the Holocaust at school; we have already done the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam so this [visit experience] has taken everything up a gear… (AB Interviewee 5: Interviews, 2009d).

Hence, the level of pre-conditioning for Holocaust death appears to be structured not only around particular events and artefacts as projected through historical and media

interpretations, but also evident is a hierarchical framework of (Holocaust) death, often based upon other visitor experiences at separate but related 'Holocaust tourist sites'. Furthermore, a Czech male interviewee suggests:

> I've always wanted to come here to Auschwitz but I wasn't sure how I would react to seeing the place in real life. I've seen and heard so much on television and in books and in the movies, but I'm really glad I've came.... I've been to other concentration camps, including the one at Mauthausen, but it is Auschwitz that has done it for me... I think it's just the sheer scale of the place, seeing the place on television and in pictures and then seeing the place for real... it's been an unbelievable experience – to be in a place where so many innocent people needlessly lost their lives in such a horrible way... (AB Interviewee 6: Interviews, 2009d).

Reconciling an iconography of Holocaust death with real-life experiences of actual space, as well as recognising the importance of death places as part of collective tragedy was also noted by a fellow companion – Mr Keith Myerscough (hereafter, Myerscough, 2009), who accompanied the researcher on his field visit(s) to Auschwitz-Birkenau during March 2009. Keeping a written diary to record his feelings and opinions of his 'Holocaust experience', Myerscough (2009) notes the potential for a 'Grand Dark Tour':

> Now here's a though! Visiting one site of evil is not enough and you can talk to those sharing the experience all you like but, it counts for very little simply because it is done in isolation. There needs to be a Grand Dark Tour of examples of evil in order to fully understand man's predilection and propensity for inflicting suffering upon other members of our species.

Myerscough goes on to note his initial journey to Auschwitz-Birkenau and the actual approach to the site:

> Well, I can now tick this 'experience off' my mental list of things to do before I die... The car journey to the site was not an easy one, both figuratively and physically. It was with a great deal of apprehension that I attempted to gird my loins for what my imagination thought was to come. Having taken a wrong turn we ended up at Auschwitz II and my worst fears were realised in seeing that icon of figures to be found in any serious history book or documentary film of the Nazis 'final solution'. Not wishing to visit this site before the first site, we turned around and headed off to seek Auschwitz I (Myerscough, 2009).

Consequently, for Myerscough at least, the level of pre-conditioning and an imagined iconography caused him trepidation at the prospect of visiting Auschwitz-Birkenau. Thus, he was already 'emotionally invigilated' prior to consuming his 'atrocity experience' at the actual site. The *icon of figures* which Myerscough refers to are, of

course, the emblematic watchtower, the archway entrance to Birkenau often referred to as the 'Death Gate' and, the railway line upon which hundreds of thousands of people were transported to their deaths (Plate 40).

Plate 40: Approach to the iconic 'Death Gate', watchtower and railway at Auschwitz II.
A visitor car park can seen in the top left of the photograph.

Similarly, Myerscough goes on to record his first experience of seeing the iconic gate at Auschwitz I (Plate 41):

> The sight of that most infamous of all gates, and its motto proclaiming freedom through hard work for all those passing through was now the only way for *them* [original emphasis] to serve the Third Reich with their labours. At a distance the gate appeared to be benign, if it were not for the knowledge and *understanding* [original emphasis] I had brought with me…. (Myerscough, 2009).

Plate 41: Litterbin for visitors in the foreground of photograph, whilst in the background is the iconic gate and barrier to the entrance of Auschwitz I.

Evident again is the notion of pre-conditioning of a space that subsequently informs visitor experiences of a death place. The emphasis of meaning that Myerscough (2009) confers on such an icon, that is the gate, not only influences his overall visitor experience, but allows for a rupture (and validation) between his prior knowledge and understanding of the infamous gate semiotics and the actual gate itself, which to him, appeared benign – from a distance at least. Thus, the suggestion is that individual iconographic perceptions of Auschwitz-Birkenau, as a place of Holocaust, augment the physical attachment of being on a site associated with mass suffering, regime advocated brutality and systematic killing. In turn, this may add to an inherent interpretation which is unique to individuals, but which is perhaps dependent upon personal levels of a (prior) 'Holocaust knowledge'. Ironically though, the iconic gate at Auschwitz I (Figure 48) is viewed by many as a liminal entry into a death space. However, once the present-day visitor has disembarked from their tour coaches or has parked their car, they are already within the original perimeter of the concentration

camp. Indeed, the car park immediately adjacent to Auschwitz I and the brick building which accommodates the café, book store, post office, cinema, and so on, and where visitors initially enter and assemble to collect and pay for audio guides, is in fact the original building where prisoners were administered before they entered the camp proper. That is, through the iconic inscribed gate (Obs, 2009d). Thus, whilst victims of the Holocaust were processed in that actual building, tourists are now 'processed' in the same building as they make their way to parts of the camp that appear familiar. Hence, without a recognisable iconography to draw upon to extract and construct meaning, this initial building which is a fundamental part of the original Auschwitz camp complex appears not to form an integral part of the contemporary Auschwitz I visitor experience. Yet, it was here that tens of thousands began their dying through starvation, slavery, torture, and ultimately, for many, execution.

Whilst the media and popular culture has disseminated the Holocaust for decades, the perpetuation of Holocaust atrocity, or at least an attempt to locate the spatial site of Auschwitz-Birkenau into a historical and political context, continues with the actual visitor experience. Particularly, the small cinema within the camp complex shows a short film outlining the Holocaust and the role of concentration camps, including Auschwitz-Birkenau (Obs, 2009d). It is here where a Holocaust iconography is reinforced as visitors consume black and white movies of burned corpses, executions and images of horrendous medical experimentation. Whereas older generations of visitors are (re)introduced to Holocaust horrors during the cinema presentation, younger visitors, of which there are many at Auschwitz-Birkenau, are introduced to the horror for the first time, or at least initiated into a well maintained Holocaust iconography (Obs, 2009d). As a young French female interviewee (in her late teens) and as part of a student group states:

> I first watched the film [in the camp cinema] about the liberation of the camp and what they found, and what had been going on… it was a real eye opener… then I came out and stood in front of those infamous gates [as referred to above] and the place is hard to describe, the atmosphere, the buildings that stand all in lines but all have a gruesome story to tell… (AB Interviewee 7: Interviews, 2009d).

However, graphic images of the Holocaust are not consigned to the actual Auschwitz-Birkenau site. Indeed, visitors are provided an opportunity to cognitively pre-

condition themselves with Holocaust death and suffering immediately prior to their physical arrival on site. An American male interviewee states:

> I booked our trip in advance on the internet and we were brought here [to Auschwitz I] from our hotel in Krakow by coach which took about an hour. On the way we watched a movie documentary on Auschwitz which was very interesting and extremely moving… it made the actual trip much more worthwhile and meaningful when I saw the gas chambers, the crematorium and the torture rooms… (AB Interviewee 8: Interviews, 2009d).

Once again, augmentation of visitors' interpretation of a Holocaust space is evident as visitors are emotionally invigilated before their 'Auschwitz experience', either by consuming a prescribed Holocaust iconography immediately before their visit, or through a broader consumption of Holocaust images and narratives within popular culture. However, in addition to the physicality of the Auschwitz-Birkenau site providing tangible markers of an iconography which has been informed by historical narratives and visual depictions, there are other 'markers' within the site of Auschwitz-Birkenau which also symbolise death (of Others), suffering and victimhood. Notably, Orthodox Jews (identifiable by their distinctive Hasidic dress code, including black overcoats, hats and, in some cases, hairstyle) intermingle with other visitors of different cultures and creeds whilst they all collectively consume historical death (Obs, 2009d). However, the distinctiveness of the Orthodox Jews and their interactions with a place where their race was subject to a planned extermination, to a Western secular observer at least, provided a spectacle. For instance, an Orthodox Jewish male stood in the middle of Auschwitz I and began to read out (very loudly) a 'prayer' in Hebrew, whilst his companion filmed the event (Obs, 2009d; Plate 42). Other (non-Jewish) visitors then began to gaze upon and photograph the prayer spectacle, as the Orthodox Jew (who was perhaps a Rabbi) seemingly called out to the dead, and the event quickly became an 'attraction within an attraction' (Obs, 2009d).

Plate 42: Jewish male (on left) reading aloud a prayer in Auschwitz I whilst his companion (on right) records the event on a video camera. Out of shot, are several non-Jewish visitors watching this unscripted event and taking photographs of the two men (Obs, 2009d).

Similarly, at Birkenau, Orthodox Jews were witnessed laughing and performing star jumps and posing with their arms outspread in front of the infamous Death Gate, whilst they were photographed by fellow companions (Obs, 2009d; Plate 43). Whether the star jumps were symbolical gestures of the Star of David – a generally recognisable emblem of Jewish identity – remains unclear; yet evident again was a *spectacle* which provided a photo opportunity for other non-Jewish visitors as they captured on film behaviour which appeared strange and out of place. Conversely, non-Jewish visitors cohabiting a place of death with Jewish visitors and gazing upon their actions allowed for respect to be generated, as well as a reminder of mortality for individuals who had suffered pervasive anti-Semitism and a unique attempt at annihilation. As a British female stated:

> Seeing all the Jewish people here reminds me of their plight, and that it must be really hard for them coming to a place like this. It also reminds me that it was them that suffered the most… they [i.e. the Orthodox Jews] also kind of reminded me of all the dead people that were killed here (AB Interviewee 9: Interviews, 2009d).

Plate 43: Jewish male facing the 'Death Gate' leaning backwards with his arms outstretched and head back whilst being photographed by a male companion. Earlier the Jewish male being photographed had been witnessed performing 'star jumps' and laughing as he was encouraged by his other companions (Obs, 2009d).

Yet, whilst the Orthodox Jews appear to constitute part of the sites' iconography, the respect for the Jewish plight, as indicated by the interviewee above, is perhaps tempered by perceived behaviour of (some) Jewish visitors, especially by a particular group of Orthodox Jews at the time of observations. For instance, a tour group of Orthodox Jews, who had previously been seen in Auschwitz I only three kilometres away, were witnessed disembarking from their coach in the car park immediately opposite Birkenau, the site where over one and a half million people, mostly Jews, were murdered. Whilst public conveniences and washrooms for visitors are provided

within the main watchtower building (and also at Auschwitz I), one particular Orthodox Jewish male was witnessed urinating outside the perimeter of Birkenau against a refuse skip which had been placed in the visitor car park (Obs, 2009; Plate 44). Whilst his fellow companions appeared jovial about the situation, and indeed were witnessed laughing at the event as they walked toward the 'Death Gate', a second Orthodox Jewish male joined his companion and he too urinated against this skip in full view of the death camp (Obs, 2009). Of course, to a Western secular observer, this type of behaviour from the Orthodox Jews not only appeared vulgar, simply for urinating in a public place, but also insolent and wholly disrespectful for urinating in a space where some many of their fellow race were transported to their deaths. Alternatively, of course, the act of urinating could be seen as indignation of Nazi oppression.

Plate 44: Top photo: Jewish male urinating against a green skip. Bottom photo: The skip (circled) is opposite Birkenau and within the visitor car park.

Myerscough (2009) goes on to record his views of this particular group of Orthodox Jews:

My mind now wonders off into the surreal – a coach load of Orthodox Jews makes it way around the camp [Auschwitz I] like a whirlwind that ignores all but the nailed down! It was if all other human beings did not exist in that they took pictures where and when they wanted, demanding that you got out of the way of the image they wished to capture for the folks back home. I found it really hard not to stare and even harder not to admonish them for their irreverence! But, is it not their memorial, is it not their right to behave as they see fit and am I the intruder into their heritage? Death may well mean different things to different people but surely it is the way that somebody dies that is important and here we have the systematic death of people who's only crime was not being a member of the Aryan Race.

Whilst it is assumed that the Orthodox Jews were at Auschwitz-Birkenau as part of a pilgrimage event, perhaps promulgating a sense of 'heredity victimhood' and attempting to find a meaning of survival themselves in horrors borrowed from the Holocaust, the very iconography of Jews within the confines of Auschwitz-Birkenau provide, perhaps, other visitors with additional meaning of the atrocity. Of course, whilst a meaning of the suffering and scale of death may be unique to individuals, similarities of meaning do exist, especially when narratives of mortality are formally projected at Auschwitz, but where informal moral tales are constructed. It is to this point that the ethnography now turns.

7.11.2 Constructing a Narrative of Death (and Moral Tales)

Auschwitz-Birkenau as place of premeditated murder has undoubtedly evolved into a museological space, where memories of dead Others are consumed by contemporary visitors. Commemorative politics are pronounced at Auschwitz-Birkenau, propelled by dissonant heritage and cultural issues, and exasperated no doubt by funding concerns. However, in addition to contested management strategies concerning the site's environmental and structural maintenance, the fact that hundreds of thousands of individuals annually visit Auschwitz-Birkenau is testament not only to the cognitive space it occupies within the public consciousness, but also designates it as a place of (mass) tourist activity. Hence, a particular theme emerged from the ethnographic data that signified how touristification occurs at the site and how authorised narratives of death, torture and extreme suffering have been produced to inform visitors of Holocaust atrocities. However, perhaps more importantly, a significant issue also emerged of how Auschwitz-Birkenau as a tourist site commemorating an atrocity is limited in its formalised narration of reconciliation,

racial tolerance, political harmony or messages of hope for the future. Instead, Auschwitz-Birkenau is a bleak despondent (re)construction of a Holocaust event, which is factual and precise, but offers little in the way of formally communicating optimism and anticipation for the future (Obs, 2009d). Thus, the underlying principle of the site's conservation – 'Lest We Forget' – a notion that implies if individuals forget past atrocities, then similar atrocities may occur again in the future, is disjointed somewhat by the visitor experience at Auschwitz-Birkenau. In other words, whilst visitors to the site are instructed not to forget – both the victims and the manner in which they suffered or died – individuals seemingly have to formulate their own strategies on how to remember the immoral past in order to comprehend (and hope) for the moral future. As an Australian female interviewee who was accompanied by several companions states:

> We've walked around the whole site [Birkenau] and wish now we had left more time as the sheer size of the place is vast, although to be honest, I'm not sure I could have coped for much longer. I managed to hold myself together until we got to the area where there is a lake and a wood [near to the gas chambers and crematoria]… I recall seeing a photograph in Auschwitz I of women and children standing in the wood, naked and in the snow – waiting for their deaths at the gas chambers, without knowing it. I know the lake next to the crematoria is full of human ash… I felt myself sobbing uncontrollably and asking myself the question why?!! [original emphasis of tone] I just did not get why it really happened and still don't... (AB Interviewee 10: Interviews, 2009d).

Thus, whilst visitors consume death and dying, they are informed of Holocaust atrocities in factual terms by sometimes limited museology methods of interpretation which, as revealed shortly, leave the visitor isolated in the search for and construction of not only why mass mortality occurred, but also subsequent moral dimensions of such death. Firstly however, and to return to the issue of Auschwitz-Birkenau as a place of tourism, the site has not only developed infrastructure which caters for mass visitation, including retail, catering, and transport facilities and so forth, but the site also adopts attraction-style presentation. This includes scheduled tours led by a group leader with a scripted and well-rehearsed account of atrocities, as well as self-auditory guides that provide commentary to visitors as they wander around a space designed for death (Obs, 2009d). Indeed, Myerscough (2009) comments upon the initial visitor inauguration into Auschwitz I and its overall 'sanitised feel':

> The journey from the over-spill car park, the tatty tourist information centre, the crossing of the road, entry into a busy and bustling main car park that was in need of refurbishment; all had the effect of distracting me from what I was

about to see and feel.... The journey from the car park to the entrance to the camp took me through a sort of sheep dip where I was plunged into a concoction that sanitised me and prepared me for an experience that could not be as dreadful as I had convinced myself it was going to be – could it?

The *concoction*, which Myerscough refers to, is, perhaps, evidence of the touristification of the site – that is, the familiar infrastructure and facilities that accompany mainstream tourist attractions. Yet, it is this very familiarity of tourism that allows for a certain 'emotional calming' and sanitisation of the (death) subject, as personal iconographies of the Holocaust are validated and meaning is subsequently constructed. Hence, and perhaps controversially, Auschwitz-Birkenau as a site of death and suffering appears to a hybrid place of a traditional museum that projects a formal narrative of *what happened* and, a kitschified tourist attraction that not only caters to visitor needs but also tells a story of *how it happened*. As an American male interviewee pointed out:

This is a difficult place to sum up, but I'm glad I've visited; Auschwitz I has been kind of an attraction visit, whilst Birkenau has been much more reflective... [additionally] our trip has been made much more comfortable by the fact that we've got a [coach] driver waiting for us when we are ready to leave and to take us directly back to the hotel... (AB Interviewee 11: Interviews, 2009d).

Whilst this individual notes the distinction between his 'touristy' visit to Auschwitz I and a more meditative experience at Birkenau, he also notes the modern conveniences of a well-managed tourist visit. Consequently, an Australian female interviewee cautions Auschwitz-Birkenau against seemingly inevitable touristification:

The Auschwitz Museum has become one of the many stops on the tourist trail, and though I welcome the exposure the Museum gives to the Holocaust, it also risks the turning the world's largest cemetery into a theme park... I have a very strong interest and very strong feelings about the Holocaust, and I think everyone should come here – at least once, but people should be prepared for crowds and those on a tourist day out (AB Interviewee 12: Interviews, 2009d).

Indeed, further evidence of touristification and notions of 'tourist excursions' at Auschwitz-Birkenau within a broader recreational itinerary are made apparent by a British female interviewee, who states:

We've only got two days in which to see, in our opinion, what are the most important locations in Krakow – those were yesterday at the Salt Mines in Wieliczka and here today at Auschwitz. The experience at Wieliczka left us with feelings of amazement and awe at what the miners accomplished over

hundreds of years and so far below ground. But here at Auschwitz, we just feel totally numb, with reactions of sadness, horror, disgust and sheer disbelief that humans could kill other humans in such a horrible way (AB Interviewee 13: Interviews, 2009d).

Similarly, a British male interviewee suggested how Auschwitz-Birkenau was part of his overall visitor experience to the Krakow area, although for him the logistics of 'tour bundling' had pragmatic implications. He goes on to state at Birkenau:

I must admit I did the Salt Mines-Auschwitz package as I got a good deal on the net... but I found the Salt Mines tour this morning dragged on a bit, meaning there was less time for Auschwitz, and there was no time for lunch and to eat in between the Salt Mines and here [Auschwitz]... a friend of mine tried to grab a quick burger at Auschwitz I but got reprimanded by some other visitors for being disrespectful for eating it – yet they sold burgers!! [original emphasis of tone] (AB Interviewee 14: Interviews, 2009d).

Indeed, catering outlets are provided at Auschwitz I (Plate 45), although it appears for this individual that 'eating to live' within a place where so many died through starvation raises ethical disquiet amongst some visitors. Of course, the catering industry is an integral component of the broader tourism sector, yet the rigours of undertaking all-day tours and a rudimentary necessity to eat illustrate apparent tensions of the touristification in a place that still haunts contemporary imagination.

Plate 45: Fast food outlet immediately adjacent to Auschwitz I and
within the overall perimeter of the former concentration camp.

Further evidence of the touristification of Auschwitz-Birkenau, and a practice that
irked some visitors was the taking of tourist photographs. As with the earlier case of
Ground Zero, photography (and its relationship with touristification) in a place where
individuals were systematically murdered may be considered inappropriate. Despite
official warning notices forbidding photography within actual buildings at Auschwitz
I, probably as an official attempt to instil a sense of reverence into the visitor
experience and also as a formal sign of respect for the dead, the practice of tourist
photography *is* widespread. This is not only within the general space of the camps, but
also in the actual camp buildings (Obs, 2009d). Indeed, visitors were witnessed
quietly jostling with one another to secure an opportune spot within the crematoria to
take the 'best photograph' of the ovens where tens of thousands of corpses were
disposed (Obs, 2009d). Whilst some used the ovens as a photographic backdrop to
pose against, a teenager was even witnessed reaching his arm out over the visitor
cordon and placing his camera inside one of the crematorium ovens, whereby the
subsequent flash illuminated the inside of the oven (Obs, 2009d; also Plate 46). A
female interviewee from Austria commented upon this issue:

> ...considering so many people were killed here [at Auschwitz] there are so
> many people here today who showed little or no respect for where they are... I
> saw people taking photographs of the ovens and in the execution yard, which I

did chastise a few for doing so, but I gave up in the end due to the number of disrespectful people... but nothing that dozy or disrespectful tourists do can take away the absolute horror of this place (AB Interviewee 15: Interviews, 2009d).

Plate 46: Visitors inside the (reconstructed) crematorium at Auschwitz I. Whilst there was a formal ban on taking photographs inside the gas chamber and crematorium, this was often flouted as visitors photographed the interior – including the researcher in taking these photographs! (Obs, 2009d).

Similarly, Myerscough (2009) records his feelings as he took photographs as he entered through the iconic gates at Auschwitz I:

> The gates were photographed and recorded in my memory for future recall to friends, family, and work colleagues. But, just before I enter the camp I get this strangest of feelings that convinces me that I must act in an 'appropriate way' [original emphasis] – surely society expects this of me – not a fucking bit of it! This is the 21st Century, and travel does not broaden the mind it just empties your pockets. [Hence] The taking of the statutory photograph, attempting to capture that elusive moment in time...

Thus, for Myerscough at least, the expectation that he and indeed others should behave according to particular social conventions is a key driver in his consumption of this death space. However, it appears that his social conventions become estranged by the notion of tourist photography, something that is further implied by his experience of the execution yard at Block 11:

> The infamous Block 11 brings the suffering of the inmates to my consciousness and leaves me distraught for a fleeting moment, to be interrupted by two Orthodox Jews who must have their photographs taken in the execution yard (Myerscough, 2009; also Plate 47).

Block 11 is a building located on the perimeter of Auschwitz I and it was here that the main torture and killing centre within the camp was located. Additionally, it was within this building that Dr Josef Mengele performed his perverse medical experiments, whilst the adjacent courtyard, which Myerscough refers to, acted as a site of execution by shooting. Indeed, the execution wall inside the courtyard has been reconstructed and now serves as a shrine for visitors to pay respects (and to take photographs), and has subsequently become a 'must see' item on the Auschwitz itinerary (Obs, 2009d; also Plate 47). Interestingly, the place most associated with inhumanity at Auschwitz I appears to be the most popular. As an Australian female interviewee pointed out with regard to her experience of Block 11:

> [our Tour Guide] said that the most "popular" exhibit in Auschwitz I was Block 11. I find that truly shocking and unbelievable if it wasn't for the fact that it was there in front of us – visibly more people queued to get into Block 11 than any other exhibition (AB Interviewee 16: Interviews, 2009d).

Plate 47: *Top photo:* It was within this yard that thousands of people were shot and murdered. A floral memorial has been constructed against the wall where people were executed. Block 11(on the right of the picture) was known as the 'Death Block' where torture and medical experiments were carried out. Note the boarded up windows of Block 10 (left of the picture) – the Nazi did this to protect the views and as not to 'alarm' those incarcerated inside Block 10, which mainly housed woman prisoners. *Bottom Photo:* Visitor posing for photograph inside the execution yard.

Whilst ethical tensions are apparent within the tourist experience, especially with regard to perceptions of appropriate conduct and behaviour in a place where so many people perished, for some visitors it is the actual presence of Others which compromise their visitor experience of Auschwitz-Birkenau. Indeed, a British male interviewee suggested the number of people at the site distracted him from his 'Holocaust experience'. He goes on to note:

> I've found Auschwitz a thoroughly haunting place – everywhere you look is filled with death and despair – but, I suggest that is less so when you're surrounded by hoards of people, which left me with little time to properly see each block. Almost everyone seemed to arrive at about 10.30ish, probably in time to catch the English film [shown in the cinema] at 11 before they hit the camp proper... (AB Interviewee 14: Interviews, 2009d).

Thus, tensions appear evident of not only how the actual tourism space of Auschwitz-Birkenau is consumed, but also by the number of people publically consuming a private space of the dead at a given period. More fundamentally, however, the touristification process, including the mass tourism appeal of the site, has important implications upon individuals' construction of morality from a place of (mass) mortality. In short, ethical tensions are not only apparent from individual perceptions of appropriate visitor conduct, including but not limited to the act of tourist photography, but also from perceptions of Auschwitz-Birkenau as a tourism-led presentation of a (death) space against a museological representation of the (dying) place. In other words, (some) visitors consciously make a distinction between consuming Auschwitz-Birkenau as a tourist, signified by their undertaking of a dedicated group tour, with a desire to better comprehend and fully experience the site, both in a temporal and spatial sense. As a Canadian male interviewee suggests from his tour guide experience at Auschwitz-Birkenau:

> I found that the Guide hurried us. She explained a part of Auschwitz and then hurried us on before I had chance to read the boards of information relevant to that part. Basically, I just glanced through windows rather than standing there and taking in the surroundings... [and] because the place is so busy we were herded along like cattle by the Guide. I would like to come again, and if I do, I will definitely do it independently so I can walk around and take my time and absorb all the information (AB Interviewee 18: Interviews, 2009d).

It is here that we return to the issue of how some individuals are left feeling frustrated and even isolated by their visitor experience of Auschwitz-Birkenau, especially when that experience is framed within a tourism context – that is, by consuming the

Holocaust through the presentational style of organised site tours. As Myerscough (2009) notes in his diary:

> Part of my frustration with the visits I have paid to the camps is in terms of me, personally wishing to be informed with the facts and thus, being able to see the bigger picture in an attempt to eventually answer the question, why? [But]... the camp gives you such a feeling of ordinariness and orderliness... the Blocks contain sanitised information and leaves me thinking that I may well have been sanitised myself with what 'they' wish me to know, no more and no less... At times it was like being detective looking at and for the clues that were there but death and dying and the methods used can only be imagined'.

Consequently, a female interviewee from New Zealand also notes this frustration because of her tour experience:

> We had one [a Tour Guide] and he rushed through everything. We missed out Block 11 and when I questioned him about it, he wasn't interested in providing a response. He rushed around everything and seemed to miss out the main parts. We went up to Birkenau as well, and that was also rushed – less than a hour to do it was on the verge of disrespectful (AB Interviewee 19: Interviews, 2009d).

Of course, Block 11 as highlighted earlier is an integral part of the Auschwitz story and for an individual to leave Auschwitz without fully comprehending the horrors committed within this building is perhaps a squandered opportunity of the Museum's primary aim of not allowing people To Forget. Indeed, a female interviewee notes the lack of engagement from her tour experience:

> The main problem with our Guide is that he seemed to be moving at a relentless pace and I had no time to stop and look at anything I found particularly interesting... whilst the Tour Guide was informative, it was obvious he wanted to get us through the camp as quickly as possible and get on with the next group... Nobody should be fearful of what they will see on this visit; it is beyond belief of the killing that took place and it is very real, but I wish I had more time to look around (AB Interviewee 16: Interviews, 2009d).

Similarly, a Polish male interviewee also noted the lack of time and space to comprehend fully the atrocity of the Holocaust when gazed through a tourism lens. Whilst this individual initially undertook a guided tour, he quickly became disenchanted with its style, pace and content and subsequently decided to 'go it alone':

> I was a bit dubious about going on a guided tour, but my wife insisted so we could learn about Auschwitz. But there were many other tours so it meant we had no space or time to see most of the exhibitions, and the Guide only took us into about a quarter of the museum barracks. In the end we left our Tour Guide and made our own way around the complex. I think this is not a theme park...

this is a hard place and I think tour groups come with schedules to keep. I don't think people can go in a group and be in contemplative state of mind. Many of the rooms are small and the tour groups just take over for a brief thirty-second stop. I think people need to stay and linger and sort out their thoughts and the memories will burn into the mind (AB Interviewee 20: Interviews, 2009d).

Hence, whilst there is an apparent disjuncture between how Auschwitz-Birkenau is consumed, between formalised and often fractured tour group experiences or by independent scrutiny of the site, the overall level of moral meaning constructed by individuals consuming barbaric acts of torture and execution remains unclear. Arguably though, the (re)presentation of the Holocaust and Auschwitz-Birkenau as a place of cruelty and massacre is perhaps *too* austere; *but only* in the sense it does not allow a formal communicative space for visitors to gather, and from where to project and narrate how past tragedy may inform, teach and provide for a more propitious future (Obs, 2009d). Of course, it would be naive to suggest representations of genocide can be anything less than austere in its interpretation. Indeed, the Holocaust is not debateable, nor is the act of murderous death committed throughout that era– but what *is* contestable is how contemporary visitors to Auschwitz-Birkenau as a tourist place consume that death and, subsequently, what potential role the site has to play in projecting a moral (and hopeful) message. Quite simply, issues are raised as whether Auschwitz-Birkenau as a tourist site should generally rely on projecting narratives of catastrophe that are dependant, to some extent, upon visitors' validation of personal iconographies of the Holocaust, or instead, formally augment historical accounts of tragic death with explicit narratives of hope and reconciliation. For example, the exhibition at Auschwitz I, which depicts Nazi persecution against Poles and Polish Jews, is set within one of the former barrack blocks. Inside the exhibition are information boards which narrate in both text and black and white photographs atrocities committed against the Polish people during the Nazi occupation, in addition to depictions of maltreatment of the Poles by the Soviet 'liberators' in 1945 (Obs, 2009d). The exhibition is a bleak depressing representation of the affliction and murder against a particular race of people, which portrays death and suffering of men, women and children in stark and uncompromising text and images of hanging, torture, shooting, stabbing, rape, and starvation (Obs, 2009d). As the exhibition is framed within a 1939-1945 continuum of events, the information boards and exhibits are subsequently designed in a linear fashion; that is, the visitor must exit the exhibition

in the same place as they enter. Thus, the defining image as the visitor leaves the exhibition space is how Nazi Germany began its persecution of Poland at the beginning of World War II and, in doing so, perpetuates a narrative of victimhood and atrocity of one group of people upon another (Obs, 2009d). There is no information available to visitors to illustrate what has occurred in Poland since the end of the War, including reconciliation between Germany and Poland, the collapse of the Polish communism political system, consequent trade agreements, cultural exchanges and military co-operation, in addition to both nations joining the European Union and Nato Alliance. Instead, the exhibition is a bleak ascetic representation of a dejected population, and the visitor is left pondering at the level of hope for the future (Obs, 2009d). Consequently, an American male interviewee pointed out:

> What is the old saying – "Abandon all hope whoever shall enter here" – well I feel the same way!! Is there any hope for us? What a thoroughly depressing place... completely dreadful!! [original emphasis of tone] (AB Interviewee 8: Interviews, 2009d).

What transpires because of this austere representation is a perceived lack of hopefulness for the future and a perpetuation of victimhood, of Semitic persecution, which in turn, propels a sense of frustration and anxiety amongst some visitors. Hence, as Auschwitz-Birkenau is a place of the dead, and remains so as it continues to project death, emotional and embodied visitors consume tragedy. Yet, not only do they have little or no formalised information as to how the tragedy has shaped post-war events, especially within the context of reconciliation, but they have limited opportunities to record their own feelings and opinions of their 'Holocaust experience' at Auschwitz-Birkenau. Consequently, graffiti is scribed by visitors throughout the camp (Obs, 2009d: also Plate 48), particularly within the barracks at Birkenau as well as on walls at Auschwitz I entrance. In the main, the graffiti represents informal short moral commentaries and signs of hope, condolence as well as questions of 'why'. Indeed, the graffiti is perhaps evidence of a pent-up demand to record and discharge emotion and opinion – which in itself is perhaps becoming more widespread in an era of blogging, tweeting and the use of internet forums.

Plate 48: Graffiti (of various languages) chipped out of the plaster by visitors inside a barrack that housed prisoners in Birkenau. Note the word 'love' (red arrow) which forms part of an (informal) moral commentary.

That said however, the traditional method of recording visitor opinions in the form of visitor comment books, which often represent a mechanism for individuals to discharge their feelings and reflections, were lacking at Auschwitz-Birkenau. Indeed, only one such book appeared to be located in the entire Auschwitz I camp complex and no visitor comment books could be located at Birkenau (Obs, 2009d). Consequently, the (only) visitor comment book at Auschwitz I was located in Block 13, an exhibition dedicated to the Roma and Sinti Gypsies. The display which appeared to attract fewer visitors than some of the other exhibitions, particularly the aforementioned Block 11 and execution yard, contained a range of visitor comments which reflect both negative commentaries of sadness, anger, and uncertainty, yet also contained positive narratives of gratitude, hope, peace and tolerance (Obs, 2009d; also see Table 21).

Visitor Comments – Auschwitz I

"Tragic commentary on society"
"Thank you for reminding us"
"Very sombre and very sobering – a stark reminder"
"Auschwitz has haunted me"
"How fortunate we are to be able to walk out of here alive and return safely to our home and families"
"We must never forget: this exhibition will last in our minds forever"
"70 years on – and what has changed – just the methods!"
"God Bless"
"Few people here in this exhibition!! What does this mean?"
"Lest we forget man's inhumanity to man, this memorial is vital"
"So many questions I have..."
"To forget would be to kill them once more..."
"Thank you for opening my eyes more"
"Never forget. Move forward to a future without this kind of cruelty"

Table 21: A selection of visitor comments cited from the visitor comment book located within the Roma exhibition at Auschwitz I (Obs, 2009d).

Considering no other visitor books were located, and the evidence of visitors' 'emotional graffiti' throughout the site, it is suggested that a degree of demand does indeed exist for visitors to project and record their own emotion and opinion, especially when it is framed within an individuals' personal psychosocial context. As a Latvian female interviewee states:

> I just cannot believe this place. It is utterly awful... I feel really depressed... I just hope it will never again happen, but how can you be sure? Where is the hope of that? What are people doing to ensure this never happens again? To me, remembering is not enough, you have to do more than just remember... I just find this place emotionally confusing. On the one hand, I understand what went on during the Holocaust, but I do not fully understand why it happened.... and I think it probably could happen again if people do not have hope for the future, and I cannot see any evidence of hope in this place – only hopelessness, only death... a really sad and depressing place. It is truly sickening... (AB Interviewee 17: Interviews, 2009d).

Arguably therefore, Auschwitz-Birkenau as a tourist site not only projects formal narratives of tragic historical death, which visitors consume in an attempt to understand ideological and industrial processes behind the Holocaust, but visitors also

seemingly demand to understand broader narratives of peace, tolerance and hope. Furthermore, the suggestion is that visitors may wish to project their own moral commentary of the Holocaust, both within a contemporary context and framed within their own psychosocial life-world. However, constructing a broader morality which is fashioned by mass mortality and mediated in a place where so many people died does begin to occur in Auschwitz-Birkenau, but this construction of morality and hope appears fractured by the visitor experience(s). Thus, crucially, Auschwitz-Birkenau provides limited official opportunities not only to formally project narratives of future hope and tolerance, but there are also limited mechanisms for embodied visitors to record and project their own *moral markers*. As such, visitors seemingly construct meanings of morality which are based upon both factual museological interpretations and sanitised touristic representations of genocide, as well as personal iconographies and, ultimately, visitors consume a site that implicitly projects hope (through not forgetting the past), yet explicitly perpetuates (Holocaust) death and atrocity. Hence, it is the explicit representation of death, and the influence it has upon visitors' concept of mortality that the final theme turns.

7.11.3 Mortality: Personal Connections, Reflections & Associations

Considering Auschwitz-Birkenau is a site of the Holocaust, notions of death and dying are ubiquitous within the overall interpretative strategy of the site; thus, the issue of mortality underpins the visitor experience. However, what is more revealing is how individual visitors utilise interpretative narratives of death at Auschwitz-Birkenau, as well as personal iconographies of the Holocaust itself, not only to commemorate and contemplate the loss of life of past Others but, perhaps more importantly, to consume a (public) place of Holocaust and formulate psychosocial connections with their own (private) life-world. Consequently, some individuals appear to associate tragic and premeditated death with inevitable natural mortality of themselves as well as the death of those close to them. Essentially, a theme emerged from the ethnographic data of how some visitors employed the spatial site of Auschwitz-Birkenau and a construction of intrinsic meaning to inform broader concepts of mortality that are perceived relevant to them. In short, Auschwitz-Birkenau as a place of death of Others not only allows individuals a space to reflect upon historical tragedy but, crucially, allows the visitor to associate their tourism experience with personal concepts of dying and individual encounters of death.

Ultimately, Auschwitz-Birkenau as a visitor site acts as a place of mediation and, thus, intercedes between those who have passed away (through unnatural causes) and those who are yet to pass away (through anticipated natural causes). Consequently, a British male interviewee stated:

> There are few words that seem appropriate. All I can think of is "overwhelming". I'm so glad I've come and paid my respects to those who perished, but I will never come back. The sights around here – the medical experiments, the torture, the gas chambers, the room full of hair and shoes were all mind blowing. I think everyone should visit this place once – it really makes you think about appreciating one another and how fragile we all are... we'll all go [die] eventually, and this place certainly reminds you of that... (AB Interviewee 14: Interviews, 2009).

It is here that this individual begins to make an association between his 'morbid gaze' at Auschwitz-Birkenau and that of his inevitable passing as a human being. However, the response is tempered by a notion that the death of (Holocaust) Others should instil a sense of appreciation and tolerance for the living, whilst it is the actual site itself which is a reminder of mortality. Similarly, an American male interviewee also makes an association between his experience of Auschwitz-Birkenau and that of broader notions of dying:

> All I can say is that everyone should come to Auschwitz-Birkenau and realise how lucky we are nowadays... what happened here was pure evil, and I'm so glad I shall never have to go through such an experience... the way people died here and the experience this place has given me about death will live with me forever... (AB Interviewee 11: Interviews, 2009d).

Thus, for this individual, the process of mediation between evil acts of the past, which resulted in the killing of so many people, and perceptions of kismet in his own psychosocial life-world, engenders a meditative experience that augments his personal view of mortality for the future. Moreover, the mediation of mortality, as a process which occurs by consuming (re)presentations of Other death in a place of actual fatality is also suggested by a female interviewee:

> There is a heaviness about this place. We were going to go to the theatre this evening in Krakow, but I think to do something so trivial after visiting this place is going to be disrespectful... but I guess we all have to return to normality at some point... Auschwitz is like nothing else I have ever seen and the images are still playing across my mind of those poor people being killed... and I must admit I did think of myself in that situation and what I would have done – would I ran away or screamed and begged for my life? – I just don't know, and I don't want to think about it for too long... I think I shall go to the theatre this evening after all... (AB Interviewee 19: Interviews, 2009d).

Consequently, whilst the killing of Holocaust victims, projected through site narratives and imagined through inherent iconographic images, the actual death of victims is replayed in the cognitive mindscape of individuals, as visitors not only attempt to understand the actual atrocity, but also begin to correlate it with personal environs. In other words, for this Mexican visitor at least, whilst she did not want to dwell for too long, quite understandably, on an imagined 'Holocaust situation', she nevertheless employs the spatial experience of Auschwitz-Birkenau to begin to frame her own *mortality moment*. Of course, it remains unclear how fearful this particular individual was of her own mortality and the amount of direct interrelationship her visitor experience had with her fears of death. This important point is examined, in general terms, later in the study. However, another indication of a mediating correlation between the space of Auschwitz-Birkenau and of personal reflection of mortality is further evidenced by comments from a Canadian female interviewee:

> I admit that I had a few weeps on the way around the site as it was difficult to comprehend the barbarity of everything that has gone on here [Auschwitz-Birkenau]. I've seen everything from the gas chambers and crematoria to the barracks where inmates died from starvation, to the rooms full of hair and spectacles, and the room where children were killed... It is something I have never witnessed before and despite the place being busy, it has an eeriness which I think the snow and cold weather adds to... it is a place I shall never ever forget. Thinking of the victims herded off the trains into so-called selection lines, walking into the gas chambers thinking they were going to have showers, given clothing like pyjamas to wear in freezing conditions like today, children being beaten and parted from their families – it is horrendous, and certainly made me think about my own family and how I or we [reference to her family] would have coped in that sort of situation... Whilst I feel such sorrow for those victims and their families and all their suffering, I am so glad I live in a free world and have the chance to die in a free world, without being killed for who I am – at least that is the hope (AB Interviewee 5: Interviews, 2009d).

For this visitor, personal reflections of individual mortality and, indeed, personal reflections of collective mortality of her family members, are important in the consideration of framing visitor experiences at Auschwitz-Birkenau. In particular, the construction of a personal and collective mortality by consuming death and suffering of (significant) Holocaust victims is, perhaps, evidence of a broader consequential influence of dark tourism sites. Therefore, not only does Auschwitz-Birkenau act as a marker of inhumanity and murder, as well as a memorial to commemorate victims, but the site also appears to act an arbitrator that intermediates between death, life and hope. Furthermore, a British male interviewee stated:

> My mother has recently been diagnosed with breast cancer and she is really going through the mill at the moment with the treatment... I don't know why but when I saw the exhibition on the medical experiments and thought of all the poor woman and children that died, I just thought of my mother and the pain she is currently going through. I know the medical experiments here have absolutely nothing to do with my mother, but I just couldn't help thinking of her and the pain she must be feeling and how she is going to pass away – although God willing, that won't be for a while yet.... [And] when I started to think of my mother, I got thinking about my wife and daughter and then myself, and we'll all die at some point, I know, but this place is just haunting in the way it makes you think... really strange I know, but that is what I thought – not for too long mind you – we are on holiday (AB Interviewee 14: Interviews, 2009d).

Hence, it seems apparent that the morbid gaze for this visitor not only generated a memorial reflection of past suffering, but perhaps more importantly, it also generated a private association built upon empathy of victims' plight with that of his own present and future psychosocial life-world. In other words, this individual appeared to reflect upon a historical narrative of death and pain and subsequently framed it within contemporary circumstances that are personal and relevant to him, particularly the terminal illness of his mother and an impending encounter with grief. Importantly however, whilst this individual associated the public death and suffering of Holocaust victims with the private dying of his mother, his 'dwell time' on such thoughts is limited. Hence, he perhaps recognised the sense of dread such thoughts may bring with associations with mortality, and specifically noted that his visit was part of a broader recreational trip, thus an inherent bracketing of experience is perhaps inevitable as he leaves Auschwitz-Birkenau and continues his own holiday.

The relationship of consuming Auschwitz-Birkenau and associations of mortality for individuals, not only for personal dying but also thoughts of family death is further evidenced by Myerscough (2009) as he notes in his diary after his visit to the crematoria at Auschwitz I:

> I don't think I fear death, but I do fear the means of dying... it was not the chilling site of the cremation process but rather being able to link it to my own father's death and cremation in May 2008. It was not the link with the process that was presumably the same, in that a body is cremated which produces ashes? Rather it was the way of the inmate's deaths and the reason for cremation that is highly significant to me. Why should this upset me I am not really sure and would not like to second guess. The fact is that I found a tenuous link between this episode in the history of mankind and that of my father's end.

Thus, apparent again is the psychosocial connection between public (re)presentation of Other death and suffering framed within the private realm of personal circumstances. Indeed, for Myerscough, he appears afraid of the process of social dying rather than biological death. Subsequently, his visitor experience at Auschwitz-Birkenau is constructed within a private context of not only his own demise, but also that of his father. It is perhaps the mechanics for dealing with disposal of the dead, that is – through the act of cremation – which Myerscough cognitively associates as a *mortality moment*. In other words, the gaze upon the efficient and effective apparatus of mass extermination is similar to methods employed today for the disposal of the dead, and it is this act of disposal that reminds him of his father's death (and life). Furthermore, Myerscough (2009) also reflects upon his own mortality moment and considers how people close to him would cope in the 'Other world' of Auschwitz-Birkenau. Essentially, Myerscough concludes that by contemplating death and atrocity of Others and locating their public suffering and death within a private psychosocial life-world, then broader issues of why the actual Holocaust occurred is more comprehendible:

> Since my return to England I have been thinking a lot about my wife and my son and the rest of the people I come into contact with – both professionally and socially. I think of their behaviours and the interactions we have and I place them in the 'other world' that I have just glimpsed at over the past five days. I ask myself, how would they survive and is there another Hitler out there waiting for their turn at infamy. I have been watching the History Channel (now 'Yesterday') and have seen the programmes on the Second World War in a different light. I think I understand *why* a little better now...' (emphasis added – Myerscough, 2009).

7.12   Summary of Ethnographic Research – Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum and Memorial

Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum and Memorial commemorates the Holocaust, an era of genocide perpetrated by the Nazi German regime during World War II, and the 'manufactured death' of millions of people, mostly Jews. Consequently, contemporary visitors now consume an 'atrocity tourism experience' at a site of mass murder that has come to symbolise the Holocaust. Hence, a number of significant themes emerged from the ethnographic research at Auschwitz-Birkenau. Indeed, through a combination of covert participant observations, interviews, as well as a

diary account, three perceptible themes were extracted from the data and subsequent interpretations were discussed with regard to each theme.

The initial theme focussed upon notions of (pre)conditioning and consequent iconographies of the Holocaust which augment and inform the visitor experience at Auschwitz-Birkenau. Indeed, media-induced familiarity of Auschwitz-Birkenau and its portrayal, both in historical accounts and popular culture depictions, ensure the site occupies a cognitive space within the public consciousness. However, a particular theme also emerged of how the visitor experience is disjointed at Auschwitz-Birkenau, particularly by the touristification process at the site whereby ethical tensions are evident and fractured messages of hope and reconciliation are either limited or loss within dominant bleak narratives of death, persecution and suffering. Hence, a final theme suggested embodied and emotionally engaged visitors consumed interpretative narratives of death, as well as personal iconographies of the Holocaust, to formulate psychosocial connections with broader concepts of mortality. Ultimately, the ethnography at Auschwitz-Birkenau suggested that the site acted as a place of mediation between the dead and the living and, thus intercedes between those who have passed away and those yet to pass away.

Table 22 defines and codes emergent themes from Auschwitz-Birkenau. As the ethnographic research serves as a foundation to the second part of the empirical analysis – the research survey – a mapping process was formulated to draw together emergent themes across all four case studies. It is to this that the chapter now concludes.

Case Study	Theme	Theme Title	Theme Definition

	Code		
Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum & Memorial (AB)	AB1	Death (Pre)conditioning	'An iconic series of visual and narrative transformations which frame and subsequently condition visitor experiences of Holocaust (death)'.
	AB2	Constructing a Narrative of Death (and Moral Tales)	'The fractured formulation of narratives by embodied individuals to construct moral meaning from a space of mass death'.
	AB3	Mortality: Personal Connections, Reflections & Associations	'The reflective practice of associating premeditated death with inevitable mortality of the Self in a place that mediates between the dead and the living'.

Table 22: Ethnographic Themes for Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum & Memorial: Definitional Statements and Theme Codes

7.13 Ethnographic Themes: Mapping Concepts of Meaning, Morality and Mortality

This thesis has employed ethnographic research methods across a multiple case study design. The four case studies include the Dungeon visitor attractions, a Body Worlds exhibition, the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre at Ground Zero, and Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum and Memorial. The purpose of this section, therefore, is to commence the task of identifying synergy between the case study ethnographies, as well as identifying concepts for further empirical inquiry. Hence, Figure 14 schematically introduces the mapping structure used to identify ethnographic synergies, whilst a brief commentary and relevant models are subsequently discussed as to how various components of the mapping process have been constructed.
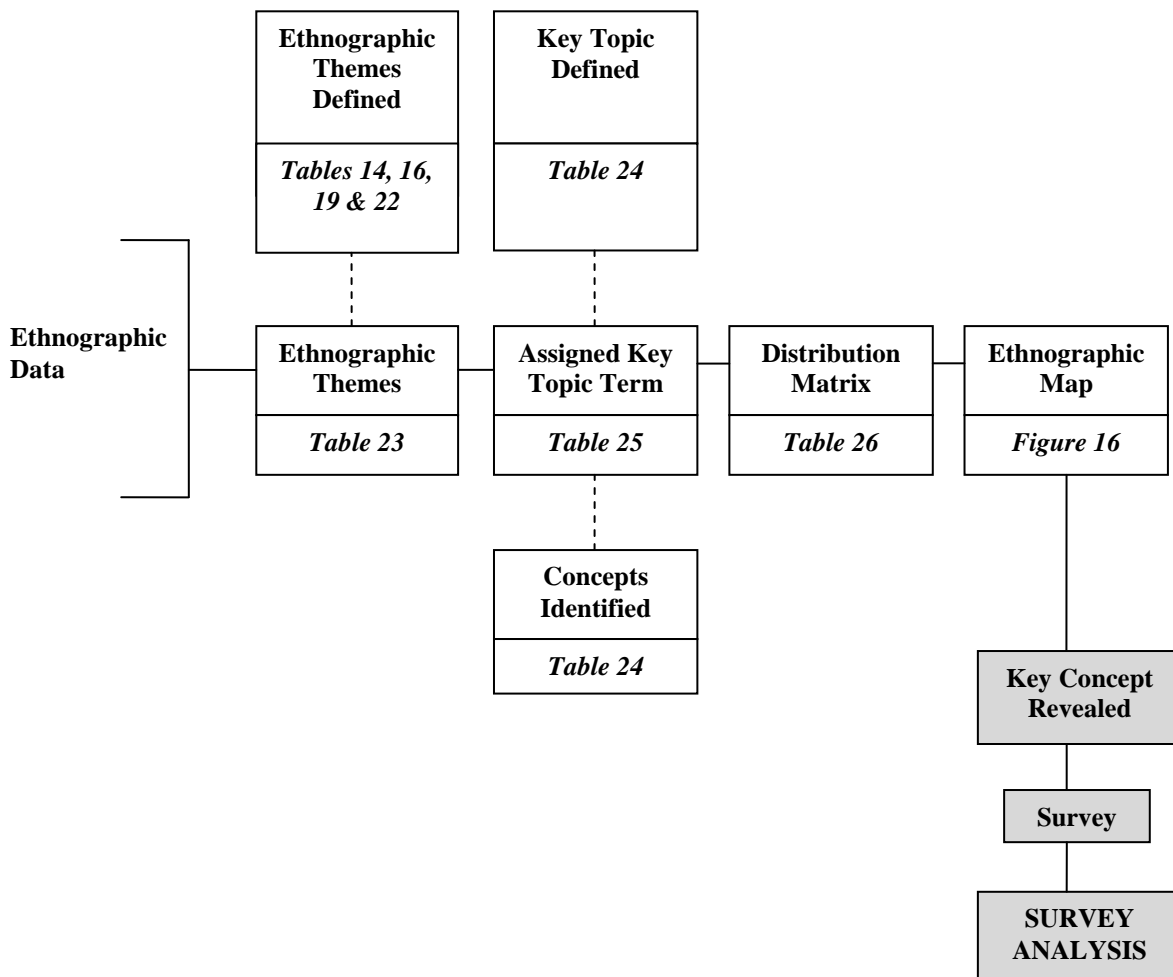
Figure 14: Schematic showing key components of the ethnographic mapping process

7.13.1 The Mapping Process

In order to refine ethnographic themes into congruent conceptual areas for synthesis with the broader literature, as well as identifying areas for further empirical investigation, a mapping process across all themes was undertaken. Notably, the study took emergent *themes* and converged them into expedient and identifiable *topic* areas. Consequently, these topic areas were then subject to definitional scrutiny which, in turn, allowed *concepts* to be identified. In short, emergent ethnographic themes from this study have been managed through a cognitive, if not subjective, filtering process. The aim of this process was to extract key messages and assign a thread of commonality to seemingly disparate themes. Accordingly, the key research issue of contemporary touristic relationships with mortality is addressed. Thus, because of this systematic process, as revealed shortly, *fifteen ethnographic themes* were (re)defined into *five key topics*, that in turn identified *three concepts*, and which ultimately determined *one key concept*. The filtering process is illustrated is Figure 15:
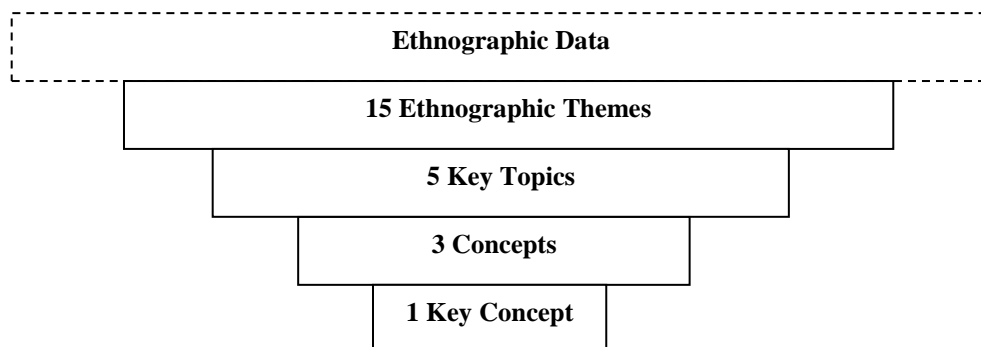
Figure 15: Model showing the refining process from empirical ethnographic data
to conceptual considerations

Firstly, therefore, a number of significant subjects emerged from the ethnographies, which, as already discussed and defined, include fifteen separate but interrelated ethnographic themes. For ease of clarification, these themes are outlined again in Table 23.

CASE STUDY	Theme Code	Theme Title
The Dungeon Visitor Attractions (DA)	DA1	Consumer Expectations vs. Consumer Experiences
	DA2	Death Designs
	DA3	Perpetuation of Death Narratives
	DA4	Ethical Dimensions & Psychosocial Connections
	DA5	Mortality and Relevancy to Life-Worlds
The Body Worlds Exhibition (BW)	BW1	Marketing the Macabre
	BW2	Promoting Life Narratives
	BW3	Death / Life Reflections
	BW4	Moral Conversations: Art of Dying vs. Death Education
The Tribute WTC Visitor Centre and Ground Zero (GZ)	GZ1	Spatial Scale and a Meditation of Mortality
	GZ2	Semiotics: Signs of Life (through Death)
	GZ3	Consuming Death and Disaster: Ethical Codes
Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum & Memorial (AB)	AB1	Death (Pre)conditioning
	AB2	Constructing a Narrative of Death (and Moral Tales)
	AB3	Mortality: Personal Connections, Reflections & Associations

Table 23: Ethnographic theme titles and codes for all case studies

To commence the refining (filtering) process, and for expediency, each of the fifteen ethnographic themes were assigned a key topic term. Put simply, a consideration of terminology was undertaken with particular words subsequently interpreted and defined to best describe the core of each ethnographic theme. The key topic terms, chosen for their 'best fit', were namely *Representation, Death, Ethics, Life,* and *Dying*. These *key topics* succinctly represent the substance of individual ethnographic themes. In short, a filtration process of theme definitional statements was carried out, together with an iterative examination of key words from each statement. This meant the choosing of key topic terminology (*Representation, Death, Ethics, Life,* and *Dying*) best described the essence of ethnographic themes.

Thus, before relationships are revealed between ethnographic themes, topics and subsequent concepts, Table 24 highlights definitional statements of the key topics used. Importantly, the *key topic* definitional statements are designed to illustrate not only the broad connotation of ethnographic themes, which have emerged from the data, but also to identify relevant concepts which are necessary to begin the task of synthesising research findings with the broader theoretical framework. In short, each key topic definition denotes theoretical concepts, which, as revealed shortly, are mapped to the empirical ethnographic themes.

Key Topic Term	Key Topic Code (KT)	Definition
Representation	KT 1	The general presentational nature, style and content of dark tourism attractions, exhibitions or sites which propel consumers to extract and construct inherent **meaning**(s).
Death	KT2	The contemporary visitor consumption of **mortality**, especially with regard to (re)presented depictions of biological death and acts of killing.
Ethics	KT3	The ethical dimensions of consuming representations of death, dying, and the seemingly macabre, and subsequent generation of **morality** concerns, issues and debates.
Life	KT4	The contemporary visitor consumption of dark tourism attractions, exhibitions or sites, especially with regard to (re)presented depictions of death and dying and, subsequent generation of **mortality** narratives which may be consequential to life and living.
Dying	KT5	The contemporary visitor consumption of **mortality**, especially with regard to (re)presented depictions of social and ontological death.

Table 24: Definitional statements of key topic terms (with codes): Concepts are highlighted in bold

These five key topics now represent the crux of ethnographic data presented in this study. Moreover, key topics characterise empirical research that has focused upon

(present) ethical tourism representation and consumption of (past) death and dying, with potential consequential aspects for (future) living. Therefore, to validate a relationship between death and dying and its touristic consumption, Table 25 assigns each ethnographic theme to one or more key topic(s). Ultimately, each ethnographic theme and its definition was filtered, analysed and interpreted for its 'best fit' with a key topic term. Hence, each of the fifteen ethnographic themes are now appropriately categorised within one or more of the five key topic areas (see Table 25).

Case Study	*Theme Code*	Theme Title	Key Topic(s)	Key Topic Code (KT)
The Dungeon Visitor Attractions (DA)	*DA1*	Consumer Expectations vs. Consumer Experiences	*Representation*	*KT1*
	DA2	Death Designs	*Representation* *Death*	*KT1* *KT2*
	DA3	Perpetuation of Death Narratives	*Representation* *Death*	*KT1* *KT2*
	DA4	Ethical Dimensions & Psychosocial Connections	*Ethics* *Death* *Life*	*KT3* *KT2* *KT4*
	DA5	Mortality and Relevancy to Life-Worlds	*Death* *Dying* *Life*	*KT2* *KT5* *KT4*
The Body Worlds Exhibition (BW)	*BW1*	Marketing the Macabre	*Representation*	*KT1*
	BW2	Promoting Life Narratives	*Dying* *Life*	*KT5* *KT4*
	BW3	Death / Life Reflections	*Death* *Dying* *Life*	*KT2* *KT5* *KT4*
	BW4	Moral Conversations: Art of Dying vs. Death Education	*Ethics* *Representation*	*KT3* *KT1*
The Tribute WTC Visitor Centre and Ground Zero (GZ)	*GZ1*	Spatial Scale and a Meditation of Mortality	*Death* *Dying* *Life*	*KT2* *KT5* *KT4*
	GZ2	Semiotics: Signs of Life (through Death)	*Representation* *Death* *Life*	*KT1* *KT2* *KT4*
	GZ3	Consuming Death and Disaster: Ethical Codes	*Ethics* *Death* *Representation*	*KT3* *KT2* *KT1*
Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum & Memorial (AB)	*AB1*	Death (Pre)conditioning	*Representation*	*KT1*
	AB2	Constructing a Narrative of Death (and Moral Tales)	*Representation* *Ethics* *Dying* *Life*	*KT1* *KT3* *KT5* *KT4*
	AB3	Mortality: Personal Connections, Reflections & Associations	*Death* *Dying* *Life*	*KT2* *KT5* *KT4*

Table 25: Ethnographic themes with assigned key topic term with codes

Whilst each ethnographic theme has now been assigned a corresponding key topic term, distribution of key topics to ethnographic themes are not equal. Indeed and perhaps unsurprisingly given the focus of research aims, some key topics are more prominent than others. However, that is not to suggest that prominence equates to level of importance in the attempt to discover contemporary relationships between death and dying and dark tourism places. Moreover, as revealed shortly, key topics are interrelated, whereby fundamental theoretical concepts are extricated, linked and ultimately grounded within the broader research. In the meantime, however, Table 26 outlines a matrix map showing the relative distribution between ethnographic themes and their assigned key topics. Thus, the purpose of this matrix map is to illustrate how each key topic is distributed and represented across ethnographic themes. More importantly, however, the matrix commences the task of identifying where conceptual considerations should be focused.

In particular, key topics of *Death* (KT2), *Dying* (KT5) and *Life* (KT4) are well distributed throughout the ethnographies. As these key topics have been defined previously to include not only the (re)presented moment of death, but also the consumption of the prospect of dying and, subsequent consideration to an end to life-projects, then it is suggested that a broader concept of ***Mortality*** emerges (see Table 24). In short, the concept of mortality has been defined as being concerned not only with biological, social and ontological death, but also with narratives of life and living (in the face of death). Similarly, the key topic of *Ethics* (KT3) is denoted in all four ethnographies. Particularly, the study's definition of ethics to include moral instruction and conversation advocates the emergence of ***Morality*** as a concept (see Table 24). Finally, the key topic of *Representation* (KT1) is positioned across all ethnographies. As this key topic has been defined as a projection of authorised narratives as well as construction by individuals of inherent connotations of both mortality and morality, it is suggested that ***Meaning*** as a concept transpires (see Table 24).

Ethnographic Theme Code	Key Topic Code				
	KT1	KT2	KT3	KT4	KT5
DA1	●				
DA2	●	●			
DA3	●	●			
DA4		●	●	●	
DA5		●		●	●
BW1	●				
BW2				●	●
BW3		●		●	●
BW4	●		●		
GZ1		●		●	●
GZ2	●	●		●	
GZ3	●	●	●		
AB1	●				
AB2	●		●	●	●
AB3		●		●	●

Table 26: Matrix map illustrating the distribution between
Ethnographic Themes and Key Topics

Of course, what now remains is to identify relationships and connections between emergent ethnographic themes, key topics, and concepts. Thus, Figure 16 outlines a model that illustrates these associations. Particularly, the model demonstrates how each ethnographic theme is represented by a key topic, which in turn has been linked into concepts of *meaning*, *mortality*, or *morality*. In short, ethnographies have been filtered and mapped to a 'conceptual destination'.
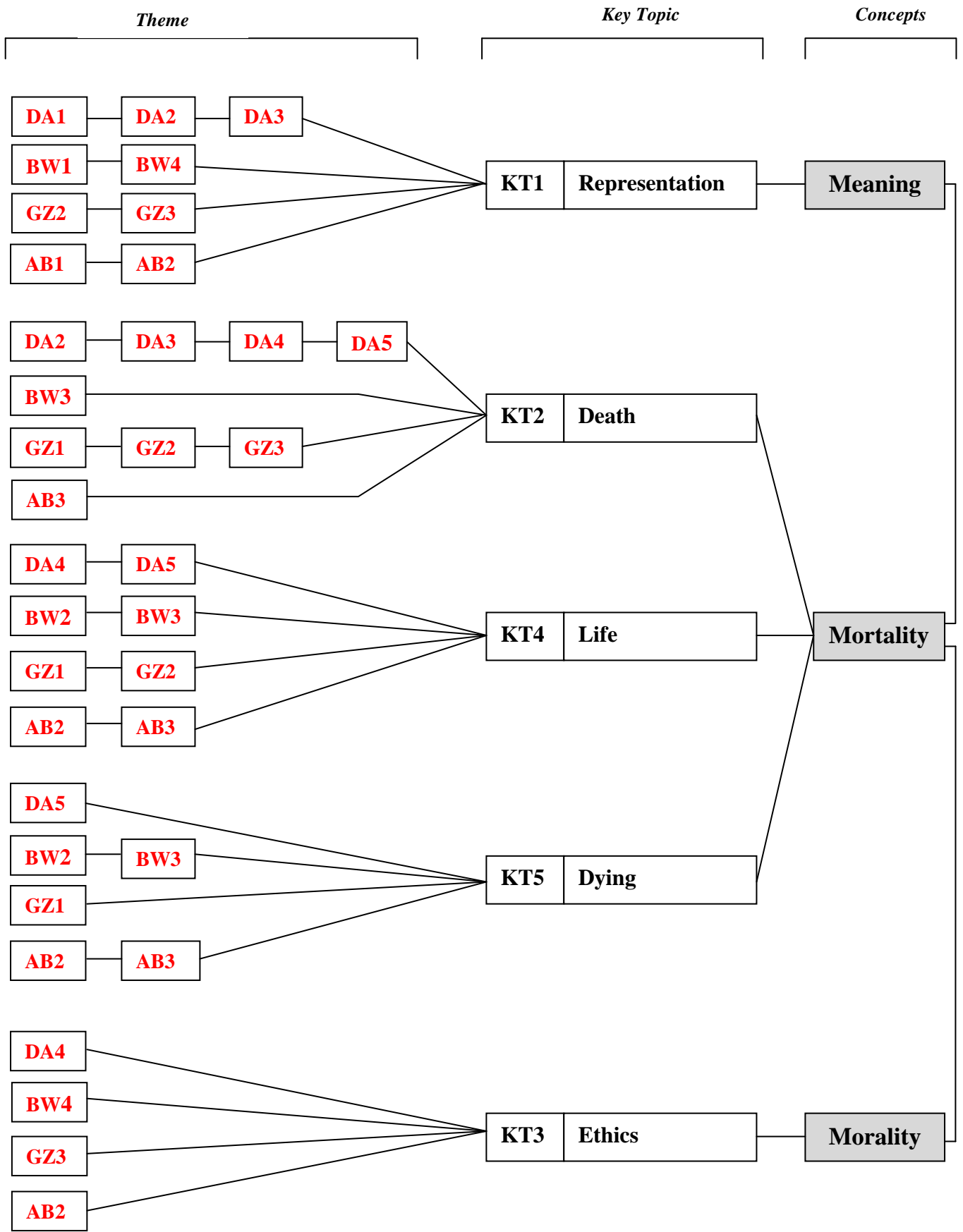
Figure 16: Ethnographic Map illustrating relationships between Themes, Key Topics and Concepts

Importantly however, the ethnographic map not only illustrates linkages between ethnographic themes and broader conceptual considerations, but also identifies *mortality* as a key underpinning concept. In other words, the ethnographies demonstrate how dark tourism, with issues of moral conduct and the construction of meaning, is in fact grounded within broader issues of death and dying. Thus, it is the construction of *mortality meaning* that is important, which is manifested by considering not only death and dying but also life itself.

However, whilst the ethnographies and their emergent themes indeed suggest mortality as a key concept, the data does not show the extent of relationship between each dark tourism case study and that of 'mortality consumption'. In other words, the empirical research thus far has demonstrated there is a relationship between dark tourism consumption and mortality, but has to reveal the nature of this relationship. It is to this point that this thesis now turns, as the next chapter discusses the second part of the empirical study. Particularly, the thesis employs survey research across each of the case studies. The research surveys are set within the context of visitors' perceptions of the wider cultural condition of society, particularly from a thanatological perspective. Ultimately, the empirical analysis now examines mortality and its interrelationship with dark tourism consumption and, thus, specifically reveals the extent of mortality contemplation amongst 'dark tourists', as well as highlighting broader morality and representational issues.

Chapter Eight

Analysis: Survey Research
&
Discussion

The Dungeon Visitor Attractions
(York & London, UK)

Body Worlds Exhibitions
(London, UK)

Tribute WTC Visitor Centre, Ground Zero
(New York, USA)

Auschwitz- Birkenau Memorial & Museum
(Oświęcim, Poland)

8.0   Survey Analysis – An Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present and analyse results from survey data at each of the case study sites. The chapter also provides synthesis of the empirical data with the broader literature and conceptual frameworks. As discussed in Chapter Six, two samples of self-completion surveys were taken at each case site, namely one at the actual site and an online version. Whilst the on-site survey was conducted immediately after the visit, the criterion for completion of the online survey was a visit to the case site within the preceding six-months. Therefore, in terms of the online survey, the potential time lapse from the actual visit may affect emotional responses, and the study recognises this issue (see Section 6.3.5 & Section 9.2.1). Nevertheless, the online population revealed an average of forty-one days between completing the survey and their actual dark tourism experience (which was well within the prescribed six-month window). Of course, future research will no doubt clarify issues of 'chronological distance' within any reflective contemplation of dark tourism sites under investigation (see Section 9.2.3).

Aggregate results are revealed for both on-site and online surveys in subsequent sections and, in doing so, a moderated narrative account is provided from the two sampling populations. The main aim of the survey was to discover the extent, if any, of the level and type of mortality contemplation or 'life/death associations' by visitors at selected dark tourism sites. Therefore, the analysis presented here compares responses across all four case studies and, by doing so, an interpretative narrative of relationships between mortality and touristic consumption is outlined. Firstly, however, because the survey sampled two populations (on-site and online), it is prudent to determine the level of significance between population distributions. In order to establish this, a chi-square test was conducted (Appendix 3), whereby the research tested whether there was any substantial statistical deviation between observed and expected data. Consequently, a null hypothesis suggested that the on-site population would be similar in distribution to the online population. The chi-square test revealed the value of x^2 to be 6.87 with a *df* of 3, giving a *p value* between 90-95%. Thus, the value of x^2 (i.e. 6.87) is bounded between 6.25 and 7.82 (derived from the critical values of X^2 at various levels of probability – chi square), and the corresponding probability is $0.10 < P < 0.05$. This is below the conventionally accepted significance level of 0.05 or 5%, so the null hypothesis that the two population

distributions are similar is verified. In other words, when the computed x^2 statistic exceeds the critical value in the relevant chi-square table for 0.05 probability level, then we can reject the null hypothesis of similar distributions (Greene and D'Oliveira, 1999). However, since the x^2 statistic (6.87) did not exceed the critical value for 0.05 probability (7.82), we can accept the null hypothesis (Greene and D'Oliveira, 1999). Therefore, it is quite conceivable that the distribution of respondents between the populations, from which onsite respondents were drawn, was similar as the population from which online respondents were drawn. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted and the data is useful.

The survey themes, which are grounded the literature review and subsequent theoretical analysis, are:

- Demographic Data
- Survey Context: Secularisation, Sequestration and Death Anxiety
- Visitor Experiences & Site Representations
- Moral Conversations
- Confronting Life and Living
- Mortality Contemplation

Building upon previous ethnographic research, the survey findings reveal the extent of how individuals consume Other Death and reflect, to varying degrees, upon broader notions of mortality. In short, the survey reveals the ordinary Self to consume significant Other death and, in doing so, dark tourism offers a potential mediating mechanism to link the living with the dead. The final chapter builds upon this notion. Firstly, however, the survey results are analysed with interpretive narratives.

8.1   Demographic Data

Demographic data is summarised in this section, including gender, age, geographic and religious profiles, as well as purpose and duration of respondent visits.

8.1.1 Gender Profile

The gender mix of respondents was female centric across all cases, especially at the Dungeons and Body Worlds. Whilst this research does not address differences in responses between genders, particularly with regard to mortality contemplation, differences may indeed exist. Therefore, the following analysis is based upon a higher proportion of female responses.

8.1.2 Age Profile

The majority of respondents (80%) fall within the age range of 16 years to 44 years, whilst the bulk of these (58%) are 34 years and under. Only 3% of respondents were aged 65 years and over. The implication here, of course, is the survey is based largely upon a 'youthful' sample. This may 'skew' perceptions of mortality, especially by those who are not reaching their natural end of life. The study recognises this limitation and suggests any future research adopts a sampling design that either targets a specific age of respondent or ensures a greater mix of age range – though difficulties do arise when utilising online distribution channels.

8.1.3 Geographic Profile

The geographical residency of respondents was international with twenty countries represented within the overall sample, including those from Australasia, Asia, Europe and North America. Table 27 shows the range of countries where respondents reside.

Country	
Australia	Germany
Belgium	Hong Kong
Korea	Ireland
Norway	Mexico
Sweden	Poland
Canada	Portugal
Lithuania	Romania
China	Spain
Czech Republic	UK
Finland	USA

Table 27: Range of countries represented by respondents' residency across all four case studies
(n = 419)

8.1.4   Religious Profile

Although 47% of respondents cited either Catholicism or Christianity as a religious affiliation, a large proportion of respondents at 41% suggested they were non-religious, thus confirming a pronounced secularisation of the sample.

8.1.5   Purpose & Duration of Visit

With 49% of respondents, staying within the destination for four days or less corresponds, generally, with the growth of short-stay leisure breaks (e.g. Chapman, 2008). The majority of respondents suggested that leisure was a primary purpose of their visit to the destination in which the dark tourism site was located, although in the case of Auschwitz-Birkenau only 28% suggested that leisure was a primary purpose. Indeed, almost a quarter of respondents (23%) to Auschwitz-Birkenau suggested their trip was primarily to visit the former Nazi concentration camp. It is here where broader connotations of (secular) pilgrimage are noted. Additionally, a relatively large proportion of 'educational tourists' were evident, especially at Body Worlds (23%). This may be due not only to the online sampling strategy which targeted academic email list-serves but, perhaps, also educational and research opportunities explicitly offered by these dark tourism sites, including Body Worlds (e.g. anatomy studies) and Auschwitz-Birkenau (e.g. Holocaust studies).

The vast majority of respondents cited that this was their first visit to the respective site. Interestingly however, a quarter of respondents to the WTC Tribute Visitor Centre stated that they had visited the site on more than one occasion, suggesting that some individuals 're-charge' their emotional and cognitive associations with the events of 9/11 through repeated visits to the (contested) dark tourism space of Ground Zero. Additionally, respondents across all case studies were *not* worried what other people may (ethically) think of them visiting respective dark sites. Consequently, notions of moral panic are dispelled somewhat, at least from a consumer perspective. Furthermore, the context in which the survey was conducted, particularly operationalising key theoretical concepts, is explored in the next section.

8.2   Survey Context: Secularisation, Mortality Anxiety and Death Sequestration

The assembly of the key theoretical framework for this thesis has been around conceptual issues of secularisation and morality, as well as the sequestration of death and consequent mortality anxiety. Thus, it is within these broad parameters that this research survey is conducted. In short, the context of this research survey is how respondents view the wider cultural condition of society, particularly from a thanatological perspective, in relation to their visitor experience to respective dark tourism sites, attractions and exhibitions. Specifically, the research surveyed respondents general views on commemoration, grief, religion, popular culture and morbidity, as well as perceptions of medicalization, the professionalization of death, the fear of mortality and notions of a 'good death'. Issues of morality, as well as matters of contemplating both life and death from dark tourism experiences are revealed later in this chapter. Subsequent discussions interpret and report key measures of secularisation, perceptions of morbidity, death sequestration and mortality anxiety. Firstly, therefore, the next section provides the context where a better understanding can be made of the relationship between touristic encounters of fatality and contemplative experiences of both life and death.

8.2.1   Secularisation

As stated earlier, a significant proportion of respondents (41%) suggested they were non-religious, which in turn intimates many individuals operate with secular values

and ideals, and where institutionalised religion may be perceived as less significant in daily living. However, it would be naive to simply claim because an individual states they are 'non-religious' that broader issues of faith or spirituality are neither important nor unimportant, especially when placed within a milieu of commemoration, death and grief. Moreover, individuals may claim a religious affiliation, yet in practice adopt secular habits and routines. Therefore, the research further revealed respondents views of religion and faith, an important point considering the potential role dark tourism may play in meditating between life and death in contemporary secular societies.

Figure 17 shows a series of graphs from each case study and the level of response when individuals were asked how often they participated in organised prayer and worship – an almost universal symbolic ritual of any religious order. The overwhelming response for all respondents was one of either *hardly ever* or *never* participating in organised prayer or worship, despite half of all respondents (50%) claiming to be of a religious affiliation. Additionally, whilst most respondents did not participate in the rituals of organised religion, the research also revealed how important faith and/or religion actually was to individuals in everyday life, as well as how respondents perceive the role of religion in providing for a better society. Consequently, Figure 18 illustrates a series of schematics that demonstrate a relationship between respondent's perceptions of religion in terms of its importance for both individual and collective living. In essence, the research revealed that religion was *not important* to individuals, generally, nor was it perceived as providing for a better society, again reinforcing the concept of secularisation – though it does not necessarily address the issue of 'spirituality'.

Dungeon Visitor Attractions

	Very Often	Often	Occasional	Hardly ever	Never
Dungeons	2%	6%	15%	24%	53%

Body Worlds

	Very Often	Often	Occasional	Hardly ever	Never
Bodyworlds	4%	6%	4%	25%	60%

Tribute WTC Visitor Centre at Ground Zero

	Very Often	Often	Occasional	Hardly ever	Never
Ground Zero	7%	12%	10%	32%	40%

Auschwitz-Birkenau

	Very Often	Often	Occasional	Hardly ever	Never
Auschwitz	4%	4%	10%	23%	59%

Figure 17: Level of responses to the question 'How often do you participate in organised prayer and worship?'

Dungeon Visitor Attractions

	1	2	3	4	5
Religion provides for a better society	5%	15%	24%	30%	26%
Importance of religion / faith to you in everyday life	6%	16%	20%	25%	37%

1 = Very Important / Strongly Agree, 5 = Not Important at All / Strongly Disagree

Body Worlds

	1	2	3	4	5
Religion provides for a better society	3%	8%	20%	35%	35%
Importance of religion / faith to you in everyday life	8%	4%	9%	24%	56%

1 = Very Important / Strongly Agree, 5 = Not Important at All / Strongly Disagree

Figure 18: A stacked comparison of responses to the questions 'How important is religion/faith to you in everyday life?' and 'How much do agree that religion provides for a better society?'

Tribute WTC Visitor Centre at Ground Zero

	1	2	3	4	5
■ Religion provides for a better society	1%	14%	31%	33%	22%
◆ Importance of religion / faith to you in everyday life	12%	15%	18%	24%	32%

1 = Very Important / Strongly Agree, 5 = Not Important at All / Strongly Disagree

Auschwitz -Birkenau

	1	2	3	4	5
■ Religion provides for a better society	3%	9%	24%	30%	34%
◆ Importance of religion / faith to you in everyday life	7%	8%	25%	16%	44%

1 = Very Important / Strongly Agree, 5 = Not Important at All / Strongly Disagree
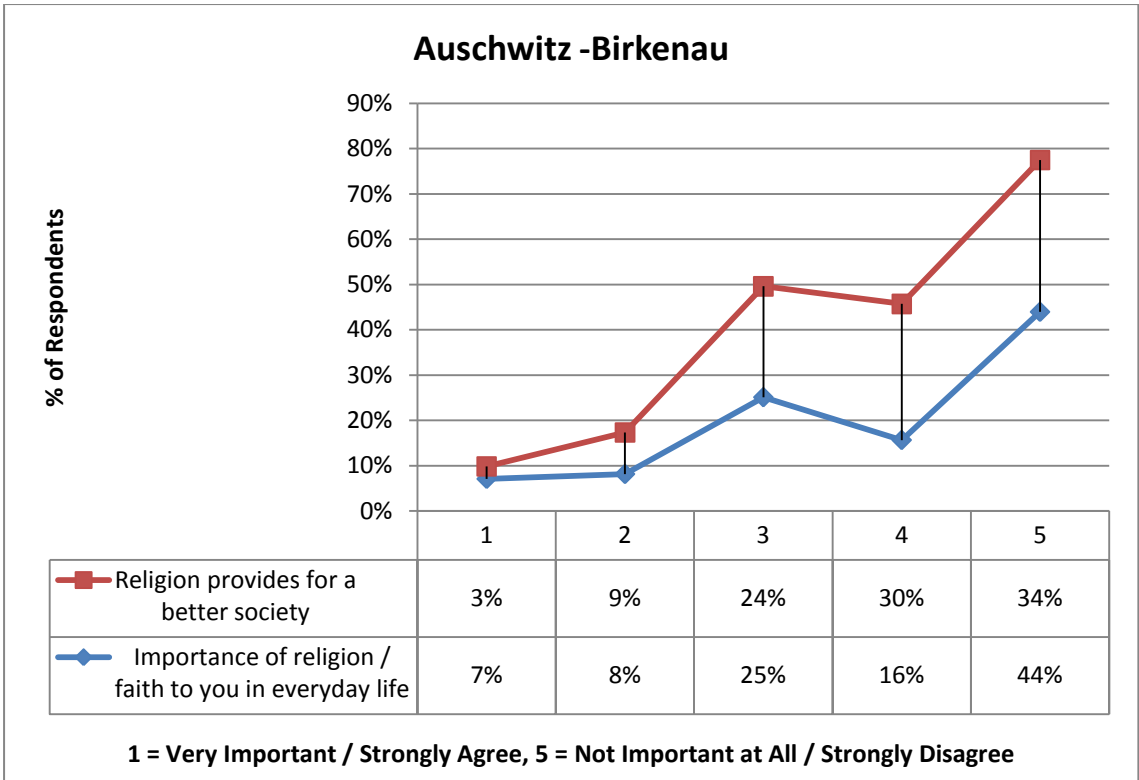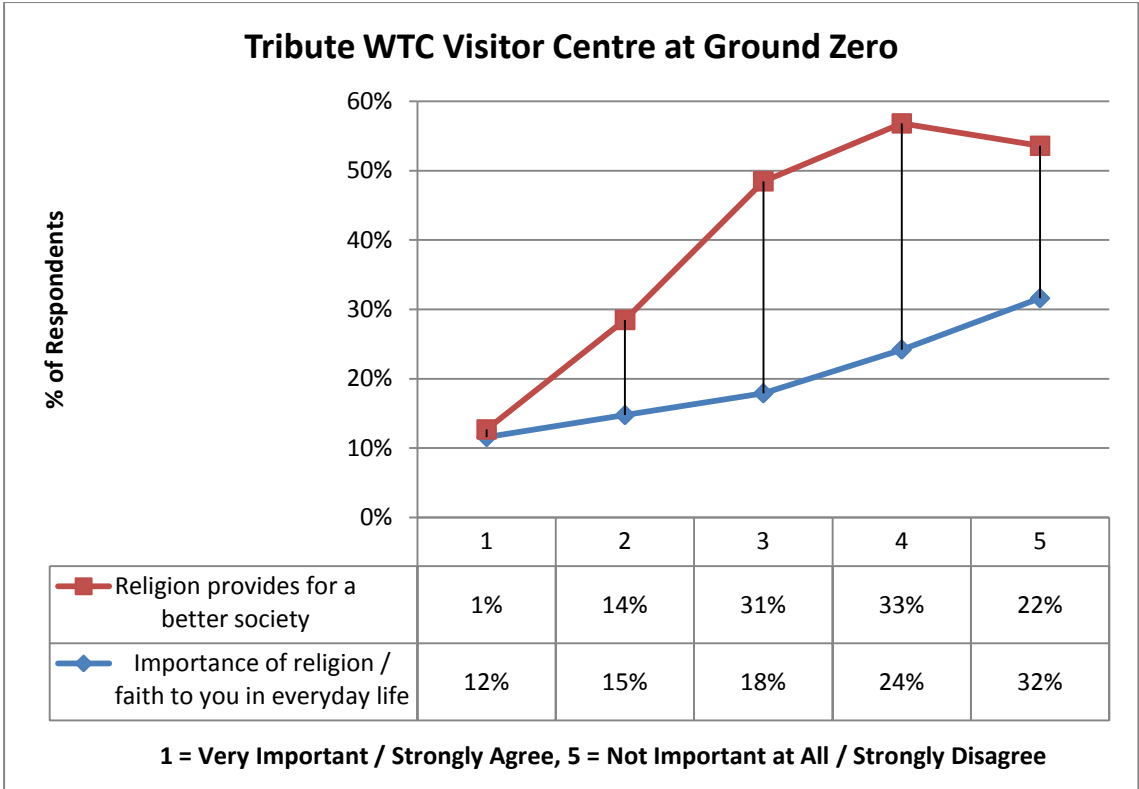
Figure 18 Cont'd: A stacked comparison of responses to the questions 'How important is religion/faith to you in everyday life?' and 'How much do agree that religion provides for a better society?'

However, respondents were asked specifically whether they considered religion important when dealing with mourning and grief. The result as highlighted in the series of graphs in Figure 19 suggest whilst individuals perceive religion as *less important* to them in everyday life, religion becomes *more important* when dealing with issues of mourning the deceased and consequent grief. The implication here, of course, is whilst individuals may claim to be secular, or even religious yet still adopt a secular lifestyle, the spiritual and social construct of religion remains somewhat important when dealing with grief.

Dungeon Visitor Attractions

	1	2	3	4	5
◆ Importance of religion / faith to you in everyday life	6%	16%	20%	25%	37%
■ Importance of religion to you when dealing with mourning and grief	16%	33%	31%	9%	10%

1 = Very Important, 5 = Not Important at All
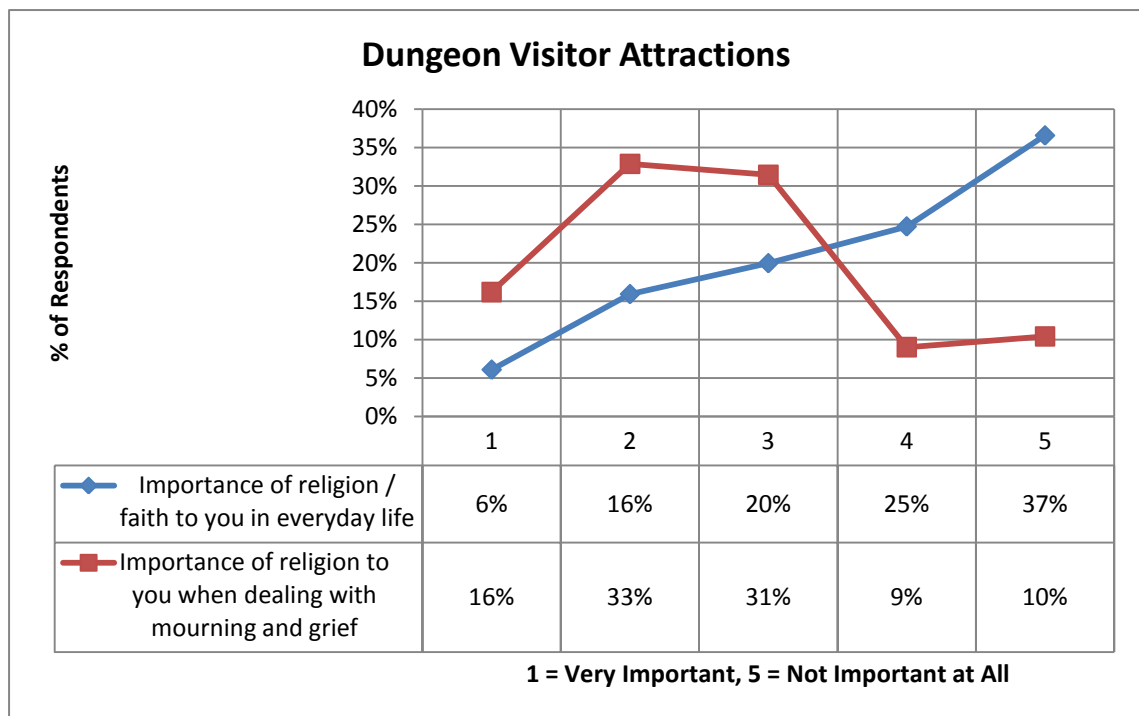
Figure 19: A comparison of responses to the questions 'How important is religion/faith to you in everyday life?' and 'Do you consider religion to be important when dealing with mourning and grief?'

Body Worlds

	1	2	3	4	5
Importance of religion / faith to you in everyday life	8%	4%	9%	24%	56%
Importance of religion to you when dealing with mourning and grief	13%	30%	23%	13%	20%

1 = Very Important, 5 = Not Important at All

Tribute WTC Visitor Centre at Ground Zero

	1	2	3	4	5
Importance of religion / faith to you in everyday life	12%	15%	18%	24%	32%
Importance of religion to you when dealing with mourning and grief	17%	34%	20%	19%	11%

1 = Very Important, 5 = Not Important at All

Figure 19 Cont'd: A comparison of responses to the questions 'How important is religion/faith to you in everyday life?' and 'Do you consider religion to be important when dealing with mourning and grief?'

Auschwitz-Birkenau

	1	2	3	4	5
Importance of religion / faith to you in everyday life	7%	8%	25%	16%	44%
Importance of religion to you when dealing with mourning and grief	7%	27%	33%	11%	22%

1 = Very Important, 5 = Not Important at All
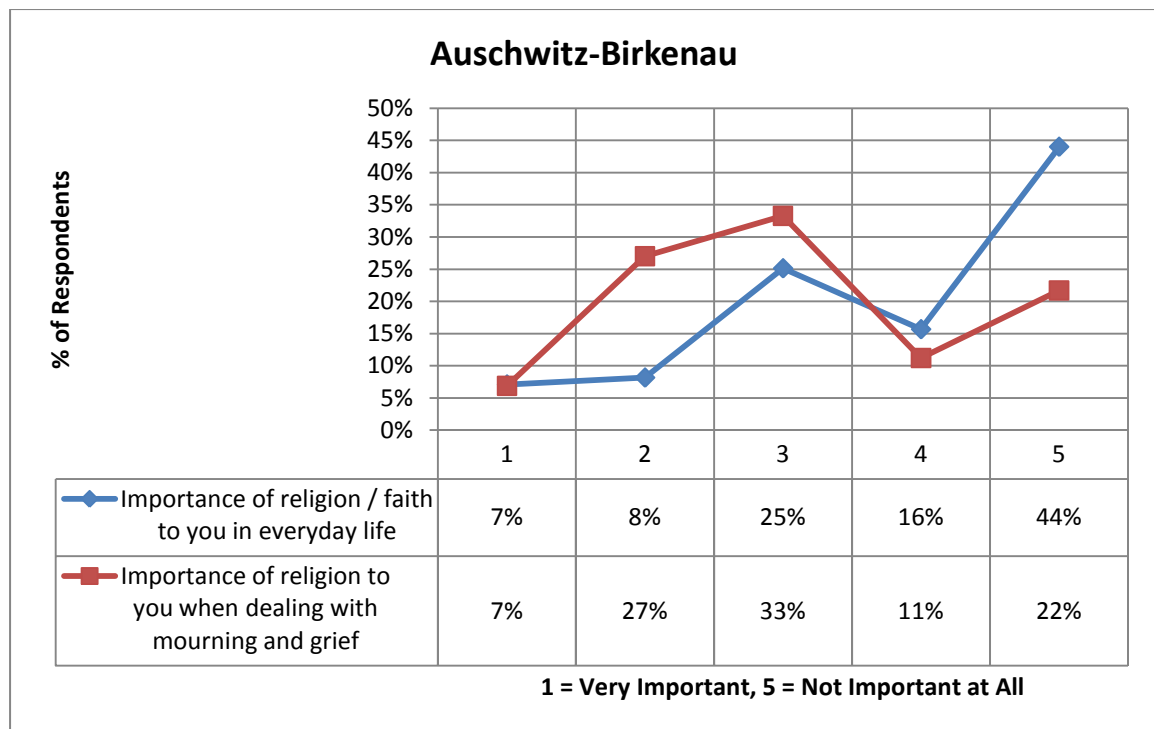
Figure 19 Cont'd: A comparison of responses to the questions 'How important is religion/faith to you in everyday life?' and 'Do you consider religion to be important when dealing with mourning and grief?'

Furthermore, in order to provide perspective as to whether religion was perceived important when dealing with grief, individuals were queried of their personal experience of bereavement. Indeed, the survey asked respondents whether they had suffered the loss of a close friend, family member, or loved one within the past five years. As Figure 20 indicates, a large majority of respondents at each case site had experienced recent bereavement, and may indeed have called upon religious structures and rituals in their time of personal grief. However, whilst this latter point is an assumption, for the purpose of this research, the issue is how individuals perceive dark tourism places as potential structural and ritualised spaces of general and collective commemoration, solace, or mediation.
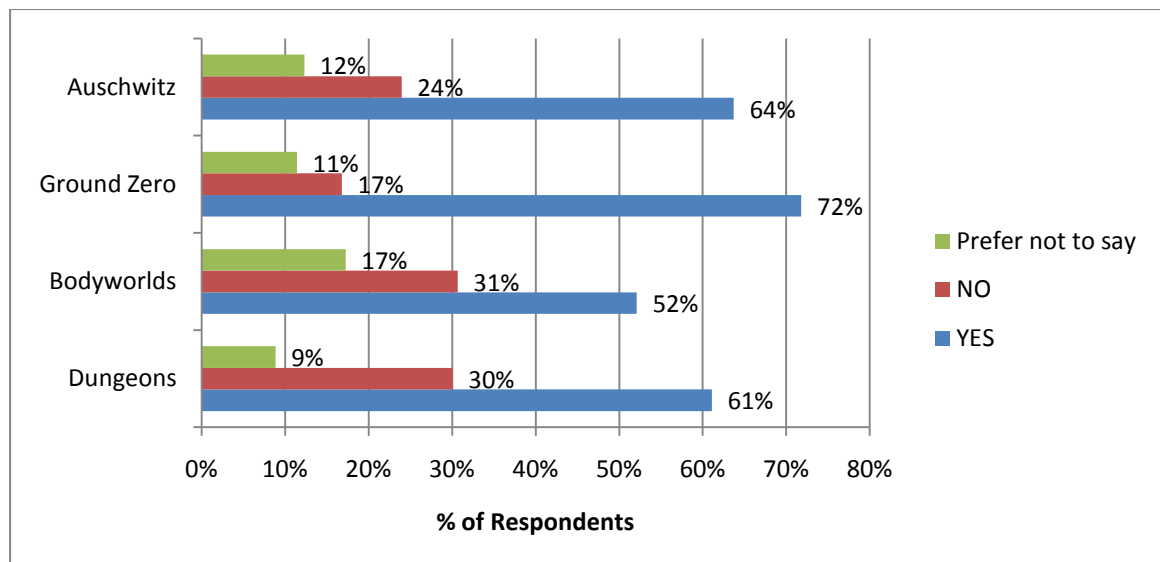
Figure 20: Responses to the question 'Have you suffered the loss of a close friend, family member, or loved one in the last five years?'

With this in mind, Figure 21 illustrates the level of response when individuals were asked whether respective case sites provided a sense of comfort when dealing with (Other) death, disease or the aftermath of tragedy. The majority of respondents at the Dungeons disagreed that the visitor attraction provided a place of comfort, confirming perhaps the level of perceived morbidity in its 'product design' as suggested in the earlier ethnographic research. Nevertheless, a significant 36% of respondents at Auschwitz-Birkenau and 39% at Body Worlds either agreed or strongly agreed that the sites provided for a place of comfort when confronting notions of death. Moreover, at Ground Zero where the atrocity of 9/11 has more 'chronological propinquity', than, say of the Holocaust, over half of respondents (51%) suggest the spatial site and exhibits provide for comfort. Indeed, as the ethnographies suggested earlier, the almost reverend presentational style of some dark tourism sites, especially at the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre at Ground Zero and Body Worlds, promote an pseudo ecclesiastic environment whereby individuals consume (collective) comfort which otherwise may have been delivered through religious frameworks.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree / Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
■ Dungeons	6%	12%	13%	23%	47%
■ Bodyworlds	16%	23%	22%	13%	25%
■ Ground Zero	14%	37%	31%	12%	7%
■ Auschwitz	15%	21%	35%	20%	9%
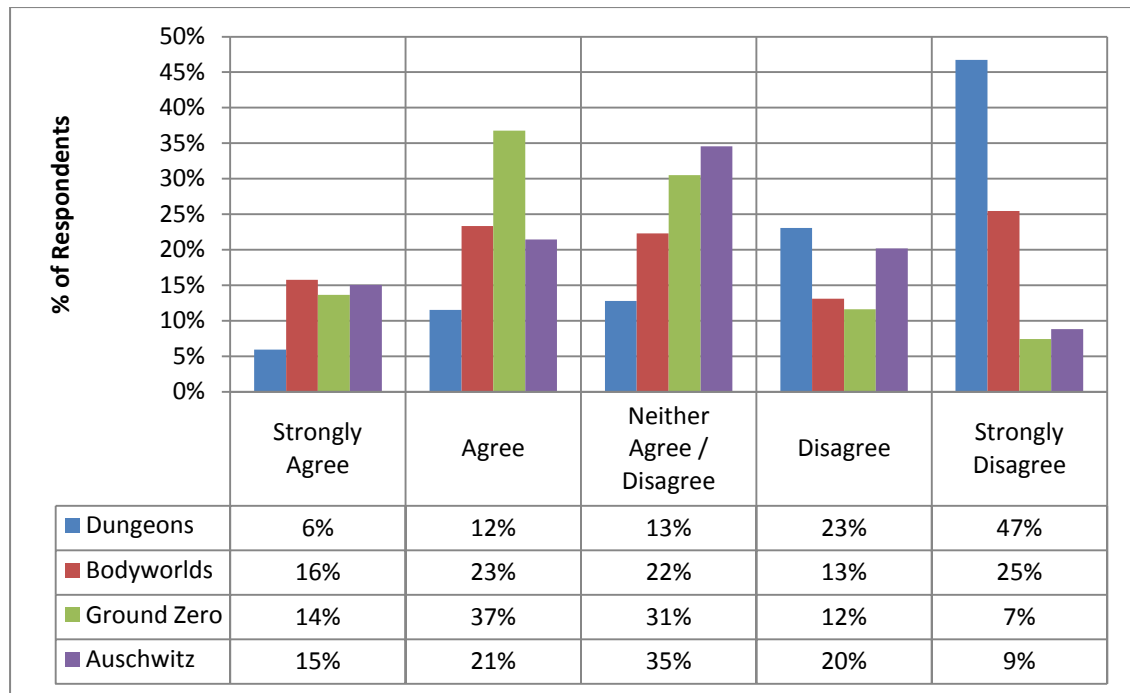
Figure 21: Responses to the question 'How much do you agree that *the case site* provides a place of comfort when dealing with *death/grief*?

Despite significant proportions of respondents agreeing that dark tourism places may provide 'comforting' and even meaningful spaces in the context of death and dying, individuals still perceive respective case study sites as tourist attractions, rather than places of commemoration. Figure 22 illustrates respondents' views of the distinction between each case site as a tourist attraction and, as a site of commemoration. Interestingly, the majority of respondents at Body Worlds (76%) and almost half of respondents at Ground Zero (49%) and Auschwitz-Birkenau (43%) agree or strongly agree that these sites are tourist attractions, yet still extract (some) meaning of comfort from touristic interpretations and secular narratives of death, dying or tragedy.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree / Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
■ Dungeons	77%	14%	4%	4%	1%
■ Bodyworlds	49%	27%	14%	3%	7%
■ Ground Zero	24%	25%	23%	17%	10%
■ Auschwitz	6%	37%	20%	24%	14%
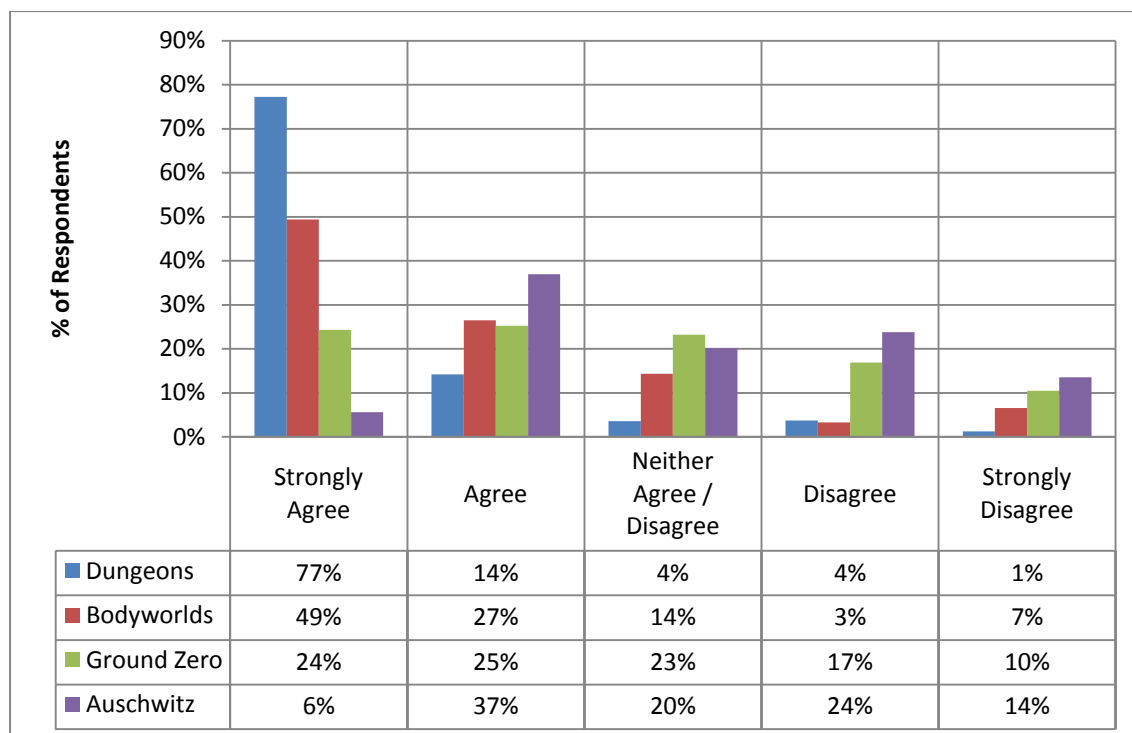
Figure 22: Responses to the question 'How much do you agree that *the case site* is a tourist attraction, rather than a place of commemoration and memorialisation?

8.2.2 *Mortality Anxiety and Issues of Morbidity*

In order to ascertain the consequential aspects of dark tourism consumption, specifically from a thanatological standpoint, respondent perspectives of 'death anxiety' and their notions of 'morbidity' within contemporary society were integral to the research. Hence, adapting the well-established *Revised Collett-Lester Fear of Death Scale*, which goes some way to determining a conscious fear of death amongst respondents, the survey examined the extent of respondents' anxiety of both the dead and the prospect of dying. In turn, the thesis provides a context when interpreting contemporary (personal) relationships between dark tourism and its potential role in mediating between the dead and the living. Figure 23 illustrates the aggregate results from the *Revised Collett-Lester Fear of Death Scale*, whereby responses from a series of questions relating to the Death of the Self, Dying of the Self, Death of Others, and Dying of Others, provide a measure of 'mortality anxiety'. Of course, limitations are recognised with the scale, particularly those which revolve around whether the scale actually measures social desirability of how to perceive mortality (thereby impugning the validity of inventory scores with which their scores correlate), or whether the scale

measures particular personality traits of death perceptions (thereby providing construct validity for the inventory scores). Despite these concerns, the scale does provide indications of individuals' level of 'death anxiety' – a considered factor when interpreting how respondents comprehend touristic (re)presentations of death within a largely secular society. Firstly therefore, across the sample of respondents, a trend was established where the majority of individuals were either anxious or very anxious of mortality. Secondly, the next significant response was that individuals were either less anxious or not anxious at all about death. Finally, the least response suggested that individuals were somewhat anxious over their mortality. Hence, the implication for this research is that an average of 51% of individuals consume dark tourism whilst inherently being anxious or very anxious of their own mortality. However, the research did not examine whether dark tourism caused death anxiety, but merely attempted to ascertain whether individuals had an inherent fear of death. That said, whilst individuals may extract meanings of comfort from narratives of Other death, as suggested earlier, the question remains as to whether individuals extract connotations of their own mortality from dark tourism and, indeed the extent of any such association – especially considering heightened levels of death anxiety. Therefore, the research reveals the extent of mortality contemplation at respective dark tourism sites shortly.
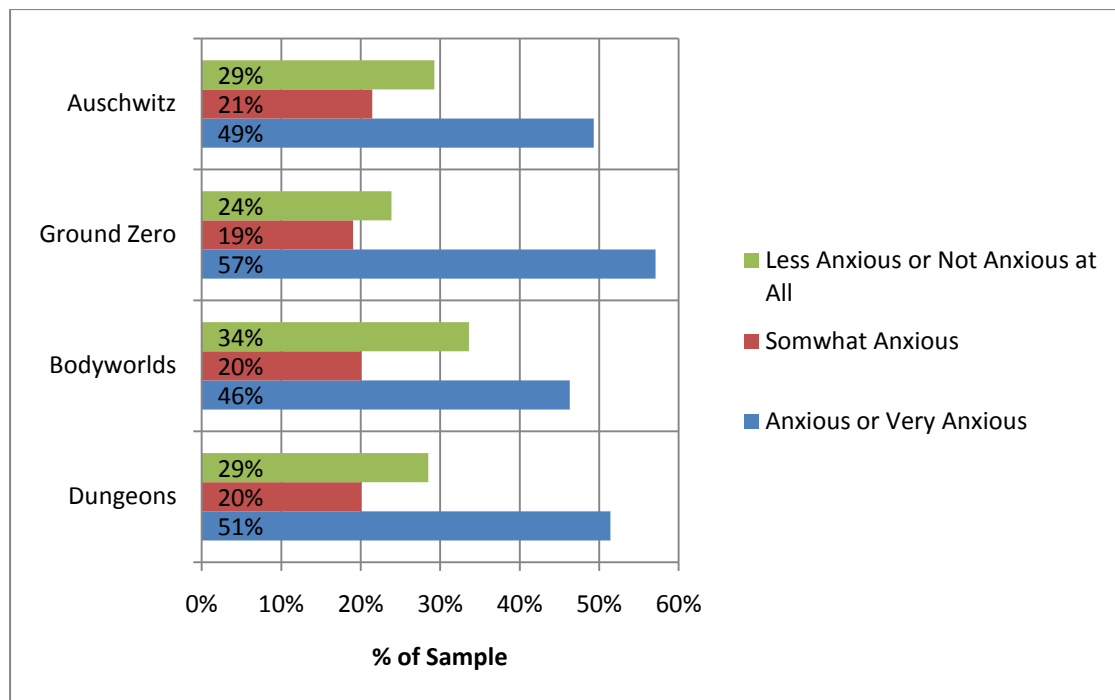
Figure 23: Correlated results from the adapted *'Revised Collett-Lester Fear of Death Scale'* (n = 419)
(Questions 30a – 30r: see Appendix One)

As well as establishing levels of mortality anxiety, the research also probed respondent conceptions of morbidity, which, at a rudimentary level at least, may ascertain perceptions of death or its representation within broader popular culture. In simple terms, morbidity relates to how individuals perceive notions of melancholy and morose or macabre. As a way of contextualising morbidity, a seemingly abstract question was put to respondents that attempted to measure the extent of how death or at least morbid thoughts of dying are consumed from afar. Hence, respondents were asked in the event of serious road traffic accident, had they ever slowed or stopped simply to gain a better view. As Figure 24 indicates, the vast majority of respondents across the case sites suggest they either did stop or at least sometimes stopped in order to gain a better view of an accident. In turn, the suggestion is that individuals have, to some extent, an inherent rubbernecking fascination with death or the prospect of death, which appears extraordinary, unanticipated, distant and untimely.
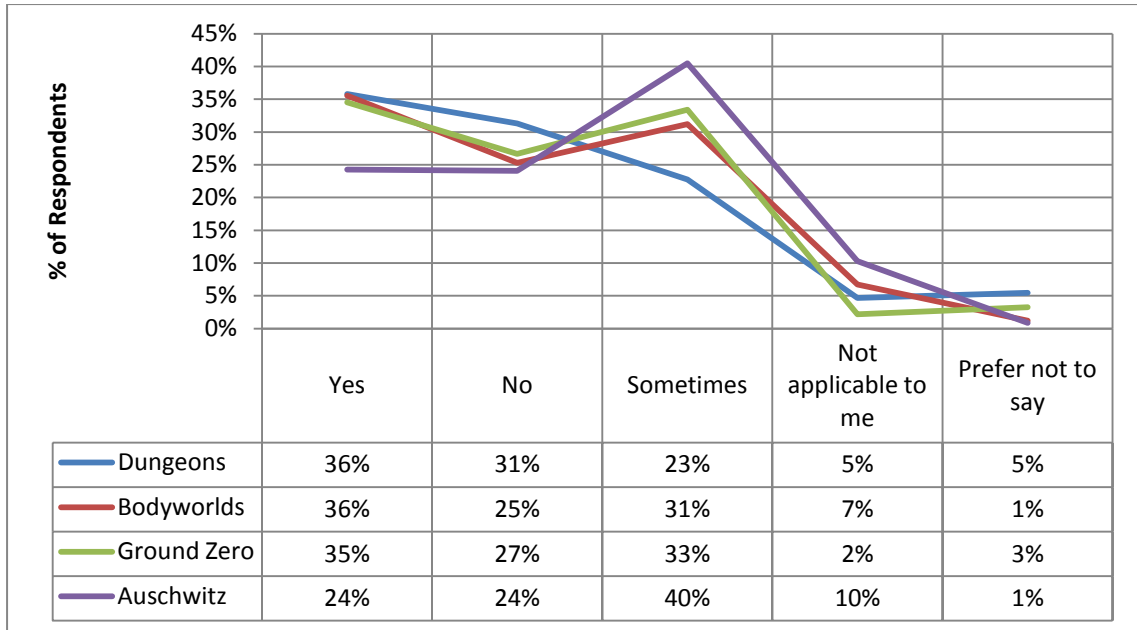
Figure 24: Responses to the question 'In the event of a serious road traffic accident, have you ever slowed down or stopped simply to gain a better view?'

Furthermore, this morbidity theme continues when respondents were asked whether they considered themselves to have an interest with *real-life* stories of *misfortune*, which implied an intrigue with actual episodes of tragedy, tribulation and death. Indeed, half or nearly half of all respondents (Figure 25) across the case sites suggest they were interested or very interested in tales of real-life misfortune, an indication perhaps of the demand for dark tourism and it's (re)packaged death of the Other.

	Very Interested	Interested	Neither Interested nor Uninterested	Uninterested	Not Interested at All
■ Dungeons	16%	34%	29%	17%	3%
■ Bodyworlds	22%	22%	36%	11%	9%
■ Ground Zero	13%	30%	29%	23%	4%
■ Auschwitz	12%	34%	31%	17%	5%
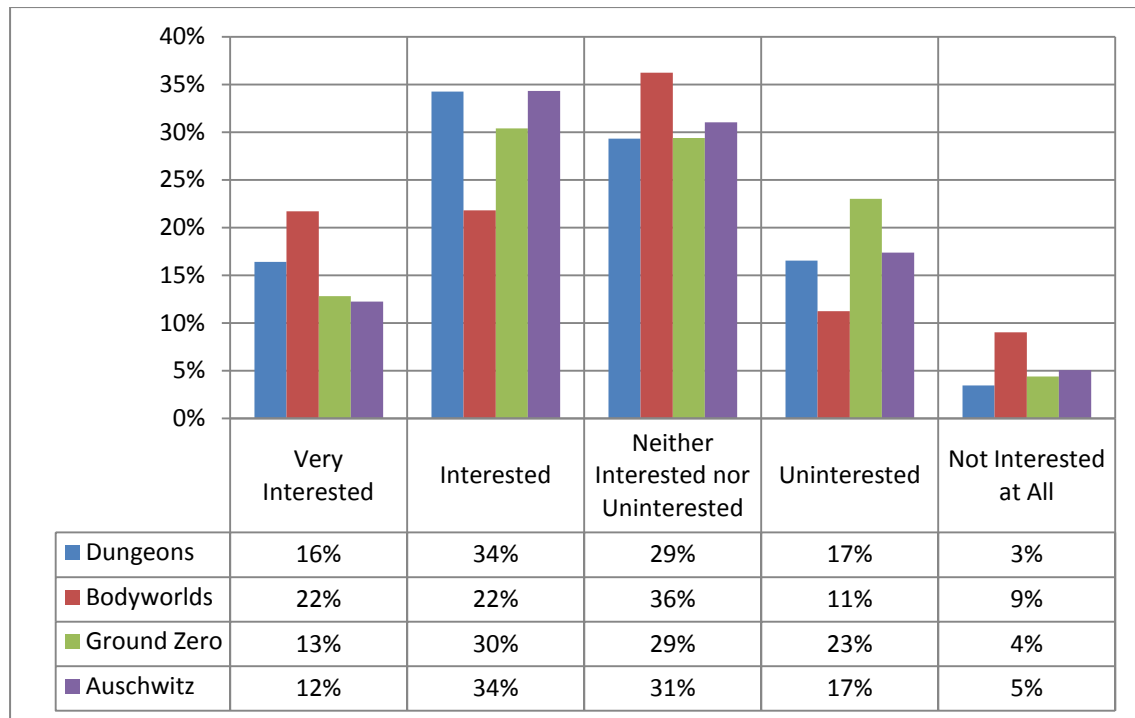
Figure 25: Responses to the question 'Do you consider yourself to have an interest with real-life stories of misfortune?'

In addition to examining individuals' levels of morbidity, or at least an indication of their morbidity, the survey also examined how individuals view morbidity within broader contemporary society and popular culture. Thus, Figure 26 illustrates the relationship between respondent views of how morbid society is and whether they perceive popular culture as intrinsically morbid. Consequently, the research revealed that respondents view society, the collective framework in which the Self resides and operates, as either morbid or very morbid. Aligned to this result, respondents also suggest that popular culture, defined here as a set of beliefs and myths which appeal and are embraced or perpetuated by ordinary (mass) people, is fascinated or very fascinated with morbid and ghoulish output. Hence, sampled respondents perceive contemporary society as inherently morbid and fuelled by a popular culture that is fascinated with projecting morbidity and the macabre. It is here where death, or at least the significant dead, are portrayed and represented for consumption, which subsequently ensures death is (ever) present within contemporary society. However, as the research now reveals, respondents view the management of death as the realm of professionals, which, in turn, largely sequesters mortality from daily routine.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Auschwitz	20%	40%	21%	16%	2%	0	32%	41%	20%	6%	1%
Ground Zero	21%	40%	27%	12%	1%	0	23%	61%	12%	5%	0%
Bodyworlds	17%	32%	36%	11%	3%	0	28%	37%	28%	6%	2%
Dungeons	23%	55%	17%	5%	1%	0	41%	26%	20%	12%	1%

LEFT CHART: 1 - Very Morbid, 5 = Not Morbid at All / RIGHT CHART: 7 = Very Fascinated, 11 = Not Fascinated at All
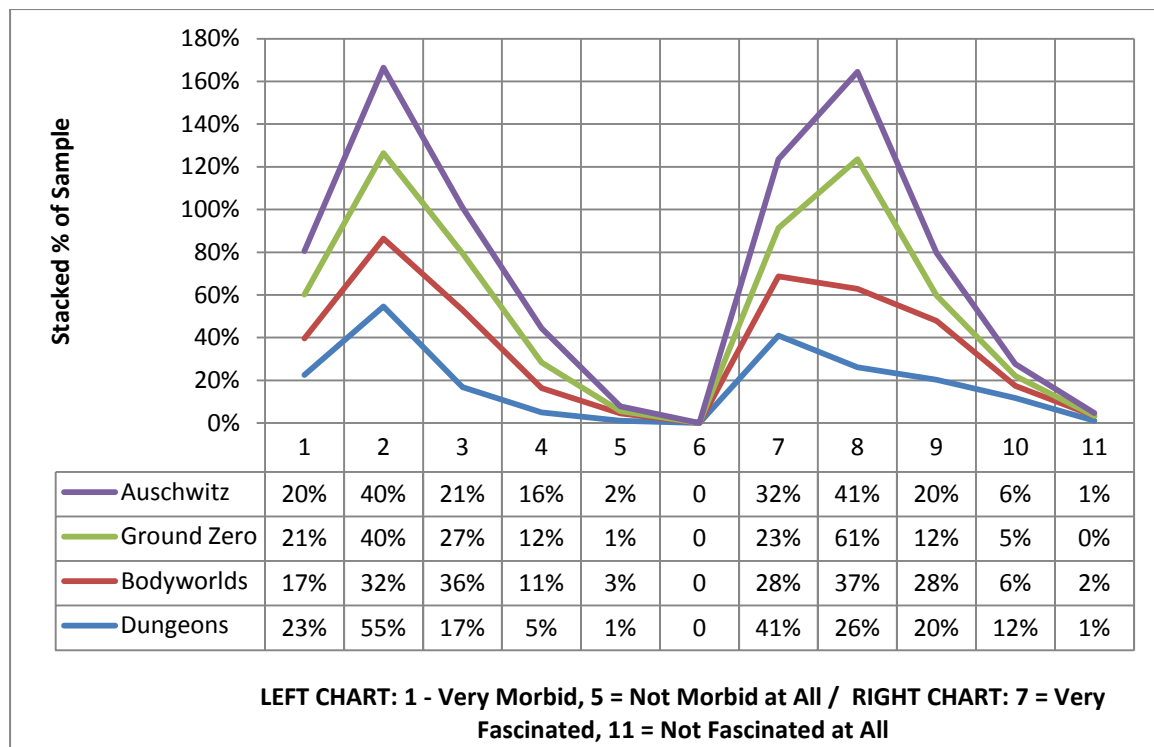
Figure 26: Stacked responses showing the relationship between the questions: 'In your opinion, how "morbid" do you think society is?' (Left hand side of chart) and; 'Do you consider popular culture to be fascinated with ghoulish things?' (Right hand side of chart)

8.2.3   Sequestration

The sequestration of death, as suggested earlier in the theoretical analysis, is largely a consequent of secularised societies depriving increasing number of individuals an existentially valid meaningful ritual structure to deal with inevitable mortality. Thus, whilst this research suggests religious orders are still somewhat important when dealing with grief, though the research has also revealed contemporary dark tourism environs offer elements of comfort, respondents also suggest modern death, or at least the management of mortality, is largely sequestered from contemporary living. Hence, as Figure 27 illustrates, respondents across the case sites overwhelming thought the majority of people in society would pass away in either a hospital or hospice, the latter implying that respondents believe a large number of people would receive palliative care at their life-end. It is here where medicalization of both death and dying relocates mortality from the community gaze to a private and professional world of medics and other health experts. Consequently, this research suggests medicalization is now an innate part of the contemporary death process, and whilst the survey does not reveal the correlation between 'death anxiety' and medicalization, the

research does reveal individuals, generally, have a high level of death anxiety during their consumption of dark tourism.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree / Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Dungeons	32%	35%	21%	8%	3%
Bodyworlds	38%	44%	10%	2%	1%
Ground Zero	35%	39%	14%	7%	8%
Auschwitz	30%	46%	19%	13%	5%
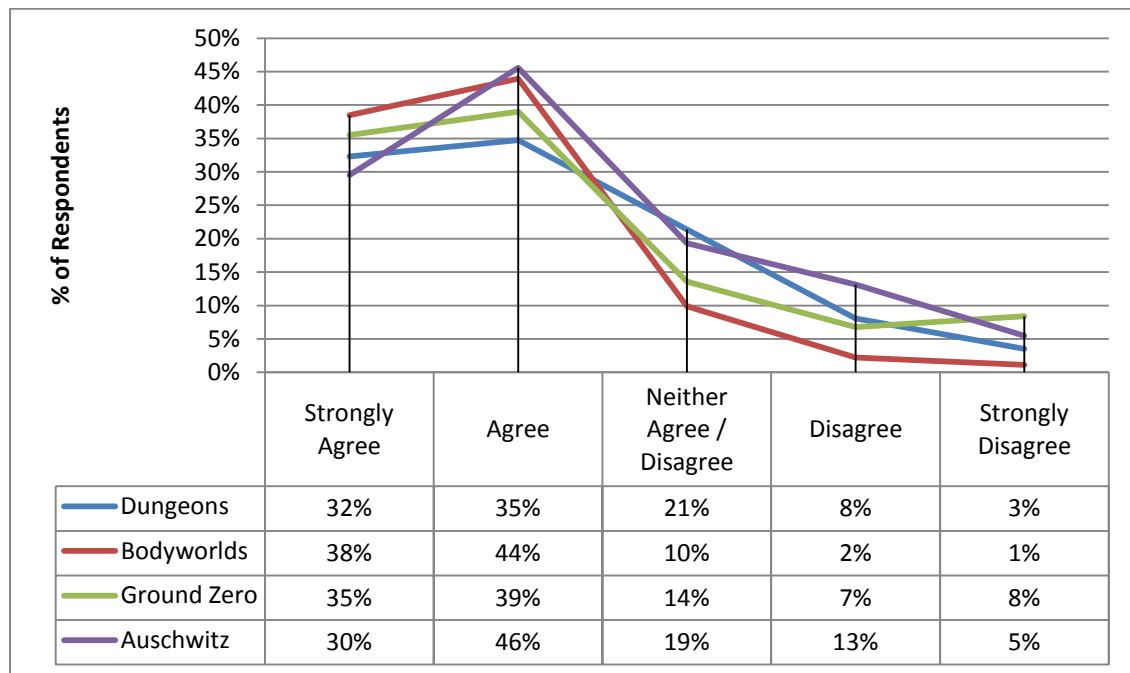
Figure 27: Responses to the statement: 'I believe the majority of people in society today will die in hospital or in a hospice'

Similarly, when respondents were asked whether they believed the body after death is largely managed by professionals within the funeral industry, the vast majority of respondents across the case sites suggested it was (Figure 28). Again, the concept of institutionalised sequestration of death is reinforced, as mortality is professionalised and made absent from the routine of individuals' existence. However, whilst the professionalization of death and its relationship with death anxiety was beyond the remit of this study, other empirical research such as Firestone (1993) does suggest a correlation. More importantly however, it is the extent of death anxiety 'dark tourists' have as individuals, as revealed by this survey, which may be caused by a variety of factors including professionalization and/or medicalization, that is important when considering the consequential aspects of dark tourism consumption.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree / Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Dungeons	33%	38%	17%	2%	1%
Bodyworlds	41%	45%	4%	2%	3%
Ground Zero	33%	45%	9%	8%	8%
Auschwitz	35%	47%	18%	6%	8%
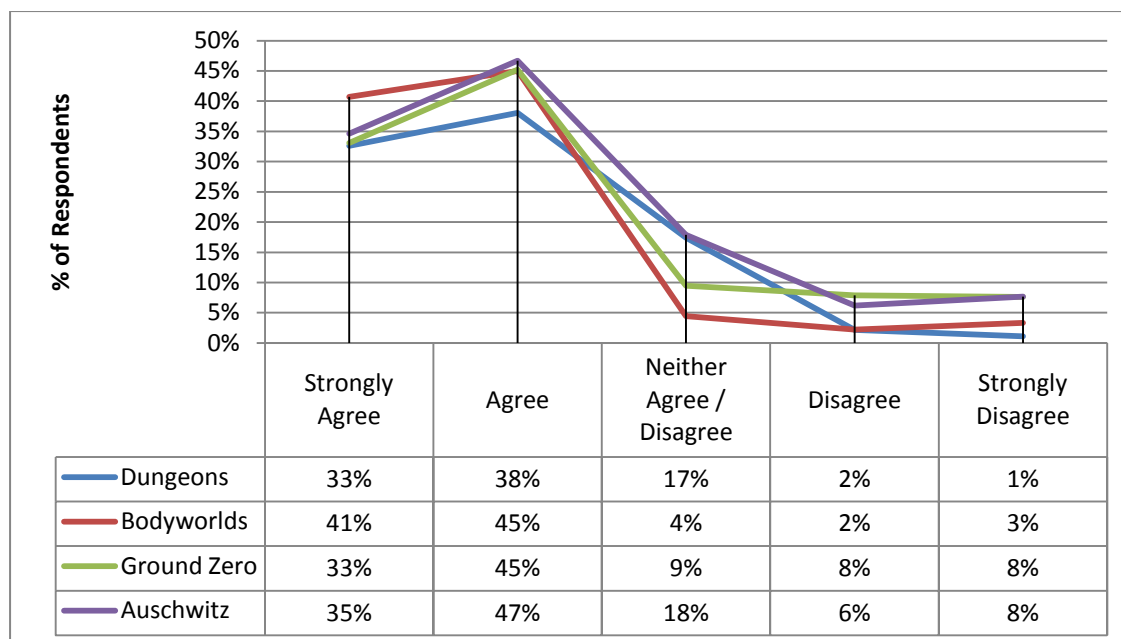
Figure 28: Responses to the statement: 'I believe that the body after death is now largely managed by professionals within the funeral industry'

However, whilst respondents may have high(er) levels of death anxiety, and also believe that death will occur within a health institution and the dead will be managed by dedicated authorities, they still *hope* for a 'good death'. Indeed, as Figure 29 indicates, whilst individuals consume dark tourism representations of death that have occurred due to either atrocity, murder or disease (or in the case of Body Worlds – the prospect of dying from particular ailments), the overwhelming majority of respondents across all case sites wished for a so-called good death. In short, a good death represented by notions of the Romantic deathbed as discussed earlier in the thesis.

The extent of contemplation of individuals' deathbeds, as well as confrontation with life-projects is revealed shortly, but firstly, the next section outlines research findings with regard to actual visitor experiences and site representations.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree/Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Dungeons	41%	19%	27%	11%	2%
Bodyworlds	46%	27%	20%	6%	2%
Ground Zero	46%	25%	21%	1%	6%
Auschwitz	37%	32%	22%	4%	4%
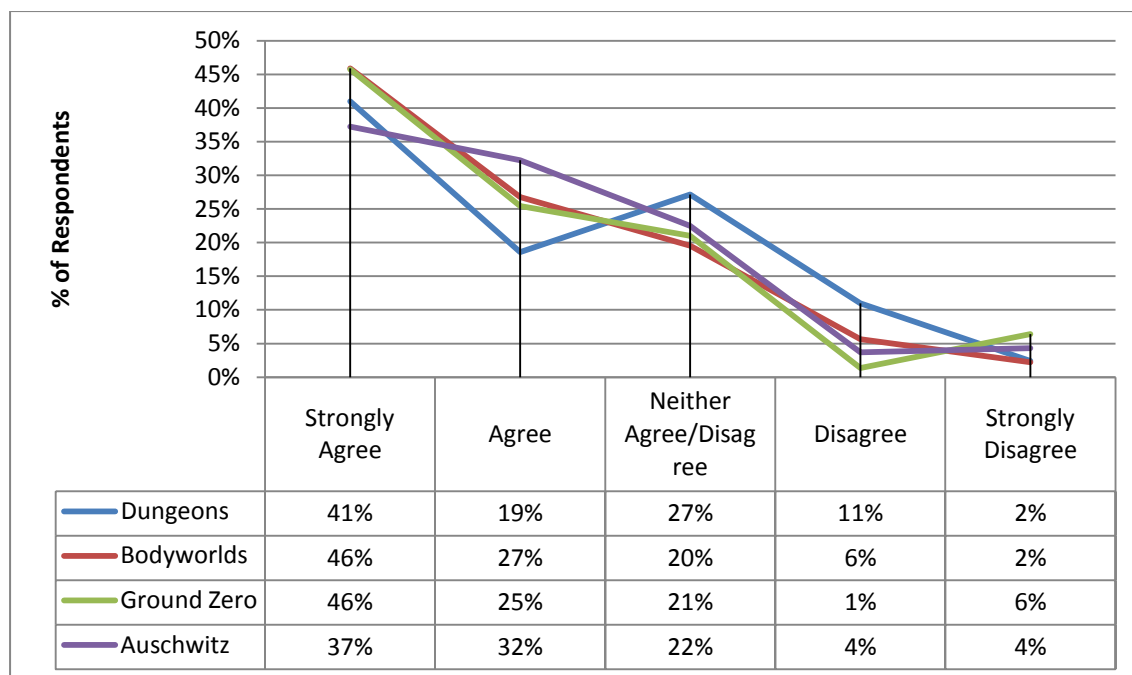
Figure 29: Responses to the statement: 'I want to die in old age at home with my family around me'

8.3 Visitor Experiences & Site Representations

A key issue for this research was to determine the nature of how and why dark tourism sites, attractions and exhibitions exist as consumed spaces of commoditised and memorialised death. Thus, it is within this context that this section is concerned.

8.3.1 Importance of Site

Firstly, Figure 30 illustrates respondents' level of perceived importance to a respective site in terms of its role in formally providing an official space to remember and commemorate victims. As expected, and noting broader issues of memorialisation and politicisation, Auschwitz-Birkenau and Ground Zero as places of genocide and murder polled the most importance. Indeed, 91% of respondents at Auschwitz and 77% at Ground Zero stated that it was either important or very important that a formal and official visitor place exists which commemorates victims. Interestingly though, a significant 46% of respondents at the Dungeons suggested that the visitor attraction was either an important or very important place to remember and commemorate victims. Despite the fact that the Dungeon site is marketed as a mainstream tourist attraction and is, perhaps, perceived to many as a kitschified representation of death and tragedy, the survey revealed the apparent importance of this attraction as a place

to remember past death and atrocity. Conversely, almost half of respondents at Body Worlds (48%), with real human corpses on show, stated the exhibition was either not important or not important at all as a place to remember or commemorate victims. Of course, this may be because Body Worlds as a visitor experience is marketed as educative and perhaps viewed as 'victimless' because of the voluntary body donation scheme. Indeed, with no personal identification of the dead on display, unlike at Auschwitz-Birkenau and Ground Zero, remembrance of the cadaver in life may only be imagined rather than based upon existential evidence.

	Very Important	Important	Neither Important / Unimportant	Not Important	Not Important at all
Dungeons	24%	22%	21%	16%	17%
Bodyworlds	8%	22%	21%	23%	25%
Ground Zero	46%	31%	17%	4%	3%
Auschwitz	79%	12%	3%	4%	1%
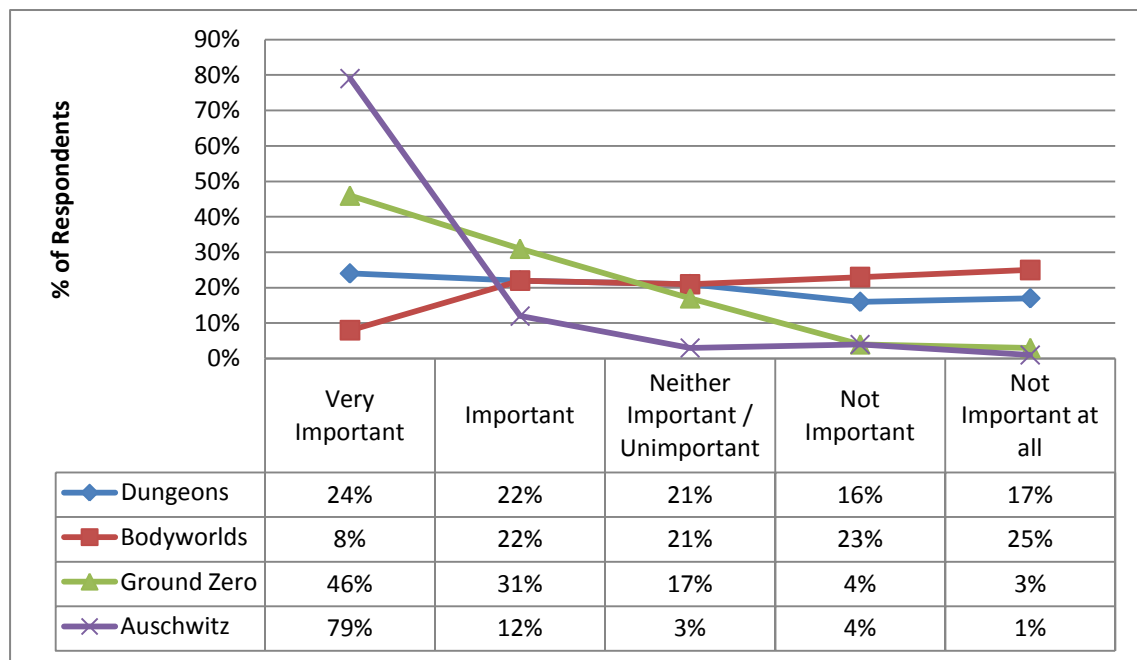
Figure 30: Level of responses across the four case studies to the question of 'How important is it to you that a formal and official place exists, such as the *case site*, to remember and commemorate victims of tragic events?'

8.3.2   *Ethical (Re)presentations*

The survey examined visitors' perceptions of the ethical representation of exhibits at case study sites (Figure 31). Respondents were asked from their understanding of the term 'ethical' to judge a site on its overall depiction of death subjects. The majority of respondents viewed both Auschwitz-Birkenau (79%) and the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre at Ground Zero (60%) as either ethical or very ethical in its presentation of the Holocaust and 9/11 respectively. Hence, despite touristification debates that often surround both Auschwitz and Ground Zero, where authentic and ethical portrayals are often a key feature, actual tourists appear to view these sites or at least the exhibits

and displays which constitute the site as 'ethically sound'. Whilst 42% of respondents perceived the Dungeons as either unethical or not ethical at all, perhaps unsurprising given the style of attraction, nevertheless a large proportion of respondents held a neutral view on the ethical portrayal of death exhibits at Body Worlds (28%), Ground Zero (28%) and the Dungeons (35%). It is here where the broader nebulous concept of ethical relativism is revealed as individuals fail to judge decisively as whether a death exhibit is ethically represented or not. Of course, whilst this was a rudimentary question into the presentational ethics of particular sites, with a focus upon how death is ethically represented, future research agendas should probe further into the ethical presentation of dark tourism.

	Very Ethical	Ethical	Neither Ethical / Unethical	Unethical	Not Ethical at all
Dungeons	12%	11%	35%	26%	16%
Bodyworlds	21%	28%	28%	18%	6%
Ground Zero	20%	40%	28%	8%	5%
Auschwitz	33%	46%	17%	3%	1%
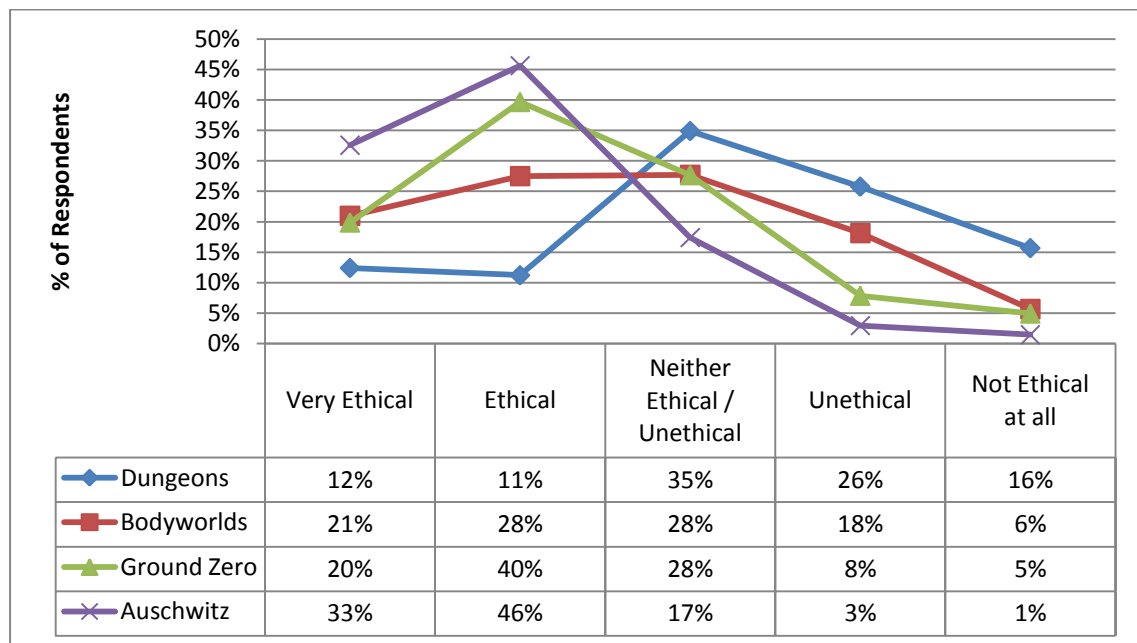
Figure 31: Level of responses across the four case studies to the question of 'From your understanding of the term "ethical", how ethically portrayed did you think the exhibits/shows/displays were at the *case site*?

8.3.3 Purpose of (Site) Existence

Visitors to each respective site were also queried as to their perceptions of why a particular site existed. Figures 32 - 35 illustrate the frequency of response from respective samples with regard to a range of 'purposes of existence'. Firstly, the overwhelming perceived purpose of the Dungeons was to entertain visitors; however, and perhaps more interestingly, almost half of respondents cited historical imperatives as the Dungeon's purpose of existence, including educating visitors of historical characters and macabre events (Figure 32). This is despite the ambiguity and selectivity of the Dungeon's interpretation of historical narratives. Additional written survey responses as to the purpose of the Dungeon visitor attraction include:

> To provide a spectacle for visitors based on the gory elements of history such as torture, disease and suffering so they can look upon them from a safe distance and make themselves feel better that they do not live in the past.

Here, the respondent suggests the purpose of the Dungeon, in essence, is to meditate between the 'gory' past and the 'safe' present by providing a tourism spectacle of fear for consumption. Similarly, another respondent states:

> When the Dungeons first opened, there were quite educational places. Now they just want to scare the cr*p [original spelling] out of people.

Furthermore, no respondent cited the purpose of the Dungeon visitor attraction as a place to provide respect to the dead, despite earlier responses that suggested visitors perceived the site as a relatively important place to remember and commemorate victims of tragedy. It is here that, whilst individuals may perceive the importance of remembering the dead, even within a dark tourism context such as the kitschified Dungeons, the reality of respecting the dead, including for example victims of plague or murder, is somewhat disjointed by death displays which are 'ethically suspect'.
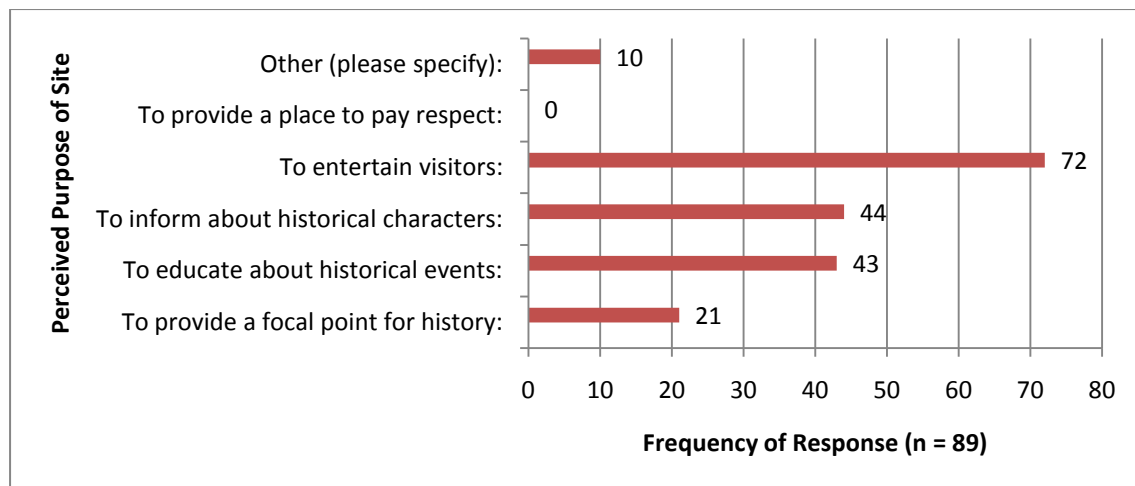
Figure 32: Frequency of response at the Dungeon visitor attraction to the question 'In your opinion, what is the purpose of **The Dungeon Visitor Attraction(s)** as a visitor site?'

The main purpose of the Body Worlds as perceived by respondents was the exhibition existed as a place to provide education about death and disease, though the survey also revealed inherent entertainment values (Figure 33). Similarly, respondents suggest the exhibition exists to inform visitors of mortality, whereby Body Worlds acts as a receptacle space to consider both life and the end of life. Respondents also offered additional written responses, which largely focused upon the purpose of the exhibition as a device which teaches about living through the display of death, as well as the exhibition exposing or exploiting taboo subjects. For example, a survey respondent noted the static nature of Body Worlds in its teaching of anatomy, whilst another suggested the exhibition was designed to exploit the fear of death and aging:

- To teach about anatomy and physiology in suspended action.
- To exploit fear of death and dying and getting old!!

Other respondents note taboo elements of the exhibition and how the perceived purpose of the exhibition is centred upon mortality reflection. For instance:

I think it is a very commercially successful attempt at pushing at the boundaries of the *acceptable* [original emphasis] – people are free to take what they what from it, whether that be a quick *gawk* [original emphasis] to reflecting upon their own sense of mortality.

Likewise, another survey respondent comments how the exhibition has a perceived purpose of exposing the forbidden (taboo of death):

To cater to populist voyeurism under the guise of science – that is, to allow folks an authentic glimpse of the *forbidden* [original emphasis] not otherwise available normally under the label of entertainment.
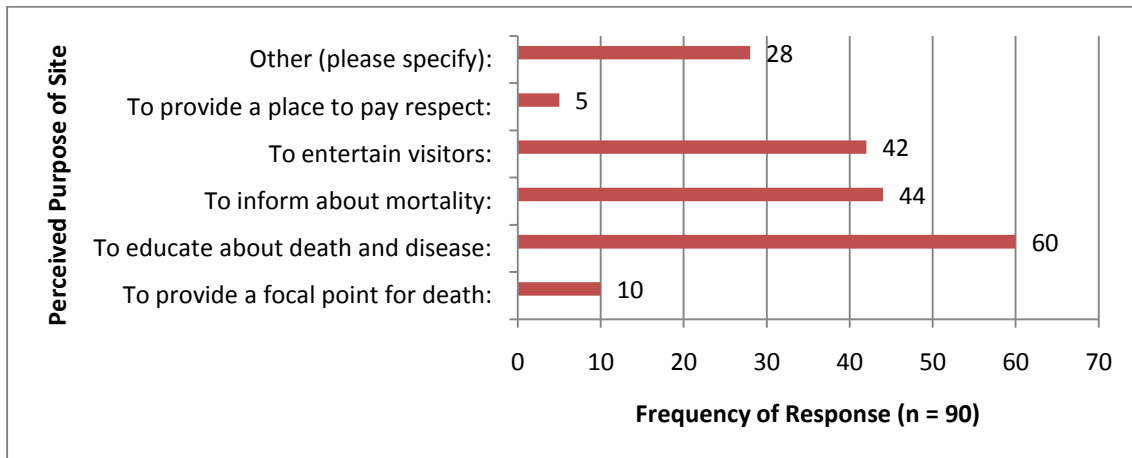
Figure 33: Frequency of response at the Body Worlds exhibition to the question 'In your opinion, what is the purpose of the **Body Worlds Exhibition** as a visitor site?'

The main purpose of the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre at Ground Zero, as perceived by respondents, suggests the site exists as a space to pay respects to the deceased as well as 9/11 education (Figure 34). Additionally, just over half of all respondents cited the purpose of informing about heroism. Consequently, issues of collective patriotism and nationhood, along with individual acts of courage and intrepidness, are seen as important, as individuals contemplate the act of (mass) murder and the response to such an event. As two survey respondents point out in written responses:

- [the purpose is] mainly an American celebration of heroism...
- To show patriotism, especially for Americans.

The survey also revealed a significant number of respondents perceived the purpose of the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre at Ground Zero as a focal point for 9/11. Thus, it is suggested the (dark) tourism space provides a place of not only emotion and commemoration, but also a place where broader political and socio-cultural intricacies, that is, the legacy of 9/11, are focussed. As a survey respondent states as to the purpose of the visitor site:

- To reflect on the deep complexities of today's society.
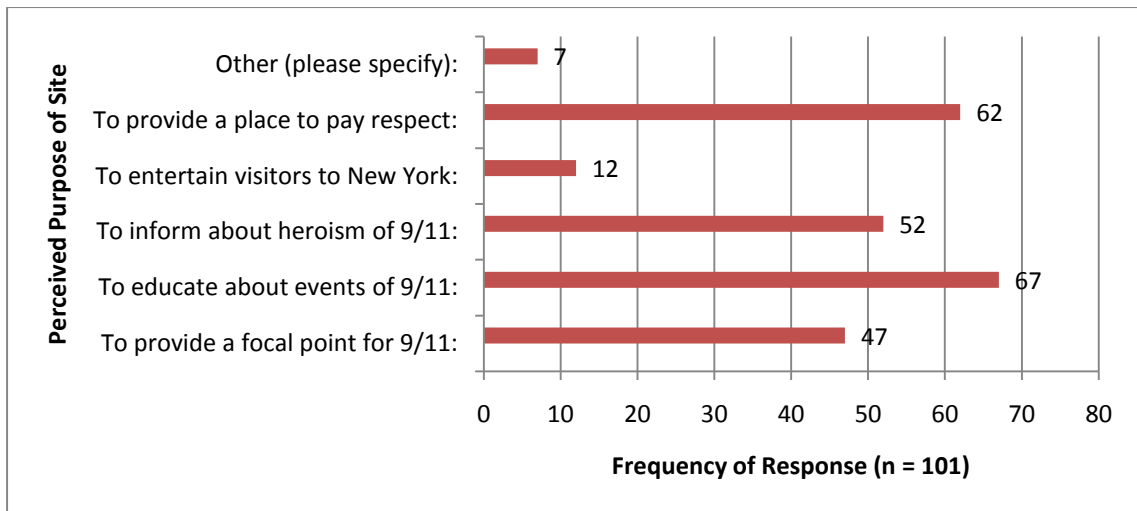
Figure 34: Frequency of response at Ground Zero to the question 'In your opinion, what is the purpose of **Tribute WTC Visitor Centre** as a visitor site?'

Comparably, respondents at Auschwitz-Birkenau reported a similar pattern of 'perceived purpose' as to the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre (Figure 35). Education about the Holocaust as well as the former death camp acting as a physical outlet to pay respect to victims were consider key purposes for the existence of the site. However, almost half of respondents also suggest Auschwitz provided a focal point for the broader Holocaust atrocity, thereby ensuring the visitor site remains a place of mediation between not only the Auschwitz dead, but a place that provide a cognitive association with *all* Holocaust victims.
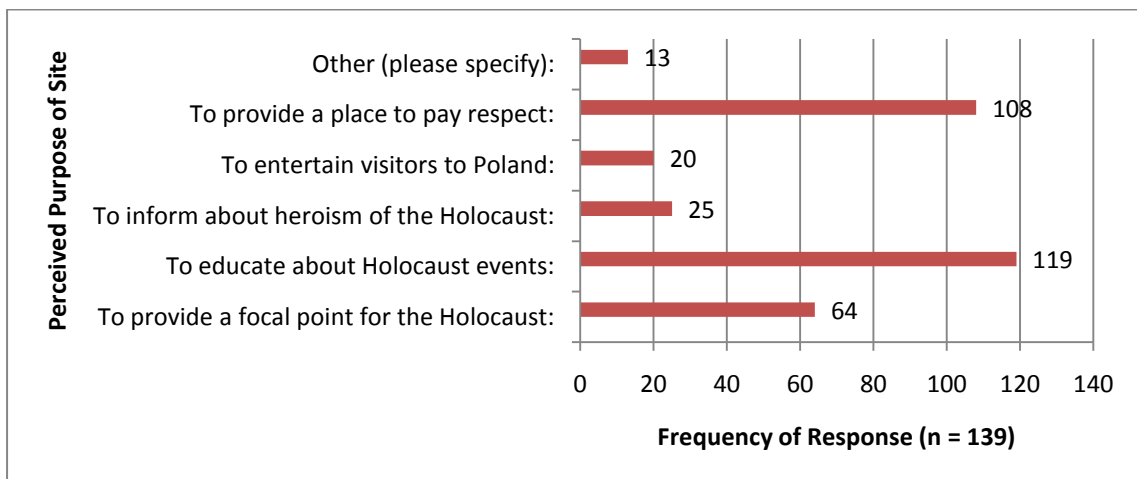
Figure 35: Frequency of response at Auschwitz to the question 'In your opinion, what is the purpose of **Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial & Museum** as a visitor site?'

8.3.4   Pre-Visit Motivations

As a way of better understanding the consequences of dark tourism consumption, and the potential relationship contemporary dark tourism consumption has with mortality, primary motivations of respondents to visit respective sites were briefly surveyed. Figures 36 - 39 illustrate the extent of key motivations of individuals across the four case study sites. As expected, motivating factors vary across all four sites; however, a common theme does emerge in that respondents place a certain motivation upon understanding and learning about the death event being (re)presented. For instance, at the Dungeons, respondents suggest learning about macabre events or how victims died was a motivating factor (Figure 36). Similarly, the survey at Body Worlds revealed not only the need to satisfy a (morbid) curiosity, but also a motivation to understand and learn about mortality as well as anatomy (Figure 37). Whilst Ground Zero respondents primary motivation appeared to centre on paying formal respects to the dead, another key motivation focused upon visiting the site for information about the 9/11 atrocity (Figure 38). At Auschwitz, respondents' key motivation centred not only on understanding the act of Holocaust, but also a need to learn about victims lives and death (Figure 39). In short, the significance placed upon understanding and learning about death (and lives) as a primary motivation, regardless of interpretation issues, means any visitor experience may influence the relationship between individuals' notion of mortality and the tourism space in which it is represented. The survey reveals the extent of this potential relationship later.
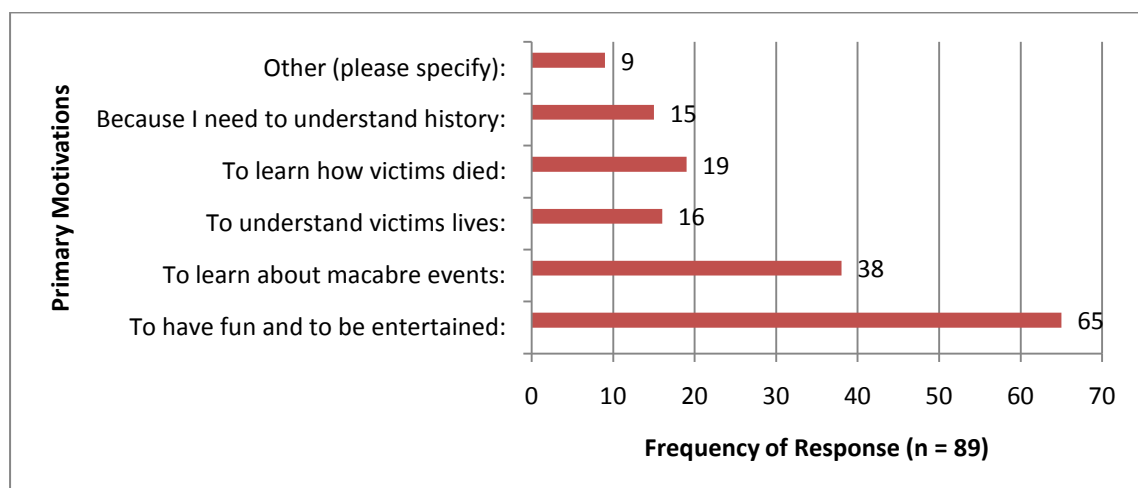
Figure 36: Frequency of response at the Dungeons to the question 'What were your primary motivations to visit **The Dungeon Visitor Attraction(s)**?'
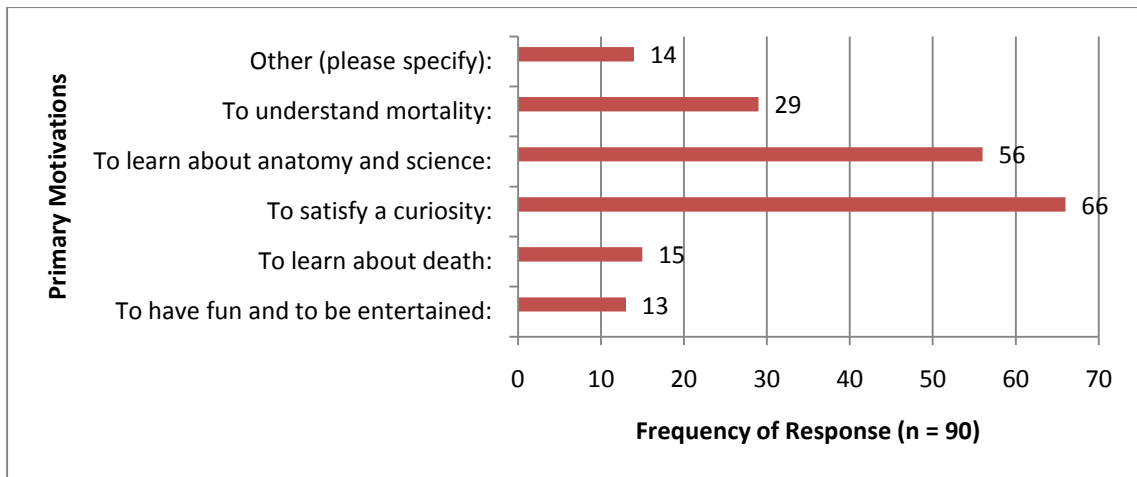
Figure 37: Frequency of response at Body Worlds to the question 'What were your primary motivations to visit the **Body Worlds Exhibition**?'
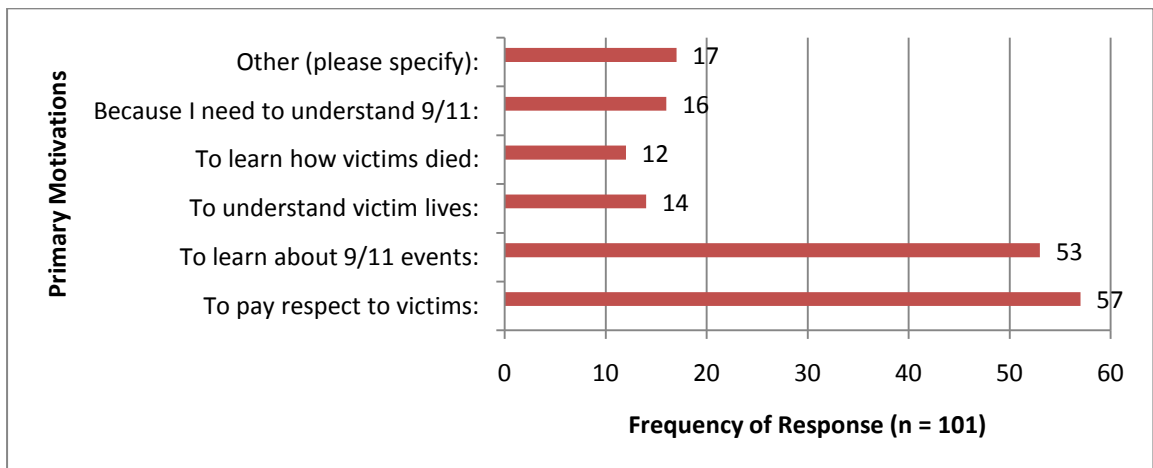
Figure 38: Frequency of response at Ground Zero to the question 'What were your primary motivations to visit the **Tribute WTC Visitor Centre**?'
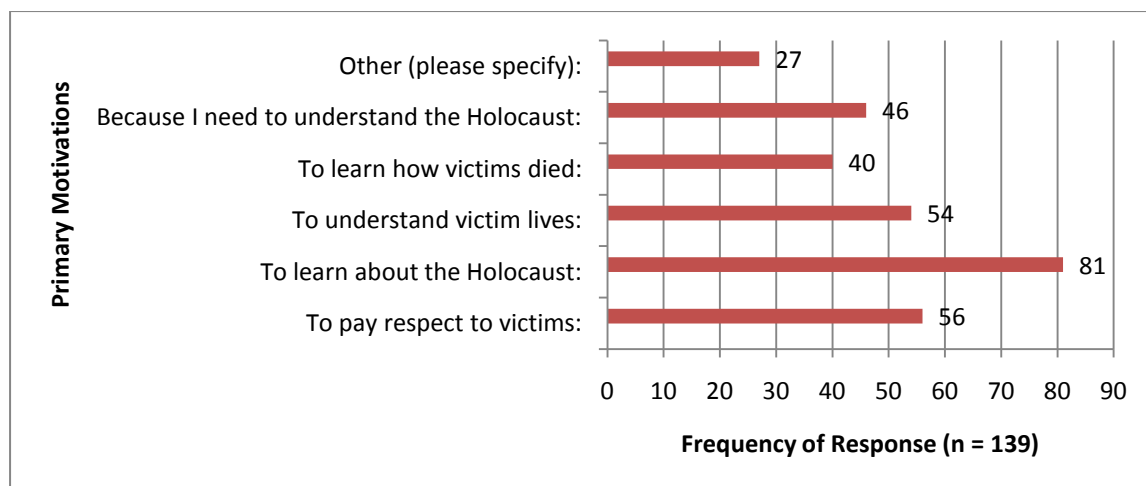
Figure 39: Frequency of response at Auschwitz-Birkenau to the question 'What were your primary motivations to visit **Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial & Museum**?'

8.3.5 *Post-Visit Feelings*

Whilst motivational factors were examined at each site, post-visit feelings of the visitor experience were also revealed. In other words, to inform broader issues of consumption, the survey evaluated how respondents felt after their site experience. Figures 40 – 43 depict the frequency of response to a range of post-visit feelings. Consequently, respondents at the Dungeons suggest that they were pleased they had learnt something about history, and whilst the teaching of historical death in such a site may be fragmented, the majority of individuals clearly combined a feeling of being entertained by dark historical narratives (Figure 40). As a number of written responses indicate, post-visit feelings were augmented by a sense of unpleasant, if not fun, history with the realities of the present-day. For instance, a survey respondent states:

> I understood the difficulties of life in ancient Holland. I didn't know these facts of history. I'm Portuguese. In a certain way after hearing about those facts, even if it was in a kind of funny way, I learnt history... And [this] gave value to our times (at least in Holland) where there is more quality of life [translated from original].

Other respondents also commented upon how the Dungeons brought historical death to the fore. For example, survey respondent comments include:

- I gained a better understanding of some historical events and the way in which people died.
- [The experience] opened my eyes to the way people died.
- Very macabre, if not fun... but real people lives and deaths are behind the exhibits – for instance – Jack the Ripper and his victims.
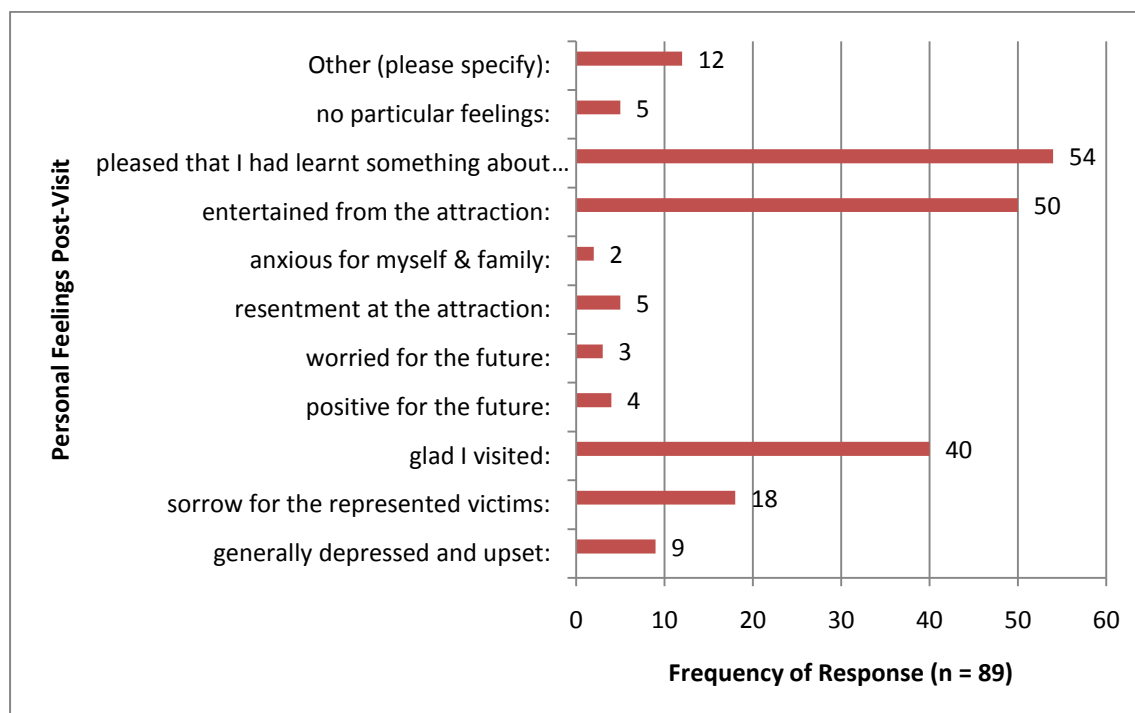
Figure 40: Frequency of response at the Dungeons to the question 'How did you feel personally after your visit to **The Dungeon Visitor Attraction(s)**?'

Similarly, a survey of post-visit feelings to Body Worlds suggest individuals were not only 'glad' they visited, despite or perhaps because of the controversy that surrounds the exhibition, but the majority of respondents also suggest they were pleased that they had learnt things about death, dying and disease (Figure 41). Interestingly, 28% of respondents indicated they felt positive for the future after their visit, suggesting some individuals do indeed take on healthy living narratives, which are projected through exhibiting the dead. Furthermore, respondents note an awareness of a (sometimes-uneasy) relationship between their visitor experience at Body Worlds and broader notions of life and death. For example, written responses to what individuals felt they gained from the Body Worlds experience include:

- A sense of wonder and awe in relation to the workings of the human body, but also an underlying sense of discomfort – am I nothing more than a voyeur, a participant in the twenty-first century equivalent of the *freak show*' [original emphasis].
- An odd place that borders the freak show, with cutting edge science, and touristy people – all mixed up to give a 21st century insight into death and disease.
- An awareness of my own mortality.
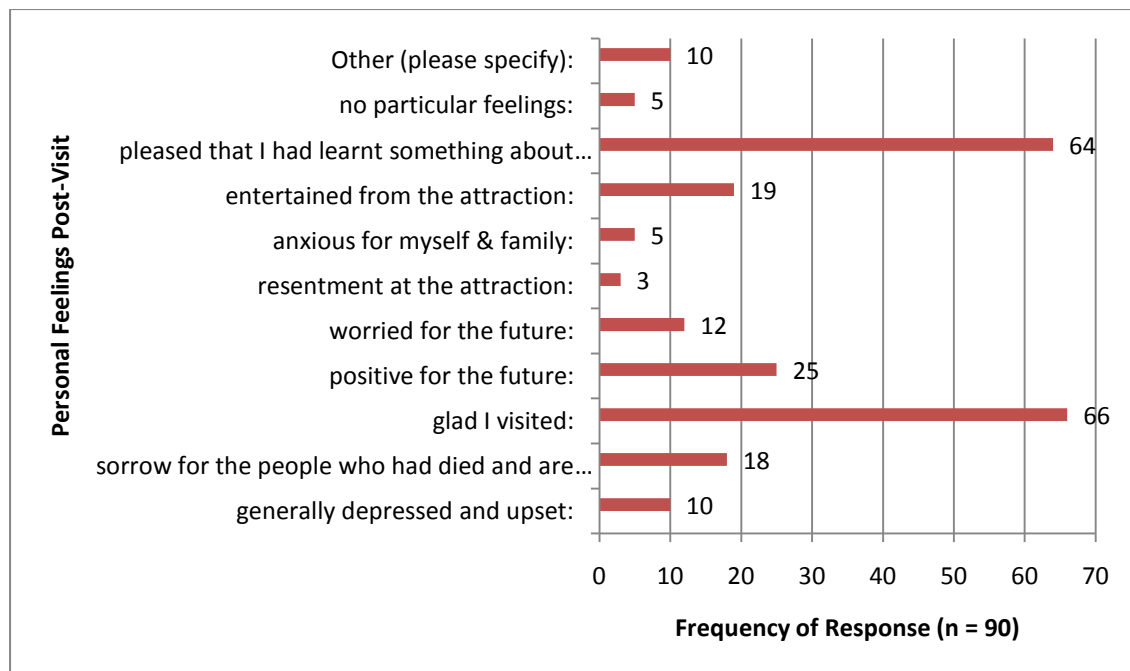
Figure 41: Frequency of response at Body Worlds to the question 'How did you feel personally after your visit to the **Body Worlds Exhibition**?'

Conversely, the overwhelming post-visit feeling at the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre at Ground Zero was one of sorrow for the victims, whilst other discernible feelings included anger at the perpetuators of the 9/11 atrocity, as well as feelings of depression and anxiety (Figure 42). Despite this however, respondents also suggest they were glad they had visited the site. In particular, written survey comments indicate some respondents arbitrate feelings of emotion with the spatial site of the Tribute centre and its representation of 9/11 deaths, ensuring meaning is constructed for both individual lives and collective living. For instance, various survey respondent comments demonstrate this emotional connection with the Tribute visitor centre, including:

- A refocusing on what is truly important in life.
- Confirmation of the purpose of the site as a focus for both private and public memorial; it is a site imbued with hugely personal scales of meaning.
- Emotional connection.
- Felt as though I could relate to the tragedy better.
- I felt a sense of connection, a bit of closure since my media images were finally connected to the place.
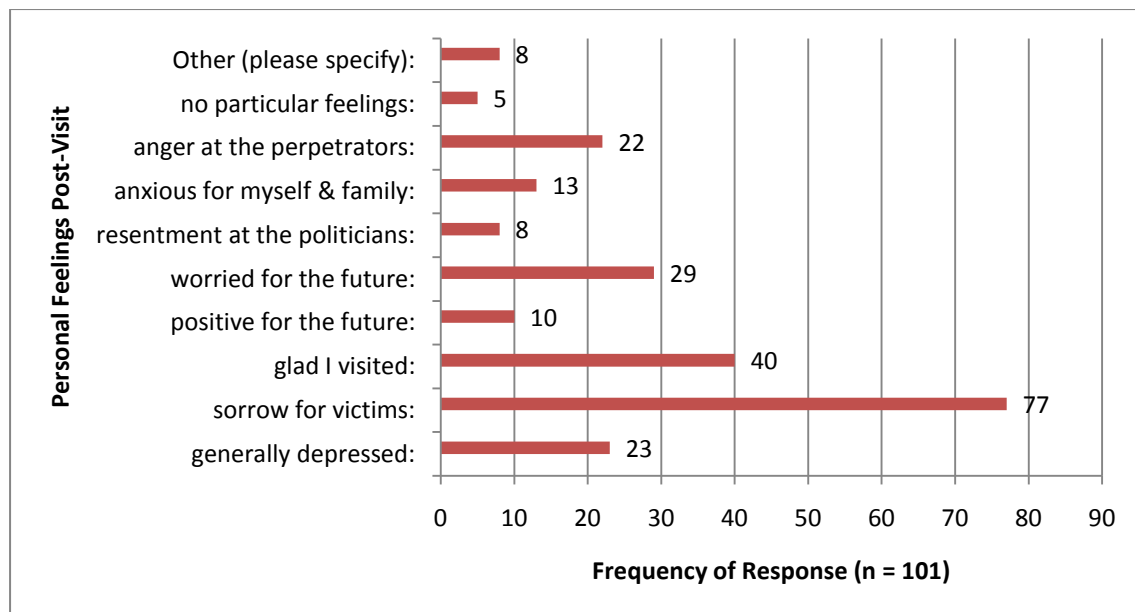
Figure 42: Frequency of response at Ground Zero to the question 'How did you feel personally after your visit to the **Tribute WTC Visitor Centre**?'

Similarly, at Auschwitz-Birkenau, the overwhelming feeling amongst respondents was one of sorrow for the dead, but also a feeling that individuals were glad they had visited (Figure 43). Equally, and perhaps unsurprising given the nature of the site, respondents reveal they felt depressed after their experience, which occurs, perhaps, not only because of the uncompromising interpretation of atrocities at Auschwitz, but also a lack of formal contemplative space as noted earlier in this thesis, to inform individuals of (positive) post-war political and cultural collaborations. As two survey respondents comment in written responses:

- Actually I felt traumatised after my visit – it was extremely upsetting.
- I realised that I definitely don't believe in God.

Nevertheless, other respondents suggest their visit experience gave them a sense of providential life as they consumed the Holocaust dead, whilst some individuals were seemingly more hopeful for the future. For example, survey respondent comments include:

- A feeling of thankfulness and feeling pensive for what happened.
- A strong sense of the ability of people to endure and survive which makes me feel more hopeful.
- A feeling of being really lucky.
- A new outlook on life!
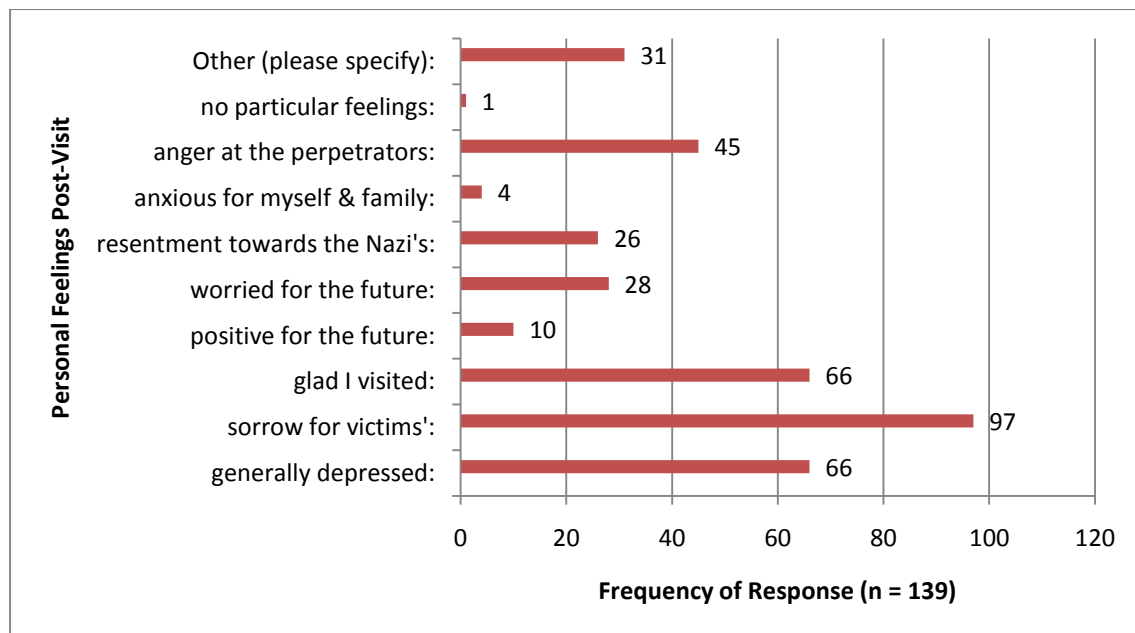
Figure 43: Frequency of response at Auschwitz to the question 'How did you feel personally after your visit to the **Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial & Museum**?'

8.3.6   Emotional Engagement & Embodiment

The survey also revealed levels of emotion that a particular dark tourism experience engendered within individuals, a measure that is suggested can provide some indication as to the extent of mediation between a represented place of death and respondents' sense of embodiment with the space. Thus, to gauge levels of pre- and post-visit emotions, on-site respondents (only) for each case study were asked to judge their 'emotional level' when they woke up that morning, as well as how emotional they felt that moment (that is, at the time of completing the survey immediately after their visitor experience). Respondents were asked on a scale of one to ten of their emotional level, with one representing feeling least emotional whilst ten feeling very emotional. Of course, emotional levels amongst respondents at Auschwitz-Birkenau or Ground Zero are naturally skewed towards the higher end of this 'emotional spectrum', than say at either the Dungeon visitor attraction or the Body Worlds exhibition. However, aggregate results as illustrated in Figure 44 demonstrate a general tendency for individuals to become more emotionally engaged and embodied by their (dark) tourism experience. In turn, it is suggested this level of engendered emotion, manipulated and influenced no doubt by consuming places of real or recreated death and tragedy, may go some way to determining the degree of

mediation between individuals and personal levels of mortality contemplation – a
point which is further revealed later in the thesis.
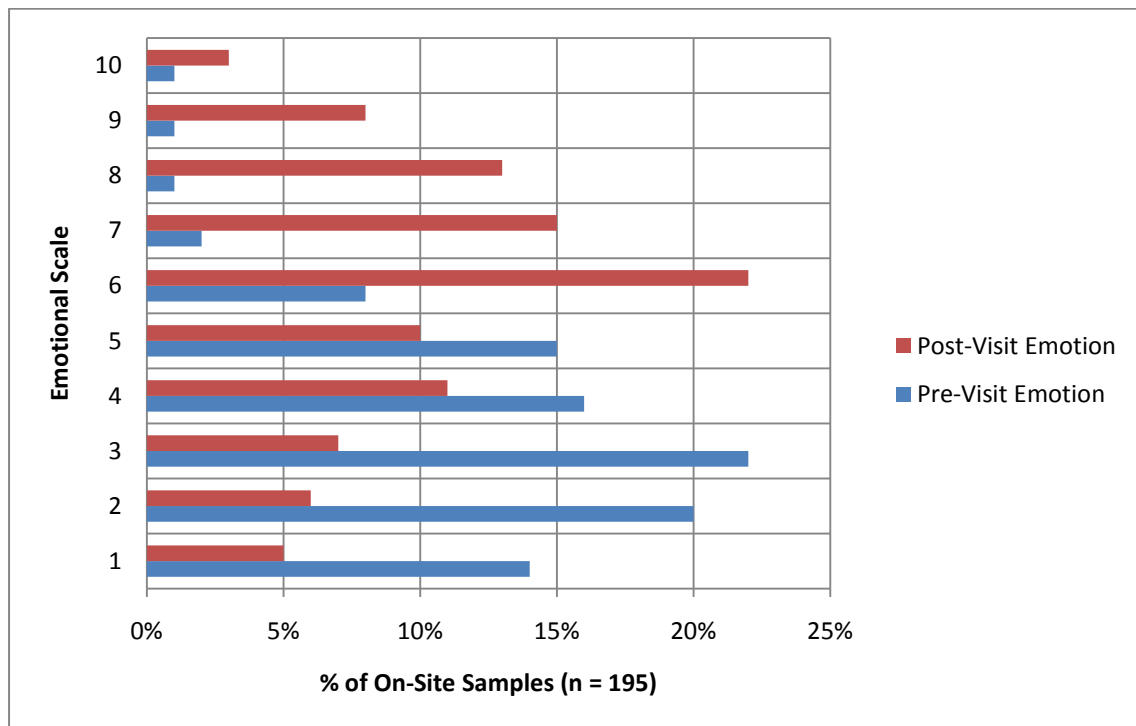
Figure 44: Aggregate results from across the four case studies showing judged levels of emotion by
on-site respondents, whereby 1 = least emotional, and 10 = very emotional

8.3.7   Perceptions of 'Darkness'

In light of emotional issues, respondents were also asked that if the term 'dark'
implies notions of the *ghoulish*, *horror*, *morbid* or *tragic*, then where on a scale of one
to ten, one being perceived *least dark* and ten being perceived *most dark*, would they
place respective case study sites. Thus, Figure 45 illustrates an empirically informed
'dark tourism spectrum' for each of the four sites. Interestingly, despite the rationale
of the visitor sites, whether they are designed for the mainstream tourism industry or
for commemoration of victims, all four sites illustrate a similar pattern of perceived
'darkness' by visitors. Consequently, respondents suggest that all sites have quite a
high level of perceived darkness attached to them, with pronounced peaks at point
eight. Of course, this is a rudimentary measure of how respondents perceive a specific
visitor site but the survey does reveal how individuals attach notions of the macabre to
a particular tourist attraction, site or exhibition.
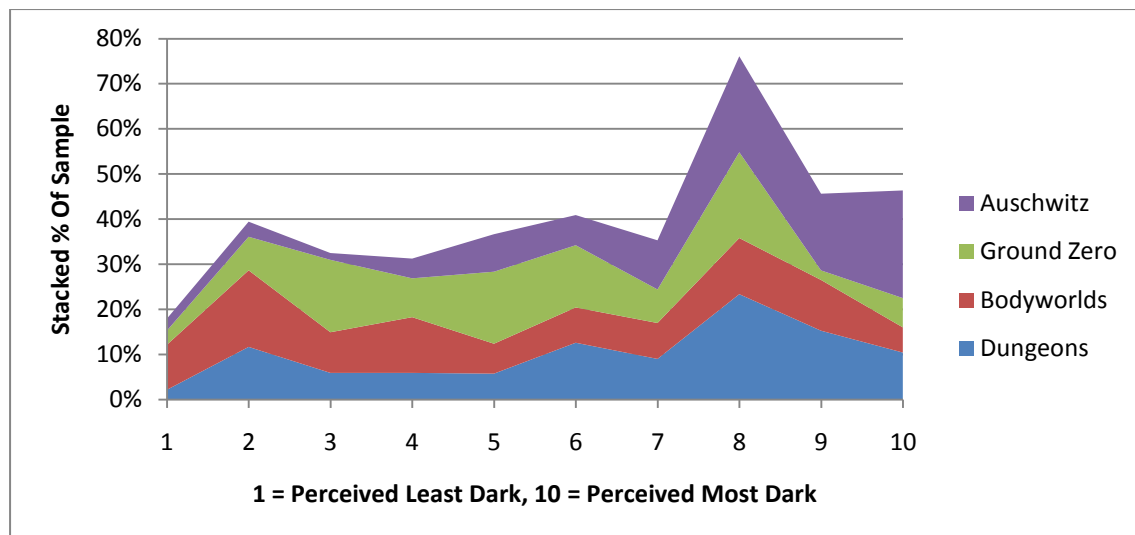
Figure 45: Results from the question 'If the term 'dark' suggests notions of the ghoulish, morbid, or tragic, on a scale of 1 to 10, where would you place the *case study* as a 'dark' site/attraction?'

8.3.8 *Promoting (Touristfied) Death*

Furthermore, respondents were also asked whether the tourism industry, in general, should promote macabre or tragic events specifically to attract visitors. Figure 46 shows the majority of respondents (59%) across the case studies hold the opinion that the tourism industry should only promote death for either educational or remembrance purposes, whilst almost a quarter of respondents (24%) suggest promotion of macabre or tragic events should only occur after an appropriate 'chronological distance' has passed. However, perhaps more interestingly, the survey revealed only 6% of respondents thought the tourism industry should never promote tragedy for contemporary consumption. In turn, this suggests an inherent demand for death, disaster and atrocity 'products' exists, whereby individuals are not against death being packaged up and 'sold' via the visitor economy, but in doing so, the production of dark tourism is conditional. That is, conditions which centre upon remembrance, education and chronological distance from the actual death/tragedy.
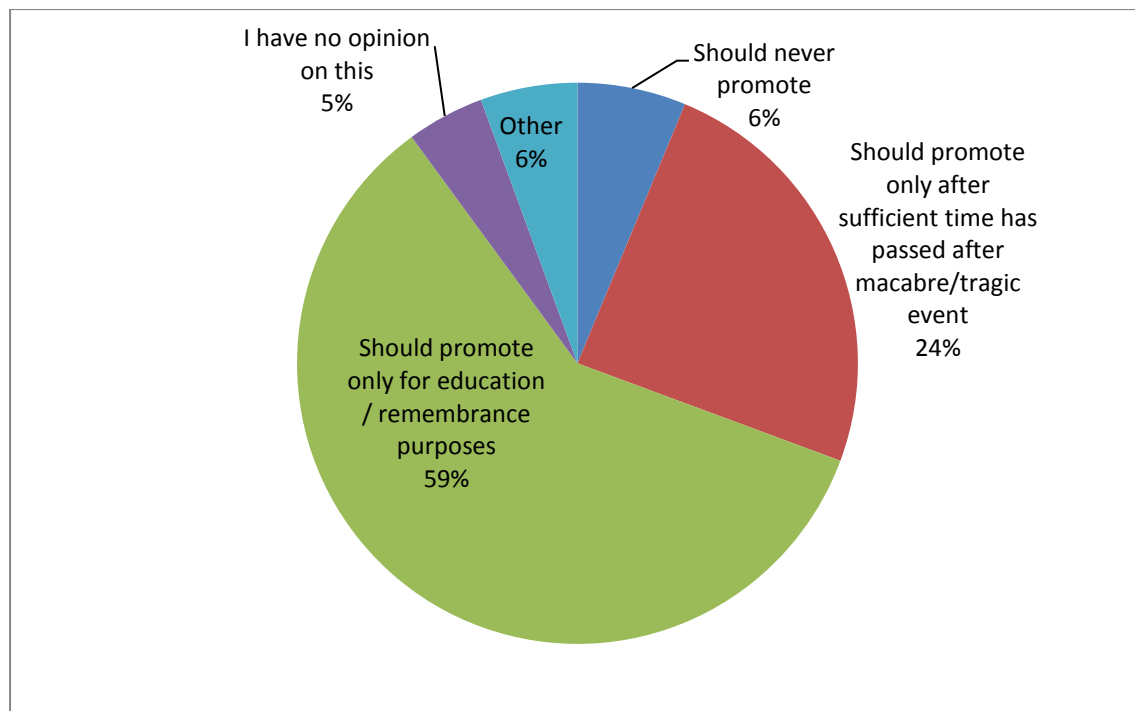
Figure 46:   Aggregate results from across the four case studies to the question 'In your opinion, should the tourism industry promote macabre/tragic events to attract visitors?'

However, whilst respondents suggest conditions for the touristification of macabre or tragic events, Figure 47 reveals that individuals perceive the respective case study sites as part of the wider tourism industry. Indeed, as expected, the vast majority of respondents class the Dungeons (81%) as part of the tourism industry; however, worthy of note is a higher proportion of respondents who perceive both Auschwitz-Birkenau (67%) and the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre at Ground Zero (72%) as part of a broader tourism sector than the Body Worlds visitor exhibition (57%). Indeed, a significant 43% of respondents at Body Worlds stated the exhibition either did not constitute part of a broader tourism industry, or were unsure that it did. Consequently, the implication is that (some) distinction exists between perceived touristification of respective sites and their museological (re)presentations of death, the dead and atrocity. As such, particular *moral conversations* are generated, and it is this that the next section turns.
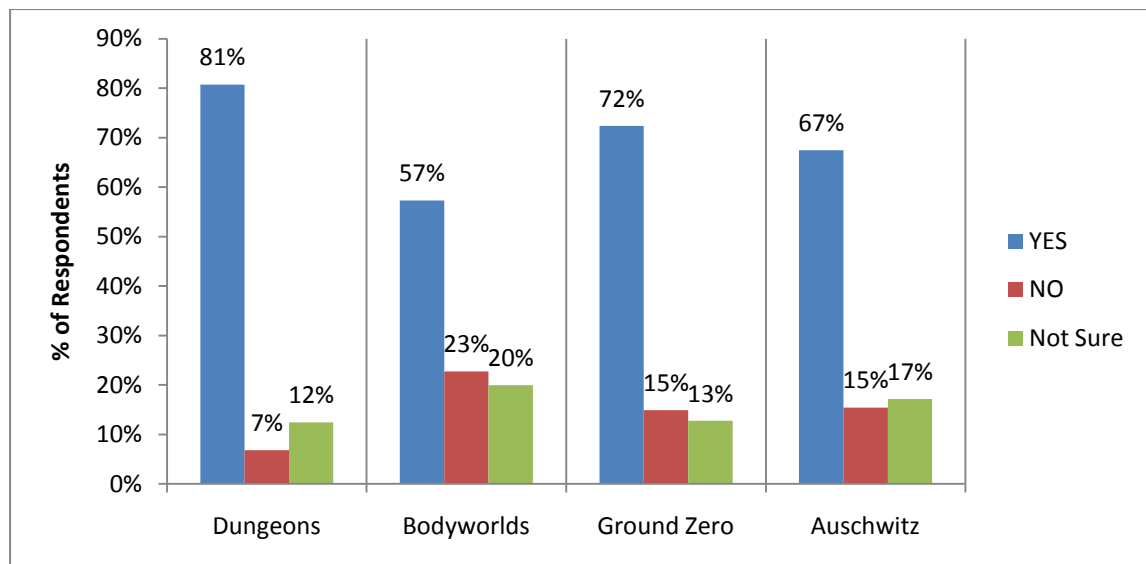
Figure 47: Results to the question 'Based upon your perceptions, do you consider the *case study site* as part of the wider tourism industry?'

8.4 Moral Conversations

A feature of this research has revolved around how and why packaging up and (re)presenting modern death and the dead raises moral dilemmas and ethical quandaries. Moreover, the thesis has outlined a theoretical notion that dark tourism places may act as contemporary communicative spaces that reconfigure, revitalise and espouse moral discourse about contemplating mortality. Hence, the survey revealed a number of significant findings with regard to individuals' embodied *moral conversations*, which are generated from consuming death (experiences). In other words, the research exposed potential relationships between visitor experiences at respective case study sites and consequential moral considerations.

8.4.1 Moral Guidance

Figure 48 shows the extent of moral guidance each site experience provides to respondents with regard to how they may treat other people, or in the case of Body Worlds – how individuals may treat/view themselves. For instance, almost two-thirds of respondents at Auschwitz-Birkenau (62%) and nearly half of respondents at Ground Zero (48%) agreed or strongly agreed that their visitor experience generated some moral guidance on how to treat other people. Similarly, over half of Body Worlds respondents (52%) agreed or strongly agreed their experience of the

exhibition generated some guidance of how to treat themselves, in health terms at least. In short, the construction of moral meaning is a consequence of the visitor experience, as respondents cognitively associate tourism representations of death to both individual and collective ethical agendas.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree / Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
■ Auschwitz	27%	35%	20%	12%	7%
■ Ground Zero	21%	27%	18%	13%	21%
■ Bodyworlds	23%	29%	27%	8%	13%
■ Dungeons	6%	15%	23%	28%	29%
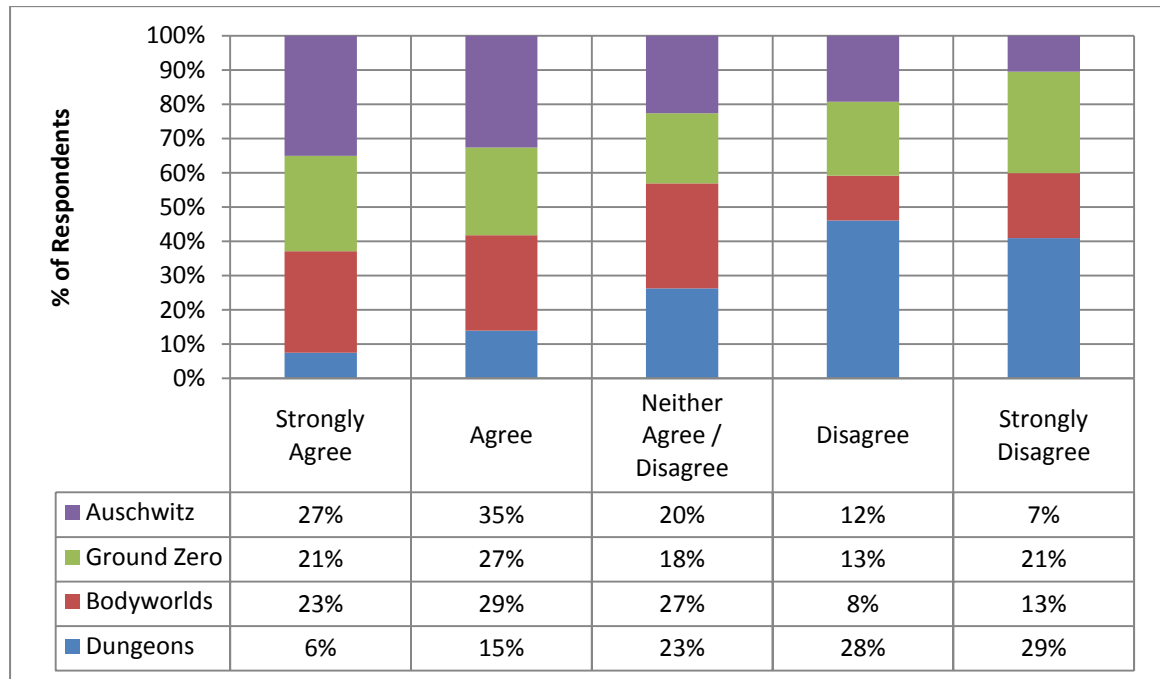
Figure 48: Stacked responses to the statement 'The *case study site* provides me with some moral guidance on how we should treat other people / ourselves.'

8.4.2   Ethical Conduct of Others

When respondents were asked whether they were more likely to think about the conduct and behaviour of other people (including other visitors) as a result of their tourist experience (Figure 49), a significant proportion of respondents at both Auschwitz-Birkenau (56%) and Ground Zero (41%) either agreed or strongly agreed that they would consider the ethical conduct of others. Even at the Dungeons, a purposeful attraction that trades on producing death and macabre shows, almost a third of respondents (29%) agreed or strongly agreed that their experience had raised thoughts about the deeds and behaviour of other people, whilst a similar proportion of respondents at Body Worlds (32%) also suggest the exhibition generated ethical considerations.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree / Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Dungeons	9%	20%	29%	30%	12%
Bodyworlds	7%	25%	24%	21%	23%
Ground Zero	13%	28%	26%	12%	21%
Auschwitz	22%	34%	26%	11%	7%
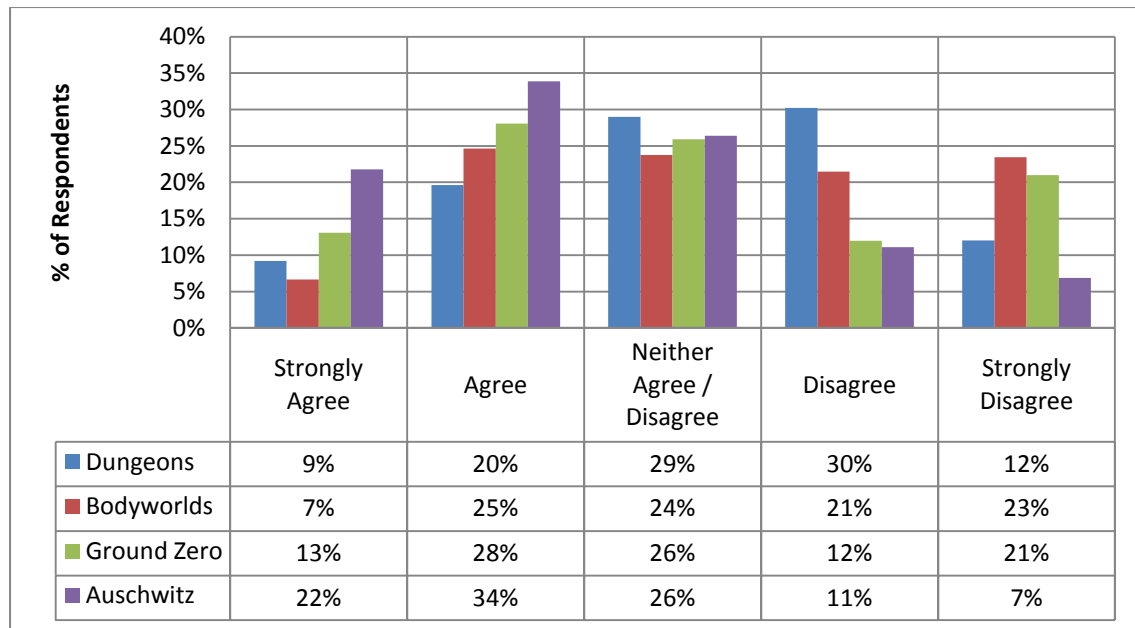
Figure 49: Responses to the statement 'I am more likely to think about the conduct and behaviour of other people.'

8.4.3 Moral Discourse

Respondents were asked whether their visitor experience would generate further conversations about the moral fibre of those who carried out the atrocity (Auschwitz and Ground Zero), torture (Dungeons), or those who had created the exhibits (Body Worlds). The overwhelming response from individuals across the case studies was one of agreement (Figure 50), whereby respondents' dark tourism experience did generate moral discourse in relation to the ethics of those who either performed the atrocities, or in the case of Body Worlds, those people who actually created the event, including Gunter von Hagens.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree / Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
■ Dungeons	10%	23%	35%	21%	11%
■ Bodyworlds	20%	35%	22%	16%	7%
■ Ground Zero	22%	35%	16%	9%	18%
■ Auschwitz	34%	42%	16%	5%	3%
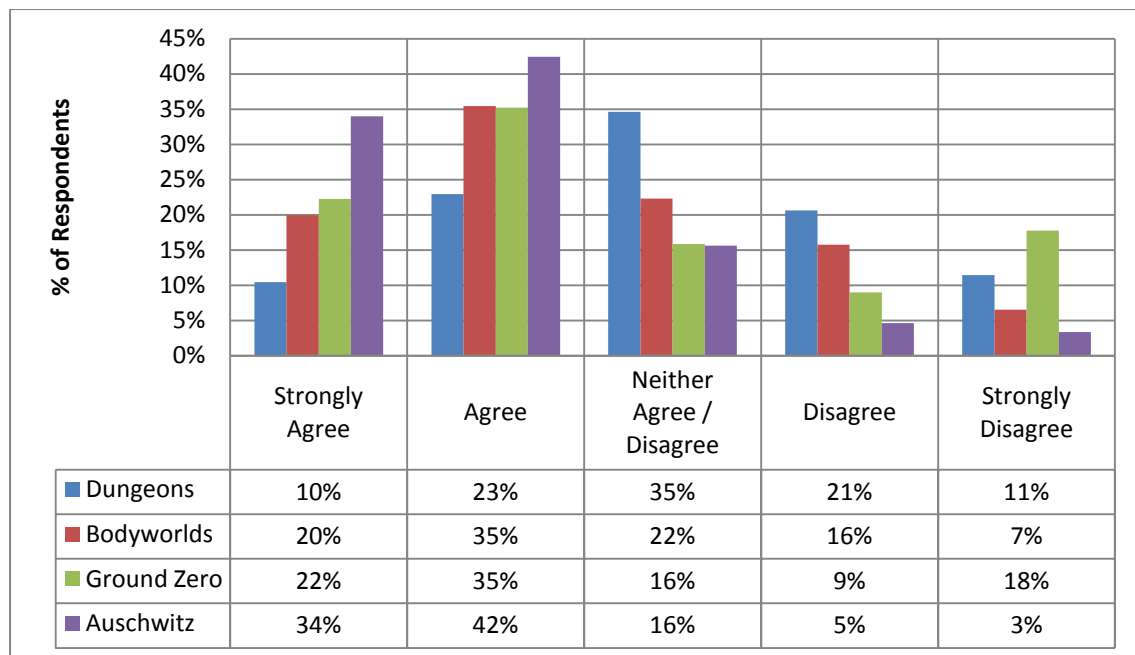
Figure 50: Responses to the statement 'I am now more likely to discuss with my friends and family the morals of those who *carried out the represented atrocities/torture or those who created the case site*.'

Moreover, Figure 51 shows the level of response when individuals were asked at Auschwitz, Ground Zero and the Dungeons whether after their visit they had considered the society in which they lived. Indeed, the majority of respondents at each of these visitor sites had considered the broader society, in which they resided, suggesting again that engagement with site narratives and emotional embodiment ensure moral conversations are generated, no matter how briefly. Of course, whilst further empirical inquiry is required to expose the type and nature of these moral and ethical concerns, the important issue here is that morality and ethical thought of both the Self and the Other are generated and mediated in a (tourism) place associated with the dead. Furthermore, issues that revolve around confronting life-projects are also revealed, and it is this that the next section now turns.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree / Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Dungeons	12%	32%	13%	27%	16%
Ground Zero	34%	37%	19%	4%	6%
Auschwitz	32%	40%	21%	3%	3%
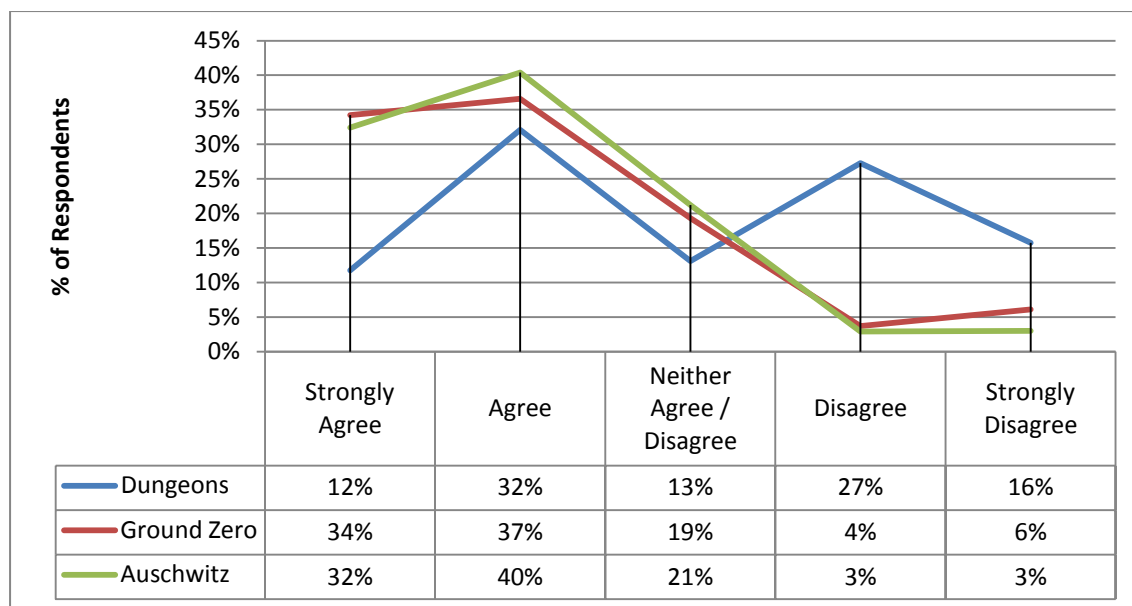
Figure 51: Responses to the statement 'After my visit, I considered the society in which we live'

8.5   Meanings of Life and Living

The ethnographic research, as outlined earlier, suggests whilst dark tourism presents narratives of mortality to the visitor economy, 'dark tourists' construct broader meaning about (collective) life and thus ruminate about (individual) living from places of real or recreated death and tragedy. Hence, the survey further revealed a number of significant findings that relate to how visitors extract connotations of their own life through the (re)presented lives of dead victims, which in turn generates a sense of empathy, relevance and ordinariness, as well as feelings of hope and fortitude.

8.5.1   Empathy

Figure 52 illustrates the level of responses when individuals were asked whether they had more empathy with either the victims or cadavers because of their visitor experience. The vast majority of respondents at both Auschwitz-Birkenau (89%) and Ground Zero (70%) either agreed or strongly agreed that they had more empathy with the victims of the atrocities; whilst over a third of respondents at both Body Worlds (35%) and the Dungeons (38%) agreed or strongly agreed their visit generated greater empathy with the represented deceased. Thus, it is here where empathic feelings with the past dead and an understanding of their demise may, to some at least, generate

broader reflection upon life of the Self and, subsequently, begin the process of contemplating mortality issues.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree / Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Dungeons	15%	23%	30%	15%	17%
Bodyworlds	17%	18%	36%	17%	13%
Ground Zero	28%	42%	17%	5%	9%
Auschwitz	58%	31%	8%	2%	1%
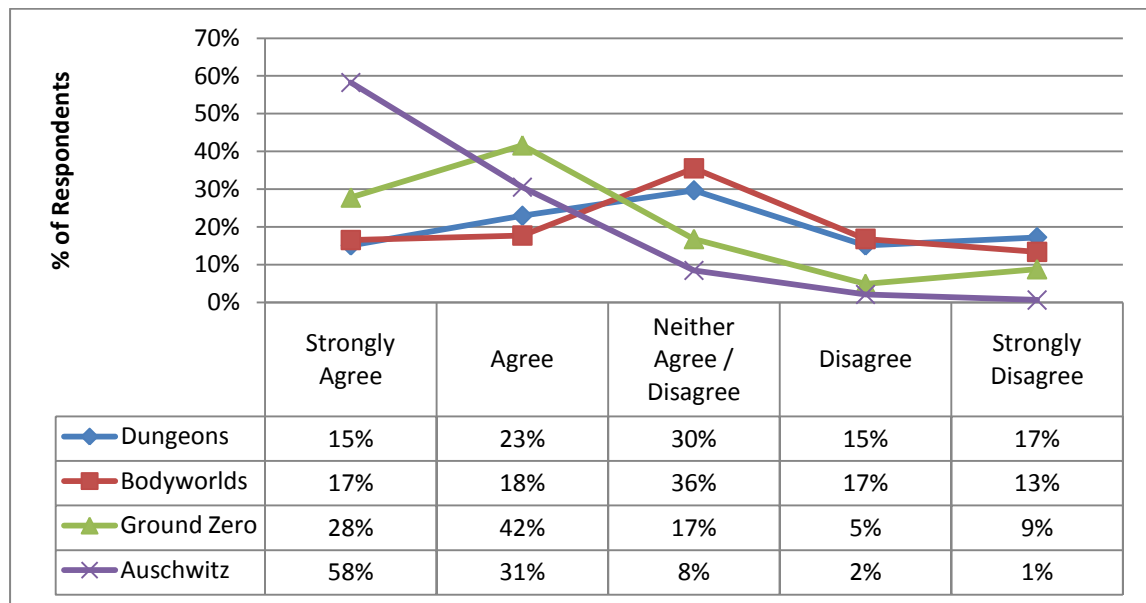
Figure 52: Responses to the statement 'As a result from your visit experience - I have more empathy with *victims/people represented* and their *death/plight*'

8.5.2 *Relevancy*

Whilst empathy with the represented dead may be important to begin broader contemplation of both life and death, so too is the importance of perceived relevance of a victims' demise to an individual's own life projects. Hence, Figure 53 shows the level of response of individuals who, because of their visit experience thought the death of represented victims at Auschwitz-Birkenau, Ground Zero or the Dungeons, or cadavers at Body Worlds were relevant to them and their own lives. Consequently, the majority of respondents at the Dungeons (74%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that represented victims were relevant to their own life-world, an unsurprising result considering the chronological distance inherent in the Dungeons exhibits. Nevertheless, as the ethnography revealed earlier, visitor perceptions of relevance at the Dungeons is intrinsic in the interpretation of particular shows and exhibits. Moreover, the majority of respondents at Auschwitz-Birkenau (61%), Ground Zero (57%) and Body Worlds (69%) suggest that representations of death were relevant to them and their specific life-world. Therefore, it this is notion of perceived relevance of how victims died or how their death is presented, and the application of that

relevance to an individual's life-world that is an integral element of the contemplation of life (and death).

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree / Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Dungeons	5%	9%	12%	34%	40%
Bodyworlds	19%	50%	16%	8%	7%
Ground Zero	20%	37%	23%	12%	8%
Auschwitz	33%	28%	28%	4%	7%
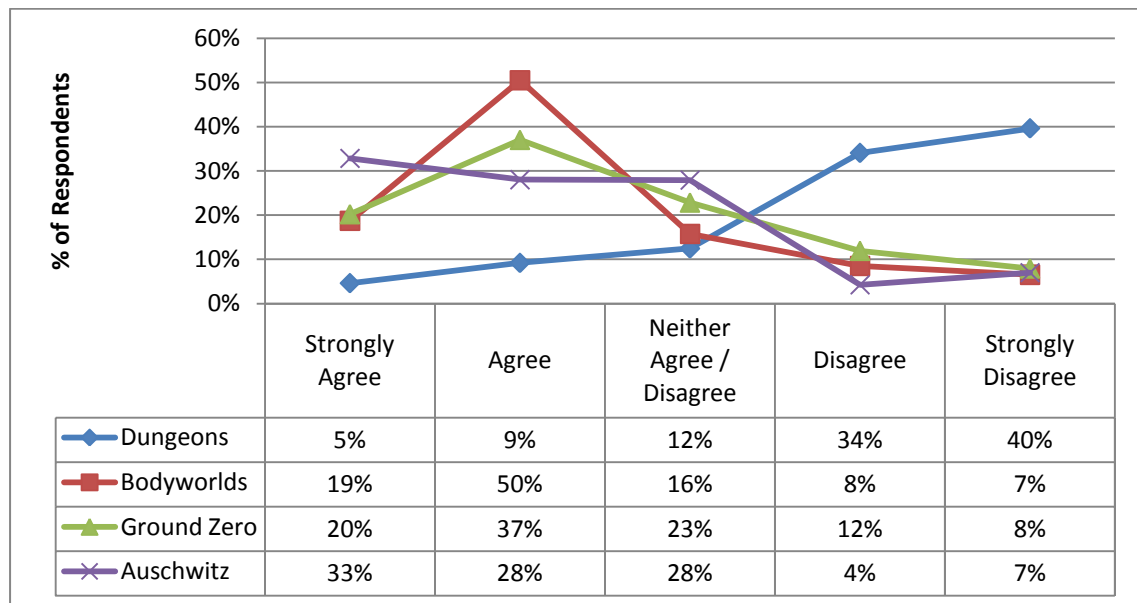
Figure 53: Responses to the statement 'As a result from your visit experience – I think represented *victims / cadavers* and their deaths are relevant to me and my own life'

8.5.3   Ordinariness

Augmenting this sense of both empathy and relevance is the notion of ordinariness. In other words, (re)presented victims (or cadavers as in Body Worlds) not only generate a certain amount of empathy and perceived relevance amongst individuals, but are also viewed as 'ordinary people' – with attributes and similarities to those visitors who may gaze upon their demise. Hence, Figure 54 shows the level of respondents' sense of ordinariness of represented victims/cadavers. Consequently, across all case studies, the survey research revealed an overwhelming sense of perceived ordinariness of victims and their deaths. Thus, the suggestion is that individuals possess not only some empathy with the victims/cadavers and apply a certain amount of relevance to their own life-world, but also view represented victims/cadavers as ordinary people. Subsequently, whilst their deaths may be extraordinary, the actual victims/cadavers are seen as ordinary citizens of a past community, thus normal and typical, which in turn, appears to strike some accord with those visitors who now consume their passing.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree / Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Dungeons	13%	35%	29%	16%	6%
Bodyworlds	34%	33%	17%	12%	3%
Ground Zero	53%	25%	14%	4%	4%
Auschwitz	33%	41%	13%	7%	5%
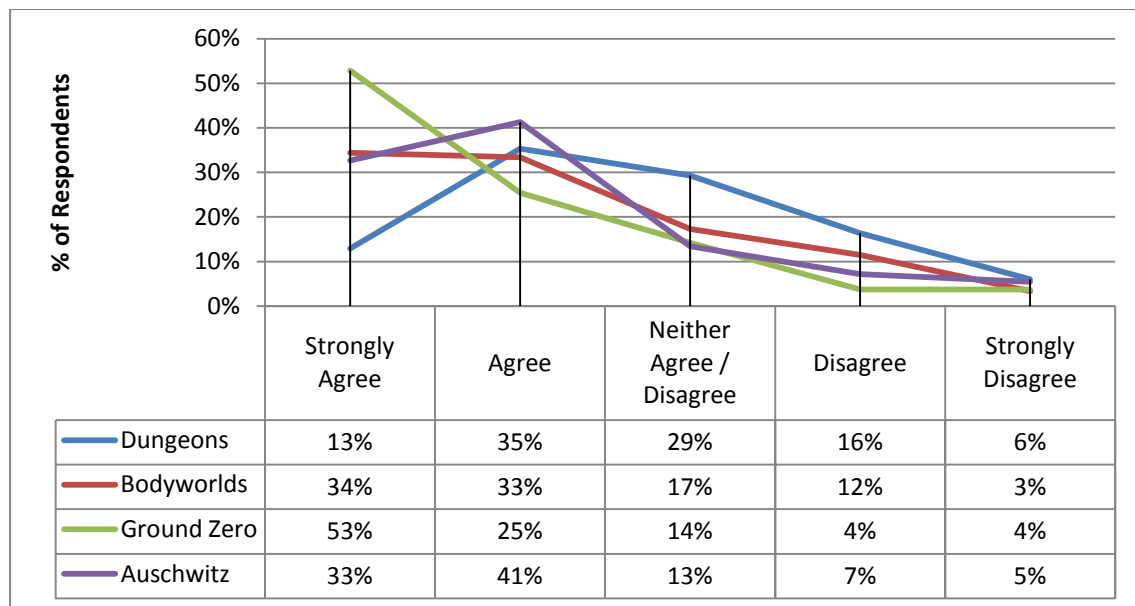
Figure 54: Responses to the statement 'I perceive the *(re)presented victims/cadavers* as ordinary people'

8.5.4 Reflection

A key research aim was to examine whether consuming 'death spaces' as represented by dark tourism had any bearing upon individuals' notions of life and living. Whilst conceptions of empathy, relevance and ordinariness are important underpinnings for the process of reflecting on life-worlds of both the individual and collective Self, the survey also revealed the extent of these reflections at various case sites. Indeed, Figure 55 shows the level of respondent cogitation upon the lives of those victims/cadavers represented at each case site. In short, the presentation of each dark tourism site generated rumination amongst visitors, albeit to varying degrees, upon the lives of those who had died, whether those victims were real-life or recreated. Indeed, the vast majority of respondents at both Auschwitz-Birkenau (93%) and Ground Zero (83%) either thought all the time or thought regularly about the lives of dead victims who were presented at the sites, confirming perhaps, inherent memorialisation narratives. At Body Worlds, where personal identification of the displayed cadavers is omitted, 58% of respondents still either thought all the time or thought regularly about the life of the displayed deceased, again suggesting that the dead are providing a mediating role between what has gone before and what is now. In addition, despite the kitschified presentation of the dead at the Dungeons, a significant third of respondents (33%) claimed they either thought all the time or

thought regularly about the victims or people epitomized at the attractions, whilst a further 29% of respondents thought occasionally about represented victims.

	Thought all the Time	Thought Regulary	Thought Occasionally	Did not Think Much	Did Not Think at All
Dungeons	11%	22%	29%	15%	22%
Bodyworlds	26%	32%	15%	22%	5%
Ground Zero	37%	46%	13%	2%	1%
Auschwitz	74%	19%	4%	2%	1%
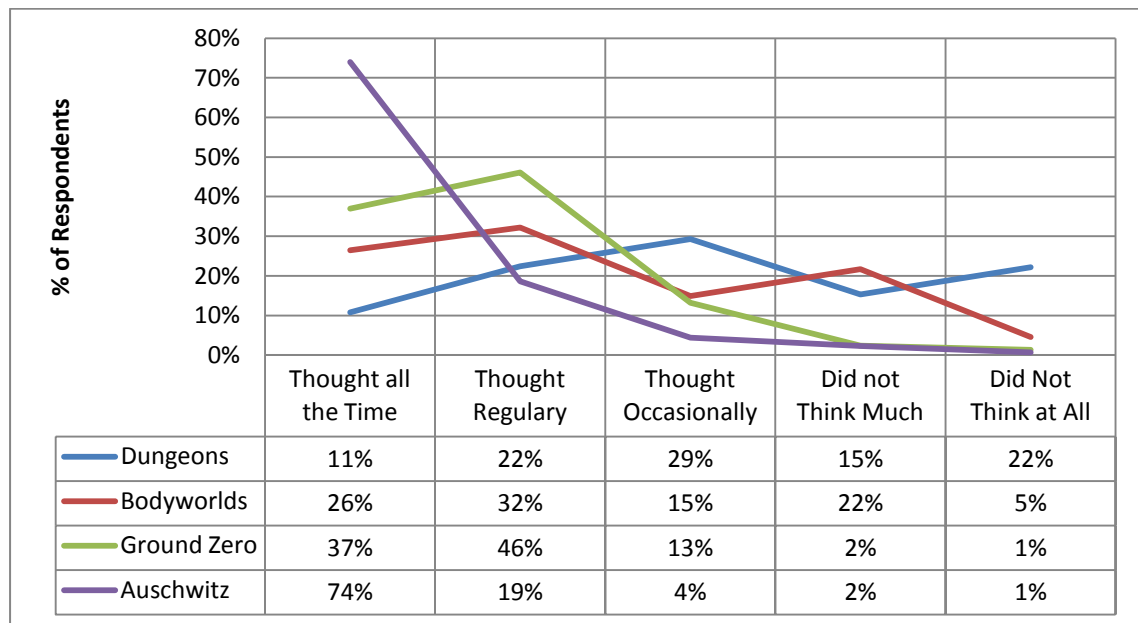
Figure 55: Responses to the question 'During your visit to the *case site*, did you ever think about the lives of *those represented*?'

Furthermore, whilst various dark tourism experiences generated reflection upon victims' lives, respondents also noted the extent of how their visitor experience(s) influenced a reflection of their *own* lives. Consequently, Figure 56 illustrates respondents' level of reflection of their own life situation. Whilst the majority of respondents at the Dungeons did not think much or did not think at all about their own life situation during the attraction experience, reflecting perhaps broader notions of relevancy as discussed earlier, a significant 32% of respondents did either think all the time, regularly or occasionally about their own lives. Moreover, a large majority of respondents at Auschwitz-Birkenau (79%), Ground Zero (80%) and Body Worlds (78%) either thought all the time, thought regularly or though occasionally about their own lives as they consumed narratives of death, dying and tragedy. Thus, it is here where considerations of meaningfulness of life and living are arbitrated through the touristic representation of death and dying. Additionally, when respondents were asked whether they thought their respective visitor experience would make *other* people think about their own lives, a similar pattern emerged with the majority of respondents at Auschwitz-Birkenau, Ground Zero and Body Worlds suggesting that

the experience *would* make other people think about their own life situation and meaning (Figure 57). Furthermore, Table 28 illustrates a selection of written statements as to respondents' reasoning why respective dark tourism visits may evoke reflection about broader life-worlds and meanings. In doing so, the suggestion is that individuals utilise touristic death place(s) as intercession spaces between what might be considered a *morbid gaze* and a *mortal insight*.

	Thought all the Time	Thought Regulary	Thought Occasionally	Did not Think Much	Did Not Think at All
Dungeons	12%	9%	11%	27%	41%
Bodyworlds	30%	28%	20%	14%	9%
Ground Zero	26%	37%	17%	9%	11%
Auschwitz	20%	36%	23%	15%	7%
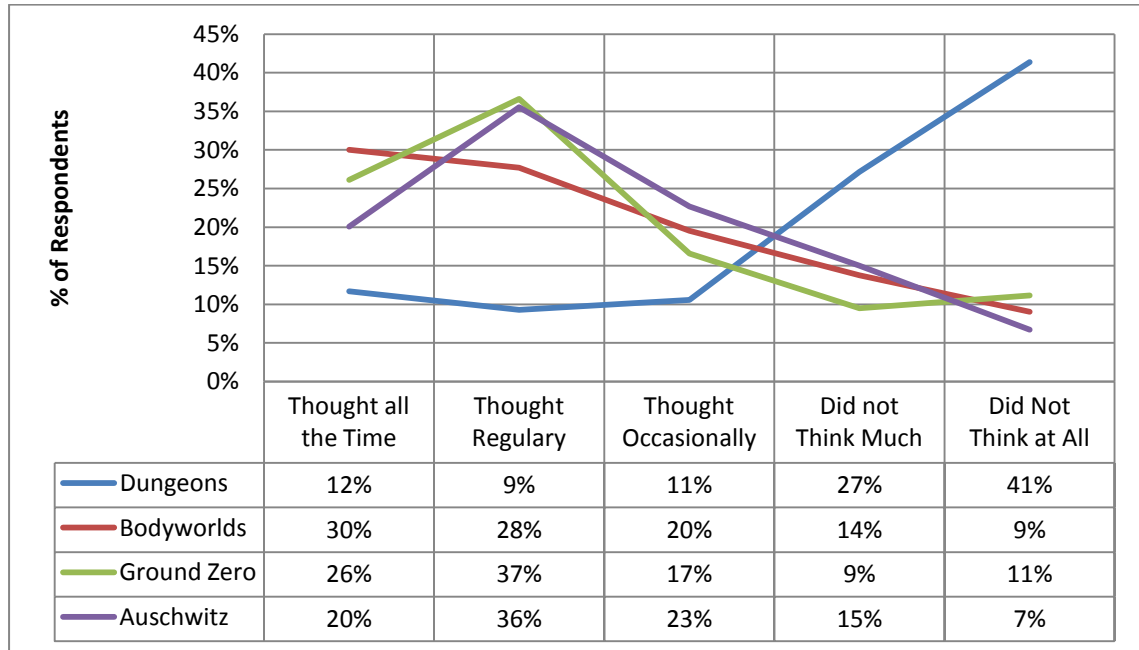
Figure 56: Responses to the question 'During your visit to the *case site*, and in relation to the experience, did you ever think about your own life situation?'

	Dungeons	Bodyworlds	Ground Zero	Auschwitz
Not Sure	38%	24%	31%	36%
NO	53%	3%	7%	11%
YES	9%	73%	62%	54%

% of Respondents
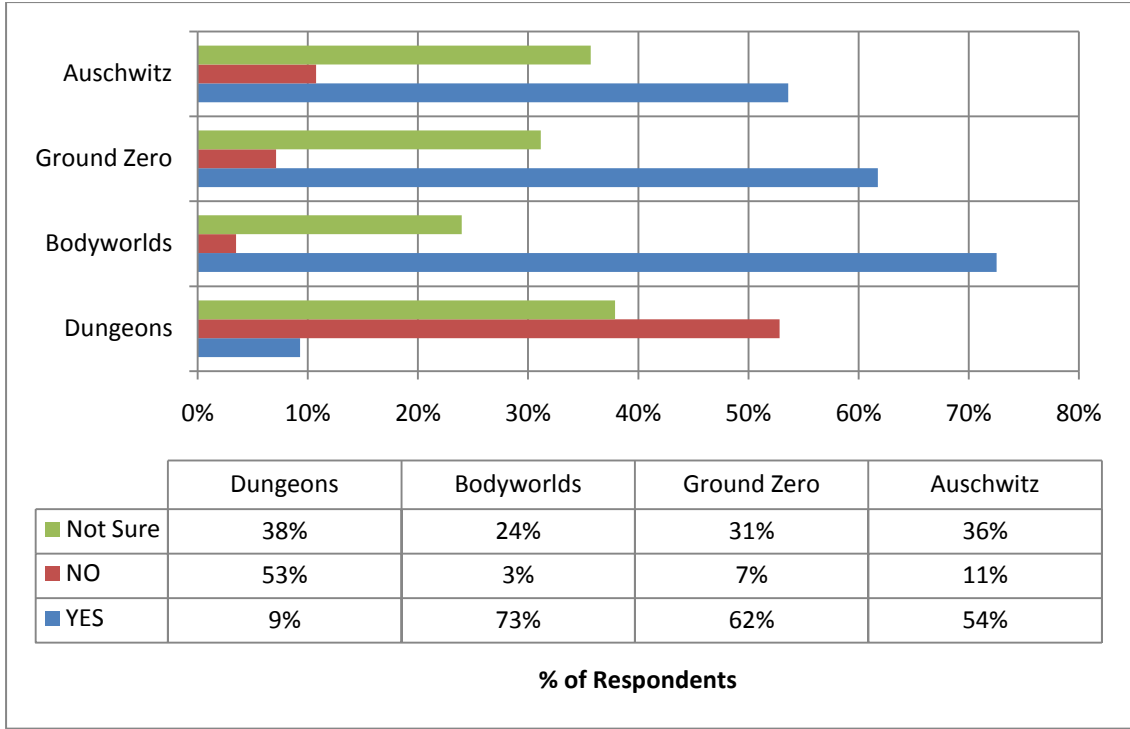
Figure 57: Responses to the question 'In your opinion, do you think the experience at *the case site* may make other people think about their own life situation?'

Auschwitz-Birkenau
'As the museum focuses on live humans dying, it may well make people think about their own life situation'.
'Because you realise just how lucky and how much opportunity you have in this life'.
'How fortunate we are to not have been subjected to such an atrocity and hope we never will be'.
'I think it could make people appreciate their own life and circumstances more after attending a place of such historical and tragic events'.
'It think people rationalise the Holocaust and deaths involved are not relevant in their continuation of life, but it also makes one appreciative that one can escape the horror'.
'The safe feeling with which most of us go through life can be questioned during the visit'.
'You can't help but contrast your own life with the victims; to understand it'.
'You'd have to have a heart of stone not to be moved and thus make some association with your own life, the worth of life, your contributions to humankind'.

Tribute WTC Visitor Centre (Ground Zero)
'It highlights how you need to make the most of every day as you can't always know when it will end'.
'It is easy to imagine being in that situation. At work or in an aircraft'.
'It makes you realise how precious life is and how easily it can be taken away'.
'Makes you think how fragile life is'.
'The personal stories told by the Tribute tour guides make their personal experiences very accessible, and one draws comparisons to one's own life'.
'We temporarily assume their position [i.e. victims] and simulate what their feelings and emotions may have been like'

Body Worlds
'Easy to relate the lives/anatomy/physiology/diseases etc of those on display to yourself or your loved one'.
'I think some visitors may be affected by the display of different organs and their relationships to the life choices (i.e. smoking) that cause deterioration of these organs'.
'It is natural to compare their anatomy with yours, in whatever state, and compare'.
'Seeing diseased organs on display, as a result of unhealthy lifestyles might make people consider their own life situation'.
'Those bodies are members of our tribe. Unless you really disassociate, I would think it'd be impossible not to relate'.
'Whilst walking around I heard many people comment on their own situation, for example, about stopping smoking'.

Dungeons
'Yes, at least they gave value of they have (more quality of life than some).

Table 28: Selection of responses to the question 'In your opinion, do you think the experience at *the case site* may make other people think about their own life situation? If YES, please briefly state your reasons why you think this?'

8.5.5   Fortitude

Thus far, the research has indicated dark tourism experiences at various case study sites generate a degree of reflection upon the life of not only the represented deceased, but also upon lives of individual visitors. Furthermore, the survey now reveals the extent of how hopeful and fortunate individuals feel, as well the extent of how fearful and secure they perceived themselves because of their dark tourism experience. Indeed, Figure 58 shows respondents level of fortitude after their reflective visitor experience. Whilst 38% respondents at Body Worlds either agreed or strongly agreed that their visit made them consider how fortunate they were, a similar proportion (40%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. Consequently, this result is perhaps an indication that Body Worlds generates a reflection of the Self in health terms, whereby clinical reflection may not generate a great deal of fortitude. Even so, the overwhelming response across the case studies was one of agreement or strong agreement that site experiences had made respondents consider how fortunate they really were.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree / Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Dungeons	23%	29%	16%	15%	15%
Bodyworlds	15%	23%	22%	25%	15%
Ground Zero	35%	29%	15%	8%	13%
Auschwitz	52%	32%	8%	4%	4%
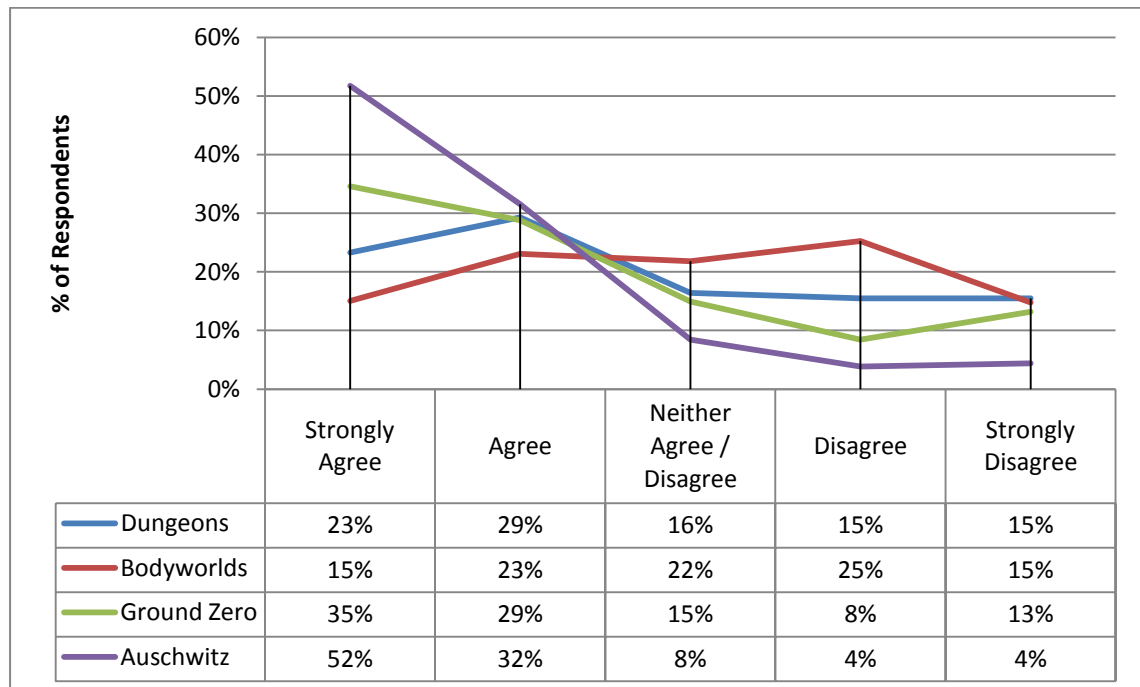
Figure 58: Responses to the statement 'My visit made me consider how fortunate I really am'

8.5.6   Hope

Respondents at Ground Zero and Auschwitz-Birkenau were asked as to their level of hopefulness for the future, as a direct consequence of learning more about death and tragedy from their visitor experience. Hence, Figure 59 illustrates these responses, and whilst a significant number of individuals at both sites could neither agree nor disagree as to whether their experience generated a sense of hope for the future, 41% of respondents at Ground Zero and 43% at Auschwitz-Birkenau either disagreed or strongly disagreed that learning about respective atrocities made them hopeful for the future. It is here, perhaps, that despite the generation of broader moral discourse about the atrocities, as discussed earlier, positive messages of hope are required at dark tourism sites, which, in turn, may inject a greater sense of optimism and expectation into (personal) reflective accounts.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree / Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Ground Zero	2%	18%	39%	27%	14%
Auschwitz	13%	17%	27%	29%	14%
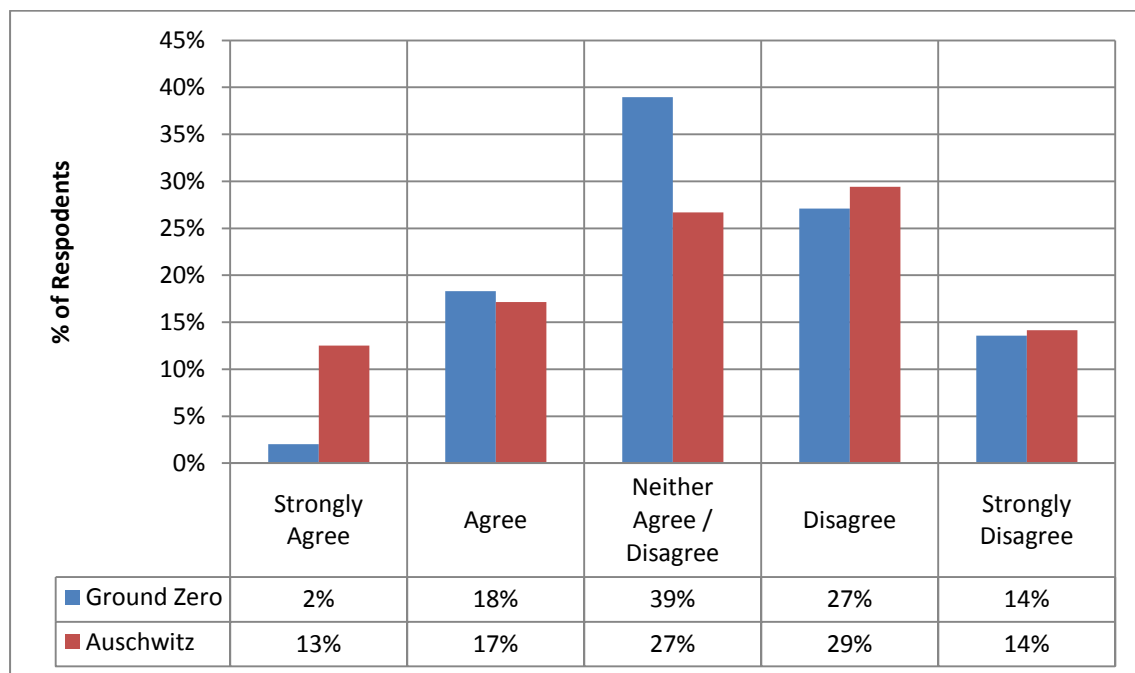
Figure 59: Responses to the statement 'Learning about the *Holocaust / 9/11* makes me hopeful for the future*'* (Auschwitz & Ground Zero only)

8.5.7 Security

When individuals across all case study sites were asked as to whether their visit experience had made them feel more secure in themselves, the majority of respondents were either undecided or disagreed that their visit experience made them feel more secure (Figure 60). Again, the suggestion is that a greater sense of optimism and potential lessons of hope, tolerance and progressiveness interpreted through

touristic narratives are required to inculcate affirmative personal feelings of solitude and ontological security.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree / Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Dungeons	1%	4%	45%	13%	37%
Bodyworlds	12%	6%	40%	26%	16%
Ground Zero	6%	2%	46%	28%	18%
Auschwitz	9%	15%	33%	25%	18%
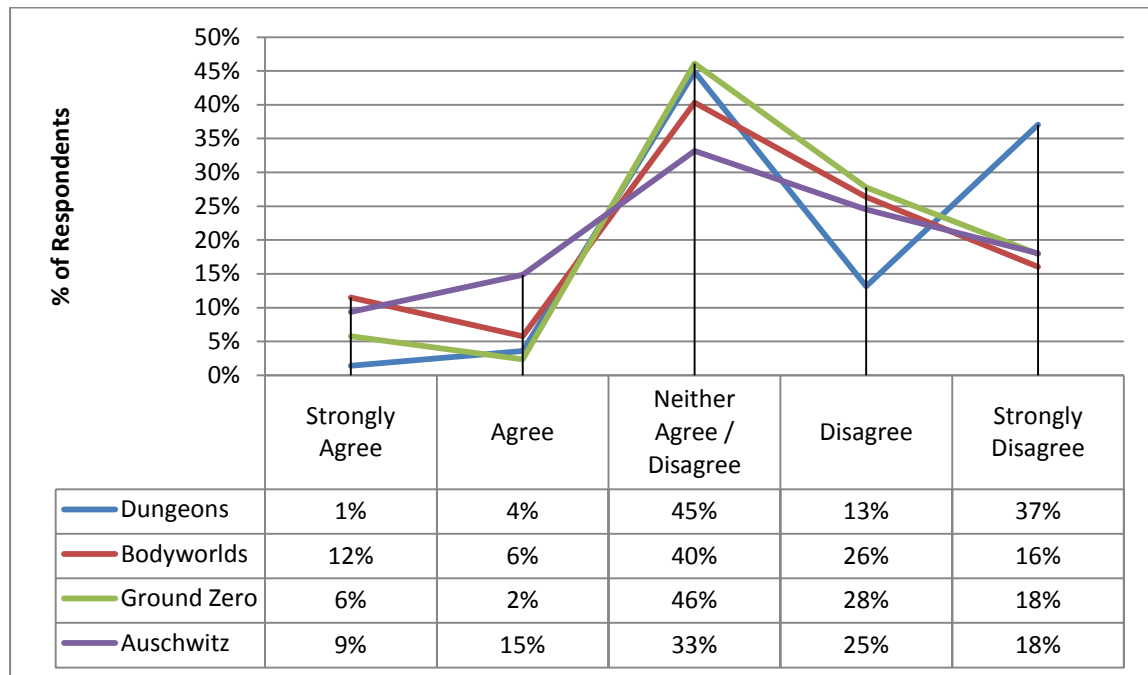
Figure 60: Responses to the statement 'I feel more secure in myself after visiting *the case site*'

8.5.8 *Fear*

When respondents were asked whether their visit experience to respective case study sites had made them more fearful about their own lives, the overwhelming response was that it did not (Figure 61). Thus, the implications are that whilst dark tourism sites may (re)create death and display the dead, they do not generally instil a fear of living. Moreover, whilst confronting life and life-projects, as discussed above, issues that revolve around mortality contemplation are fundamental to this research. Hence, it is to this that the thesis now turns in its final analysis of the research survey.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree / Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Dungeons	2%	5%	15%	22%	56%
Bodyworlds	6%	13%	15%	27%	39%
Ground Zero	6%	19%	16%	30%	28%
Auschwitz	6%	11%	20%	28%	34%
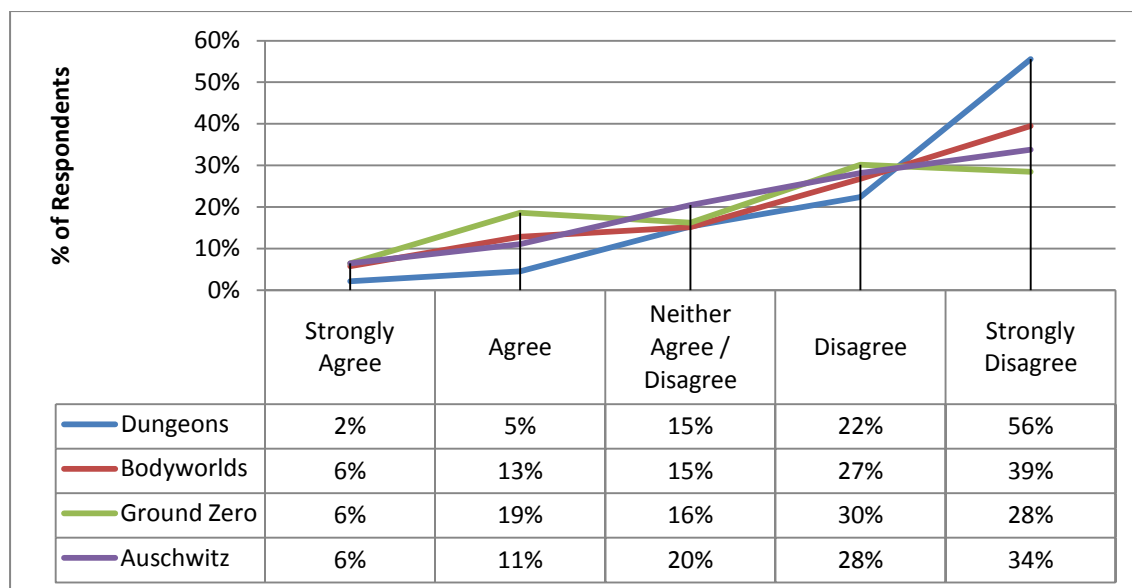
Figure 61: Responses to the statement 'The *case site* makes me fearful about my own life'

8.6   Contemplating Mortality

The research has already established that respondents across the four case study sites possess a relatively high degree of mortality anxiety, as measured by the *Revised Collett-Lester Fear of Death Scale*. Therefore, with this in mind, the study further unveiled relationships between dark tourism experiences and individual's cognitive thoughts of mortality. In other words, a key research aim was to discover the extent of relationship between individuals who generally had high levels of death anxiety and their dark tourism experiences. In turn, the survey attempted to measure any deliberation about death of the Other, as well as death of the Self. Importantly however, the research did not seek to establish whether certain dark tourism experiences actually caused death apprehension amongst individual visitors, though this may be a future research avenue. Consequently, following previous ethnographic research as outlined earlier, the study attempted to ascertain the degree of how particular dark tourism experiences generated a sense of death/dying contemplation. This is especially important considering broader notions of secularisation and death anxiety.

8.6.1   Contemplating Death of the Other

Firstly, therefore, Figure 62 shows responses when individuals were asked whether during their respective dark tourism experience they had ever thought about the death

of represented victims and/or cadavers. Subsequently, half or over half of respondents at Body Worlds (50%) and the Dungeons (54%), and the vast majority of respondents at Ground Zero (88%) and Auschwitz (94%) either thought all the time or thought regularly about those (deceased) people and their (re)presented deaths. It is here, perhaps, where the touristic display of the 'significant dead', that is, (in)significant people who have died and whose deaths continue to influence the living, compel visitors to contemplate biological, social and ontological deaths of the Other.

	Thought all the Time	Thought Regulary	Thought Occasionally	Did not Think Much	Did Not Think at All
Dungeons	20%	34%	22%	15%	8%
Bodyworlds	17%	33%	24%	18%	7%
Ground Zero	43%	45%	8%	2%	1%
Auschwitz	75%	19%	4%	1%	1%
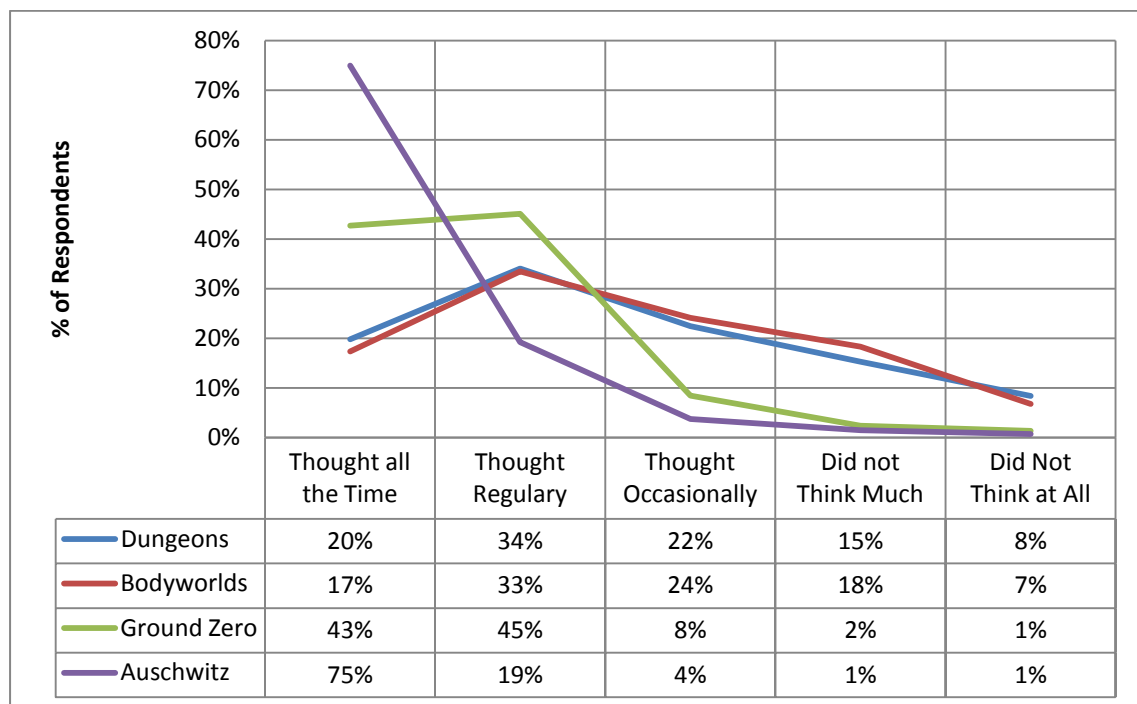
Figure 62: Responses to question 'During your visit to *the case study site*, did you ever think about the death of those *perished/represented victims/cadavers*?'

8.6.2 Contemplating Death of the Self

Whilst the research revealed contemplation of Other mortality through touristic narratives and representations of the significant dead, the same (re)presentations also offered visitors an opportunity to begin to 'think about' their own mortality. Indeed, the research specifically asked a number of questions that addressed the extent of relationship between dark tourism experiences and notions of mortality contemplation, particularly at an individual level. Hence, Figure 63 illustrates the level of response when individuals were asked whether, in relation to their dark tourism experience at respective dark tourism case sites, they ever thought about their own mortality for the future. Whilst the majority of respondents at the Dungeon did

not think much or did not think at all about their own mortality whilst consuming the Dungeon visitor experience, other dark tourism experiences did generate a certain amount of 'mortality contemplation'. Consequently, almost half of respondents at Body Worlds (45%), Ground Zero (44%) and Auschwitz (47%) either thought all the time or thought regularly about their own demise in relation to their visitor experience(s). A further 24% of respondents at Body Worlds, 22% at Ground Zero and 16% at Auschwitz also thought occasionally about their mortality. Thus, it is here where the extent of relationship between dark tourism consumption and contemplation of death of the Self is apparent. In essence, individuals begin to construct (some) meaning from their dark tourism experience, albeit to varying degrees and from various sources, of their own mortality through the representation of the Other dead. Consequently, the represented significant dead of the past mediate with the present living as (anxious) individuals face up to their ultimate future demise.

	Thought all the Time	Thought Regulary	Thought Occasionally	Did not Think Much	Did Not Think at All
Dungeons	3%	5%	11%	26%	55%
Bodyworlds	22%	23%	24%	19%	12%
Ground Zero	16%	28%	22%	14%	20%
Auschwitz	16%	31%	16%	19%	18%
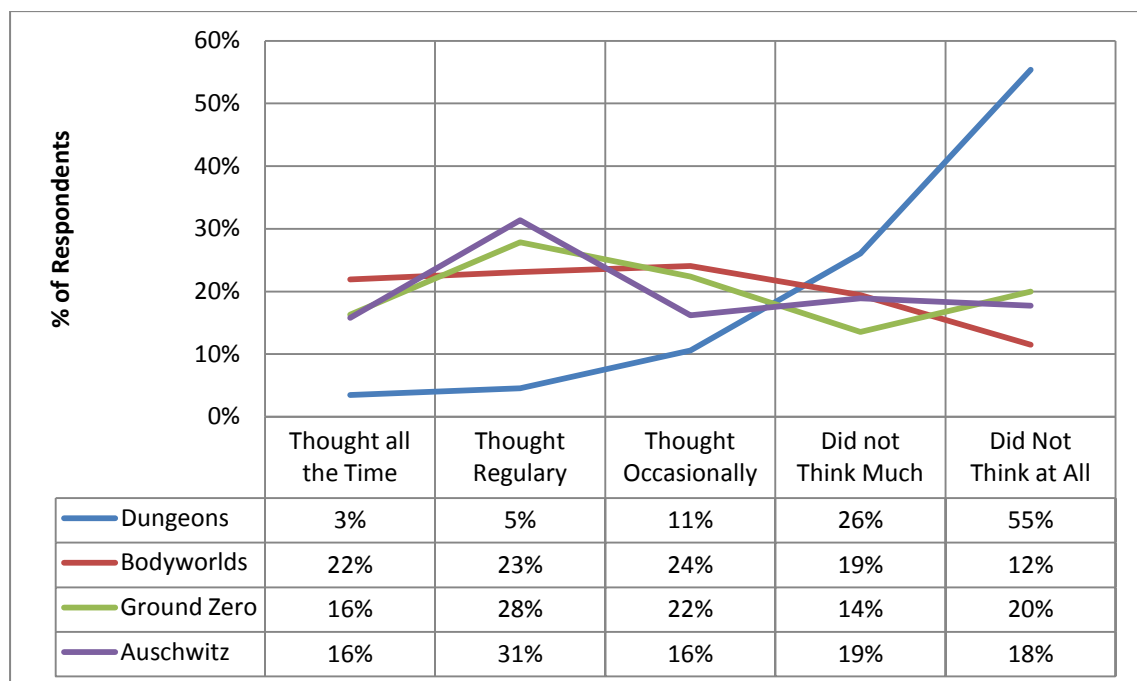
Figure 63: Responses to question 'During your visit to the case study site, and in relation to the experience, did you ever think about your own mortality?'

The survey further investigated contemplation of death of the Self with two questions that were subtly different in angle, yet still addressed fundamental aspects of confronting notions of passing away. Consequently, Figure 64 and Figure 65 illustrate respondents' level of reaction to the statements *'My visit made me think, however*

briefly, about my own death' and, *'I am reminded of my own mortality after visiting [the case site]'*. Whilst the latter question was designed to examine broader notions of both death and dying, termed here as mortality, the first question was directly related to the actual (biological) death of the Self. Indeed, Figure 64 shows that an overwhelming three-quarters of respondents at Body Worlds (75%) and almost half of respondents at both Ground Zero (45%) and Auschwitz (43%) either agreed or strongly agreed that their visitor experiences had made them *think* about their own death. Even at the Dungeon, with kitschified representations of loss of life, a quarter of respondents (25%) suggested their experience had made them consider their own demise. Similarly, when respondents were asked whether they were reminded of their own mortality from respective experiences, a comparable pattern emerged with regard to how dark tourism provides for a consideration of mortality (Figure 65).

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree / Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Dungeons	6%	19%	20%	20%	36%
Bodyworlds	42%	33%	13%	8%	5%
Ground Zero	23%	22%	24%	13%	17%
Auschwitz	17%	26%	14%	17%	26%
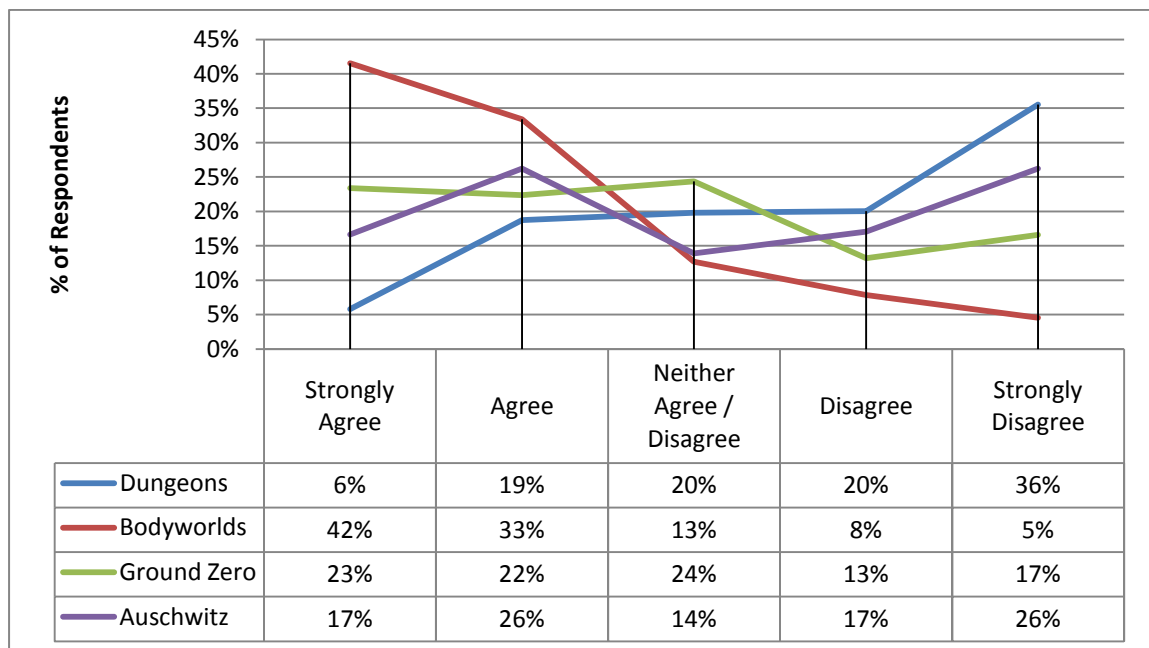
Figure 64: Responses to statement *'My visit made me think, however briefly, about my own death'*

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree / Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Dungeons	8%	9%	39%	11%	32%
Bodyworlds	33%	25%	15%	16%	10%
Ground Zero	23%	21%	22%	14%	20%
Auschwitz	19%	23%	28%	19%	11%
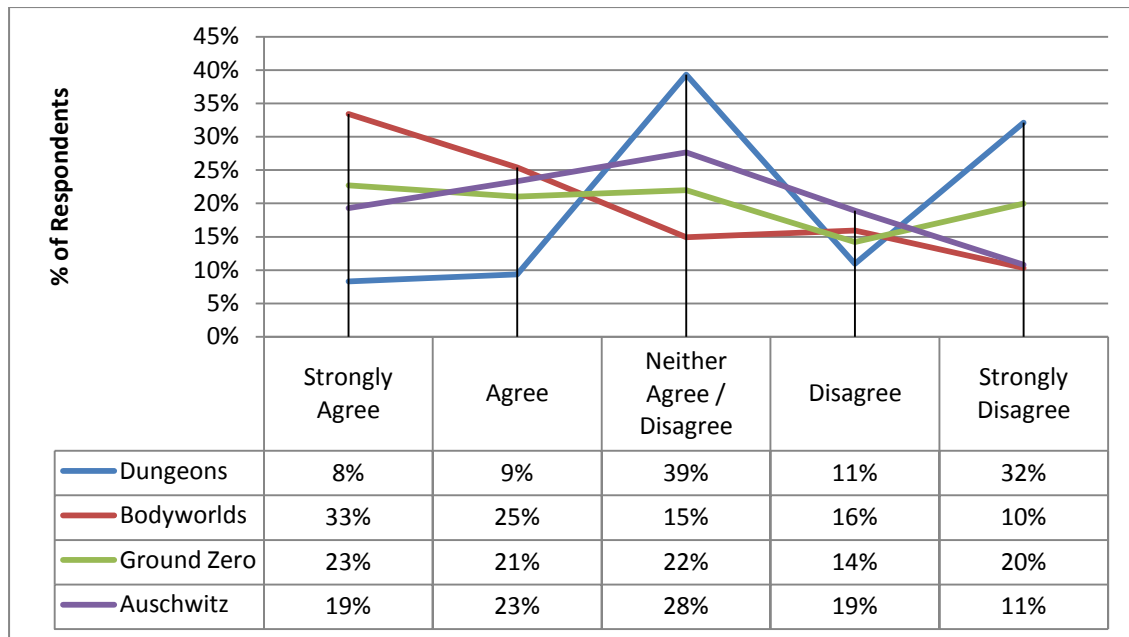
Figure 65: Responses to statement 'I am reminded of my own mortality after visiting *the case site'*

Moreover, the research as outlined earlier also revealed general levels of high(er) death anxiety, which notwithstanding the Dungeon attractions, corresponded with sampled respondents who thought all the time or thought regularly about their demise whilst they experienced particular sites (Figure 66). Hence, any potential mediation of death within dark tourism places is against a context of death anxiety and a fear of mortality.
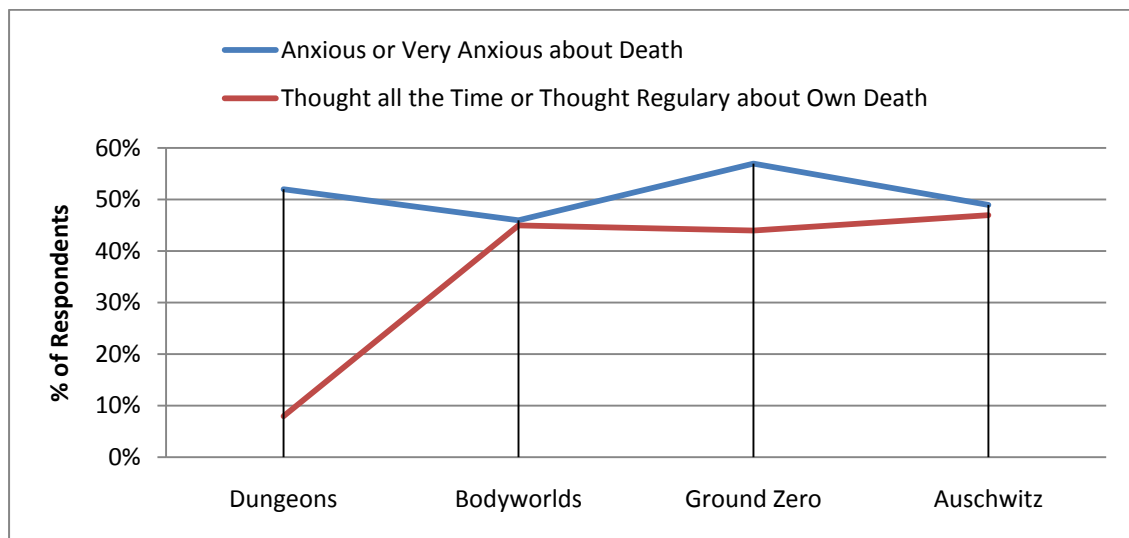
Figure 66: Relationship between death anxiety of individuals and sample of respondents who thought about their own death

In addition to this 'consideration' of mortality by (anxious) respondents; when compared with results of how dark tourism experiences generate personal reflections of existence, a relationship emerged which suggests how, generally, dark tourism provides an interceding place to construct meaning of both life and living and death and dying. Figures 67 -70 illustrate corresponding configurations between respondents' level of reflection of both life and death from respective dark tourism experiences. Ultimately, consumption of dark tourism appears not only to provide individuals a morbid gaze to consider and associate personal demise, but also, provides a lens which to reflect upon aspects of both collective and individual life.

Dungeon Visitor Attraction(s)

	Thought all the Time	Thought Regulary	Thought On Occasion	Did not Think Much	Did Not Think at All
Thought of Life of Self	12%	9%	11%	27%	41%
Thought of Death of Self	3%	5%	11%	26%	55%
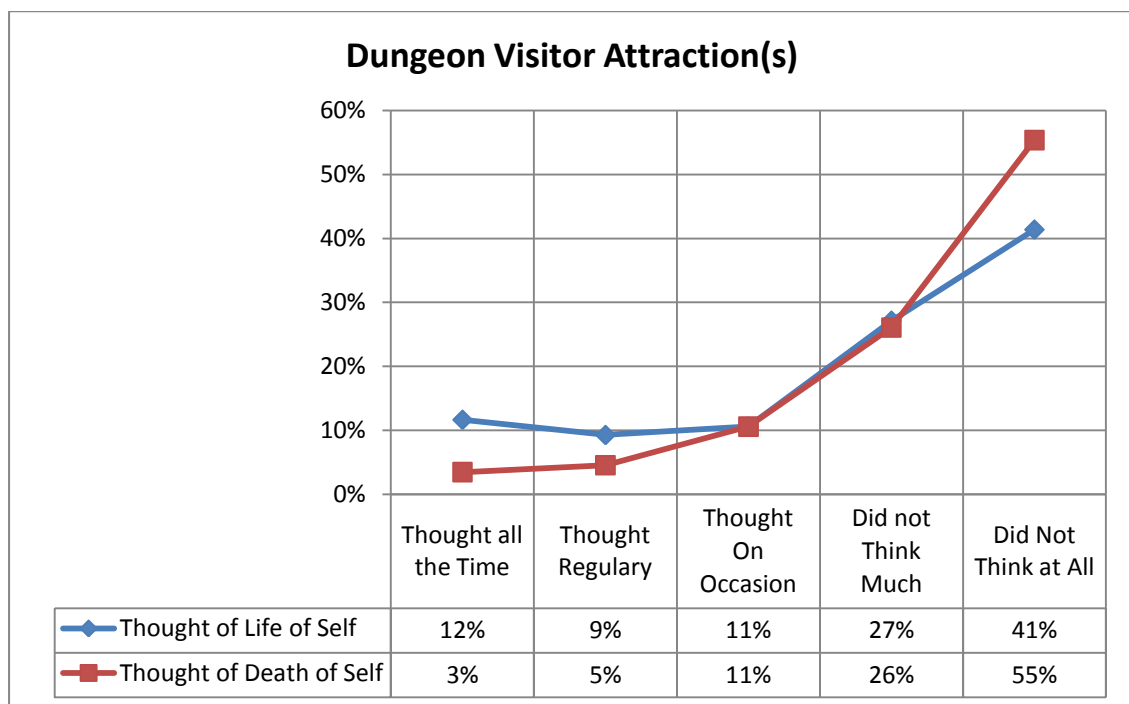
Figure 67: *Dungeon Visitor Attraction(s)* - Comparative responses to the statements: 'During your visit to *the case site*, did you ever think about your own life situation? (shown in blue) and, 'During your visit to *the case site*, and in relation to the experience, did you ever think about your own mortality? (shown in maroon)

Body Worlds

	Thought all the Time	Thought Regulary	Thought On Occasion	Did not Think Much	Did Not Think at All
Thought of Life of Self	30%	28%	20%	14%	9%
Thought of Death of Self	22%	23%	24%	19%	12%
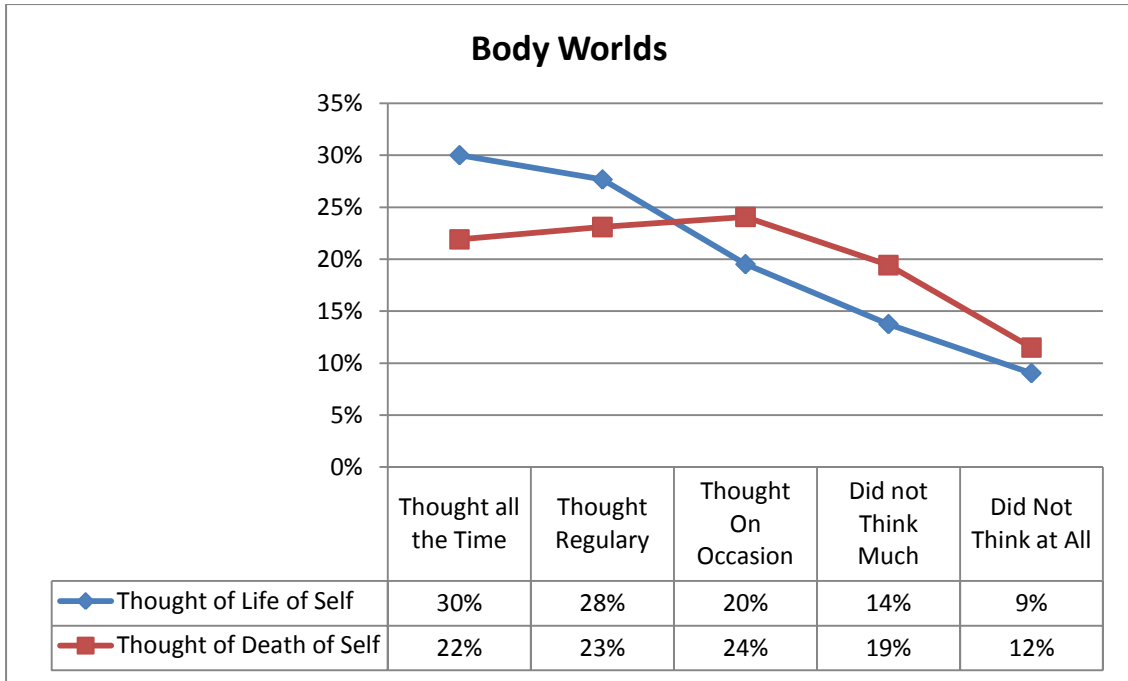
Figure 68: *Body Worlds Exhibition* - Comparative responses to the statements: 'During your visit to *the case site*, did you ever think about your own life situation? (shown in blue) and, 'During your visit to *the case site*, and in relation to the experience, did you ever think about your own mortality?' (shown in maroon)

Ground Zero

	Thought all the Time	Thought Regulary	Thought On Occasion	Did not Think Much	Did Not Think at All
Thought of Life of Self	26%	37%	17%	9%	11%
Thought of Death of Self	16%	28%	22%	14%	20%
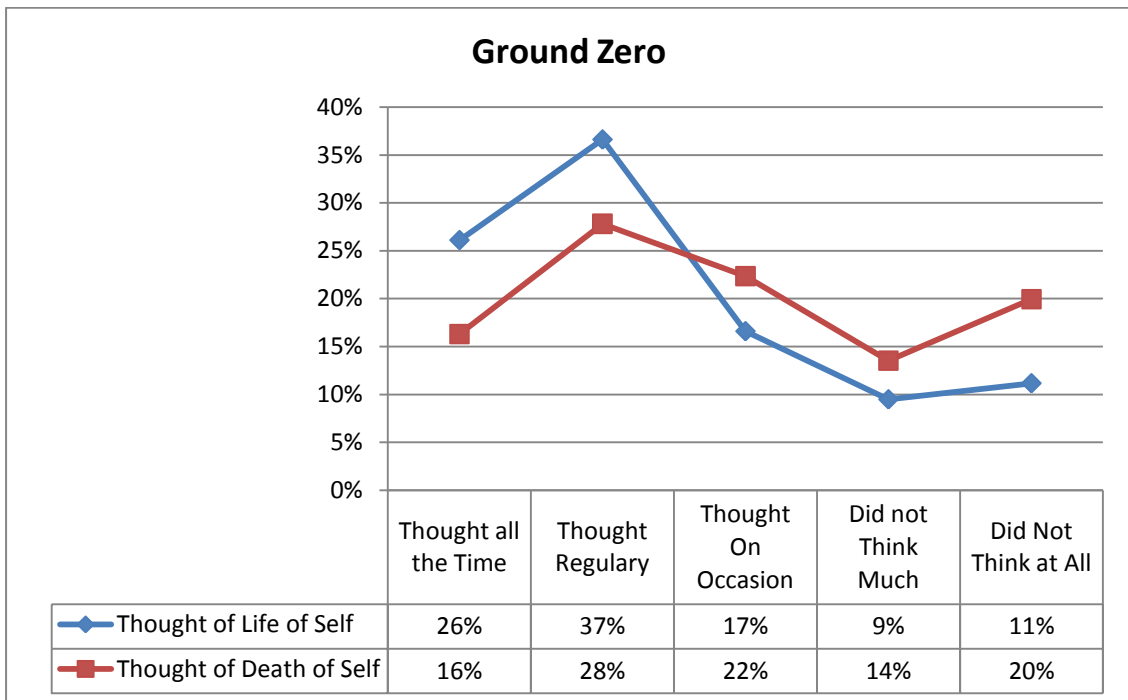
Figure 69: *Tribute WTC Visitor Centre at Ground Zero* - Comparative responses to the statements: 'During your visit to *the case site*, did you ever think about your own life situation? (shown in blue) and, 'During your visit to *the case site*, and in relation to the experience, did you ever think about your own mortality?' (shown in maroon)

Auschwitz-Birkenau

	Thought all the Time	Thought Regulary	Thought On Occasion	Did not Think Much	Did Not Think at All
Thought of Life of Self	20%	36%	23%	15%	7%
Thought of Death of Self	16%	31%	16%	19%	18%
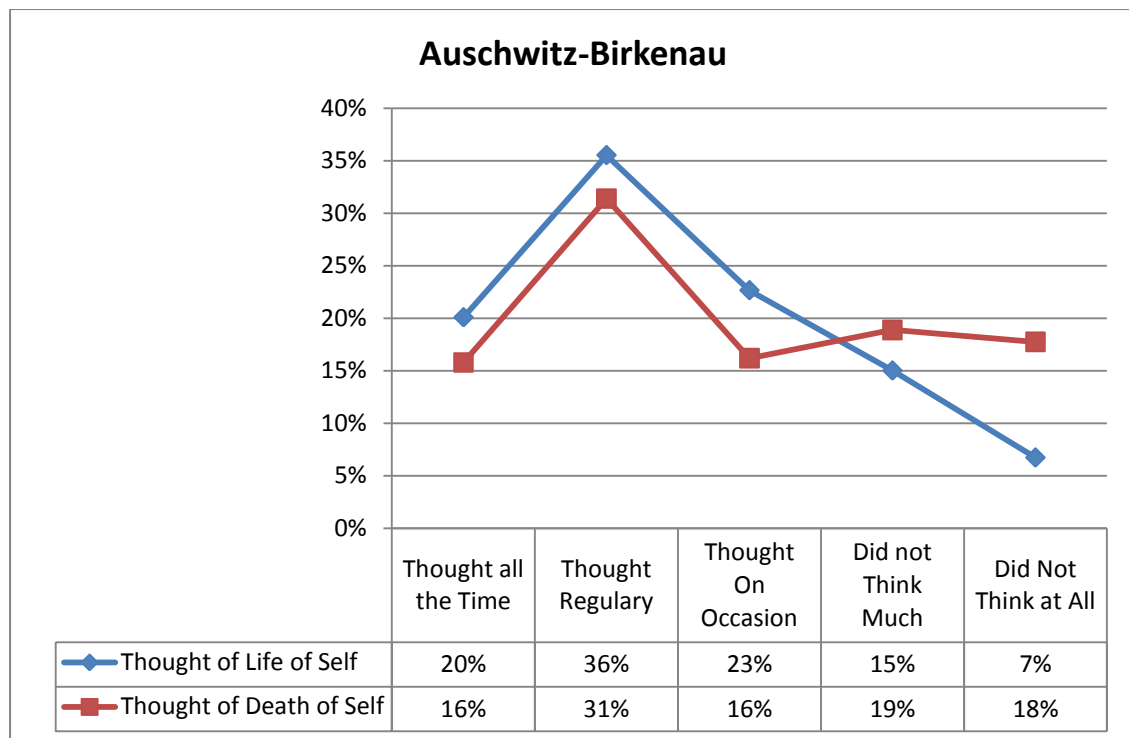
Figure 70: *Auschwitz-Birkenau* - Comparative responses to the statements: 'During your visit to *the case site*, did you ever think about your own life situation? (shown in blue) and, 'During your visit to *the case site*, and in relation to the experience, did you ever think about your own mortality?' (shown in maroon)

Furthermore, whilst the research divulged the extent of personal contemplation of mortality (and living) at particular dark tourism sites, the study also revealed that individuals deem dark tourism (experiences) as a mechanism for other people to consider their own deaths. As Figure 71 demonstrates, almost three-quarters of respondents at Body Worlds (74%) and either just under or just over half of respondents at Ground Zero (51%) and Auschwitz (48%) suggest the visitor experience(s) will make other people think about their own mortality. It is here that the research suggests consuming death of the Other through the significant touristic dead engenders individuals to consider other people will mediate their own 'mortality moment'.

	Dungeons	Bodyworlds	Ground Zero	Auschwitz
■ Not Sure	29%	19%	35%	41%
■ NO	46%	7%	14%	11%
■ YES	26%	74%	51%	48%

% of Respondents
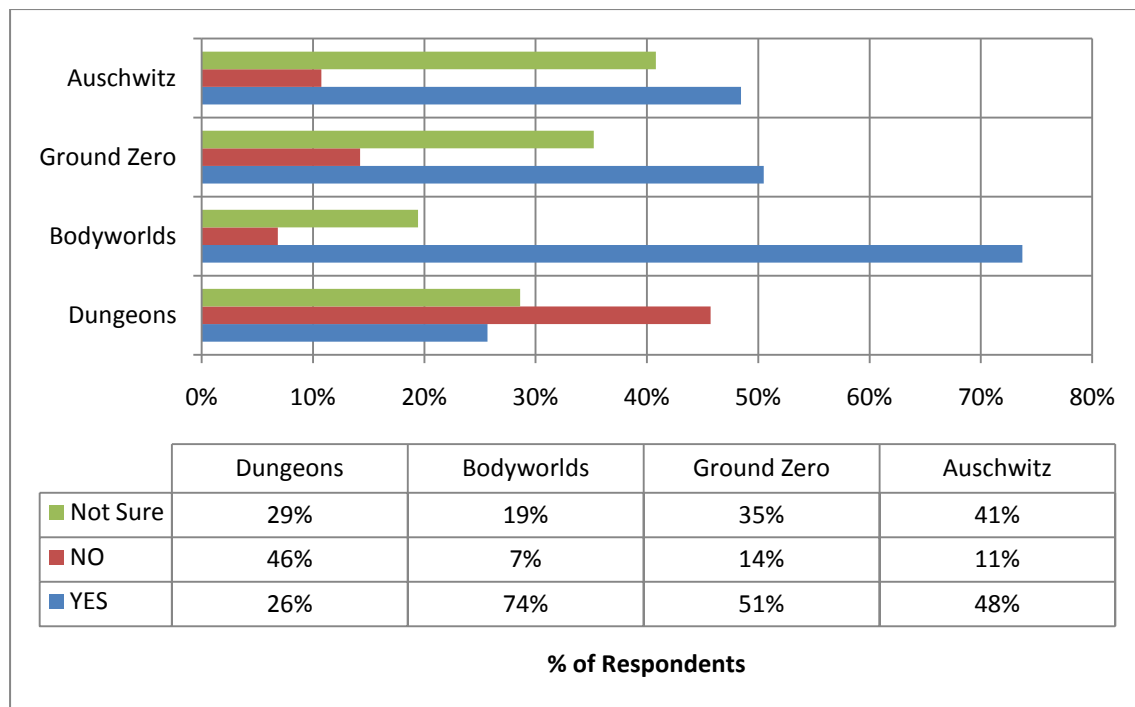
Figure 71: Responses to the question 'In your opinion, do you think the experience at *the case site* may make other people think about their own mortality?'

Of course, so-called 'mortality moments' or critical incidents where individuals may consider death, dying or indeed the process of life are often framed within religious structures and rituals. However, as this research has revealed, modern-day places such as dark tourism sites provide contemporaneous secularised opportunities to contemplate mortality of both the Self and of the Other. Indeed, as Figure 72 illustrates, significant proportions of respondents either agree or strongly agree that Body Worlds (44%), Ground Zero (46%) and Auschwitz-Birkenau (57%) are important places to consider mortality. Whilst the vast majority of respondents at the Dungeons disagree the attractions are important places to consider mortality, the point is made nevertheless that dark tourism to varying degrees provides places where visitors may consider and relate their life-end through the end-of-life of Others.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree / Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Dungeons	1%	7%	21%	31%	40%
Bodyworlds	17%	27%	24%	22%	10%
Ground Zero	15%	31%	31%	14%	9%
Auschwitz	19%	38%	23%	11%	9%
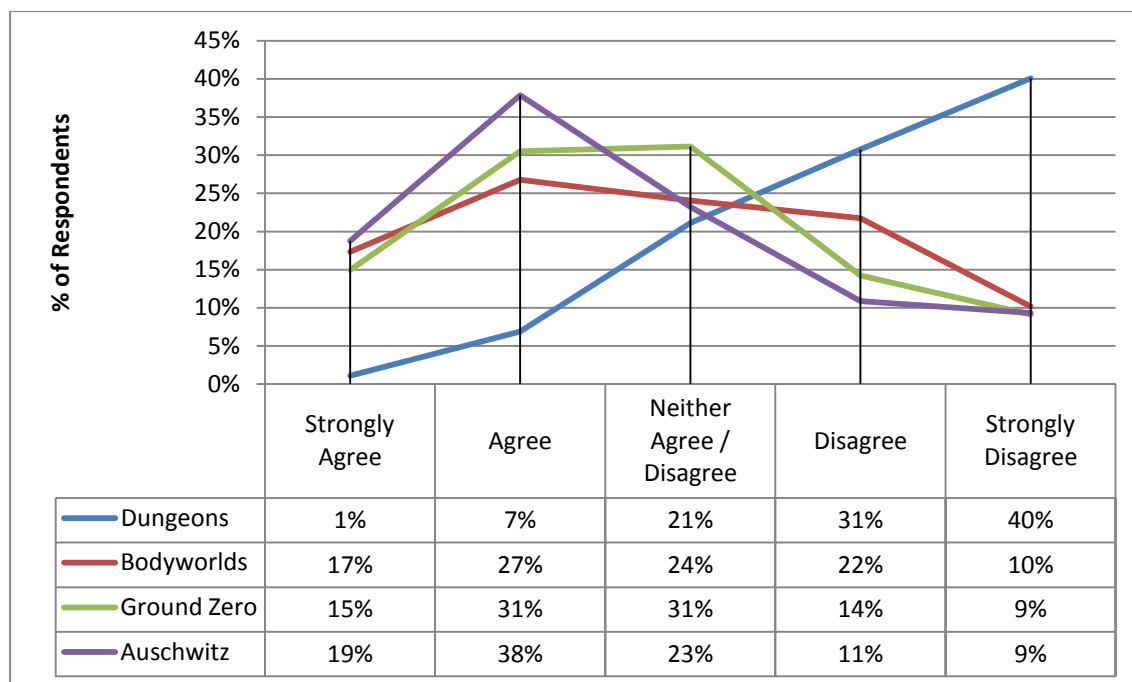
Figure 72: Responses to the statement '*The case site* is an important place to contemplate mortality'

The next section summarises the primary research, with subsequent discussions with broader concepts and synthesis with the literature.

8.7 Summary of Primary Research

This study has offered primary research findings and subsequent analyses with regard to dark tourism consumption. Across four selected case studies, research has centred upon fundamental relationships between tourist experiences and the wider thanatological condition of society. In other words, the research aimed to discover the nature and extent of fundamental interrelationships between dark tourism consumption and touristic representations of death and dying.

In doing so, the study has revealed a number of significant original findings that unveil relationships of how individuals relate to mortality within contemporary societies. Ethnographic research employed by this study revealed, in general terms, that dark tourism consumption is framed by meanings of death and dying as well as life and living. In turn, the research revealed broader discourse about the morality of both representing and consuming the dead. Furthermore, it is clear from this study that dark tourism provides an opportunity to individuals to gaze upon significant Other death and the dead, which have been designated by iconographies, semiotics and fractured narratives. In particular, individuals make reflective psychosocial connections, albeit to varying degrees, between constructed meanings of death spaces and their contemplation with mortality. Crucially, within a context of secularisation and death sequestration and anxiety, it is this reflection upon death of the Self through a dark tourist gaze of Other death that allow individuals to associate personal mortality. Ultimately, the empirical study has revealed that dark tourism spaces are inscribed with meanings of both life and death, and thus have the potential to become mediating places between the dead and living.

8.8 Relating to Mortality: Sequestration and the Revival of Death

The remainder of this chapter provides synthesis of the empirical analysis with broader conceptual ideas. In particular, the thesis argues that sequestration of death and its touristic revival within contemporary society, as demonstrated by the empirical data, plays a crucial role within individual and collective relationships to mortality. Consequently, the thesis discusses how particular dark tourism sites, attractions and exhibitions play a potential role in not only de-sequestering death but also mediating mortality within the thanatological condition of society.

As a starting point, death is not separate from society, but rather something that is part of life and shaped by society. As earlier discussions in Chapter Five advocate, the deathbed throughout history has undergone a plethora of political, socio-cultural, medical and spiritual revolutions. Indeed, throughout the history of humankind, death has been an enduring theme of myth and religion, science and magic, and curiosity and fear. However, as Kearl (2003: 1) notes, since the late twentieth century 'death is becoming recognised as the central dynamism underlying the life, vitality, and structure of [our] social order'.

Thus, death is a companion to life, whereby the assurance of mortality is made through the passage of living. Nonetheless, as this thesis has argued, there has been a questioning of the structural analysis of death in contemporary Western societies. Indeed, after the Second World War, scholars such as Geoffrey Gorer (1955, 1965) subscribed to the view that 'natural death' was hidden, suggesting the Romantic (good) death of the Victorian era with its elaborate mourning customs had given way to a modern society that failed to acknowledge and confront the realities of death. However, as Howarth (2007: 30) notes, 'this perspective suggests that Gorer was either ignorant of the wealth of data generated by the positivists, or, alternatively, that he did not recognise it as a discourse on mortality'. Even so, whilst Gorer concluded death had replaced sex as the unmentionable subject – that is, the pornographic (media) coverage of death as discussed earlier in the study – he insisted that death had not simply become a substitute for sex. Rather, he asserted that death in its *violent* manifestations had come to reside along with sex as a legitimate theme for entertainment. Indeed, Gorer (1955: 173) states 'while natural death has become more and more smothered in prudery, violent death has played an ever growing part in the fantasies offered to mass audiences'. In this respect, Gorer's presage is largely correct, especially considering the representation of violent death exhibited in the dark tourism case studies, notwithstanding Body Worlds. However, ultimately, Gorer suggested (natural) death had been relocated to the prudent realms of the medical profession, meaning secular death was hidden 'locked away within a hospital setting and mourning privatised and confined to the immediate family' (Howarth, 2007: 31). Other psychologists and sociologists, including seminal work by Ernest Becker (1973) and Philippe Aires (1981), where death was suggested as the 'final taboo',

promulgated this view and modern Western societies became perceived as 'death-denying'. As this study argued earlier, death denial, which emerged during the 1950's and 1960's became the foundation of a death sequestration thesis. More recently, scholars have even gone as far as to term contemporary mortality as a 'shameful death', whereby the nature of present-day longevity and resultant social dying are full of consternations (Kellehear, 2007). Furthermore, Kellehear suggests the sequestering of death and dying experiences mean that individuals have less access to regular experiences of death and dying, which were otherwise available to previous generations. He goes on to state:

> In our modern world... dying – as a shared set of overt social exchanges between dying individuals and those who care for them – is increasingly unrecognised in institutional settings outside hospital or health service settings in both global or domestic contexts (Kellehear, 2007: 253).

Consequently, during the past sixty years or so, the dead body has been disconnected from daily living. The dead no longer rest in peace in the front parlour under a community gaze, but typically die in hospital rather than at home, and are then removed to an industrialised morgue before going to a private funeral parlour (Laderman, 2003). Thus, empirical evidence from this study supports the principles of death sequestration. In particular, the research suggests a high proportion of sampled individuals perceive death to be sequestered to hospitals and funeral management, yet, paradoxically, also wish to have a 'good death' themselves – that is, dying in peace and old age at home surrounded by loved ones – as informed by Romantic ideology. It is here that death is not necessarily denied, but rather, a fear of death – or a fear of dying – is evident. Thus, empirical findings across the case studies suggest individuals were anxious, generally, of their finitude. Of course, the suggestion is not all individuals are fearful of death, but some are fearful of the process of dying. Furthermore, psychologists have argued that the fear of death is a *universal* phenomenon (Taylor, 1979). If this was the case, however, and every individual in society shares this fear, then it must be a social feature rather than simply an individual trait. Kellehear (1984, 2001, 2007) rejects this conclusion, as does this study. Certainly, whilst over half of respondents in the survey research suggest they were anxious or very anxious about death, it was not a universal feature. Secondly, where individuals do report death anxiety, the nature of fear will undoubtedly vary in both a temporal and cultural sense – something that this study

recognises, but is beyond the scope of the thesis. Third, despite using an adaptation of the well-established Revised Collett-Lester Death Anxiety scale, the category of fear is so inclusive that fear of death, arguably, could be regarded as a fear of life itself. Finally, a description of individual fear does not inform anything about the organisational dynamics that might result (Howarth, 2007). Hence, for that reason the study does not correlate individuals' general fear of death to specific experiences of dark tourism sites. Rather the study ascertained the general extent of death anxiety amongst respondents, which then provides a context when examining personal associations with broader mortality – a point discussed in more detail shortly. Nevertheless, despite these issues, anxiety of death was real for many respondents. Therefore, to dismiss this fear as divergent to the overall relationship with contemporary mortality would be naive. As Becker (1973) notes, 'societies [that is, individuals residing in societal frameworks] may adopt a maladaptive psychological response to awareness of mortality'. Moreover, the founder of the psychodynamic school of ideas Sigmund Freud suggests with regard to the fear of death, 'our own death is quite unimaginable, and whenever we make the attempt to imagine it we can perceive that we really survive as spectators' (Freud, 1984).

The Freudian 'spectator of death' concept is pertinent to this study of dark tourism. Indeed, through ethnographic research instruments, both the researcher and respondents may be considered *spectators*, gazing upon both real and imagined (re)constructions of Other mortality – anxious or otherwise. However, as Howarth (2007: 35) points out, 'in analysing the nature of death, and evaluating the denial of death thesis, sociologists have tended to adopt a psychological mechanism that was not designed to analyse society'. She goes on to suggest 'centring analysis on these individual aspects of mortality inevitably ignores other areas of public social experience where death is present' (2007: 35). Hence, death is complex, multifaceted and socially and culturally diverse. Moreover, death appears both in private and public spheres, in expected and unexpected forms, in natural and unnatural modes, and to the willing and not so willing.

Therefore, on the one hand, death in secular societies is sequestered through the processes of industrialisation and medicalisation, whereby (some) individuals have a high(er) level of death anxiety. Yet, on the other hand, death is resurrected and

reconstructed for popular entertainment, manifested through both real and fictional macabre events. Indeed, Walter (1991), focussing upon the assertion that death is the taboo of contemporary society points out that death and news of death is almost ubiquitous in (post)modern societies. Consequently, he argues that both print and broadcast media confront death with daily reporting of tragedies, murder, famine, industrial negligence, war, natural disasters, acts of terrorism, death of celebrities, and so on. He later asserts in his book 'The Revival of Death' that 'death is more and more talked of' within contemporary societies (Walter, 1994: 1). He goes on to note the deluge of books, articles and novels, television dramas and cinematic productions, as well as the plethora of university and college courses that focus upon death and dying. With such exposure to death, Walter (1994: 4) concludes 'all this sounds like a society obsessed with death, not one that denies it'.

Thus, this study demonstrates both perspectives – that is, individual notions of death sequestration *and* the revival of death for consumption through dark tourism (re)presentations. Consequently, this thesis supports the argument that death has been sequestered, or at least private death and dying has been institutionally separated and removed from the public realm (Giddens, 1991; Mellor, 1993; Mellor and Shilling, 1993; Wilmott, 2000). Additionally, this study has highlighted a number of sampled individuals who have elevated levels of death anxiety (or dread), which, potentially, may cause problems of meaning of mortality for people who reside in complex contemporary death sequestered societies (Giddens, 1991). This issue is considered below. Equally, this thesis also argues the dead have been revived and reconfigured through the act of dark tourism and, subsequently consumed as thanatological entertainment and education (or 'edutainment'). Hence, death, it is argued, is not so much denied or even taboo, but is very much present within society. However, the important point here is the suggestion that *real* death – that is, inconspicuous normal death of the Ordinary Self – has been sequestered to private and professional realms, but notable abnormal death of Significant Others, whether unusual, untimely or violent, has very much been revived and *(re)created* within the public (tourism) sphere. Of course, to a be a Significant Other in death does not necessarily mean that individuals require significance in life. It is particular deaths that are perceived significant to the living that is important, and may include the deaths of famous people as well as ordinary citizens. In other words, death that is routine, normal and

end-of-life is not packaged up and sold for consumption – apart from say, as number of deaths within group mortality statistics. However, (mass) death that is aberrant, atypical, premature, or that simply perturbs the collective (media) consciousness and, thus perceived as *significant* and relevant to an individual's life-world – as the empirical research indicates – has potential for dark touristification. Hence, death revivalism must begin to include dark tourism in the private/public death dichotomy, because it this dichotomy that is the basis of mediation between the dead and living. This is especially the case when the concept of (Significant) Other Death is considered, and it is this as a preceding discussion to mediating with the dead that the next section turns.

8.9   The Role of 'Other' (Significant) Death

Throughout history, religious rituals have provided an ontological link between the dead and the living. In turn, religion, which has evolved from ancient practices of praying to ancestors and gods, has constructed ecclesiastical mechanisms that promote public and spiritual 'traffic with the dead' (Walter, 2005). In particular, mourning rituals and subsequent prayers for the deceased provide intercession, for many, between those who have passed away and those who are yet to pass away. Indeed, a Christian perspective suggests God 'is not the God of the dead, but of the living.... for there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus' (Matthew 22:32 / 1.Timothy 2:5). However, an increasing prevalent secularised ideology suggests the 'dead have no spiritual existence, so communication with the dead soul is not so much wrong as impossible' (Walter, 2005: 18). Thus, secularism, as a feature of this research, may be considered a 'barrier ideology' cutting the living from the dead soul (Walter, 2005). Augmented with the institutional sequestration of death as discussed earlier, Strobe and Schut (1999) argue that the contemporary (Western) individual has little choice but to reconstruct a life without the (their) dead. However, to suggest contemporary Western society is wholly cut off from its dead, with no traffic between the two domains, is not entirely accurate. Indeed, Walter (1995) advocates there is considerable traffic, with several professions making a living out of the dead. In his 'mediator death-work' analysis, Walter examines those who work within the death, dying and disposal industry, including spiritualist mediums, pathologists, obituarists, funeral directors, and so on. It could be

argued those who produce dark tourism (re)presentations may join this list – for example, Gunter von Hagens of Body Worlds. Walter goes on to note Aries claim of modern unfamiliarity with the dead, and states, 'if Aries is right that it is lack of familiarity that makes death dangerous and wild, then mediator deathworkers re-tame it and enact this taming in public ritual' (2005: 19).

It is this notion of mediation/mediator and the *taming of death* within public spaces, and its relationship with dark tourism that now concerns this thesis. Indeed, the empirical research suggests, albeit to varying degrees, evidence of a meaning of mortality for individuals, or at least the construction of mortality meaning. The empirical analysis also indicates mortality meaning was attributed to dark tourism (re)presentations of *Significant Other* death. Hence, as revealed shortly, the Other of Death as a defining feature of dark tourism is important in the role of mediating between the living and the dead. Firstly, however, the 'Other' is a well researched concept in the social scientific study of tourism (e.g. Urry, 2002; Rojeck, 1993; McCain, 2003; Uriely, 1997). Indeed, the Other as opposed to the Self and, as a concept utilised throughout this thesis, can be traced back to early tourism, including the Grand Tour, where wealthy and mainly European travellers would encounter foreigners of other nations and communities. The tales travellers told upon their return often related to other societies that were perceived as bizarre, primitive, superstitious and inferior to their own. In short, the apparent strange judicial and religious practices, extraordinary customs, and alternative physical appearance of far away people and places were seen as *differences* (Seaton, 2001). With the advent of anthropology and the systematic study of other people, the term 'The Other' became signified by meaning 'people not like us'. Consequently, Hawthorn (1994: 141) offers this definition: 'to characterise a person, group or individual as 'other' is to place them outside the system of normality or convention to which one belongs oneself'.

Whilst a full critique of the conceptualisation of the Other is beyond the scope of thesis (but, see Said, 1978; Hollinshead, 1999; Urry, 2002), its main dimensions are recognised as a potent force not just in social relations, but in psychological development, self-recognition and enactment of self-identity (Seaton, 2009b). However, whilst the Other is socially constructed, therefore derived in part from contrasts between phenomenological practices of one world group against another, the

'Other of Death' is not socially constructed. In other words, whilst culturally diverse rituals surround Other Death in terms of grieving, disposal of the body, or symbolically marking the deceased, Other Death is *universal* in the sense of human finitude. Hence, Other Death is a uniquely powerful force because it is universal, existing in all cultures as an absolute, and not as a construct of relative difference (Seaton, 2009b) unlike the fear of death. As Other Death may be considered as part of universal opposition that transcends culture, Seaton (2009b: 84) suggests 'recognition of the absolute and universal character of death's Otherness to all peoples means that thanatourism [dark tourism] has the potential to be one of the most widely shared reasons for travel internationally'. However, as the empirical study has revealed, respondents' motivation to experience death lies more with the desire to understand and learn about death and dying, rather than specifically motivated by *death per se*. Consequently, the universal nature of (re)presenting Other Death within dark tourism has important relationships, functions and consequents for meditating mortality and linking the living with its dead.

8.10   *Mediating with the Dead*

The dominant paradigm of contemporary Western bereavement studies, legitimised by Freud (1984) and Bowlby (1979), has been for individuals to let go of their attachments to the dead and move on. However, Klass *et al* (1996) suggest individuals better move on with, rather than without, the dead. Thus, the dead are not banished from the lives of individuals, nor are the dead, generally, seen as a threat or jeopardy to living – though violent death may perturb a collective consciousness. Therefore, the concept of mediation, which serves the purpose of a social filter that protects, maintains and controls life/death relationships, is an important one. Hence, the dead require a channel to *communicate* with the living, as do the living require a *filter* in order to communicate with the dead. Indeed, the act of mediating with the Other dead – that is, the act of transmitting information about people who have died – has a long historical pedigree. The dead, especially the Significant Other dead, have been long been presented or *filtered* to the living through literature, folklore, architecture, the arts, archaeology, religion, and more recently through popular culture mass media and the internet. Of course, if a society did not mediate with their dead, the concept of history would be lost, as would notions of ancestry. It is here that a vibrant interest in

history and history of the dead manifests itself through nostalgia and a proliferation of heritage tourism (Seabrook, 2007; Sharpley & Stone, 2009).

However, whilst secularism and its consequent institutional sequestration of death has largely denied meaningful relationships between the living and the dead (Walter, 2009), a family of institutions that link the dead and living have evolved throughout history. A full critique of these institutions is beyond the scope of this thesis, but mediating institutions do include the family and the telling of ancestral tales, the inscription and recording of history, song writing and the musical expression of grief, the law and will making, as well as religion and pilgrimages (Walter, 2009). There are, of course, other and perhaps more obvious mediators between the living and dead, including gravestones, cemeteries and ancient burial grounds, as well as an increasing number of informal shrines at locations where people have been killed or murdered. Additionally, contemporary society, exemplified by diasporas, create and recreate sacrosanct (dead) heroes with which to connect and identify. These dead heroes go on to mediate both collectively and individually with the living. For instance, the fire fighters who were killed on 9/11 or Anne Frank who was interned at Auschwitz-Birkenau (and later died at Bergen-Belsen concentration camp) mediate a narrative link between their own tragic plight and those who gaze upon them. Even the disgraced dead, such as Jack the Ripper, Dick Turpin or Sweeny Todd, who are represented at the Dungeon visitor attractions, take on meta narratives through popular culture myth-making and become the celebrated villain, whilst their victims are largely forgotten. In either case, heroes and villains become sacred ancestors whereby the living bestow immortality on them by representing their image and deeds.

Much of this immortality arrives through another mediator that links the living with the dead. In particular, the photograph is a vivid instrument of how individuals encounter the dead, and (tourist) photography was a particular contested practice identified through the ethnographies. As Barthes (2000[1980]) observes, still photography is a contemporary *memento mori* whereby images of the deceased or places where they died provide reminders of inevitable mortality. Indeed, the 'photograph connects us both with the dead, and with our own death' (Beloff, 2007: 183). Moreover, a principle progression of photography has been the growth of the

mass media and its ability to (re)present and repeat death through multiple mediums. Whilst the ideological function of religion and its rituals traditionally provided the key social filter by which death could be glimpsed and approached, Walter (2006) argues that this function has largely been taken on by the mass media. In other words, the mass media (first) provides the information when atypical deaths occur. Walter (2009) further notes in terms of tragic events and making sense of mortality and in linking society with the dead, secular individuals turn to newspapers and television programme makers, rather than the priest, in helping make sense of what has occurred.

Evidently then, there are a range of mediating institutions that connect the living with the dead. Whilst the empirical study suggests religion is still important when dealing with issues of private grief, it is popular culture representations and the mass media that publically mediate Other Death. Hence, whilst Sharpley (2009) suggests the possibilities for dark tourism have been greatly increased by the advertising that the mass media can provide, Walter (2009: 44) argues there is a much closer link between the media and dark tourism – 'they mediate sudden or violent death to mass audiences'. Indeed, the notion of iconography and preconditioning of death events, as evident in the ethnographic research, is brought to the fore by the mediating effect of the mass media. The individual Self may bring with them images of death and the dead prior to their consumption of a dark tourism experience, thereby validating perceptions or challenging preconceptions. Hence, dark tourism spaces link the living with the dead. In turn, dark tourism mediates death and allows a construction of mortality meaning to occur. Consequently, new mediating places of mortality are developed and contemporary mediating relationships with the dead transpire (Stone, 2010).

Chapter Nine

Conclusion

'Life is not separate from death. It only looks that way.'

Blackfoot – Native American proverb

9.0   Introduction

This thesis has offered a theoretical analysis of dark tourism and its fundamental relationship with the thanatological condition of society. Consequently, the study has offered interdisciplinary narratives that provide grounded theories of dark tourism consumption. Crucially, though, by augmenting theoretical discussions of touristic representations of death and the morality of consuming such 'experiences', the study cited the sequestration of death within contemporary secular society as an underpinning conceptual framework. Hence, the empirical study critically explored dark tourism representations of death and dying within four distinct, but interrelated, case studies. Ultimately, the empirical analysis and subsequent discussions in Chapter Eight revealed dark tourism converged, somewhat, by representing not only Other death and dying, but also, and more importantly, by allowing the Self to relate personal mortality.

The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to conclude the thesis, outline its limitations as well as highlight research implications. Finally, the chapter offers future directions for dark tourism research.

9.1   Resurrecting the Dead: Dark Tourism as a New Mediating Institution

In contemporary secular society where (some) individuals have elevated levels of death anxiety and where private death is institutionally sequestered yet, paradoxically, Other Death is publically revived through popular cultural representations; the act of mortality mediation is of great consequence. As this research has demonstrated, dark tourism has the potential to join a family of mediating institutions that allow individuals to construct meaning(s) of (personal) mortality through the consumption of Other Death. However, the construction of mortality meaning is dependent upon semiotic truism and the polysemic nature of dark tourism spaces (Seaton, 2009a). Indeed, the empirical research suggests individuals consume dark tourism in a multitude of ways that are deemed pertinent to particular life-worlds. For example, the ethnographic research illustrated a visitor connecting the London Dungeon space with his own funeral, or individuals at Body Worlds contemplating their own health and finitude, or people at Ground Zero reflecting upon their own mortality, whilst some at Auschwitz-Birkenau reflected upon the mortality of not only themselves but also

family members. Of course, whilst Other Death is represented by dark tourism, the (re)presentations are not unproblematic or homogenous. Indeed, as the research has suggested, personal perceptions of relevance and significance ensure not all respondents feel an auratic presence when they consume universality of Other Death. Consequently, the notion of sacred space, an established concept in the sociology and anthropology of religion (Eliade, 1959; Malpas, 1999), was a feature of the empirical findings. Indeed, all case studies displayed notions of 'sacredness' – the Gregorian chanting in the Dungeons, the hushed atmosphere at Body Worlds, the ecclesiastical ambience at Ground Zero, or the sombre tone of Auschwitz-Birkenau. However, the research also demonstrated that there is a crucial difference between the auratic design of (tourism) death spaces as it exists physically and the place as it is perceived. Thus, it would be naive to claim that all respondents consume dark tourism as a universal meaning, especially with regard to personal notions of mortality. Quite simply, they did not. Whilst the construction of mortality meaning was a defining feature of the empirical research, the dark tourism case sites do not have absolute values – they have different meanings for different people from different cultures at different times (Creswell, 2004). In short, dark tourism *spaces* are polysemic whereby meaning is attached so that they become dark tourism *places*. Moreover, it is generally accepted that space possesses four key attributes. Firstly, it exists in people's imagination as much as the physical existence of place (Seaton, 2009b). Thus, the notion of pre-conditioning, iconography and media validation feeds the 'imaginary community' of dark tourists (Anderson, 1991). Secondly, space is socially constructed whereby meaning is produced through the influence of authorised representations as well as other tourist behaviours and (re)actions (Creswell, 2004). For instance, the contestation over ethical behaviour of some visitors at Ground Zero and Auschwitz-Birkenau is socially constructed according to social mores and moral relativism (Harman, 1975), as well as reactions influenced by acculturation (Sharpley, 1999). Thirdly, space is temporal, suggesting that places do not have a fixed meaning but one that changes over time (Seaton, 2009b). For example, the temporal nature of the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre at Ground Zero as a site of memorialisation, or Auschwitz-Birkenau as a site that requires maintenance, means dark tourism spaces are only permanent due to the intervention of those who seek to keep 'the dead alive'. Finally, space is attributed; ensuring place has no inherent significance in itself, but is provided with subjective significance by those who experience it. Indeed, 'space does

become place as the (human) senses combine together to actively gather a range of environmental information even in a subliminal way [whereby] memory and mediation may work together to create an *intersensorium* [original emphasis] through the multisenuous immersion of the body' (Middleton, 2010: 224).

The attribution of death spaces into subjective dark tourism places, signified by the consumptive experiences of visitors brings dark tourism into the family of mediating institutions with the dead (Stone, 2010). Indeed, within a secular context of death sequestration and heightened death anxiety levels amongst some visitors and, a degree of desire to understand and learn about events that agitate the collective consciousness, means that certain relationships with the dead are mediated by dark tourism. Thus, based upon empirical research findings and adapting a framework offered by Walter (2009), dark tourism relationships with the dead, albeit to varying degrees, are schematically revealed in Figure 73 and subsequently discussed.
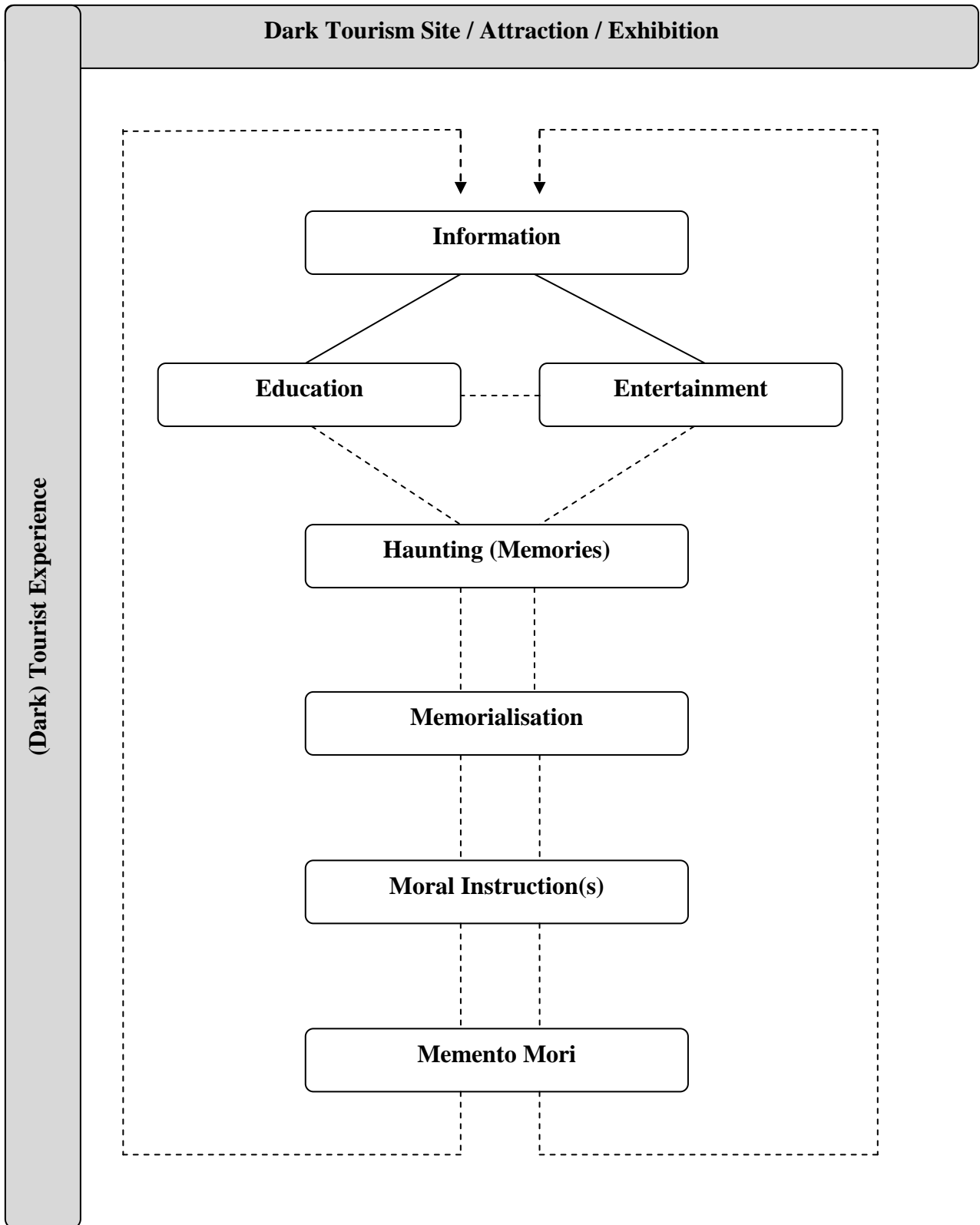
Figure 73: Model of Mediation - Relationships of the Dead and Dark Tourism

9.1.1 Information

The initial relationship of linking the living with the dead through dark tourism is one of providing information. Consequently, information about both the long and recent dead is imparted at dark tourism sites through formal interpretation. Whether the interpretation is kitschified (Sharpley & Stone, 2009), as in the case of the Dungeon visitor attractions or limited as at Birkenau, the real and (re)created dead are communicated and filtered through tourism (re)presentations as well as marketing narratives. Of course, broader issues of authenticity and political imperatives are bound up within interpretation, which this study recognises but is beyond the scope of the thesis. Nevertheless, the imparting of information is a first step in the overall mediation process, whereby death and suffering is presented and interpreted in order to be consumed as a tourist experience.

9.1.2 Education

Through the provision of (tourism) information and subsequent representation, the dead can be encountered for educational purposes. Indeed, a commonality across all case studies was one of dark tourism being both produced and consumed for educative reasons. For instance, those visiting Body Worlds congregate with the real dead and learn about not only death and disease, but also about life and health. In turn, visitors have an educative opportunity to learn about the human body through 'a hands-on archaeology of the dead body' (Hafferty, 1991:10). Similarly, visitors to Ground Zero are presented with an opportunity to learn about the events leading up to, during, and after 9/11. It is here that the ordinary Other Dead mediate their significant dreadful demise with educative narratives of tolerance and forbearance. Likewise, at Auschwitz-Birkenau, the Holocaust Dead tell tragic tales of persecution and genocide and display the conditions in which human survival became almost impossible. Even at the Dungeon visitor attractions, historical narratives are integral to the overall 'death design', which subsequently provides a context to begin to comprehend past methods of torture and incarceration, as well as 'learning' about deeds of the disgraced dead such as Jack the Ripper or Dick Turpin.

9.1.3 Entertainment

Whilst death and the concept of tourism – a practice often identified by hedonistic and pleasure seeking experiences – may appear an anomalous conjunction, the empirical research demonstrates that entertainment, defined here as 'the undertaking of an activity within leisure time', was evident across all case studies. Indeed, the dead, like much else from the past, mediate their presence through the act of entertaining present-day visitors. The most obvious example, of course, was at the Dungeons with the explicit depiction of both death and the dead. Consequently, visitors were entertained in a Baudrillardian sense through simulated acts of killing, including hanging and the cutting of throats. More noteworthy, however, was the evidence within the other case studies of entertainment as a 'death mediator'. At Body Worlds, the dead provide entertainment through occupying and posing in exhibitory space as well as possessing strategic alliances with the living through, for example, restaurant promotions. In turn, the plasinated Body Worlds corpses became integral components of a commodified tourism package, whereby entertainment (or *edutainment*) through a morbid gaze was a core activity. Meanwhile, whilst it would be erroneous to suggest Ground Zero and Auschwitz-Birkenau were deemed entertaining, the empirical research did illustrate that consuming these experiences were, for many, part of a broader 'tourism/entertainment itinerary'. Consequently, whether individuals were in New York to visit other iconic land marks or to undertake shopping trips, or in Poland to visit medieval Krakow or the Salt Mines at Wieliczka, both Ground Zero and Auschwitz-Birkenau were, generally, consumed as integral elements of a wider leisure outing. Consequently, both the 9/11 Dead and Holocaust Dead do not provide 'entertainment' in the accepted tourism sense. Nevertheless, both Ground Zero and Auschwitz-Birkenau are actively marketed/perceived as part of the broader visitor economy. Thus, it may be argued that the respective dead provide 'entertainment respite' for the leisured visitor who purposefully visit either site as part of a planned tourism trip – or through serendipity.

9.1.4 Haunting (Memories)

The unquiet dead can haunt people; indeed, memories of murdered individuals or those who die in vain in a civilised society – as a group of collective dead – can haunt society. For instance, events of 9/11 represented at the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre or the Holocaust at Auschwitz-Birkenau need to be incorporated into a collective narrative with which individuals may identify. Likewise, past methods of

execution or acts of infamous (unsolved) murder that still haunt, if not also thrill, contemporary individuals are (re)packaged and consumed at the Dungeon visitor attractions. Similarly, terminal illnesses that continue to perplex clinical science, such as cancer or Alzheimer's disease which Body Worlds seeks to illuminate, may haunt individuals as they face up to personal notions of health and mortality. In turn, death anxiety levels may be elevated as a myriad of death or disaster events disturb the collective consciousness. Consequently, 'if individuals repress memories of trauma because they are impossible to integrate into a personal narrative, collective traumas may be defined as those that cannot – or cannot at all easily – be integrated into collective narrative' (Walter, 2009: 49), even after individuals and their memories have died (Olick, 1999).

Thus, Walter (2009) suggests such unquiet deaths and their memories are the very stuff of dark tourism. In other words, traumatic, difficult-to-comprehend deaths, murder and disasters, as well as causes of death that still prevail over modern medicinal attempts to offer a cure, provide the basis for dark tourism. It is this very nature of haunting, or at least the notion of lingering, disturbing and evocative memory, at places such as Ground Zero, Auschwitz-Birkenau, Body Worlds and even the Dungeon attractions, that links both the individual and collective Self with the Other dead.

9.1.5   *Memorialisation*

Whilst disturbing death may haunt contemporary imaginations, the act of remembrance and memorialisation allows (darker) dark tourism to form. Indeed, as dark tourism may be typified by conceptual 'shades', then so too can different kinds of memory. Whilst memory and memorialisation studies is a vibrant transdisciplinary field of research, involving amongst others neurologists, psychoanalysts, anthropologists and philosophers, the debates are broad and too diverse to discuss here; yet, it is the different kinds of memory as generations pass away that is important to dark tourism. Consequently, first-generation memory refers to events, places or people that are personally experienced. Whereas such memories are fluid rather than static, Olick (1999) suggests first-generation memories are 'cobbled together anew each time the memory comes to mind'. Hence, recent atrocities such as 9/11 are termed first-generation memories, and although most people were not present

in New York at the time of the atrocity, the live television transmissions of the events meant that people were transported to the death site whilst remaining in their living rooms. Meanwhile, second-generation memories are those of our parents and their generation, and are passed down to influence our understanding of the world. For instance, at Auschwitz-Birkenau, a Holocaust survivor will remember the Holocaust in a different way than say their son or daughter, or for unrelated individuals for whom it has become history. Thus, by third-generation memory (and later), the past enrols into our consciousness in different ways. Indeed, one such way is history and through representing historical narratives. The important issue, however, is that remembrance is not memory (King, 1998). Hence, 'remembrance entails commemoration and memorialisation of those whose suffering and death one may not have personally witnessed' (Walter, 2009: 47). Therefore, when memory is not first hand, it evolves into (represented) remembrance and as time transpires into memorialisation and eventually into history. Remembrance, memorialisation and historical representation through dark tourism are all ways of relating to and mediating with the Significant Other dead, and/or contemplating their deaths. As Walter (2009: 48) notes, 'at the same dark tourist site, all may be present, for different visitors'.

At Ground Zero, for instance, the empirical research demonstrates remembrance of the 9/11 dead by individuals wishing to pay respect, which is within the realms of first-generation memory. Meanwhile, at Auschwitz-Birkenau where the Holocaust dead are becoming chronologically distance, memory is third-generation or later for many respondents. Hence, memorialisation of the Holocaust occurs by maintaining Auschwitz-Birkenau as a visitor site as well as formally constructing memorials at the location (and elsewhere). In terms of 'lighter' dark tourism, however, memorialisation narratives are largely omitted. Although the Dungeons visitor attractions were perceived as important places to commemorate the dead, the victims of Jack the Ripper, for example, are identified but are not given a voice in which to remember or commemorate their lives. Conversely, at Body Worlds, the dead are not personally identifiable, thus are denied an existential narrative. Nonetheless, those who gaze upon plasinated corpses can recall loved ones that have passed away – a response that appears to be triggered by representing particular diseases or causes of death. Similarly at Body Worlds, first-generation memory is evoked of unrelated episodes

where notable tragic death has occurred and subsequently reported in the media (for example, the incident when visitors whilst examining plasinated foetuses remembered the pregnant woman dying in childbirth). Ultimately, however, whatever the extent of remembrance and memorialisation of Other Death at dark tourism sites, it is this mediating 'recall' relationship that gives the dead the authority to afford guidance and moral instruction to the living.

9.1.6 *Moral Instruction(s)*

The empirical case sites as tourist attractions have either strategically deployed taboo subjects and commercially exploited macabre and tragic events, or offered memorialised narratives that connect the living with the dead. As a result, the sites exist within the broader visitor economy, often marketed as mainstream tourist attractions, and are contemporaneous cultural spaces that act as receptacles of 'highly charged' ideas and representations that appeal to mass-market demographics (Williams, 2001). Across the case sites, to varying degrees, nihilistic narratives of fear, death, horror, violence and disease are celebrated and (re)created through mimesis, kitsch and pastiche representations, as well as stark uncompromising and bleak depictions. Cultural interplay is both encouraged and sanctioned by visitors who, depending upon the eclecticism of their own life-worlds and the perceived 'ordinariness/relevance' of the exhibited victim(s)/cadavers, as well as the ethical conduct of other visitors, construct appropriate and relative meanings of morality through the Significant Other Dead. With embodied and emotional engagement resulting in a (quiet) collective effervescence (Stone, 2009b), the dark tourism space offers the Self an emancipatory place for reassessment and self-reflexivity that can allow an optimistic reconfiguration of outlooks and interpretative strategies.

Consequently, Body Worlds offered narratives of health, life, and moral instruction on how to extend living both biologically as well as ontologically. Similarly, at the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre at Ground Zero, moral directions are provided to lessons of hope, tolerance and peace. At Auschwitz-Birkenau and the Dungeon attractions, however, the poetic use of shock in order to generate a rupture in visitor (pre)conditioning and expectations, provides a deeper, more critically alert awareness of things-as-they-were, and an anticipation that such tragedy, murder, and execution can never occur again. It is on this premise of how things were and how things are

now that psychosocial moral connections are made by visitors within the dark tourism experience, whereby death, disease and gruesome moments from history are illuminated for the present day and, in turn, cast light on otherwise unseen mortality moments.

9.1.7   Memento Mori

Whether through religion, art, folklore, ancestral tales, or literature, as well as other mechanisms, reminders of personal mortality moments – *memento mori* – have a long history. However, Seaton (1996) highlights the decline of the medieval memento mori and its transformation through Romanticism, including the quixotic depiction of death within the arts, which propelled a cult of sentimentality that was significantly bound up with responses to death. Indeed, as noted earlier in this thesis, mortality was a major subject of Romantic art, literature and travel that 'turned death into sensibility – not so much a religious and moral mediation in the medieval, *memento mori* tradition, [but] as an imaginative dwelling on fatality for aesthetic gratification' (Seaton, 2009: 531). Conversely, Seaton (2009) also highlights the Romantic period as an era that was covert and slightly sadomasochistic, expressed through vicarious pleasures of terror and horror, manifested by the sublime and gothic novels and architecture. In essence, Seaton proposes modern-day dark tourism is an extension of Romantic reminders of mortality – that is, cultural representations that remind people of their mortality even as they go about everyday living.

However, as this study has illustrated, it is not simply representations of death that act as *memento mori*, but it is the consumption of Significant Other Death through dark tourism that allows the Self to construct and contribute to a meaning of death, which has become sequestered and secularised, and to relate personal mortality. Walter (2009: 48) goes on to note 'whether dark tourism sites actually remind visitors of their mortality varies... [thus] we may encounter the dead in a way that shields us from our own mortality, or the encounter may be liberally sprinkled with *memento mori*'. Essentially, this research has demonstrated consuming dark tourism *does* indeed remind individuals of their mortality, though as this study has also shown, Walter is correct in his assumption of variability. Consequently, the extent of thanatopsis – that is, the contemplation of death – is more pronounced at Auschwitz-Birkenau and Ground Zero, where Other Death is narrated through memorialisation, whilst at Body

Worlds, mortality contemplation is accompanied with positive narratives of health and life. Even at the Dungeon attractions, there are elements of *memento mori* as visitors consume simulated death at a safe socially sanctioned distance. Ultimately, however, it is the nature and extent of *memento mori* as a mediating relationship, and as a key finding of this research, that is at the crux of dark tourism. Hence, the chapter now concludes on this point and, in particular, offers a number of reasons why dark tourism is a contemporary mediation institution that links the living with its dead.

9.2   Conclusion

'A Cheap holiday in other peoples misery!

I don't wanna holiday in the sun
I wanna go to new Belsen
I wanna see some history
'Cause now I got a reasonable economy'
(*Holidays in the Sun* by The Sex Pistols, 1977)

On October 14, 1977, the British punk rock band 'The Sex Pistols', famous for their anarchist views on social conformity, released their fourth single 'Holidays in the Sun'. The band's vacation to the Channel Island of Jersey inspired the lyrics of the song, with John Lydon (also known as Jonny Rotten) saying:

> We tried our holiday in the sun on the Isle of Jersey and it didn't work. They threw us out. Being in London at the time made us feel like we were trapped in a prison camp environment. There was hatred and constant threats of violence. The best thing we could do was to go set up in a prison camp somewhere else. Berlin and its decadence was a good idea. The song came about from that. I loved Berlin. I loved the Wall and the insanity of the place (Savage, 2005:1).

Whilst hedonistic and pleasure-seeking experiences in the sun are considered staple ingredients of (mass) tourism, for the Sex Pistols at least, the search for a non-conformist tourist experience took them to 1970's Berlin. Divided by the Berlin Wall into liminal places, the juxtaposition of profligacy in capitalist West Berlin with the asceticism of Communist controlled East Berlin, together with remnants of Nazi Germany's attempt to exterminate Jews during the Holocaust – hence, the song's reference to Belsen – provided the Sex Pistols with an 'alternative tourism experience'. Indeed, the selected case studies offer *alternative* tourist experiences.

Consequently, the notion of alternativeness lies at the heart of dark tourism, whether (dark) tourist trips are motivated by memorialisation or by an interest in the macabre, or simply through serendipity. However, when visitor experiences are motivated, somewhat, by a desire to learn about death or disaster that has perturbed the collective consciousness and, when the real and fictional dead are (re)presented and marketed as ghoulish or unconventional, as indicated by this study, then dark tourism will undoubtedly flourish. Thus, despite its apparent historical evolution from Christianity to Antiquarianism to Romanticism, as highlighted earlier in Chapter One, dark tourism as the act of contemporary travel to sites of death, disaster or the seemingly macabre is ostensibly increasingly as an alternative (niche) tourist experience – yet, it often forms an integral component of a more conventional and mainstream tourism activity. Therefore, what is more important is the function or consequence dark tourism has upon wider society, especially when considering the structural analysis of death.

Hence, the research aim of this study was *to appraise dark tourism consumption within society, especially within a context of contemporary perspectives of death and, in doing so, offer an integrated theoretical and empirical critical analysis and interpretation of death-related travel.* The research is an original contribution to the social scientific study of tourism in general and, to dark tourism studies in particular. In other words, as tourism may be defined simply as the *movement of people*, this movement generates both social consequences as well as business management implications. In short, the study has attempted to appraise the touristic 'movement of people' and its social consequences within a context of death-related travel. Consequently, the disciplinary location of this dark tourism study is firmly within the realms of thanatology – a sub-discipline of sociology. Thanatology, as discussed in Chapter Five, is the study of society's perceptions of and reactions to death and dying. In 1901, the Russian microbiologist and Nobel Laureate Ilya Mechnikov first introduced the term thanatology, meaning the study of death-related behaviour. In the 1970s, the academic field of thanatology grew steadily, mainly focusing on the apparent taboo of death and the uncomfortable way of dealing with mortality. Today, the field of thanatology has a broad array of transdisciplinary contributions that examine death in society, creating a strong, diverse and vibrant field as academic and media interest in death in society continues. As Metcalf and Huntington (1991:25)

note when discussing the merit of thanatological studies, 'the issue of death throws into relief the most important cultural values by which people live their lives and evaluate their experiences. Life becomes transparent against the background of death, and fundamental social and cultural issues are revealed'. Thus, it within a general sociology of death that this study contributes and, in particular, an original contribution to thanatology is provided.

Arguably, therefore, because of this research and its appraisal of the phenomenon of dark tourism, fundamental touristic relationships with the thanatological condition of contemporary society are better understood. Part One offered a literature review and theoretical discussions, whilst Part Two outlined the research methodology as well as offering empirical analysis and critical synthesis with broader concepts. In summary, therefore, various chapters of this study have addressed specific research objectives. Chapter One set out the overall research aim, questions and objectives of the study, as well as briefly highlighting the research methodology. Chapter One also set out the research context and parameters and introduced the concept of dark tourism. Chapter Two subsequently revealed current themes and issues within the broader dark tourism literature. In particular, discussions were centred upon the diversity, scope and associations of dark tourism, as well as offering definitions and theoretical perspectives. Specifically, both Chapter One and Chapter Two addressed the research objective – 'to critically evaluate the concept of death-related travel, known as dark tourism, and its socio-cultural, and historical origins'. Chapter Three went on to construct a conceptual and typological framework in which to place diverse dark tourism supply, but more importantly, offered a process in which to begin to locate dark tourism demand. Specifically, the chapter revealed a conceptual model - 'The Dark Tourism Spectrum' - in which various 'shades' of dark tourism could be attributed. As a result, the research objective – 'to compile a conceptual *typological framework* in which to locate diverse visitor sites of death, disaster and the seemingly macabre' – was addressed. Chapter Four sought to address the research objective 'to explore contemporary aspects of *morality* and dark tourism experiences and meanings'. In doing so, the chapter offered a theoretical account of dark tourism and ethical quandaries. In particular, the chapter placed the construction of morality within a broader context of secularisation, individualism and consequent moral confusion. In essence, Chapter Four suggested there is no moral panic as a result of

consuming dark tourism, but a contemporary revitalization of morality in (new) dark tourism spaces through the act of social binding and collective effervescence in the face of death. Consequently, Chapter Five went on to explore the nature of death within society, and specifically addressed the research objective 'to synthesise potential relationships between *mortality* and the contemporary consumption of dark tourism'. In particular, Chapter Five discussed the history of death and the current thanatological condition of society. In doing so, the chapter offered a key conceptual framework in which the empirical research was located. In particular, within a context of secularisation, the argument centred upon a concept of institutional death sequestration, which created difficulties for contemporary contemplation, and meaning of death. Specifically, the chapter suggested death sequestration and the absent/present death paradox contributed to notions of dread and a fear of death, causing anxiety amongst potentially ontologically insecure individuals.

In Part Two, Chapter Six outlined the methodology for the study. In doing so, a principal research orientation was set out with epistemological and ontological considerations. The research design, research methods and data collection techniques were critically appraised, as were mechanisms used to transcribe and analyse the data. The chapter concluded by highlighting particular influences on the conduct of the research, as well as noting specific limitations. Both Chapters Seven and Eight addressed the research objective 'to compare and contrast a range of dark tourism *empirical experiences* within a framework of society's perceptions of and reactions to morality and mortality'. In Chapter Seven, the first stage of the empirical research was outlined. In particular, the chapter focused upon ethnographic research findings at four case study sites within the UK, USA and mainland Europe. The chapter introduced the context and main features of each case study. Moreover, fifteen subject themes were extracted from the ethnographic data, which in turn were filtered into five key topics, then related to three concepts, and ultimately into one key concept that centred upon mortality. Chapter Eight continued the empirical analysis, and highlighted the second stage of the empirical design. Specifically, Chapter Eight focused upon survey research, which examined the nature and extent of mortality within dark tourism consumption. The chapter also offered critical discussion and synthesis with broader conceptual ideas, which in turn, addressed the overall research aim. Essentially, Chapter Eight demonstrated visitor experiences at dark tourism sites

offered individuals an opportunity to contemplate and to relate personal mortality, albeit to varying degrees. Finally, Chapter Nine concludes this study. In doing so, the chapter outlines how dark tourism offers a (re)presentation of Significant Other Death, whereby individuals may contemplate the mortality of the Self. Ultimately, dark tourism within secularized death sequestered societies offer mediating experiences that link the living with the dead.

The overall research question to this study was – *within a thanatological context, what fundamental interrelationships exist between visitors and sites that offer a (re)presentation of death, disaster or the seemingly macabre?* Thus, the fundamental interrelationships to emerge from this research are threefold. Firstly, dark tourism interprets death and associated suffering or disease for contemporary consumption within the broader visitor economy. Secondly, the interpretation and (re)presentation of death ensures the concept of mortality is at the crux of dark tourism. Finally, dark tourism, albeit to varying degrees, provides the individual Self an opportunity to contemplate personal mortality through consuming representations of Significant Other Death. However, as this research has also demonstrated, it is not the simple consumption of death by visitors at dark tourism sites – as *memento mori* – that provides the contemporary context, but rather the broader thanatological condition of modern societies. In essence, the thanatological condition revolves around the absent/present death paradox, which arises from the institutional sequestration of death within secularised and medicalised societies. Thus, *real death* of the Self has been sequestered from the public gaze during the past sixty years or so – a notion supported by empirical findings. However, in its place is *(re)created death*, where the Significant Other Dead cohabit the living world through a plethora of mediating channels, including literature, architecture, monuments, popular culture, the media, and dark tourism. Indeed, this study concludes by advocating real ordinary mortality has been relocated to a back region of medics and death industry professionals, but modern-day extraordinary death of the Significant Other, or at least its depiction, is revived through a substitute of recreated situations and memorialisation, including those found within the dark tourism case study examples. Hence, dark tourism is part of a wider death revivalism phenomenon, whereby consuming dark tourism experiences de-sequesters mortality, thus helping make 'absent death present'. It is these consequential relationships and (moral) meanings that permits dark tourism as a

mediating experience that links the living with the dead. In doing so, dark tourism is added to a range of contemporary mediation channels – or death capital – that individuals may draw upon within their everyday lives in an attempt to construct ontological meaning (and security).

Consequently, dark tourism provides an opportunity to contemplate death of the Self through gazing upon the Significant Other Dead. Indeed, visitors to the case study sites hope, to a varying extent, for a *good Romantic death* for themselves yet, in a paradoxical age of death sequestration dominated by medicalisation, the likelihood is for a 'hi-tech' death that is stage-managed by medics and professionals. Hence, where the *invisible* deathbed has been (re)created, rather than denied, dark tourism experiences provide a contemporary mediating relationship of mortality reflection for the Self through Other death.

Ultimately, therefore, the thesis is that dark tourism is a (new) mediating institution within secularised death sequestered societies, which not only provides a physical place to link the living with the dead, but also allows the Self to construct contemporary ontological meanings of mortality and to reflect and contemplate both life and death through consuming the Significant Other Dead.

Figure 74 schematically illustrates the framework of the thesis, which takes into consideration the theoretical and empirical analysis that has transpired from this research. The model demonstrates the fundamental interrelationships of dark tourism, within the broader thanatological condition of society. In essence, the framework that has emerged from this research shows dark tourism as a new mediating institution of death that provides a contemporary spatial and cognitive opportunity to contemplate mortality, thus contributing towards broader ontological meanings of life, living and death for the individual Self.

Thanatological Condition of Society

Absent Death

Privatisation
Medicalisation
Professionalisation

**Absent/Present Death
Paradox**

Present Death

Popular Culture
Media
Mortality

Institutional Sequestration of Death

Ontological Insecurity

Death Anxiety

Contemplation / Bracketing

**Dark Tourism
Consumption**

De-Sequestration / Death Revivalism

Mediating Relationships

Information

Education

Entertainment

Haunting (Memories)

Memorialisation

Moral Instruction

Memento Mori

(New) Mediating Institution

Ontological Meaning

Life

Living

Death

Mortality

Figure 74: Dark Tourism Consumption within a Thanatological-Mediation Framework

Whilst dark tourism is a contemporary mediating institution, which allows the Self to construct ontological meaning and to reflect and contemplate both life and death through a mortality lens, there are four key reasons that potentially explain why dark tourism is a mediating institution:

- firstly, dark tourism mediates mortality by representing and communicating death;

- secondly, dark tourism mediates mortality by providing the visitor an opportunity to accumulate 'death capital' upon which individuals may draw upon to aid reflection and contemplation;

- thirdly, dark tourism mediates the complexity of death whereby contemporary mortality is reconfigured and revitalised through dark tourism spaces;

- and finally, dark tourism mediates both recent and past tragedy, disaster or the seemingly macabre through symbolically displaying the Significant Other Dead.

Consequently, this research has particular implications, not least for the management and governance of dark tourism sites, as well as further understanding consumer behaviour of so-called 'dark tourists'. Crucially, those who are responsible for the management and (re)presentation of 'Other Death' at dark tourism sites need to recognise the role of particular sites as potential receptacles of mediation between the lives of visitors and their perspectives of mortality. To that end, dark tourism is not so much about presenting narratives of death, but about representing narratives of life and living in the face of inevitable mortality.

Of course, despite this research, dark tourism remains a complex, emotive, multi-dimensional, politically vulnerable, and ethically challenging phenomenon. There are no simple comprehensive definitions of dark tourism, no simple answers to many of the questions that surround it, and no quick solutions to the many challenges or dilemmas inherent in the development, management or promotion of dark sites. Nevertheless, as a particular theme in tourism studies, it is not only a fascinating subject in its own right but it also represents, as with the study of tourism more generally, an influential mechanism for exploring contemporary social life, practices and institutions. In other words, the principal benefit of this research lies in what it

reveals about the relationship between life and death, the living and the dead, and the institutions or processes that mediate, at the individual or societal level, between life and death. Indeed, although the term *dark tourism* implies a focus on death and dying, developing our understanding of the phenomenon, ironically, tells us more about life and the living.

9.2.1   Research Limitations

This study has particular limitations. Firstly, the degree of subjective experience is recognised within the sampled individual responses. Indeed, the evocative nature of the research subject ensures respondent meanings and feelings of their dark tourism experience cannot be devoid of subjectivity. Thus, respondent dark tourism experiences, as well as the researchers', have been grasped through the innate degree of subjectivity which is encased in the expression of the telling (i.e. the respondent's subjectivity), as well as the degree of subjectivity in the listening and observing (i.e. the researcher's subjectivity). As Madison (2005: 34) notes, 'subjectivity becomes all at once a vessel, lens, and filter of every telling'. Thus, it within the context of subjectivity that this study has been conducted.

Secondly, therefore, because of the level of subjectivity inherent within the responses and observations, in addition to the overall sampling design, the degree of generalisation of the research findings is recognised. Indeed, the researcher was aware of the notion when generalisations take the form of 'truths' that are really specific to a limited experience, or are particular to a respondent's life-world. Hence, 'just as generalizations are problematic in the truth claims they purport, specificity can be problematic in its oblivion to broader implications' (Madison, 2005: 34). Consequently, this study does not generalise its findings to all dark tourism experiences, nor does it suggest that the thanatological condition of society exists in all societies. Rather, the thesis suggests the emergent findings be used as a context to frame future phenomenological research, within a variety of socio-cultural environments, and to illustrate the level of support of dark tourism as a contemporary mediating institution of mortality.

Thirdly, this study essentially relies on Anglophone references, though reference to works in French, German and Polish are given. However, as Dann (2010:219) notes,

'th[is] over-representation in the [dark tourism] literature may reflect the unexplained, apparent domination of the sub-field by English speaking scholars'. Additionally, whilst the empirical study did have respondents from fifteen countries, as well as case studies located in the UK, USA and Poland, the sample was inherently UK/USA centric. This Anglophile bias is recognised, and does raise certain cultural issues – especially when individuals are examined in different societal frameworks with regard to their sense of finitude. Consequently, Dann (2010:219) suggests that 'societies, like the UK, that *do not do God* (original emphasis) and which privatise death, are at a distinct disadvantage from Continental European countries with a much longer tradition of Catholic Christianity that treats death as a community celebration of a stage in a journey towards the after-life rather than something to be dealt with clandestinely by a sanitized and self-appropriated divine medical establishment'.

Fourthly, and related to the self-imposed cultural boundaries of this study, issues of age, gender and health status of sampled respondents is also recognised. In particular, this study did not (purposefully) address how the age and gender profile of respondents corresponded with attitudes towards mortality. As the empirical research relied on an essentially 'youthful' sample, age and life stage will no doubt play a key role in how individuals mediate mortality of the Self through the death of the Other. Additionally, the study is restricted somewhat by the lack of data that correlates the health status of respondents directly with visitors' experiences and any contemplation of mortality. However, that said, this research did not specifically seek to address these issues, though notions of life stage, health, gender and cultural nuances within a thanatological framework remain a fruitful avenue of empirical inquiry in future dark tourism studies.

Finally, the specific issue of 'recentness of visitor experience' is recognised within this research design, especially considering the empirical study incorporated on-site sampling which was nested with other research methods to help maintain integration (see Section 6.3), as well as online sampling techniques. Recentness of visitor experience is important when considering the nature of mortality contemplation and the extent of 'emotional stimuli' that individuals seek or attain from (dark) tourism experiences (Opaschowski, 2001, also see Chapter Two). However, as earlier discussions in both Chapters Six and Eight demonstrate, the differences and any

limitations between recentness of visitor experience between the two samples are mitigated by the fact that online respondents undertook their visits to respective sites within a six month window of completing the survey. Indeed, the average for online respondents to have visited a dark tourism site and to complete a survey was forty-one days. Hence, online respondent experiences at respective dark tourism sites were considered recent enough, that is – to generate an appropriate level of 'emotional stimuli' – whereby respondents demonstrated an active interest in dark tourism and offered reflections that directly and indirectly augmented a deeper knowledge and insight to the topic under scrutiny. Nevertheless, whilst the average of forty-one days between visitation and online survey completion is considered to be recent, in relative terms at least, and does not distract findings or invalidate the methodological design, it is also recognised that 'emotional stimuli' of on-site respondents' experiences were immediate and arguably 'raw'. Thus, it is this 'rawness of experience' and the potential for 'emotional stimuli skew' that this study acknowledges, especially in relation to mortality contemplation at dark tourism sites. That said however, this study sought to strike a reasonable balance between the total number of on-site respondents (47%) and online respondents (53%) to mitigate any potential for so-called 'emotional skew'. Consequently, a chi square test examined a null hypothesis that the distribution of the two survey populations (on-site and online) was similar, and reported that there was no substantial statistical deviation between the two, ensuring that the data captured was useful. Additionally, the purposeful criteria prescribed for online respondents to have visited a respective dark tourism site within a past six-month window allowed adequate time to recall the experience (and emotion) but without excess time to dilute emotional stimuli. Nonetheless, the amount of time taken for online respondents to reflect upon particular experiences is also noted. Therefore, it is suggested that any future studies should incorporate a longitudinal research design, within the theoretical parameters set out by this thesis, whereby temporal correlations between immediate dark tourist experiences and mortality contemplation and later perceptions of the same visitor experience are undertaken to determine the potential nature and implications of any 'emotional skew'.

9.2.2   Future Research Directions

The relationship between dark tourism sites and dark tourist experiences is one of continued research inquiry. As Walter (2009: 52) notes, 'dark tourism confronts us

not with human suffering and mortality, but with *certain kinds* of human suffering and mortality' [emphasis added]. Therefore, future research agendas need to address the type, level and consequent of dark tourism as a mediating institution. Particular questions need asking as to the nature of dark tourism experiences, including but not limited to, what is the meaning/perception of 'dark' in relation to dark tourism? What are the cross-cultural or gender differences? What role does age or health play in the contemplative aspects of dark tourism and death? How intentional are dark tourists in their consumption of sites of death? What is the role and extent of emotional stimuli at dark tourism sites? What is the role of dark tourists as semioticians? How is suffering and death commodified for contemporary consumption? Other questions should revolve around tourist motivation and may relate to other theories in psychological discourse – for example, social and psychological theories of the Other or Freud's concepts of Eros and Thanatos as basic inherent instincts within human behaviour (Freud, 1922).

To an extent, this thesis acts as blueprint to begin to address some of these questions. In particular, and to address specific limitations of this study as highlighted earlier, future research should address the notion of dark tourism as a mediating institution cross-culturally in a variety of comparative case study settings. Indeed, such research should address the extent of religiosity within particular societal frameworks and its interrelationship with dark tourism consumption and mortality contemplation. Further studies should also address the issue of life stage and its relationship with the consumption of dark tourism. Accordingly, a future planned comparative study by the researcher will focus upon perspectives of schoolchildren (Year 10) as they undertake curriculum field visits to former Nazi concentration camps, with those of coach tours to the same sites which cater to the so-called 'grey market' (that is, elderly visitors over the age of 60 years). Additionally and as already suggested, to address issues of the extent of emotional stimuli and its temporal relationship with mortality mediation at dark tourism sites, a collaborative longitudinal study is now planned by the researcher and psychology colleagues. This study will revolve around a cohort of undergraduates and their experience of a particular dark tourism site, and their perceptions and level of emotional stimuli and recall of the same site (experience) over a period of four years. Indeed, with the launch of a Research Centre at the University of Central Lancashire in 2010 dedicated to dark tourism, and with the

researcher as its Director, Professor Graham Dann suggests 'Stone [is] well equipped to carry out a self-imposed mandate of extending the theoretical and pragmatic base of this complex subject' (2010:219).

Consequently, future research output from the new Centre – both independent and collaborative – will further address the issues, concepts and limitations raised by this study. Particularly, any future studies should methodologically adopt inductive mixed method research designs, which may be operationalised through a range of research instruments, including focused groups, surveys, depth interviews, observations, and diaries, obtained from sampled individuals who narrate specific dark tourism experiences. Indeed, future case study research based upon phenomenological data derived from visitors of different dark tourism experiences will augment this thesis and further strengthen what has been to date a theoretically fragile and empirically tenuous area of research. This study has begun that task in earnest.

9.3   Final Thoughts: the dominion of dark tourism

Robert Harrison in his book 'The Dominion of the Dead' highlights the role of the Significant Other Dead:

> The contract between the living and the dead has traditionally been one of indebtedness... The dead depend on the living to preserve their authority, heed their concerns, and keep them going in their afterlives. In return, they help us to know ourselves, give form to our lives, organise our social relations, and restrain our destructive impulses. They provide us with the counsel needed to maintain the institutional order, of which they remain authors... Why this special authority? Because the dead possess a nocturnal vision that the living cannot acquire. The light in which we carry on our secular lives blinds us to certain insights. Some truths are glimpsed only in the dark. That is why in moments of extreme need one must turn to those who can see through the gloom (2003: 158-159).

This thesis has revealed that the relationship of the living with its dead is complex and operates within a milieu of religious edicts and secular assertions. Thus, within the context of complexity, Harrison suggests the living create a dominion of the dead in order to provide insights into death that perturb a secular collective consciousness. Consequently, this research has demonstrated that the living can link with its dead through a social filter or *dominion of dark tourism*. Hence, regardless of whether dark

tourism is an imitation of post-modernity; or has its origins in the fatality that was central to the development of Christianity; or developed through Antiquarianism and the discovery of heritage; or whether Romantic ideals still pervade a modern consciousness of death – at the philosophical core of the dark tourism dominion is the concept of mortality. In a contemporary secular age where ordinary and normal death is hidden behind medical and professional façades, yet abnormal and extraordinary death is recreated for popular consumption, the dominion of dark tourism plays a mediating role between life and death, linking the living with the dead. As such, the dead have always been guardians of the living, either through religious rituals or by secular myth making. Therefore, through dark tourism mediation we give the dead a future in order that they may give us a past. Ultimately, however, the dominion of dark tourism helps the dead to live on in memory so that they may help the living go forward.

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APPENDIX ONE

Sample of Interview Questions

Sample of Semi-Structure Interview Questions

1) What nationality are you?
2) How long are you staying in the area?
3) Have you ever visited this attraction/exhibition/site before?
4) Which other visitor attractions have you visited or are planning to visit during your trip?
5) Did you know what this attraction/exhibition/site was about before you arrived today?
6) What did you think of the representations/exhibits/tour guides on offer?
7) What was the atmosphere like for you at the attraction/exhibition/site?
8) Do you think the site/exhibition is relevant to you?
9) What do you think of the marketing and promotion of the attraction/exhibition/site?
10) Do you feel more or less emotional than when you first arrived for your visit?
11) During your visit, did you ever think about the people who were represented at the attraction/exhibition/site and how they died?
12) During your visit, did you ever think about the people who were represented at the attraction/exhibition/site and their lives and how they might have lived?
13) During your visit, did you ever think about your own mortality?
14) During your visit, did you ever think about your own life and the society in which you live?
15) Do you think this attraction/exhibition/site is ethical?
16) What do you think of other peoples' behaviour here at the attraction/exhibition/site today?
17) What motivated you to visit the attraction/exhibition/site today?
18) Is the attraction/exhibition/site what you expected it to be?
19) Are you glad you visited the attraction/exhibition/site?
20) Did you know much about the events that are represented here at the attraction/exhibition/site prior to your visit?
21) Did you learn anything today from your visitor experience?

APPENDIX TWO

Example of Survey

VISITOR SURVEY
Consuming Dark Tourism in Contemporary Society

Tribute WTC Visitor Centre

Background:
Consuming Dark Tourism is a research project commissioned by the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan), UK, and focuses upon potential interrelationships between *dark tourism* and *thanatology*. The field of thanatology – the study of a society's perceptions of and reactions to death and dying, has led in recent decades to increased understanding of how individuals and communities cope with grief, tragedy and trauma. Dark tourism, the label given to visitation to sites of death, disaster, tragedy or the seemingly macabre, is an increasingly pervasive feature within the broader travel market. As a mirror to certain aspects of culture, places of tragedy, such as here at the former site of the World Trade Centre are an important yet untapped source of thanatological exploration.

Therefore, *if you have had no direct loss of relative, friend, or loved one as a result of 9/11*, we really appreciate your participation in this research. Whilst we sincerely understand the potential emotive and sensitive aspects of this research, we kindly urge you to respond quickly and honestly to the questions; all responses will remain anonymous and strictly confidential, only being released as group statistics for study.

PLEASE ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS: It should take approximately 5 to 8 minutes – Thank You

---

PART ONE: Personal Data

i) **Gender:** MALE ☐   FEMALE ☐

ii) **Country of Origin** (please state) _____

iii) **Age:**
- under 16 yrs ☐
- 16 - 24 yrs ☐
- 25 - 34 yrs ☐
_____
- 35 - 44 yrs ☐
- 45 - 54 yrs ☐
- 55 - 64 yrs ☐
- 65 - 74 yrs ☐
- 75 yrs + ☐

iv) **Religious Affiliation:**
- Buddhist ☐
- Catholic ☐
- Christian ☐
- Hindu ☐
- Jewish ☐
- Muslim ☐
- Non-Religious ☐
- Prefer not to say ☐
- Other (please state):

PART TWO: Your Visit

1) What is the primary purpose of your visit to New York? (Please tick <u>one box only</u>):

- Leisure only ☐
- Business only ☐
- Leisure & Business ☐
- Education / student ☐
- Visiting Friends / Family ☐
- Primarily to visit Ground Zero ☐
- Resident of area ☐
- Other ☐

3) Please state number of people in your visiting party today? _____

2) How long are you staying in New York? (Please tick <u>one box only</u>):

- Less than 24 hours ☐
- Up to 4 days ☐
- Up to 7 days ☐
- More than 7 days ☐
- Resident of area ☐

4) Have you ever visited Ground Zero / Tribute WTC Visitor Centre before?

YES ☐   NO ☐

If yes, what was the approximate date of your previous visit(s)? _____

5) How important is it to you that a formal and official place exists, such as the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre, to remember and commemorate victims of tragic events?
(Please circle: 5 = Very important, 1 = Not at all)

5   4   3   2   1

6) From your understanding of the term 'ethical', how ethically portrayed do you think the exhibits / displays of 9/11 events are at the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre?
(Please circle: 5 = Very ethical, 1 = Not ethical at all)

5   4   3   2   1

7) In your opinion, please rank in order the purpose of the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre, as a visitor site:
(Rank: 5 = Most likely purpose, 1 = Least likely purpose)

To provide a *focal point* for 9/11 ___
To *educate* about events of 9/11 ___
To inform about *heroism* of 9/11 ___
To *entertain* visitors to New York ___
To provide a place to *pay respect* ___

8) Please rank in order, in terms of importance, your primary motivations to visit the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre?
(Rank: 5 = Most important, 1 = Least important)

To *pay respect* to victims ___
To *learn* about 9/11 events ___
To understand *victim lives* ___
To learn *how victims died* ___
Because I *need to understand* 9/11 ___

9) In a single brief sentence, describe what you have *gained most* from your visit experience to the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre:
_____

10) How do you feel personally after your visit to the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre?
(Tick three boxes only that best describe your feelings):
I FEEL:

generally depressed ☐
sorrow for victims' ☐
glad I visited ☐
positive for the future ☐
worried for the future ☐
resentment at the politicians' ☐
anxious for myself & family ☐
anger at the perpetrators ☐
no particular feelings ☐
other feelings: ☐
    Briefly state: _____

11) As a result from your visit to the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre, how much do you agree or disagree with these statements?
(Please circle: 5 = Strongly agree, 1 = Strongly disagree)

I have more empathy with 9/11 victims' and their plight:

5   4   3   2   1

I think 9/11 victims and their death are relevant to me and my own life:

5   4   3   2   1

I am worried what people may think of me visiting Ground Zero:

5   4   3   2   1

The Tribute WTC Visitor Centre provides me with some moral guidance on how we should treat other people:

5   4   3   2   1

Today, I am now more aware of other peoples' moral codes and ethics:

5   4   3   2   1

Today, I am more likely to think about the conduct and behaviour of other people:

5   4   3   2   1

I am now more likely to discuss with my friends and family the morals of those who carried out the 9/11 attacks:

5   4   3   2   1

12) Whilst you are here at 'Ground Zero', which term best describe you:
(Tick one box only):

Visitor ☐   Sightseer ☐ Traveller ☐
Tourist ☐   Pilgrim ☐ None of these ☐

13) Based upon your perceptions, do you consider the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre as part of the wider New York tourism industry?

YES ☐ NO ☐ Not sure ☐

14) How often do you participate in organized prayer and worship?
(Please circle: 5 = Very often, 1 = Not at all)

5   4   3   2   1

15) In your opinion, how important is religion / faith to you in everyday life?
(Please circle: 5 = Very important, 1 = Not important at all)

5   4   3   2   1

16) How much do you agree that religion provides for a better society?
(Please circle: 5 = Very much, 1 = Not at all)

5   4   3   2   1

17) Do you consider religion to be important when dealing with mourning and grief?
(Please circle: 5 = Very important, 1 = Not at all)

5   4   3   2   1

18) Have you suffered the loss of a close friend, family member, or loved one in the last five years?
YES ☐   NO ☐   Prefer not to say ☐

19) How much do you agree that the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre provides a place of comfort when dealing with the aftermath of 9/11?
(Please circle: 5 = Strongly agree, 1 = Strongly disagree)

5   4   3   2   1

20) How much do you agree that the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre is a tourist attraction, rather than a place of commemoration and memorialization?
(Please circle: 5 = Strongly agree, 1 = Strongly disagree)

5   4   3   2   1

PART FIVE: Morbidity

21) In the event of a serious road traffic accident, have you ever slowed down or stopped simply to gain a better view?
YES ☐   NO ☐   Sometimes ☐
Not applicable to me ☐   Prefer not to say ☐

22) Do you consider yourself to have an interest with real-life stories of misfortune?
(Please circle: 5 = Very interested, 1 = Not at all)

5   4   3   2   1

23) Do you ever feel anxious with images or discussion of the ghoulish/macabre?
(Please circle: 5 = Very often, 1 = Not at all)

5   4   3   2   1

24) In your opinion, how "morbid" do you think society is?
(Please circle: 5 = Very morbid, 1 = Not morbid at all)

5   4   3   2   1

25) Do you consider popular culture (e.g. TV / films) to be fascinated with ghoulish things?
(Please circle: 5 = Very fascinated, 1 = Not at all)

5   4   3   2   1

26) Do you find yourself interested in horror stories?
(Please circle: 5 = Very interested, 1 = Not at all)

5   4   3   2   1

27) If the term 'dark' suggests notions of the ghoulish, horror, morbid, or tragic, on a scale of 1 to 10, where would you place the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre as a 'dark' site / attraction:
(Circle one number only: 10 is perceived most dark, 1 is perceived least dark)

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

28) Have you visited in the past five years any visitor attraction / site / exhibition, which had a main theme of death, tragedy or suffering?

YES ☐   NO ☐

If yes, please state name of attraction / site / exhibition:

_____

29) In your opinion, should the tourism industry promote macabre/tragic events to attract visitors? (Tick one box only):

☐ **Should never promote;**
☐ **Should promote only after sufficient time has passed after macabre/tragic event;**
☐ **Should promote only for education / remembrance purposes;**
☐ **I have no opinion on this;**

30) How _disturbed_ or _made anxious_ are you by the following aspects of _death and dying_? Please read each item and answer it quickly. Don't spend too much time thinking about your response. We want your first impression of how you feel right now. Circle the number that best represents your feeling

Your Own Death   (5=very anxious, 1= not anxious at all)

a) The total isolation of death:	5	4	3	2	1
b) The shortness of life:	5	4	3	2	1
c) Missing out on so much after you die:	5	4	3	2	1
d) Dying young:	5	4	3	2	1
e) How it will feel to be dead:	5	4	3	2	1
f) Never thinking or experiencing anything again:	5	4	3	2	1
g) The disintegration of your body after you die:	5	4	3	2	1

Your Own Dying

h) The pain involved in dying:	5	4	3	2	1
i) The uncertainly of dying:	5	4	3	2	1
j) Your lack of control over the process of dying:	5	4	3	2	1
k) Possibility of dying in hospital away from family:	5	4	3	2	1

The Death of Others

l) The loss of someone close to you:	5	4	3	2	1
m) Having to see their dead body:	5	4	3	2	1
n) Feeling lonely without them:	5	4	3	2	1
o) Never being able to communicate with them again:	5	4	3	2	1

The Dying of Others

p) Having to be with someone who is dying:	5	4	3	2	1
q) Having them to want to talk about death with you:	5	4	3	2	1
r) Being reminded that you are going to go through the experience also one day:	5	4	3	2	1

---

31) During your visit to the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre, did you ever think about the <u>lives</u> of those who died during 9/11?
(Please circle: 5 = Thought a lot, 1 = Did not think at all)

     5   4   3   2   1

32) During your visit to the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre, did you ever think about the <u>death</u> of those who perished during 9/11?
(Please circle: 5 = Thought a lot, 1 = Did not think at all)

     5   4   3   2   1

---

33) During your visit to the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre, and in relation to the experience, did _you_ ever think about <u>your own life</u> situation?
(Please circle: 5 = Thought a lot, 1 = Did not think at all)

     5   4   3   2   1

34) During your visit to the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre, and in relation to the experience, did _you_ ever think about <u>your own mortality</u> for the future?
(Please circle: 5 = Thought a lot, 1 = Did not think at all)

     5   4   3   2   1

---

35) On a scale of 1 to 10, how emotional did you feel when you woke up this morning?
(<u>Circle one number only</u>: 10 is extremely emotional, 1 is not very emotional at all)

   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

---

36) On a scale of 1 to 10, how emotional do you feel right now?
(<u>Circle one number only</u>: 10 is extremely emotional, 1 is not very emotional at all)

   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

37) In your opinion, do you think the experience at the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre may make *other people* think about <u>their own life situation</u>?

YES ☐   NO ☐   Not sure ☐

If yes, please briefly state your reason(s) why you think this:

_____

_____

38) In your opinion, do you think the experience at the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre may make *other people* think about <u>their own mortality</u>?

YES ☐   NO ☐   Not sure ☐

If yes, please briefly state your reason(s) why you think this:

_____

_____

39) After your experience at the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

(5 = Strongly agree, 1 = Strongly disagree)

		5	4	3	2	1
a)	Today, I have thought, however briefly, about my own death:	5	4	3	2	1
b)	Ground Zero is an important place to contemplate mortality:	5	4	3	2	1
c)	I liken the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre to a tourist attraction:	5	4	3	2	1
d)	Today, I have considered how fortunate I really am:	5	4	3	2	1
e)	I perceive the victims of 9/11 as ordinary people:	5	4	3	2	1
f)	I want to die in old age at home with my family around me:	5	4	3	2	1
g)	Ground Zero makes me fearful about my own life:	5	4	3	2	1
h)	I know I will not suffer the same fate as the 9/11 victims:	5	4	3	2	1
i)	The deaths of 9/11 victims has no relevance to me:	5	4	3	2	1
j)	Today, I have considered the society in which we live:	5	4	3	2	1
k)	Learning about 9/11 makes me hopeful for the future:	5	4	3	2	1
l)	I feel more secure in myself after visiting 'Ground Zero':	5	4	3	2	1
m)	I am reminded of my own mortality after visiting Ground Zero:	5	4	3	2	1
n)	I believe the majority of people in society today will die in hospital or in a hospice:	5	4	3	2	1
o)	I believe that the body after death is now largely managed by professionals within the funeral industry:	5	4	3	2	1

40) Please feel free to add any further comment about your experience at the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre / Ground Zero:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

<ins>Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey</ins>
We really appreciate your responses to this sensitive, but important research.

Please hand in your completed survey to the on-site Pollster or any Tribute WTC Visitor Centre team member.

Please tick here ☐ if you wish to be informed of the results (please provide email address in Part One).

Please tick here ☐ if you wish to help in future research (please provide email address in Part One).

You can learn more about death and tragedy and its relationship to the visitor economy at The Dark Tourism Forum (visit www.dark-tourism.org.uk)

University of Central Lancashire (UCLan)
(Consuming Dark Tourism in Contemporary Society Research Project – GR161)
Preston, PR1 2HE, United Kingdom

APPENDIX THREE

Chi Square Test

Chi Square Test (see Section 8.0)

Null hypothesis:
The distribution between on-site and online survey populations will be similar.

Observed Numbers (O)

	a	*b*	*n= a+b*	*p= a/n*
	On-site Population	Online Population	Total	
Dungeons	46	43	89	0.52
Bodworlds	42	48	90	0.47
Ground Zero	49	52	101	0.49
Auschwitz-Birkenau	58	81	139	0.42
TOTAL	195	224	419	

Expected Numbers (E)

	a	*b*	*O-E*	
	On-site Population	Online Population	*a*	*b*
Dungeons	41.4	47.6	4.6	-4.6
Bodworlds	41.9	48.1	0.1	-0.1
Ground Zero	47.0	54.0	2.0	-2.0
Auschwitz-Birkenau	64.7	74.3	-6.7	6.7
TOTAL	195	224	0	0

	$(O-E)^2/E$	
	On-site Population	Online Population
Dungeons	0.51	0.44
Bodworlds	2.39	2.08
Ground Zero	0.09	0.07
Auschwitz-Birkenau	0.69	0.60
TOTAL	3.68	3.19	$X^2 = 6.87$

Degrees of Freedom (*df*) = (number of columns – 1) x (number of rows – 1)
= (2-1) x (4-1) = 3(*df*)
0.05 Probability (p) = 7.82
The value of X^2 (6.87) lies between the boundary of 6.25 and 7.82 (boundaries derived from critical value chi square test tables). Thus, the value of X^2 does not exceed the critical value for 0.05 probability. The corresponding probability is $0.10<P<0.05$. Null hypothesis is accepted and the data is useful.