The Commodification of

Dark Tourism:

Conceptualising the Visitor Experience

A theoretical and empirical analysis

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment for the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Central Lancashire

February 2018

STUDENT DECLARATION FORM

![UCLan logo - University of Central Lancashire]

Type of Award: PhD

School: Lancashire School of Business and Enterprise

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Abstract

The study of 'dark tourism' has gained increasing traction over the past two decades or so. Visits to sites *of*, or *associated with* death, disaster, atrocity, or suffering are a pervasive feature within the contemporary tourism landscape. This thesis, therefore, critically examines dark tourism within the modern tourism industry in which 'dark' experiences are packaged-up and sold to consumers – a process known as 'commodification'. As a result, the study appraises the effects commodification has on the visitor experience at sites of dark tourism.

Drawing upon a multidisciplinary approach, this thesis examines key relationships between dark tourism supplier and consumer in order to evaluate the visitor experience. This includes the notion of mortality and, in so doing, the research considers how the process of commodification affects encounters with the fragile state and inevitable demise of the human being. Moreover, this relates to the so-called 'sequestration of death' whereby death, in modern life, is removed from daily life in order to protect the Self from undue upsetting thoughts.

This thesis utilises a phenomenological research philosophy in order to understand the nature of visitor experiences. The study also adopts a supply-demand approach, and so through the instruments of semi-structured interviews and participant questionnaires, appraises the relationship between the provision and consumption of dark tourism experiences. The empirical research investigates two case studies within UK dark tourism: Lancaster Castle and the International Slavery Museum, Liverpool.

Ultimately, this thesis argues that the commodification process denotes specific semiotics of a touristic and behavioural nature. In turn, this thesis offers an original blueprint model in which to locate commodification processes, which this study terms the 'Semiotic Framework of Dark Tourism Experience'. It is concluded that, using supply-side entities such as tour guides, shops, interpretative materials and other such items, suppliers of dark tourism sculpt the experience and direct visitor behaviour, but crucially do not fundamentally change the nature of experience by providing those phenomena. Rather, commodification within dark tourism provides a specific context in which to encounter death, mortality and atrocity within authentic and ontologically secure boundaries.

You'll see the horrors of a faraway place,

meet the architects of law face to face.

See mass murder on a scale you've never seen,

and all the ones who try hard to succeed.

This is the way, step inside.

This is the way, step inside...

'Atrocity Exhibition'

Joy Division

1980

Table of Contents

4.   Chapter Four

The 'Kitschification' of Dark Tourism

5.   Chapter Five

Methodology and Approach to Research

List of Figures

List of Plates

Acknowledgements

Much can be made of individual effort in undertaking a substantial project such as this. Discipline, enthusiasm, knowledge, application – all are skills vital in the construction of a thesis. However, I firmly believe that one's environment represents a vital context in which that effort may be allowed to develop, and so in that respect I owe a deep debt of gratitude to the many people without whom this journey would never have occurred.

I have had the privilege of being surrounded by inspiring academics during my studies. Dr. Philip Stone, as Director of Studies, has provided expert academic guidance whilst never allowing me to forget the importance of enjoying one's work. Dr. David Jarratt, as Secondary Supervisor, brought huge enthusiasm, knowledge and humour to the table, coming to the fore for the empirical research. Both Philip and David have made the process as straightforward as possible, dispensing trustworthy advice when needed yet also allowing me independence to grow as an academic and a person. Beyond the supervisory team, my colleagues at the University of Central Lancashire have provided a vast web of support in which I have been very fortunate to find myself. Special mention goes to my colleague and friend Rod Train, who provided untold encouragement in the closing stages of my studies over a Tuesday night pint.

I am also privileged to have a supportive network of friends and family who have variously indulged and focussed my thoughts and efforts. Some friendships date back two decades and more, others I have forged over the course of the 42 months of study, others in between, while of course my family remain ever-present. All, however, have encouraged me at every turn. I am truly grateful, and I send you my thanks and love.

Imperative to my work have been my parents, Susan and Bill Grebenar. Without them, it would have been simply impossible, as they have provided extraordinary love and support in every way imaginable at every point in my life. My thanks to my parents, if written in full, would exceed the length of this thesis many times over, and so I humbly dedicate it to them.

I finally mention Jess, simply inspiring in her ability as an academic, practitioner and a human, and who made this endeavour entirely worthwhile.

Chapter One

Introduction

1.0: Research Introduction and Background

In c.2250 B.C., at great human and financial cost, Pharaoh Khufu oversaw the construction of the Great Pyramid at Giza, the centrepiece of a complex dedicated to his earthly mortality. Millennia later, from c. 2nd century A.D., as the Roman Empire moved towards Christianity, mysterious catacombs adorned with iconography and religious artefacts were excavated to house the dead underground. By c. 1100, the iconic Tower of London – perhaps the world's most famous castle and notorious historic prison – was almost certainly complete in its first iteration. Torture, subjugation and execution form a significant part of its history and, subsequently, the imposing architectural tradition of castle and gaol building became rapidly established as an effective means of security, but also as demonstrations of power and the use of death and suffering as deterrents to all.

Head east and forward to 1648 A.D., and the ephemeral Taj Mahal is completed at Agra to the orders of Shah Jahan as a mausoleum and shrine for his late wife. In Africa, by the 18th century, peaking investment in prisons, fortifications and transport enables the swift passage of enslaved African people to the American colonies, Great Britain, Brazil and other countries. This concerted process of dehumanisation re-emerges by 1940; in order to execute the doctrines of Adolf Hitler, vast camps are created in order to enact the genocide of Jews and other minority groups in Germany and its subjects.

Originally built as (literal or figurative) monuments to the death or subjugation of humans, the aforementioned sites are now recognised as places that tourists visit and experience. Arguably, they are also all sites of 'dark tourism'. The exact nature of dark tourism has been widely discussed (Lennon, Seaton & Wight, 2017; Lennon & Teare, 2017; Light, 2017; Stone, 2016; Hartmann, 2014; Stone, 2006; Lennon & Foley, 2000a; Foley & Lennon, 1996; Seaton, 1996), and this thesis serves to add to the current conception of dark tourism as a distinct phenomenon within the wider tourism industry, as this chapter details. The phrase 'dark tourism' has developed since its introduction in 1996 (Lennon, Seaton & Wight, 2017; Lennon & Teare, 2017; Collins-Kreiner, 2016; Foley & Lennon, 1996), and as a still-nascent academic field, there is some disparity across a number of slightly differing definitions. However, all explanations agree that dark tourism involves visits to sites involved with death or suffering in some form (Collins-Kreiner, 2016; Sharpley & Stone, 2009a; Stone, 2006; Tarlow, 2005; Lennon & Foley, 2000a), whether real or imagined, recent or historical. As such, dark tourism is understood to mean the supply and consumption of experiences involving the presentation of death, disasters, suffering, atrocity and other such subjects within the medium of the tourism industry. Tarlow (2005, p. 48) describes sites of dark tourism as

'places where tragedies or historically noteworthy death has occurred', though this ignores the possibility of sites which merely highlight or commemorate death without physically being the site of the events in question. Indeed, whilst Tarlow's definition is utilised and supplemented by other academics (Kang *et al.,* 2012; Sharpley & Stone, 2009a; Strange & Kempa, 2003), others also include sites *dedicated to*, not just *of*, the aforementioned phenomena (Raine, 2013; Stone, 2006; Lennon & Foley, 2000a). Other related terms include 'thanatourism' (Friedrich & Johnston, 2013; Seaton, 1999 & 1996), and the concept of 'sensitive' (Austin, 2002) or 'contested' and 'difficult heritage' (Dann & Seaton, 2001), and thus academic work using these terms will be considered to be synonymous with anything using the specific term 'dark tourism' as this is common in the current base of literature (Light, 2017.

There is a substantial base of such sites across the UK and the world that can be described as sites of dark tourism, not all of which were originally conceived as sites of death but which have taken on that meaning through time. Asia is home to the Killing Fields of Cambodia, the Hiroshima Peace Park, and various sites connected to the Vietnam War; Africa bore witness to atrocities such as the Rwandan Genocide and the Transatlantic Slave Trade, both of which are commemorated at a myriad of sites and visitor facilities. Brazilian *favelas* may now be visited by tourists wishing for a lurid insight into squalid living conditions, whilst, heading north, the USA is adept at harnessing public sentiment when commemorating the dead at sites as diverse as Ground Zero, Arlington Cemetery, Oklahoma City and The Alamo. Europe arguably possesses the most diverse set of dark tourism experiences; the murderous legacies of fascism and communism can be seen at former concentration camps and memorials, whilst the turbulence and war experienced in some former Yugoslav states after its dissolution provide visitors with many sites dedicated to its history and legacy. Furthermore, the two World Wars of the 20th century provide many visitor sites, from battlefields and cemeteries to memorials, museums and other such militaria.

Much of the UK's dark tourism industry has a focus on heritage sites – the best-known dark site being arguably the Tower of London – and, indeed, medieval castles form a well-established part of tourism in the UK (Hewison, 1987). There is also a rich vein of dark and bloody history commemorated at a range of sites across the country. These range from the massacres at Culloden and 'Peterloo' – a slaughter of 15 working-class protesters by the British Army in 1819 at St. Peter's Field, Manchester – to the mysterious folklore of the Pendle Witches, the legends of Dick Turpin and Jack the Ripper to the atrocities committed by the British Empire. Pilgrimages to the former haunts and final resting

places of doomed characters also typify the British dark tourism experience – Ian Curtis, Sylvia Plath, or the Brontë family at Macclesfield, Hebden Bridge and Haworth respectively, for example, along with graveyards in general (Raine, 2013). Arguably, they are without the renown of Anne Frank House, Amsterdam, or Père Lachaise, Paris, which is arguably the world's most (and only) glamorous cemetery, housing the graves of Edith Piaf, Jim Morrison, Oscar Wilde, and other notable individuals. However, they can nonetheless all be categorised within the umbrella of dark tourism, and, as such, typology is important due to such wide variety.

To that end, Stone (2006) created the Dark Tourism Spectrum, which attempts to classify sites based on 'shades' of darkness (shown in Figure 1); from 'darkest' – sites *of* death or suffering with an educative and historic approach alongside a strong authenticity of product and location – to 'lightest' – sites *associated* with death or suffering with an emphasis on entertainment. Part of the typological consideration is location; just like the historical figures responsible for those aforementioned monoliths of mortality, contemporary tourism suppliers have invested much in the creation of purpose-built heritage sites (arguably to the detriment of contemporary culture, as argued by Hewison, 1987), many of which centre on death, suffering or other such phenomena as noted herein. Indeed, in the same way that their ancient counterparts made their contribution to our understanding of death with awe-inspiring edifices, modern tourism supply-side stakeholders attempt to convey their own representations in a contemporary tourist setting and therefore, this thesis argues, influence our experience of death as tourists. This thesis therefore examines the effect that the so-called 'commodification process' has on the visitor experience at sites of dark tourism in the UK.

A DARK TOURISM SPECTRUM: PERCEIVED PRODUCT FEATURES OF DARK TOURISM WITHIN A 'DARKEST-LIGHTEST' FRAMEWORK OF SUPPLY

Higher Political Influence and Ideology

Lower Political Influence and Ideology

'Sites Of Death and Suffering'

'Sites Associated with Death and Suffering'

| Darkest | Darker | Dark | Light | Lighter | Lightest |

Education Orientation

Entertainment Orientation

History Centric (Conservation/ Commermorative)

Heritage Centric (Commercial/ Romanticism)

Perceived Authentic Product Interpretation

Perceived Inauthentic Product Interpretation

Location Authenticity

Non-Location Authenticity

Shorter Time Scale to the Event

Longer Time Scale from the Event

Suppley (Non Purposefulness)

Supply (Purposefulness)

Lower Tourism Infrastucture

Higher Tourism Infrastrukture

Figure 1: 'A Dark Tourism Spectrum' (Stone, 2006)

Whilst Stone's (2006) Spectrum has provided much context within dark tourism research and will do so for this thesis, it is limited in part by its linear framework. Whilst the extremes are clearly defined, the potential for sites to reside in the intermediary 'shades' provides a lack of clarity, inferring that the seven given criteria at either end of the spectrum are mutually exclusive as a set to their relative opposites. Whilst a combination of either set at a given site points towards a position around the centre, the individual value of each criterion is not evident, meaning that it is difficult to 'calculate'

the relative importance of each one towards positioning a site on the continuum, requiring some subjectivity to do so (Stone, 2017). Furthermore, the model does not directly address the role of commodification (referring instead to supply approach and infrastructure) which is notable because, arguably, modern dark tourism – much like tourism at large – is pervaded by the concept of 'commodification' (Stone, 2017; Young & Light, 2016). Indeed, it has been observed on a large scale across the last half-century and more (MacCannell, 2011 & 1976; Boorstin, 1987) and as such the term is common and relatively well understood (Sather-Wagstaff, 2011; Walsh & Giulianotti, 2007). This thesis demonstrates that the commodification process manifests itself in many ways, but in the context of tourism, it is perhaps best described as the way in which a tourism experience can be developed, marketed and packaged in order that it may be sold in the same way as that of a physical commodity (Walsh & Giulianotti, 2007). As such, an experience is said to be 'commodified' when it is subject to commodification though, as this thesis will demonstrate, the extent to which it is commodified will vary. Commodification is a process which may be enacted on a 'sliding scale' so that some experiences may be deemed more 'heavily commodified' than others where what are herein termed the 'symptoms' of commodification are to the fore. This notion is depicted in Figure 2; the diagram suggests that the effect of commodification on the visitor experience increases in correlation with the scale of commodification. This is simplistic, but is provided in order to represent a broad effect – the exact effects of commodification are discussed throughout this thesis and are empirically investigated in Chapters Six and Seven.

	Level of commodification	Nature of commodification
1	**No commodification**	Undeveloped/ natural
2	**Some commodification**	Maintenance/ accessibility
3	**More commodification**	Clear effect on experience
4	**Liminal commodification**	Unclear effect on experience
5	**Heavy commodification**	Sold as a commodity
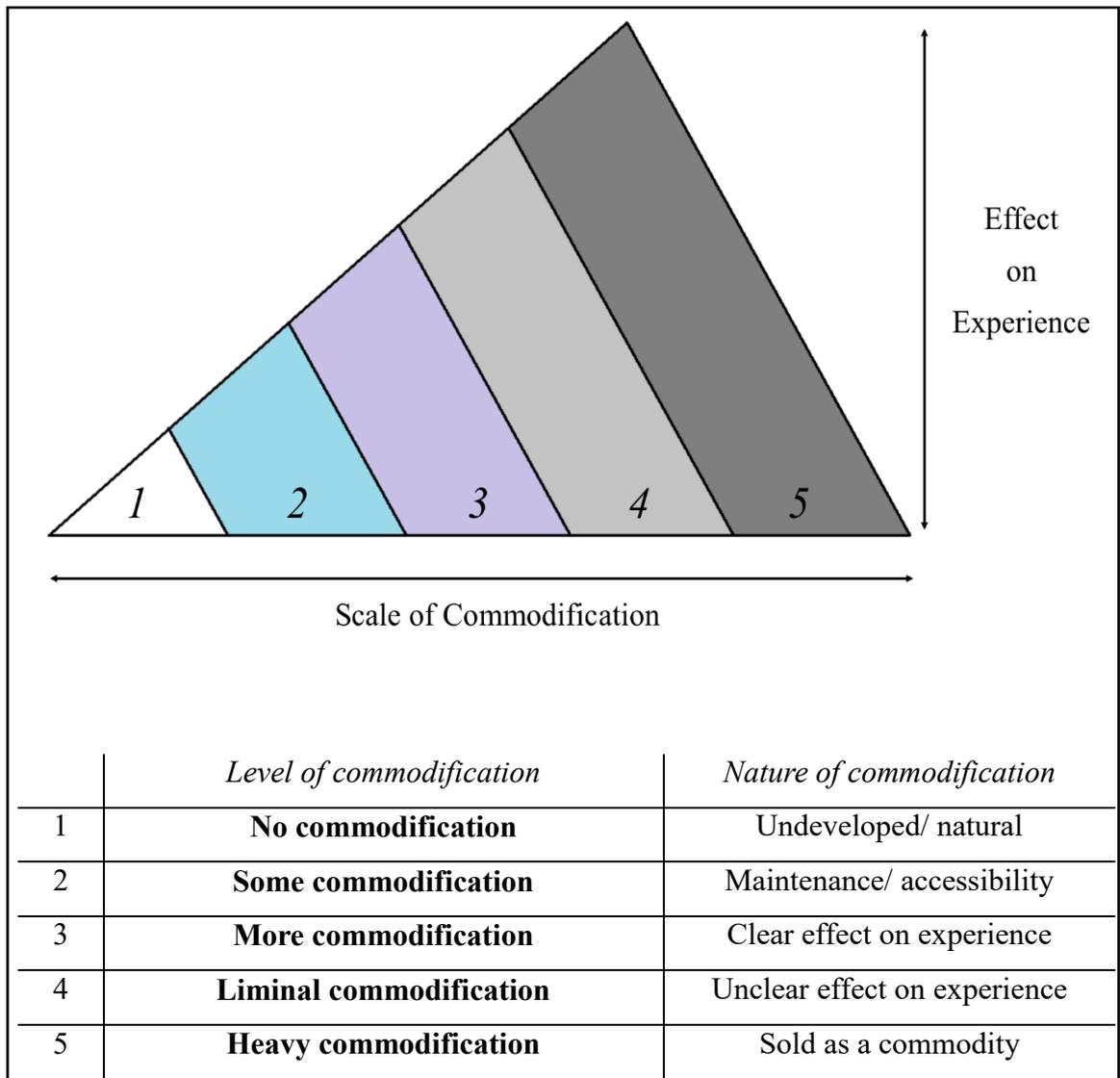
Figure 2: A Commodification Scale

In the context of this thesis, the commodification process may refer to many instances of commercial decisions directly related to the tourist site itself (distinct from indirect costs incurred by the tourist such as travel or accommodation). It could be the charging of admission fees or the presence of an on-site shop, which directly involve the tourist. Additionally, there are the transactions which take place in the so-called 'back-areas' (MacCannell, 1976), away from the consciousness of the tourist; creation of specific discourses, the implementation of marketing or branding, or perhaps investment in infrastructure as part of the sculpting of the tourist experience within a 'servicescape'. As this thesis will demonstrate, these decisions, transactions and investments combine to form the commodification process, and so play a role in how the site is experienced by tourists. Commodification is distinct to similar terms such as 'commoditization', which

refers to reductive or shallow representations which have necessarily exploitative effects (e.g. Swanson & Timothy, 2012; Cohen, 1988), or 'commercialization' which is directly concerned with profit-making activity (e.g. Coghlan & Noakes, 2012; Tuckman, 1998). Although there may be some aspects of commoditization or commercialization within the commodification of a specific site, they are not intrinsically linked and so further examination of those concepts, and any links to commodification, remain beyond the scope of this thesis. Furthermore, there may be links to (actual or perceived) hostile seizure of space or culture (Devine, 2017; Kelly & Ybarra, 2016) whether in the context of tourism (Qurashi, 2017; Zinda, 2017) or, for example, the natural world (Kelly & Ybarra, 2016; Fairhead, Leach & Scoones, 2012). However, in the context of this study, that appropriation or conflict is not a key component of commodification; rather, the focus is the way in which experiences within tourism may be 'packaged' – that is, presented and offered – for consumers (e.g. Stone, 2009b; Cole, 2007), and the effect of the process on the visitor experience. As such, its connotation of neoliberal expansionism as utilised by some authors (e.g. Kelly & Ybarra, 2016; Fairhead, Leach & Scoones, 2012) is of only tangential relevance herein (representing one potential outcome rather than a necessary one), and so, within this research, commodification is viewed primarily as a process of transactions within tourism management (e.g. Stone, 2017; Zinda, 2017; Seaton, 2009; Morgan & Pritchard, 2005). Importantly it is not viewed as inherently good or bad (Sather-Wagstaff, 2011; Walsh & Giulianotti, 2007; Boorstin, 1987; MacCannell, 1976) but, as explored in depth through this research, as a complex process with many forms, functions and outcomes. Further exploration of commodification and its effects, along with more explanation of its current academic conception, is provided within the literature review, and specifically in Chapter Four.

Although typology and the nature of dark tourism and the nature of commodification have been widely discussed as noted previously, the relationship between the visitor experience and the commodification process within dark tourism is not currently clear. Despite this lack of knowledge, on a broader level, the relationship between tourists' financial expenditure and the authenticity and enjoyment of a touristic experience has been explored. It is shown that there is a positive relationship (Brida, Disegna & Osti, 2013; Coles, 2004) insofar as tourists understand and often welcome the positive role that commodities play in the understanding of experience. In a dark tourism context, Brown (2013a, p.272) describes the relationship between sites and gift shops as 'ubiquitous', yet also 'constrained by issues of taste and decency'. This encapsulates the current situation; the acknowledged and burgeoning industry of dark tourism is still

tightly regulated by often unspoken ethical considerations. Austin (2002) notes those considerations at Cape Coast Castle, a former slavery prison in Ghana, and that such sites are particularly prone to misinterpretation as the experience may be highly personal (Packer & Ballantyne, 2016). Indeed, the issue of taste and interpretation is a recurring theme in this thesis, and kitsch is examined as a consequence of the commodification process. That juncture allows the disparity between ethical values of taste and the commercial imperative of modern tourism sites to be explored as crucial to our understanding of dark tourism.

In an attempt to illuminate the potential disparity between ethical values and commercial activity at sites of large-scale grief, Sturken (2007) notes the presence of kitsch products as a voluntary attempt to use commodification to diffuse ethical tension. The sale of snow globes and soft toys around Ground Zero in New York is used to show the attitudes taken by street traders hoping to capitalise on public sentiment surrounding what has been termed 'cultural trauma' (Edkins, 2004; Eyerman, 2001) – an event of catastrophe or atrocity which affects wide swathes of a community, rather than just those who have a relationship with victims. Indeed, as tourism to the Ground Zero site – originally for mourning in the immediate aftermath, later as a means to express American identity and commemoration of victims (Edkins, 2004; Lisle, 2004) – has essentially developed piecemeal (in contrast to more established sites of tourism), kitsch 'mass-mediated representations' (Edkins, 2004; Eyerman, 2001) can be said to dictate ethical views in certain circumstances. The reverse, however, is the case at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Museum, where there is an absence of:

> *"*...things like medals or pencils with 'Auschwitz' printed on them, and we
>
> don't intend to... that would mean commercializing it".
>
> (*The New York Times*, 2004)

Whilst the Holocaust is still a cultural trauma, much of the atrocity was initially clandestine and, crucially, was committed in a time before a mass media could facilitate cultural representations beyond those of a specifically religious tone. In contrast, the events of 9/11 unfolded live on television across the globe. Thus, the rules of the visitation to concentration camps are well-established (though often unwritten), whereas Ground Zero's are indistinct. There exists an 'unofficial' visitor centre away from the impact site that purports to be the '#2 Most Popular Tour' in New York, along with a long-awaited 'official' memorial where the World Trade Centre once stood. However, Sturken (2007)

notes that the snow globe and the teddy bear in a fire fighter's uniform have become ubiquitous symbols of collective understanding of the atrocity in a way in which to *not* embrace them, or to denounce the cheapness of the kitsch items, could be seen as disrespectful to the victims and, by proxy of the cultural trauma, the notion of Americanism. Such an absolute is not merely conjectural; the precedent was set by then-President George W. Bush's statement on the Government's stance in the aftermath of the attacks: 'you're either with us or against us' (*CNN*, 2001). This goes hand-in-hand with a 'conspicuous consumption culture around the site' (Potts, 2012, p. 233) – the process of feeling obliged to buy into the experience seems likely to affect the visitor experience. Indeed, Farmaki (2013), researching two sites of dark tourism in Cyprus, suggested that it is entirely possible for the supply-side to create a previously non-existent demand for a site of dark tourism, and for it to become a 'must-see' attraction simply because it appears on tourist itineraries, not because of specific tourist interest in the site (Farmaki, 2013). As will be shown, this also relates to the concept of 'conspicuous compassion' (West, 2004); individuals may feel obliged to demonstrate a certain level of empathy or emotion when given the opportunity to engage with dark tourism. These factors form part of the commodification process in relation to demand for dark tourism; in this way it can be shown that the decisions of supply-side stakeholders can affects attitudes towards death and other phenomena within dark tourism.

Due to that relationship, this study utilises a supply-demand approach. Much dark tourism research has thus far focussed on typology (of sites and tourists), motivations of tourists, and ethical issues; however, Farmaki (2013) is rare in that she examined supply-side drivers alongside the more researched demand-side. Like Farmaki (2013), this research aims to focus on those two key groups – the consumer/ visitor, and producer/ site management. Both groups are viewed through the lens of political and cultural perspectives – that is, how current, past, and changing morals, ethics and taboos inform decisions and interpretations of both consumer and supplier in order that we may better understand the relationship between the commodification process and the visitor experience in dark tourism. The term 'visitor' has been chosen instead of 'tourist' as it can be used, in the context of a site of tourism, to encompass all types of individuals (Leask, 2010) – 'visitors' who visit a destination/ site for one day, and 'tourists' who stay for at least one night (Leask, 2010; also Brown, 2003). Whilst the two terms are broadly synonymous, the term visitor, in the context of this research, is thus preferred as more versatile in denoting the range of individuals who may visit a given site at any time. Both terms reflect participants in the 'visitation experience' (Kempiak *et al*., 2017, p. 376) and,

whilst there may be notable differences in behaviour, for example expenditure levels (Podhorodecka, 2014), it is fairly common for academics to group individuals, whether a 'visitor' or 'tourist', in a homogenous manner as the focus of research (e.g. Jurdana & Frleta, 2017; Lyngdoh, Mathur & Sinha, 2017; Draper, 2015; Frangos *et al*., 2015; Wolf, Hagenloh & Croft, 2012; Shin, 2007). As such, this research acknowledges the differences as above but uses 'visitor' as the preferred term for inclusivity and consistency. Furthermore, 'consumer' is used occasionally as a direct antonym to 'supplier', but in so doing follows the above rationale and so is intended to reflect the inclusive term 'visitor'.

1.1: Research Question, Aims and Objectives

This thesis will address the question:

'How does the commodification process affect visitor experiences within UK dark tourism?'

Within this over-arching question, the research, using both critical analysis of existing literature along with primary empirical research, will address the commodification that is, as will be shown, inherent in dark tourism production and consumption. The aim of the research is to critically explore associated actions and feelings of visitors at sites of death and atrocity (as defined herein and throughout the thesis), including attitudes to mortality, aspects of commodification, sensitivity and authenticity as aspects of experience. Therefore, the research objectives are as follows:

1. Critically appraise visitor engagement with the inherent commodification processes of dark tourism sites, attractions or exhibitions.
2. Critically examine fundamental interrelationships between producer and consumer within dark tourism.
3. Critically evaluate the extent of how and why commodification affects notions of authenticity at specific dark tourism sites.

These areas are addressed throughout this thesis and rely on a synthesis of existing literature alongside original empirical research in order to provide clear outcomes, which, as will be demonstrated in the remainder of this chapter, provide originality and thus a

clear rationale for research. The definitions of 'dark tourism', 'commodification' and 'visitor' have been briefly explained thus far, and so the research will build upon those definitions in order to fully address the objectives as detailed herein.

1.2: Thesis Structure

1.2.1: Part One – Literature Review

Chapter Two

Chapter Two begins by exploring the 'search for meaning' as a means of motivation in why one becomes a tourist. A search for escape or novelty is considered as one motivation – an 'inward' motivation – along with a search for the esteem of others – an 'outward' motivation. The latter point considers the notion of conspicuous consumption within modern society as evidence of its prevalence, and utilises the theories of Boorstin (1987) and MacCannell (1976) to identify the implications of commodification within those motivations. From there, the chapter moves on to consider how the supply-side addresses and facilitates the aforementioned demand. The commodification process is examined through three 'symptoms': admission fees, souvenirs, and 'servicescapes', all of which, it is shown, have become accepted – arguably integral – parts of the tourist experience. The consequences of those phenomena upon the visitor experience are considered, as are the implications and benefits for the supply side. This extends to the role of semiotics – whether it is in fact the trappings of the experience, and the cues put in place by the supply-side, that affects the tourist, rather than any kind of over-arching reasons as discussed previously. From this, it is shown how commodification may influence the visitor experience.

Chapter Three

Chapter Three develops the themes of Chapter Two by transferring them into the context of dark tourism. Firstly, a background to dark tourism is provided, bringing together much of the fundamental literature on the phenomenon (Lennon, Seaton & Wight, 2017; Light, 2017; Sharpley & Stone, 2009a; Stone, 2006; Lennon & Foley, 2000a; Foley & Lennon, 1996; Seaton, 1996). The history of the phenomenon – as well as its life as an academic field – is considered, as are more precise definitions. Moving on, the reality of dark tourism is examined; that is, how dark tourism manifests itself within the tourism marketplace. This includes concepts such as commemoration, milestone anniversaries, and how they contribute to our understanding of death and

disaster. The chapter then begins to compare and contrast the physical and implied attributes of dark tourism sites, incorporating typological considerations in order to further support the conception of the industry. The chapter then considers the effect that our experiences of death as a society have on the manifestation, and interpretation, of dark tourism. The absent-present death dichotomy is introduced as a means of understanding how individuals interact (or do not interact) with death, and how this can influence the perception and experience of dark tourism. This links to the 'sequestration of death', which is identified as a driver of demand for dark tourism from both consumer and supply-side perspectives. This is linked to 'ontological insecurity' as a symptom of the sequestration of death, and which can be addressed in part by dark tourism.

The first part of the chapter outlines some of the major issues in dark tourism; the second part combines those issues with the visitor motivations as covered in Chapter Two in order to firmly root those motivating factors within a dark tourism context. Firstly, the concept of novelty as a motivator is considered, drawing on the aforementioned sequestration of death and ontological insecurity as evidence of 'risk' within dark tourism, suggesting that such risks form part of the novelty of dark tourism. The concept of the 'heterotopia' is then introduced into the discussion; the chapter argues that heterotopias offer a 'novelty of place' in which the concepts as outlined in the first part of the chapter collide in various measures to form a distinct and appropriate environment within the bounds of commodification. The chapter then examines the second motivating factor: the seeking of esteem from others. To demonstrate this in a dark tourism context, the concept of 'conspicuous compassion' is highlighted as an extension of conspicuous consumption. By combining examples such as the now-ubiquitous 'selfie', the concept of 'voluntourism' and media influence, this section posits that demand for dark tourism may well relate to social pressures and norms in that individuals seek to appear to be compassionate and caring towards victims of atrocity and violence. Thus, they seek out dark tourism experiences as enacted through the commodification process. Building on this, the chapter then examines the role of authenticity within the dark tourism experience and contemplates how it is commodified. As the chapter outlines, the concept of authenticity is itself fluid and unclear, but it is nonetheless possible to direct the behaviour and perceptions of the visitor towards a specific view. Furthermore, the chapter discusses the relative types of authenticity in an attempt to explore how the supply side may commodify authenticity, and how it may be perceived by the consumer. The concept of 'post-authenticity' is discussed as an alternative perspective; this approach states that the concept of becoming a tourist is becoming more fragmented from person to person – it is

merely a 'game' (Urry, 1990).

Chapter Four

The final chapter of the literature review focusses on the presence of kitsch products and sentiments within the commodification of dark tourism. Firstly, the chapter considers the concept of commodification critique in order to conceptualise the current literature on the implementation of commodification, offering insight into how it is critiqued in a positive and negative sense. Kitsch in this context is observed as a symptom of the commodification process, and so the nature of kitsch is outlined and discussed; concepts within kitsch such as simplified messages, 'nostalgic' kitsch and 'melancholic' kitsch, the notion of taste (a concept which recurs throughout the chapter) and, overall, how it fits into our understanding of culture. Also noted is how kitsch relates to the notion of escape as a motivator, as covered in previous chapters.

The chapter then moves on to the 'kitschification' process evident in dark tourism as noted by many theorists (Lennon, Seaton & Wight, 2017; Brown, 2013a; Potts, 2012; Stone, 2009a&b; Sturken, 2007). As its existence is accepted, the chapter instead asks why it exists and why it pervades to such an observable level considering the presence of controversy and other issues as outlined previously. Next, the chapter examines the concepts of Boorstin (1987) and MacCannell (1974) and examines notions of authenticity and commodification within the realm of mythic and legendary events that, it is argued herein, occupy a notable place on the fringes of dark tourism in the UK. This is used as a means of demonstrating the pervasion of kitsch commodification across the dark tourism industry, and draws together the concepts of authenticity, commodification and the presentation of death as have been introduced previously.

The literature review then returns to examine souvenirs which, it is argued, have many similarities to (and, indeed, often *are*) mass mediated representations. Typology is a significant factor in this section: how it affects the availability, type and design of souvenirs, and what effect those things have on the visitor experience. Furthermore, the notion of the dominant discourse is used as a variable in the examination of those effects. Again, the question of 'why' emerges, as does the concept of taste, though as a further layer of discussion, the chapter considers how intentional these effects are from a supplier's perspective: despite the ethical issues, is kitsch simply a by-product of accepted touristic behaviour? Indeed, this concluding thought is taken forward into empirical research in order to examine how the commodification process affects the visitor experience.

Latterly, this chapter explores how the commodification of dark tourism affects the way in which tourists view death; however, whilst commodification is often seen as negatively affecting an experience (as noted in 4.1), Chapter Four ends by noting how it may be used to enhance our understanding of death. Essentially, the chapter synthesises how and to what extent dark tourism is commodified whilst considering typological issues in understanding the effects of the commodification process on how we conceptualise death within touristic activity.

1.2.2: Part Two – Empirical Research

Whilst the literature review serves to provide a thorough discussion of dark tourism in its own right, in the context of this thesis it also acts as a foundation for empirical research which both informs the design and facilitates the analysis of findings. Chapter Five provides a full explanation of the methodology employed in the primary research, including the research philosophy, design, methods and analysis in order to explain how the research is approached both theoretically and in practice. In addition, the chapter includes a rationale for the selection of each aspect of the methodology in order to explain its suitability.

As noted in Chapter Five, this research employs a case study design, and as such, Chapter Six and Seven contain analysis of each of the two cases in turn, those being, respectively, Lancaster Castle and the International Slavery Museum, Liverpool. Chapter Eight concludes this study; it contains a summary of the findings, further discussion about its overall outcomes and implications, and presents a 'semiotic framework' in which the effects of commodification on the visitor experience are conceptualised. It also contains a discussion of the limitations of this research.
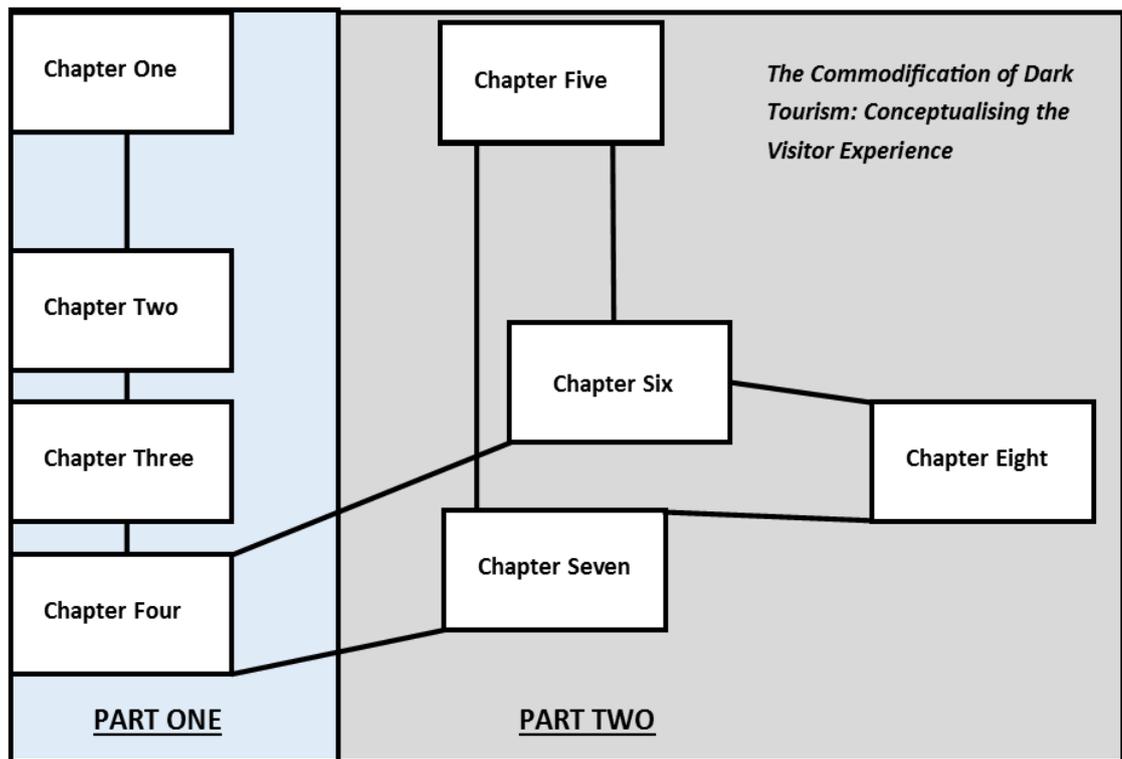
Figure 3: Research Structure

1.3: Research Rationale & Originality

There is currently a demonstrable gap in the existing dark tourism literature base. On the one hand, there is a base of literature which explores dark tourism as a distinct phenomenon, including concepts such as typology (Stone, 2006; Lennon & Foley, 2000a), site presentation (Yoshida, Bui & Lee, 2016; Friedrich & Johnson, 2013), heterotopia (Stone, 2013) and commodification within tourism (e.g. MacCannell, 2011; Sather-Wagstaff, 2011; Walsh & Giulianotti, 2007; Boorstin, 1987) and specifically dark tourism (Seaton, 2009). Furthermore, Light (2017) notes a current absence of research on the supply-side 'voice' with the commodification of dark tourism. This thesis is positioned in the current gap between the four aforementioned areas because it examines those concepts in conjunction with the visitor experience, and also considers the interrelationship between supplier and consumer. This is depicted below in Figure 4, which shows that the research occupies a previously unfilled area of knowledge in the 'overlap' of the four stated areas of kitsch, heterotopia, commodification and dark tourism.
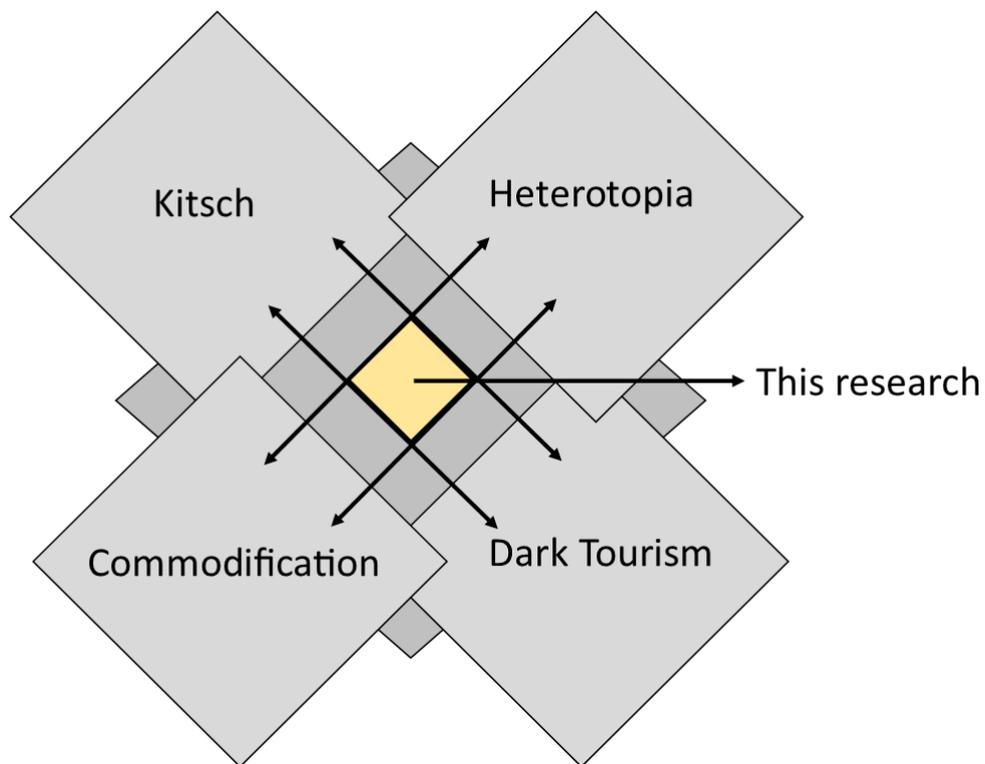
Figure 4: Research 'gap' for this thesis

Furthermore, unlike much dark tourism research, this thesis takes a supply-demand approach to primary and secondary research. For example, Chapter Three examines the notion of heterotopia; whilst this is a concept already noted within existing dark tourism, herein it is viewed as a tool which can be shaped by the commodification process to create a 'novelty of place'. Furthermore, and as detailed in full latterly in this thesis, the research offers an original framework in which to conceptualise the effect of commodification on the visitor experience in UK dark tourism as a result of empirical research – a 'semiotic framework' created by the commodification process which affects the visitor experience. Finally, the structure of the research develops relationships between concepts that thus far remain unexplored – chiefly, the equitable integration of supply and demand within one conceptual framework but also furthermore in the linking of societal perception of death and the consumption of dark tourism experience within a specific supply framework.

This research serves to strengthen the current base of literature in dark tourism research whilst also challenging currently held views and providing a stimulus for further research into the concepts contained herein. Furthermore, the research can be useful for dark tourism supply-side stakeholders. By providing an insight into the role of

commodification, site managers will be able to better understand not only the effect of the process on the experience itself, but also the views of visitors and the image of the site overall. As such, this research can be used to tailor activity accordingly in order to present the site in specific ways, appealing to specific markets.

By its very nature, this research has limitations; these are outlined in full in Chapter Eight, whilst limitations of a methodological nature are discussed in Chapter Five.

Chapter Two

The Search for Meaning:

Supply, demand and the tourism experience

2.0 Chapter Introduction

The reach of tourism is extremely pervasive, and it can be defined in a myriad of ways. It is most basically described as travel - the 'movement of people' (Stone, 2017, p. 3) - for leisure or business purposes, to places outside of what we may term 'everyday life'- places other than the home or the workplace (Shaw & Williams, 1994a) and necessarily within a capitalist framework. Of course, it is in reality a vastly complex phenomenon that is difficult to define (Cooper & Hall, 2013; Cooper, 2012; UNWTO, ND) as is the concept of the 'tourist' (Collins-Kreiner, 2016, p. 1188). Whilst one may, when considering the concept of tourism, immediately picture a sun-drenched parasol on a golden beach, or a stunning mountain vista at the top of a ski lift, the reality is infinitely more complex (Gunn, 1994). It includes travel to visit relatives in a (relatively) mundane locale, venturing to a large out-of-town shopping centre in the next city, or visiting a National Park on a day trip. Many factors influence the ease of which one can do these; transport links, infrastructural investment, or the opening of once-private lands for the enjoyment of the public (Lea Davidson, 1998; Page, 1995; Gunn, 1994). Furthermore, and crucially to this thesis, it does not happen by chance – there are suppliers and stakeholders who wish for the public to undertake certain activities, or to collectively increase the success of a particular location (Gunn, 1994) and create new tourism products (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007). Whilst that initial picture is a domestic one, of course tourism is now a global concern. Where once the UK public were enthralled *en masse* by package holidays to Mediterranean resorts (Wright, 2002; Turner & Ash, 1975), the options available to tourists now are ever increasing (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007). Tourists of today's world can plan excursions across the world with ease – North Pole treks, Full Moon parties in Thailand, African safaris, Australian Outback trails, tours of Brazilian *favelas* (Light, 2017; Rolfes, 2011), and travel to sites of death (Stone, 2006) are examples of some of the diverse experiences undertaken as a result of developments in the modern tourism industry. Indeed, the future is sure to lead us further on this path (Wright, 2016).

In an attempt to further conceptualise tourism, this chapter will examine the questions of why one becomes a tourist, and how this process is facilitated by the tourism industry. The question of 'why' will be addressed first, using the two motivators of 'esteem' and 'escape' as a framework in which to answer it. Then, the question of 'how' will be examined; the so-called 'commodification' process (as explained in Chapter One) will be explored by examining admission fees, souvenirs/ gift shops, and 'servicescapes'. By doing so, this chapter will begin to critically analyse the role of authenticity and

semiotics in order to understand how the tourist experience can be affected by the commodification process ahead of further grounding in Chapter Three.

2.1: Esteem and Escape: Why does one become a tourist?

The 'search for meaning' within the human condition is widely researched (Collins-Kreiner, 2016; Uriely, 2005), variously regarding areas such as ancestry (McCain & Ray, 2003), entertainment (Hofer, 2013), or religion and spirituality (Martinez & Scott, 2014; Steger *et al.*, 2010), and it is therefore possible to frame the motivations of tourists within that phenomenon – searching for meaning from others, and for meaning from within. Kay (2003 & 2009) identified four areas of tourist motivation; this chapter will focus upon the 'values-based' approach, which is based on the individual's personality and outlook on life (Madrigal, 1995), and show how it feeds a search for meaning. Berlyne (1950) suggests that, at its most basic, the approach of an individual towards tourism is an attempt to escape the routine of the everyday. Furthermore, when extended to incorporate the realities of modern tourism (i.e. that it is more than just the act of removing oneself from the everyday, as will be discussed herein), it bestows the tourist with a veritable arsenal of new knowledge and experience, the pursuit of which is esteemed by society (Berlyne, 1950).

Of course, the desire to travel and gain these experiences is immaterial if one does not possess the means to do so (known as 'suppressed demand' – Cooper *et al.*, 2008, p. 34). Critically, the vast majority of tourism requires substantial monetary outlay on the part of the tourist (Berghoff, 2002), and indeed this outlay can be used by the tourist to inflate the esteem bestowed by society on their experiences (Kerr, Lewis & Burgess, 2012; Berghoff, 2002). A night's stay at a locally-run bed-and-breakfast not far from one's home offers exactly the same basic premise as a marquee-name hotel such as the opulent Burj al-Arab in Dubai, however clearly the latter is far more impressive not just for its famous and far-flung destination but, crucially, its price. However, Urry and Larsen (2011) note that as we move into a ubiquitous age of travel, the esteem no longer lies simply in those who choose to travel. The 'interest and ability' (Gunn, 1994, p. 34; also Theobald, 1998) now required to travel is commonplace – it has become a 'cultural force' (Berghoff, 2002), perhaps even as far as becoming something of a human right (Cooper *et al.*, 2008; Berghoff, 2002). Rather, a distinction lies between different 'classes' of tourists in terms of the level of esteem received from others. This notion of 'class' – between activities, rather than a social hierarchy – is crucial to the understanding of why one becomes a tourist, particularly when specifically trained on the realm of dark tourism

(see Chapter Three). As such, tourism can be examined as a vehicle from which one may receive esteem from others.

2.1.1: 'I Consume, Therefore I Am': Conspicuously seeking esteem

By its very existence, such an implicit system of class may lead tourists towards an experience that bestows the maximum amount of esteem and prestige, which may counteract their own innate motivation to travel. Morgan and Pritchard (1998) suggest this by virtue of a prevailing 'imagistic culture' in which the image of one visiting a given place outweighs the experience, acting as a souvenir itself – or even as a trophy (Nusair *et al.*, 2013; Snow, 2008; Berghoff, 2002). Indeed, the process of sharing photographs via social media networks can be used to demonstrate that culture (Lennon, Seaton & Wight, 2017). Donaire, Camprubí and Galí (2014) note the use of flickr.com, an image-sharing website, by tourists to distribute photographs of a natural or heritage element. This is evidence of an overt process of capturing and sharing photographic evidence of travel in the implicit hope of garnering esteem from others because social media is necessarily a public service in the public domain, and so by uploading photographs to Flickr, one does so in the knowledge that they will be seen by others (Lennon, Seaton & Wight, 2017).

A further example of an overt display of photography in order to garner esteem can be found in the case of Contiki, the world's market-leading tour operator in holidays and tours for 18-35s (*Contiki,* 2014). The company encourages their clients to upload photographs to twitter.com, using the hashtag '#NOREGRETS' – 'no regrets' being the Contiki slogan (Baginski, 2014). Not only does this give clients a way to distribute the photographs to a wider audience, but it also shows that this quest for esteem can be co-opted for commercial gain through 'corporate interventions' (Lennon, Seaton & Wight, 2017, p. 233; also Kerr, Lewis & Burgess, 2012), much as souvenir photographs have been doing since the 19th century (Snow, 2008). Indeed, photography has long been a central part of tourism (Garrod, 2009; Snow, 2008). In the first instance it was used by tour operators to sell a destination as exotic or interesting (Garrod, 2009), but now, using the channels mentioned previously along with the more conventional face-to-face sharing, the photograph has become a way of displaying the 'conspicuous consumption' of tourism, which is a vital tool in garnering the esteem of others.

Conspicuous Consumption

This culture of conspicuous consumption (Potts, 2012; Rojek, 1995) can be said to be a major driver of tourism in the 21st century. In the aftermath of the post-1945 boom

in affluence, peer and social groups have become a major provider of cues on which individuals can base their consumption (Ordabayeva & Chandon, 2010; Mason, 1981). Indeed, Tilman (2006) suggests that *emulation* of status, rather than actually aiming to attain that status, could be the basis for the 'consumer frenzy' (Tilman, 2006) of modern Western capitalist society. To this end, Tilman discusses Veblen's theory on conspicuous consumption in the 'leisure classes' (Veblen, 1970 – originally published in 1899) in an attempt to update the concept into a post-war affluent society, particularly due to the emergence of advertising as a dominant discourse in the West (Tilman, 2006). As such, it is noted that there may in fact be three strands to Veblen's conspicuous consumption. 'Veblen 3' suggests that conspicuous consumption may intrinsically contain an element which is interpreted by others as wasteful or ostentatious (Tilman, 2006). Though that strand is beyond the scope of this thesis, the other two will be used herein. 'Veblen 2' – whereby consumption is interpreted as generosity or sociability (Tilman, 2006) – will be discussed in Chapter Three, whilst the remaining concept will be examined now.

'Veblen 1' states that conspicuous consumption is an intentional attempt to emulate a certain image of financial strength or, in the case of tourism, sufficient cultural capital, personality or knowledge to engage in particular activity (Tilman, 2006). The notion of emulation suggests a certain amount of pretension or what we may term 'esteem by proximity'. To conceptualise this, consider again the opulent Burj al-Arab hotel in Dubai. In order to gain the esteem of friends and peers by engaging in expensive and exotic travel, a family with a modest income may holiday there, mingling with extremely wealthy fellow guests and enjoying the sumptuous furnishings and service. However, rather than living a glamorous lifestyle, this family are merely emulating one. They have saved money over a long period and foregone other luxuries to pay for what is often termed a 'holiday of a lifetime'. It will take a substantial amount of time to be able to do that again; rather than hobnobbing with the extremely wealthy regular patrons of the hotel, they will merely be temporarily given an inside look into that lifestyle. Upon returning home, they will resume their normal lives; whilst esteem may be bestowed upon them, it is reasonably clear to their peers that the family do not travel in that manner on a regular basis. The diversification of choice may merely be a contrived decision in order to overcome social cynicism; Kahn and Ratner (2005, p. 102) identify the need for variety (i.e. varying the choices of travel destinations) in order to 'increase the overall utility' of the behaviour. In this sense, conspicuous consumption suggests that the search for esteem greatly pervades travel choices, and that it is inherently self-gratifying. The combination of displays of affluence (Wang & Griskevicius, 2013; Ordabayeva & Chandon, 2010),

attempts to prolong the display through the use of photographs (Donaire, Camprubí, & Galí, 2014; Snow, 2008), and the attempts to project a sense of status through purchase choice (Tilman, 2006; O'Cass & McEwan, 2004) are perhaps there to 'outdo' others (Berghoff, 2002), rather than to simply 'keep up with the Joneses' (Ordabayeva & Chandon, 2010).

The process of becoming a tourist in a search for esteem necessarily makes travel a self-gratifying experience, but this theory is a relatively modern one (Berghoff, 2002) despite Wright's (2002) identification of some history of self-expression within mass tourism. Typically, in a 20th century context, tourism has often been typified as a much less smug or pretentious activity; that it is undertaken merely for a relatively straightforward combination of enjoyment and respite from work – a temporary escape from everyday life (Wright, 2002; Boorstin, 1987; Turner & Ash, 1975). In this respect, tourism can also be viewed as a means of escape (Rojek, 1993). This view provides a counterpoint to tourism as a search for esteem, and so to further understand why one becomes a tourist, tourism as escape will now be examined.

Escaping from the Everyday

The notion of tourism as 'escape' noted by Berlyne (1950; also Berghoff, 2002; Rojek, 1993) supports the search for esteem whilst also offering another means of motivation. Khan, Dhar and Wertenbroch (2005) identify the fundamental choice that consumers in general make when making premium purchases: to opt for a hedonistic alternative to the utilitarianism of the everyday. Potential tourists are no different; they essentially decide based on an emotional response to a stimulus (Khan, Dhar & Wertenbroch, 2005), to temporarily shun the reality of everyday life and escape by buying into the tourism industry, thus becoming a tourist. This choice exists across all platforms of consumer behaviour – such as choosing to eat ice cream, rather than fruit, for dessert (Khan, Dhar & Wertenbroch, 2005) – but the unparalleled escape offered by tourism is plain to see. Whilst one may be able to momentarily imagine sipping a cocktail on a Jamaican beach by choosing to drink Malibu at home instead of tap water, tourism actually offers the chance to transport oneself to the Caribbean, far removed from the utilitarian goings-on of everyday life. Far more than any other aspirational product, tourism offers real, albeit temporary, physical escape. As a means of demonstrating the potential for a destination to offer escape, the concept of delineating a specific place can be observed in the development of towns for the purposes of attracting tourists (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007; Powell, 2004; Bennett, 1986). The nature or atmosphere

of a place can be dictated by a myriad of factors; local culture, for example (Bennett, 1986), infrastructure (Hall, 1986), a specific attraction (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007) or, as will be explored in Chapter Three, an opportunity to invert one's normal behaviour (Foucault, 1967). However, issues of space and place in the context of this chapter are generally beyond the scope of this thesis, and that elaboration serves only to further contextualise the potential to present a particular place as an escape.

The escape offered by tourism arguably works on two levels: firstly, the physical transportation of the individual. In temporarily moving away from one's home environment for the purpose of leisure, the possibility of new or seldom-undertaken experience increases, with opportunity variously for relaxation (Park, Reisinger & Kang, 2008; Kozak, 2002), risk-taking (Chang, 2011; Cater, 2006), or adrenal rush (Buckley, 2012; Cater, 2006) (the latter two of which will be explored in Chapter Three). Furthermore, there is the ability to visit the attractions that form part of the tourism product in that destination (Navrátil, Pícha & Navrátilová, 2012; Cooper *et al*., 2008). Whilst the notion of indulgence may seem to be the same as the actions taken to garner esteem, it is important to note that, when motivated to escape, the effects are self-beneficial, rather than the outwardly-focussed seeking of esteem from others. Also physical is the length of escape; obviously a one-night's stay at a local hotel offers a far more temporary escape than a year-long voyage around the world; this aspect of escape is reasonably overt, and is beyond the scope of this research in further detail. However, its counterpart – a second level of escape – is particularly relevant to this research: the intangible, psychological feeling of escape.

Tourists can choose different means of escape, as destinations and attractions have brand-like identities (van der Merwe, Slabbert & Saayman, 2011; Kotler & Gertner, 2010; Beckerson, 2002). One can escape to Paris for romance and fine food, escape to San Francisco for Beat culture and music, or escape to a tropical island for relaxation in an isolated idyll. The images conjured by those destinations, whether real or illusory, give cues to the potential tourist (Garrod, 2009; Morgan & Pritchard, 1998; Leiper, 1990) as to what kind of escape they will have. The basic notion of removal from the everyday in order to partake in activities or behaviour that is out-of-the-ordinary does not convey the reality of the current market. Not only does it hark back to the advent of the package holiday, when UK overseas tourism overwhelming centred on Spanish resorts with a narrow set of experiences (Morgan, 2002; Turner & Ash, 1975), but it also ignores the theory that tourism does not completely exclude the everyday (Larsen, 2008; Lash & Urry, 1994). Tourists may not simply be escaping from household tasks and

responsibilities *per se*, but perhaps the very notion of modernity (Frost & Laing, 2014; Theodossopoulos, 2013; Gration *et al.*, 2011). In this respect, the aforementioned cues, and thus products that they describe, can be used to direct the thoughts and behaviour of visitors (Morgan, 1998); phrases such as 'fairy-tale' can be applied equally to a quaint German village or the Burj-al Arab in its mock-ancient modernity (Jarv, 2010). Phrases such as 'retreat', to signify wellness tourism (Pesonen & Komppula, 2010; Mak, Wong & Chang, 2009) could refer to a five-star city-centre hotel-spa or a no-frills walking holiday in the Lake District; an English village could be variously typified as a nostalgic step-back in time or a wasteland of culture (Frost & Laing, 2014).

This suggests that the interpretation of tourism products can be dictated by the supply side (Ashworth & Isaac, 2015). In the process of seeking esteem from society, the tourist nonetheless *does* escape and benefit from all the advantages that tourism bestows upon the self – they are still indulging in escape. Vice-versa, the process of escape may produce esteem from others, whether it is sought or not. As stated previously, there are other reasons why potential tourists may seek to travel (Kay, 2009 & 2003; Crompton, 1979; Lundberg, 1971), but the theories offered in this chapter attempt to define the underlying motivation toward tourism. Latterly, this thesis will explore more specific phenomena (such as authenticity, risk, novelty, and mortality) but, for now, this chapter will consider how those demands are met by the commodification process within tourism.

2.2: Towards Commodification: How does one become a tourist?

Whilst travel has existed as a cultural phenomenon for centuries (Light, 2017; Cooper, 2012; Stănciulescu, Molnar & Bunghez, 2011; Theobald, 1998), the concept of modern tourism – a consumer product distinct from the 'travails' of the travellers of pre-modern times (Boorstin, 1987) – can be said to begin around the mid-nineteenth century, when 'attractive items of travel were wrapped up and sold in packages' (Boorstin, 1987, p. 85; also MacCannell, 1976). This is a critical juncture in the evolution of travel as leisure as it marks the point in time at which the effort to organise a 'tour', and the risks involved, on the part of the consumer began to decrease substantially (Boorstin, 1987). The advancements of travel by train, then the car, and latterly air travel (Cooper, 2012; Urry & Larsen, 2011; Page, 1999; Boorstin, 1987), meant that the uncertainties of those undertaking the 'Grand Tour' – unreliable carriers, extortionate or unforeseen fees and underdeveloped roadways (Gunn, 1994; Boorstin, 1987) banished by the advent of the mass-produced car – could be eliminated towards convenient and affordable travel for leisure. However, it must be noted that tourism cannot simply be attributed to a small

number of organisations; rather it is an intricate web of entities (Lea Davidson, 1998; Page, 1995; Gunn, 1994), some of which work in harmony, and others which are in competition. Indeed, this harmonization of supply-side stakeholders has become a hallmark of locations around the world as pioneered by British seaside resorts pre-1945 (Beckerson, 2002), and has become critical to a destination trading itself as a tourist commodity (Cooper *et al.*, 2008; Beckerson, 2002). There are also the myriad 'supporting industries' which complete the tourist experience but which are not necessarily critical to its existence (Berghoff, 2002). Arguably, it is these secondary phenomena – such as souvenirs or contrived photo opportunities – which most accurately demonstrate the commodification of tourist locations, as they exist in a self-perpetuating model of consumerism (Berghoff, 2002). Essentially, when tourists purchase these souvenirs, they are validating them as relevant to their experience as, for example, it will be used to recall memories later on (Sturken, 2007; Swanson, 2004; McLean, 1997). This sense of meaning is crucial to understanding the effect of commodification on the tourist experience, and will be explored latterly in this chapter.

Specifically, this thesis will examine admission fees, the purchasing of souvenirs, and the 'servicescape' (Cooper *et al.*, 2008, p. 309) as what may be termed 'symptoms' of the commodification of tourism, as will now be discussed. To briefly contextualise the ensuing discussion, firstly consider two UK tourist attractions with opposing admission policies.

2.2.1: Admission Fees

Lancaster City Museum, in the centre of the historic city, offers free admission to all (Lancaster City Council, NDa). At no direct personal financial cost, an individual can explore an array of information and artefacts relating to the long history of Lancaster, its surrounding geographical area, and its famous military regiment. Should one visit the city, one could be easily tempted to spend an hour or more immersing oneself in the interesting exhibits – after all, it's free!

Two hundred and fifty miles away at the southern end of the Western mainline, the London Transport Museum gives its visitors a fascinating insight into the important link between the capital and its various methods of transport throughout history, including not only the iconic red London buses, but also the London Underground and the world-famous black cabs. Admission is free to under-16s, however adults must pay a fee (London Transport Museum, 2014). It is an interesting attraction for tourists and London residents alike; however, the presence of an admission fee presents an extra element of

consideration to that of free attractions such as the Lancaster City Museum.

Two museums, two valuable assets in a cultural and touristic sense, yet also two differing commercial stances regarding admission. The sociological implications and issues surrounding the concept of admission fees at cultural attractions has been debated since at least the 1840s (Cortell Vandersypen, 2012; Bailey & Falconer, 1998), and the discussion continues on the benefits of free admission to such sites (Cash, 2008; Le Gall-Ely *et al.*, 2007; Selwood & Davies, 2005). It can be noted that European museums have a long legacy of exclusivity regarding admission and admission fees (Cortell Vandersypen, 2012) and, initially, the debate centred on the type of clientèle the institution wished to attract, the implication being that those of the lower classes would not or could not appreciate the fine exhibits displayed in their hallowed halls (Cortell Vandersypen, 2012). This is in contrast to the American conception of the museum – that it is an embodiment of American freedom and as such should be available to all (Cortell Vandersypen, 2012). The modern picture, however, is slightly different.

In today's society of increased disposable income, it is the issue of financial upkeep that generally dictates the presence, and rate, of admission fees (Luksetich & Partridge, 1997), rather than any debate about exclusivity. Over the past three decades, there has been a growing consensus that publicly-funded museum should be free of entrance fees (Cortell Vandersypen, 2012; Lampi & Orth, 2009; Cowell, 2007; Le Gall-Ely *et al.*, 2007). Over the course of the first decade of the 21st century, the UK's Labour Government enacted a scheme to actively encourage museum trustees to 'go free', in an attempt to open up the museums which received Government funding (Cowell, 2007; Selwood & Davies, 2005; Martin, 2002). This apparently worked; visitor numbers increased by around 50% (Cash, 2008), mirroring the process in Sweden, where visitor numbers dropped after free admission was scrapped in 2007 (Cash, 2008). However, Luksetich and Partridge (1997) observed that increasing or introducing fees might not necessarily see a proportionate decrease in visitor numbers. Clearly, it is a delicate issue. Le Gall-Ely *et al.* (2007) describe the concept of free admission as intrinsically linked to the democratic opening of knowledge to all, a concept which is arguably at the heart of the public museum in the modern age (Lepik & Carpentier, 2012; Levitt, 2008). The danger is, of course, that those of lower financial means may be deterred from using museums because of admission costs (Levitt, 2008) which could lead to an exclusion of certain social groups. Reducing such exclusion has been a key feature of recent UK Government policy (Levitt, 2008), and as such this opening of knowledge to all can be said to be the antithesis to the notion of admission fees. Yet O'Hagan (1995) notes that a

majority of visitors to free museums are from the higher socio-economic groups and that the presence of entrance fees is not a prevailing factor in why those from lower socio-economic groups do not visit as frequently (though further exploration of motivation is beyond the scope of this thesis).

The concept of admission fees is not all-or-nothing. Many institutions operate a two-tier method of admission (West, 2012). In 2008, Manchester's Museum of Science and Industry (MOSI) played host to the controversial 'Bodyworlds' exhibition, in which preserved cadavers are displayed (Bouchard, 2010; Stone, 2009a) as a critique of human mortality. Bodyworlds is an example of a high-profile, temporary 'blockbuster' exhibit (Cortell Vandersypen, 2012; West, 2012; McLean, 1997). It is common for institutions to charge only for the exhibit in question, while the rest of the museum's content is free to access, as was the case with MOSI and can be observed elsewhere at the Natural History Museum (*Natural History Museum*, 2014)*,* and the Victoria & Albert Museum (*Victoria and Albert Museum*, 2014)*.* Cooper *et al*. (2008; also Wanhill, 2003a) argue that, due to a decline in demand for 'static attractions' – attractions which stay the same year-round – the presence of a temporary exhibit will increase demand (Cortell Vandersypen, 2012), and thus tourists are more inclined to pay a fee in an otherwise free institution. Sites can use an admission fee as a means of conveying a level of exclusivity, but it is nonetheless seen as unseemly to do so at cultural attractions in most cases as it 'frames' (Joy, 1998, p. 259) the attraction in an exclusive light which may restrict social access (Cortell Vandersypen, 2012; Shaw & Williams, 1994b) when compared to the standard, free-to-enter exhibits (Cooper *et al*., 2008). However, publicly-funded sites, including those funded by National Lottery grants, clearly have far less of a financial imperative in their operation than their privately-funded counterparts. Whilst they are still accountable in the sense of efficiency and customer service (Babbidge, 2000), not-for-profit services do not have the imperative of profit generation beyond their overheads. Indeed, whilst the aforementioned debate on free admission has raged, the charging of admission fees at privately-funded attractions of lesser cultural value is an accepted norm (Cooper *et al*., 2008).

As an example of a large-scale tourist attraction, consider the theme park, now a prominent and considerable part of the visitor economy (Cooper, 2012; Wanhill, 2003a; Wong & Cheung, 1999). Braun and Soskin (2010) note that the price of admission can be a powerful stimulant of demand as observed in Florida, where the proliferation of theme parks led to strategic altering of fees across the market. Indeed, Ryan, Shih Shuo and Huan (2010) find that tourists to theme parks are reasonably price inelastic in that they

are willing to pay a premium on the premise that it is a quality product. Shaw and Williams (2004b) find that, because of that inelasticity, theme parks are heavily commodified (also Spracklen, 2009; Kim & Jamal, 2007; Swarbrooke, 1995), which in turn fuels further price increases as suppliers seek to bring in ever-more thrilling rides and 'imaginary pleasures' by engendering a 'falsification of place' (Shaw & Williams, 1994a, p. 168) or invoking the 'non-place' (Elkington, 2015). These two similar concepts build on the delineation of space for the provision of escape, but suggest an inherent falseness to tourist attractions (also Boorstin, 1987). A location may have 'place attributes' (Hall & Page, 2014, p. 127; also Hannigan, 1998), but may not necessarily offer what it purports to represent (Crouch, 2015; Elkington, 2015). This concept of falseness can be further observed in tourism to film sets (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007) or the rather ambitious (and ultimately failed) attempt to position the Blackpool Winter Gardens as a cultural centre to rival the great European cities (Bennett, 1986). This falseness has implications on authenticity (as will be explored latterly in this chapter), but for now it is critical to note that this overt falseness demonstrates a key difference in the provision of fees as opposed to more traditional cultural institutions (Aitchison, MacLeod & Shaw, 2000; also Elkington, 2015) which are seen as valuable public assets when compared to overtly commercial entities to which we may be more ambivalent (Elkington, 2015).

Theme parks can therefore be said to be one such type of overtly commercial entity (Wanhill, 2003a; Wong & Cheung, 1999). The admission fee is a fundamental part of the experience in that one pays in order to be allowed in (Sharma, 2009; Shaw & Williams, 2004b; Wong & Cheung, 1999). Therefore, it can be said that this type of tourism is different to the 'cultural' tourism discussed previously where, as noted, admission fees are subject to much discussion, yet within overtly commercial entities, the admission fee is an issue of ambivalence (whilst one may prefer not to pay, the payment itself is understood as necessary). However, as will now be explored, it is not only admission fees that take such cultural sites towards the commercial activity of the overtly commodified attractions like theme parks. Souvenirs also play their part.

2.2.2: Souvenirs

The sale of souvenirs and merchandising as a means of extending the profile and influence of a given brand in the private sector is relatively well understood from a commercial perspective (Kotler & Gertner, 2010; Hall & Piggins, 2003; von Bories, 2003). Indeed, the brand can become an attraction in itself as can be observed at sites such as NikeTown (Stevens, 2003, von Bories, 2003), other obviously branded attractions such

as the Guinness Brewery, Dublin, or the various LegoLand sites. However, the availability and interpretation of souvenirs in a less overtly commercial context (i.e. gift shops at cultural and heritage attractions) is much more convoluted and fraught by two particular issues: taste (considered in subsequent chapters) and authenticity (Petroman *et al.*, 2013; Poulter, 2011; Artan, 2008; Sturken, 2007). In that sense, there is the potential for the presence of commercially available souvenirs to affect the meaning of the attraction; just as admission fees affect our interpretation of the experience, so souvenirs also add their own influence, as will now be shown.

From around the 1970s onwards, as museums were required to be increasingly accountable to the public, revenue streams became vitally important to their on-going viability (Cortell Vandersypen, 2012; Swanson, 2004; Love & Sheldon, 1998). As a result of this reliance, the gift-shop has become a ubiquitous – arguably even an inherent – fixture of modern tourism which tourist expect and desire to encounter (Brown, 2013a; Kent, 2010; *Retailing for Visitor Attractions*, 1997). By creating the infrastructure required to run a commercial outlet within a visitor attraction, a supplier is overtly expressing the commodification of the experience, but its effect on the overall experience may be down to the reaction of tourists themselves (Swarbrooke, 1995) (as will be further investigated in Part Two of this thesis). Gift shops can be said to dilute the authenticity of a site (Cooper et. al., 2008), particularly as there is often merely a 'faint line' (*Retailing for Visitor Attractions*, 1997, p. 16) between the attraction and the retailing operation but, as stated, they are actively welcomed by tourists as 'part of the day out' (McLean, 1997, p. 166). The latter point demonstrates the willingness of tourists to consume tourism as a gratifying commodity (Spracklen, 2009), and also neatly ties together the concept of both 'how' and 'why' one becomes a tourist (Urry & Larsen, 2011). As many of the trappings of tourist activity can now be viewed at home via TV or the Internet, individuals understand that engaging in tourist activity is to purchase something and experience it, rather than anything more profound (Urry & Larsen, 2011). Latterly in this chapter, the further implications of this semiotic perspective will be considered, but for now let us consider the aforementioned financial imperative, the crafting of experience, and the potential for branding.

As stated, the gift shop has become ubiquitous at tourist attractions. Physical products make a service tangible (Paraskevaidis & Andriotis, 2015; Swarbrooke, 1995); however, at visitor attractions, such things as historical artefacts or white-knuckle rides are only temporarily available to the tourist – he or she does not have tangible access indefinitely. Without the presence of souvenirs, there is no tangible product to take away

(Paraskevaidis & Andriotis, 2015). Thus, the souvenirs allow the brand to be disseminated away from the site, and potentially add to the site's social goals (Morgan & Pritchard, 2005; McLean, 1997; Lovelock & Weinberg, 1988) – indeed, it is an attempt to make the temporary escape a little less temporary. By selling souvenirs to consumers, the attraction gives the tourist items which link directly to the experience which they have had (Poulter, 2011). Consequently, McLean (1997) finds a tendency for sites to offer tacky or poor quality souvenirs merely to address the financial imperative of running a retail outlet (the so-called 'kitschification' of tourism, which will be explored in Chapter Four). This suggests that the effect of souvenirs on the experience is currently unclear.

Perhaps this tendency towards poor quality souvenirs is indicative of the commercial nature of modern tourism as described thus far. However, it is not only the type of products on offer that add or detract from the experience; the physical make-up of the retail space is also crucial, as it forms part of the service (Swarbrooke, 1995). There is differing advice on the best possible way to incorporate a retail space within a visitor attraction, although it seemingly depends much on the site itself. Swarbrooke (1995) notes that such shops must be bright and prominent so as to attract more custom, but the example of the discreet presence of a shop appropriate to the reverent ambience within King's College Chapel, Cambridge, highlights the alternative (*Retailing for Visitor Attractions*, 1997). It is generally accepted, however, that it must not interfere with the main goals and corporate strategy of the attraction (Milman, 2015; McLean, 1997; *Retailing for Visitor Attractions*, 1997; Swarbrooke, 1995), and that the subject matter of a site will have a huge influence on the presentation of commercial goods and services (Milman, 2015; Brown, 2013a; Stone, 2009b).

Retailing within tourism also enables the attraction to develop a brand, which is important particularly in areas with a large concentration of tourist sites, all vying for patronage – indeed, it can lead to 'compatibility' with other attractions, mutually increasing footfall (Weidenfeld, Butler & Williams, 2010). Branding of attractions (and the managing companies) has been well documented (Morrison, 2013; Kotler, Bowen & Makens, 2010; Hall & Piggin, 2003; Morgan, 1996), yet it is considered to difficult to implement and can take a long time to develop (*Retailing for Visitor Attractions*, 1997; Swarbrooke, 1995). As such, research continues to examine this delicate area towards understanding the effect of retailing within specific touristic environments (e.g. Leask, 2016; Camarero, Garrido & Vincente, 2015; Leask, Fyall & Barron, 2013). Branding and retailing is a desirable asset, as it can increase the appeal of a site (Munjal & Jauhari, 2015; Morrison, 2013; Hall & Piggin, 2003; *Retailing for Visitor Attractions*, 1997). Once

again, however, the nature of a site confers perspective on the connotations of the brand. For example, whilst the overtly commercial NikeTown stores (von Bories, 2003) only exist as attractions after the successful cultivation of a worldwide brand, and thus is inherently commodified, a site possessing World Heritage status benefits from huge prestige (Hall & Piggin, 2003; Morrison, 2013) which is not overtly commercial. Branding adds intangible value to a site (Morrison, 2013; Kotler, Bowen & Makens, 2010) such as reliability or identity, (Morgan, 1996) but, much like the presence of souvenir shops, must be relevant to the experience on offer or the tourist may feel misled (Morrison, 2013; Morgan, 1996).

As suggested herein, retailing may be a commercial necessity but, as will be considered latterly in this chapter, they have been shown to have an effect on the visitor experience and authenticity. For now, let us consider the overall environment in which such commerce may be cultivated – the concept known as the 'servicescape'.

2.2.3: 'If you build it, he will come': Servicescapes within tourism

The above oft-misquoted maxim, taken from the 1989 film 'Field of Dreams' (*IMDb*, 2015) neatly encapsulates the desires of many governments and industry figures to mass tourism from the mid-20th century onwards (Cooper, 2012; Cooper *et al*., 2008) – to create a branded product or 'commodity' with which to attract tourists and their money (also Yoshida, Bui & Lee, 2016). It can be argued that the supply side ultimately drives demand by enacting the commodification process, which contributes to, or becomes a catalyst for, a tourism product (Cooper *et al.*, 2008; Leask, 2003). An attraction only becomes so when a form of value is ascribed to it (Yoshida, Bui & Lee, 2016; Prideaux, 2003) and so a 'place' becomes a 'space' in order to create a viable attraction by way of a specific experience or product (Elkington, 2015; Joy, 1998).

If you build it, however, they may not necessarily come (Swift, 2004). Purpose-built resorts – planned developments providing a tourism product – have varied success; whilst the Disneyland brand has had sustained tourist interest for 50 years (Toyoda, 2014), many British seaside resorts such as Morecambe (once famous for its Pleasureland attraction) are in overall decline within the same period (Jarratt, 2013; Butler, 2001a). Furthermore, such resorts or attractions may never really have sustained success (Swift, 2004) as has happened in some 'peripheral areas' where planned developments are made to revitalise a declining local economy (MacCannell, 2011; Prideaux, 2003), and where the link between rival or contrasting attractions is generally unclear (Weidenfeld, Butler & Williams, 2010). As such, it can be seen that the planning of service delivery is key in

the provision of tourist experience.

Arguably, the most critical choice in that provision is the creation of what is termed the 'servicescape' – the physical make-up of a space where a given service is delivered (Cooper & Hall, 2013; Dong & Siu, 2013; Kim & Moon, 2009; Bitner, 1992). The term 'servicescape' has been widely applied particularly in the retail and hospitality industry; it may be also termed an 'experiencescape' (Cooper & Hall, 2012; O'Dell, 2005) or 'imagescape' (Wanhill, 2003a, p. 19) as visitor satisfaction at attractions relies on the tourist experience in terms of content and features (Wanhill, 2003a; see also Ashworth & Isaac, 2015), as opposed to a physical product. Whereas an attraction may succeed in appealing to its target market, neglecting to transfer this into a manageable and enjoyable experience may contribute to relative failure of the site (Wanhill, 2003a) because an appropriate product/ service mix – that is, the servicescape – is imperative (McLean, 1997; Swarbrooke, 1995). The decisions that a site manager makes are therefore vital (Prideaux, 2003; Swarbrooke, 1995) to the presentation of the experience on offer (Walsh, 1992) because the service that the tourist receives is core to their interpretation of the site (Frochot, 2001; Swarbrooke, 1995).

A notorious example of failure in this respect is the Millennium Dome in London, opened at the turn of the 21st century to much fanfare, an iconic visitor attraction with a planned lifespan of just one year. The legacy of the Dome is that of a disappointing attraction (Hemmington *et al*., 2005; Prideaux, 2003; Ravenscroft, Chua & Reeves, 2000) despite benefiting from an investment of around £628million (McGuigan & Gilmore, 2000) and a huge tourist footfall (Hemmington *et al*., 2005). The visitor experience has been criticised as too 'bloated' to be effectively consumed in one day (Hemmington *et al*., 2005, p.7; also McGuigan, 2003). Thus, it is remembered rather ignominiously (Gilliat-Ray, 2004; McGuigan, 2003), saved from obscurity only by its reincarnation, under new ownership, as a concert venue. Arguably, the ignominy was fostered by the unclear and unsuitable servicescape, which, as suggested previously, is a key aspect of the commodification process

It is interesting to consider Prideaux's (2003) assertion that not all tourist attractions are conceived or designed primarily for visitor enjoyment (also Walsh, 1992); rather, their foremost aim is to generate a profit. The servicescape is bound to reflect this as it must be in line with the corporate aims (Prideaux, 2003). Ascribing themes bestows a site with strong continuity in order to achieve this (Wanhill, 2003b) and can also alleviate problems such as irregular crowd flow; on a large scale, the servicescape can actually be used to control tourists into following certain physical behaviours (Bryman,

1999), notably through the use of semiotics (as discussed further subsequently in this thesis). It may be to convey a particular cultural meaning or to direct tourists to a particular commodity (Gottdiener, 1998), or to generally denote the way in which it is intended to be interpreted (Urry, 1990). Gottdiener (1998) uses the casinos of Las Vegas to demonstrate this; the décor, lighting, and layout (amongst other considerations) all point toward the allure of money, that being the sole reason they exist (though it is to generate money for the owners, not the tourists). It can be said that they are 'over-endowed' with meaning (Gottdiener, 1998, p.45) as a marketing tool, which demonstrates how the servicescape can be constructed in order to further organisational aspirations.

Indeed, these aspirations may conflate with tourist expectations in order to shape a pleasing experience. Boorstin (1987) writes extensively on not only the inherent bias of tourists towards their own desires (rather than new concepts) which arguably leads to inauthentic experiences, but also the 'pseudo-events' which are completely contrived, inauthentic experiences peddled by the supply-side. Boorstin (1987) suggests that tourists seek out such experiences subconsciously rather than something completely new (Lee & Crompton, 1992; Berlyne, 1950). Further to this, Timothy and Boyd (2003, p. 251) state that, whilst tourists may desire a modicum of genuine experience, they would find true authenticity 'tasteless, dirty [or] unacceptable'.

In this respect, Urry (1990) notes that semiotics are key in the interpretation of authenticity. This is alluded to by Boorstin (1987) in his description of the Istanbul Hilton hotel, which offers modern, Western comforts and amenities in the bustling city from which tourists can dip their toe into Turkish culture. Crucially, this is without having to use Turkish hotels that may be of a different (i.e. inferior) standard to that which is desired (the aforementioned 'unacceptable' authenticity of Timothy and Boyd (2003)). This subliminal falseness can also be observed variously in Canadian 'tourist villages' (Frost & Laing, 2014; MacCannell, 2011), 'invented' festivals and 'instant traditions' created solely for tourists (Getz, 1998) and the 'staged' authenticity of MacCannell (1976), which will be explored further in Chapter Four along with Boorstin's pseudo-events.

These 'signs' give tourists cues as to what to expect and how to behave. According to Peirce's theory of semiotics (cited in Pinto Santos & Soares Marques, 2011; also Pennington & Thomsen, 2010), there are three elements to the phenomenon: the sign itself, the object or experience denoted by it, and the 'interpretant'. Clearly, whilst the first and second aspects may remain relatively unchanged, the individual interpreting the sign will bring their own experiences into the process. A tourist may see through the fog of signs designed to denote some form of authenticity and denounce the venue as

inauthentic, yet another tourist may take the signs at face value. Nelson (2005) notes that tourism is unique in its reliance on a process of 'visualization' (also Pennington & Thomsen, 2010), whereby the experience is reduced to visual cues and representation from which tourists make their interpretations on issues of quality and authenticity (Lennon, 2017; Stone, 2016; Ashworth & Isaac, 2015). Indeed, it can be argued that tourists often only experience the signs, and not the producers themselves (Knudsen & Rickly-Boyd, 2012). Therefore, such signs – both physical and metaphorical, overt and implicit – are, as outlets of the commodification process, designed to direct visitor behaviour. This also relates to the sharing of images for esteem.

The symptoms of commodification as identified earlier in this chapter – admission fees, souvenirs, and servicescapes – are all arguably signs that denote certain properties as identified previously and which will be further elaborated upon in subsequent chapters. Their effect on the visitor experience in dark tourism, however, is not currently understood fully; the empirical research within this thesis will attempt to outline such effects in line with the motivations noted herein. For now, the phenomena explored in this chapter serve to provide an underpinning for subsequent chapters which will build upon the notion of the tourist's 'search for meaning' as served by the commodification of tourism and use those foundations in order to focus specifically upon dark tourism in the next chapter.

2.3: Chapter Summary

This chapter has established many key concepts that are of pertinence to the overall aims of this research. In taking a supply-demand approach, this chapter has outlined ways in which individuals are motivated to engage in tourism through the seeking of escape or esteem, and has begun to conceptualise the way in which the supply-side addresses the demand for such experience. In doing so, some 'symptoms' of that commodification have been discussed regarding the effects which they may have on the interpretation of experience. Latterly, the chapter examined the role of semiotics in the visitor experience, and it is suggested herein that these signs sculpt and shape the visitor experience by pointing them in certain (metaphorical) directions and denoting authenticity. This chapter is summarised below in Figure 5.
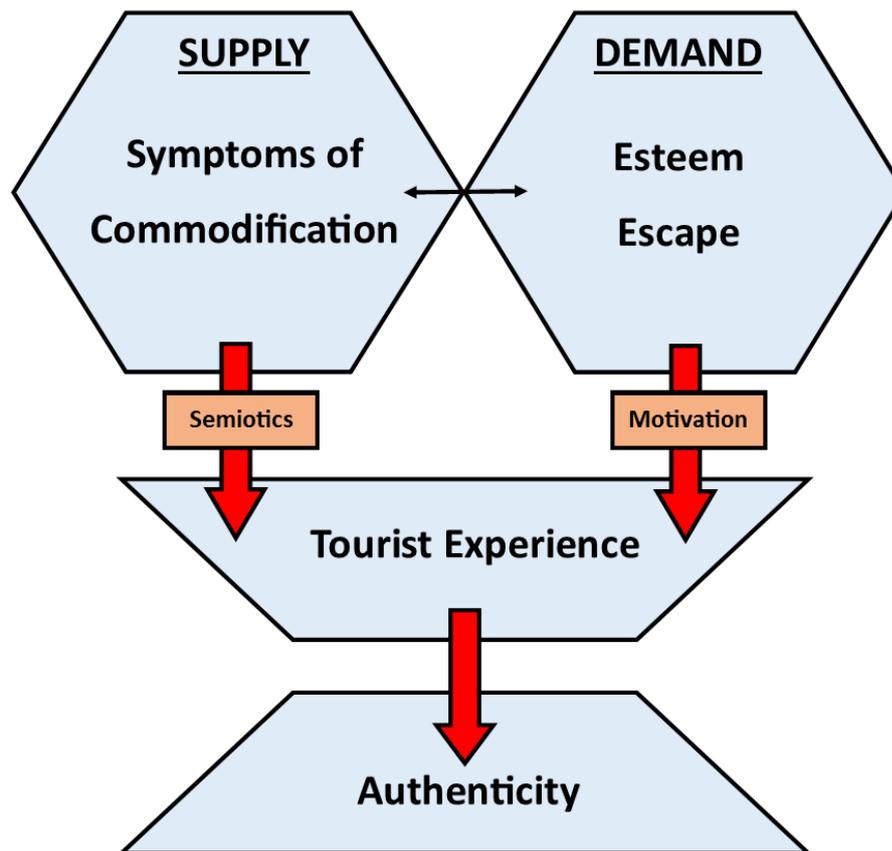
Figure 5: Conceptual framework of Chapter Two

However, this has been under the assumption that tourism is overtly pleasurable, whether in the context of entertainment or education, whether inauthentic or authentic, and whether for esteem or escape. However, as we now begin to delve into the realm of dark tourism, that assumption must be abandoned; travel to places associated with death, disaster and tourism is not an overtly pleasant experience. This thesis shall now examine the essence of why one undertakes what may be unsettling, awkward, contestable, or unpleasant experiences and, more pertinently, how the commodification process affects the visitor experience in such circumstances. As such, many of the concepts covered in this chapter will be re-introduced in Chapter Three in order to begin to unravel the nature of the dark tourism experience and, as a result, understand the effect that commodified experiences have on tourist experience and the conceptualisation of mortality and death within a touristic environment.

Chapter Three

Supplying and Consuming Dark Tourism

3.0: Chapter Introduction

In much of the Western world, funeral rites – whether religious or not – are generally reverential affairs. Graves or memorials are stark and similar, and the dead are protected by the maxim that one must not 'speak ill of the dead' (Ariès, 1981). However, in other cultures, the dead are often celebrated, photographed, and treated in ways that might seem inappropriate or unseemly to many Westerners (Light, 2017; Young & Light, 2016). The sky burials of Mongolia and Tibet, the joyous atmosphere of Balinese death rituals, or the lurid decorations of coffins in parts of Ghana (which symbolise the deceased's passions in life) all demonstrate the vastly differing ways in which humans approach the unifying inevitability of death. As this chapter will show, dark tourism may be an attempt to peel back the veil of death not only regarding our own inevitable demise as humans, but also what we may term 'unnatural death' – namely murder, disaster, and other phenomena that cause harm or loss of life (Collins-Kreiner, 2016). These concepts – and the more exact nature of dark tourism – will be explored throughout this chapter. As will be considered, dark tourism has its own unwritten rules and notions regarding, for example, tourist motivation, ethical considerations and the consequences of commodification. Arguably, however, dark tourism's concerns are particularly controversial because death is subject to vastly varying views, beliefs, and rituals, which are generally deeply rooted in one's religious and cultural membership. To that end, this chapter seeks to address those controversial concerns and their relationship with the commodified tourist experience.

This chapter will firstly explore what dark tourism is currently understood to entail not only in the sense of academic concepts, but also the reality of its presentation. Then, by maintaining the supply-demand approach, and incorporating many of the concepts introduced in Chapter Two, this chapter will observe how the commodification process links with societal and personal conception of death, disaster and other such concepts involved in dark tourism. Furthermore, and in conjunction with the visitor motivations of esteem and escape, this chapter will focus on the visitor to consider why one may engage in dark tourism; it is suggested herein that dark tourism not only offers a novel experience in a novel place, but also that it allows one to garner the esteem of others. This, as will be shown, is not simply in the consumption of experience, but also one's perceived or actual emotional response. It will also be shown that society's approach to death and dying may in fact dictate the commodification of dark tourism and thus the potential for authentic engagement with thanatological concepts. The examination in this chapter will be underpinned with existing theory, such as Stone's (2006) Dark Tourism Spectrum. It notes

that there is a wide range of dark tourism sites, and that various characteristics of a given site/ experience point towards its appropriate position on a continuum. As will be shown, it neatly characterises the disparity within dark tourism; the attraction and supply of sites of genocide is not the same as that of the Dungeon attractions (Stone, 2009b), and Stone's Spectrum allows that difference to be articulated. However, both can be described as sites of dark tourism, and indeed there are still arguably some similarities between the two. The similarity lies in the process of commodification, which has been explored in Chapter Two and which will now be developed to specifically consider dark tourism and its idiosyncrasies; therefore, the chapter firstly discusses the exact nature of dark tourism as an industry.

3.1: Dark Tourism: Illumination of an industry

Although evidence suggests that travel to sites of death and suffering has existed since antiquity (Light, 2017; Baldwin & Sharpley, 2009), tourism, as explained in Chapter Two, is a modern concept distinct from mere 'travel' and is situated within modern capitalism. Therefore, dark tourism can arguably be said to begin in the early part of the 20th century not only in line with the development of the tourism industry as a whole, but also due to several events leading to mass death and suffering. Large-scale maritime disasters of the time, and the then-unprecedented loss of life in the First World War (Lennon & Foley, 2000a), along with the germination of mass transportation, allowed voyeuristic or memorialising visits to sites of death *en masse* for the first time (Baldwin & Sharpley, 2009; Sharpley, 2009a; Seaton, 1999). It is likely that there was no name for this type of travel at the time; indeed, the current name has only existed since the mid-1990s (Lennon & Foley, 1996). Dark tourism – with 'thanatourism' as its sister term (Seaton, 1999) – has come to envelop phenomena such as 'grief tourism' (Levitt, 2010; Lewis, 2008; West, 2004) and 'black spots' (Rojek, 1993), alongside more specific terms such as 'Holocaust tourism' (Friedrich & Johnston, 2013; Schaller, 2007; Seaton, 1999) to become a widely accepted term for the industry, despite a relative lack of clarity on its precise and exact definition (Lennon & Teare, 2017; Light, 2017; Biran & Poria, 2012; Stone & Sharpley, 2008). Although its nature has been widely covered (Lennon & Teare, 2017; Stone, 2016; Raine, 2013; Sharpley & Stone, 2009a; Stone, 2006; Foley & Lennon, 1996; Seaton, 1996), it nonetheless requires some grounding in the context of this thesis.

Stone (2006, p. 146) describes dark tourism as 'travel to sites associated with death, disaster and the seemingly macabre', a definition which has been well accepted by other academics (e.g. Raine, 2013) and, by reviewing existing academic literature, one

may draw a reasonably firm impression of what is termed 'dark tourism'. The literature identifies sites focussed on entertainment and heritage such as the Dungeon attractions (Stone, 2009b) and those dedicated to local/ national history (Farmaki, 2013) such as castles and other military institutions. Another category is graveyards, particularly those housing the graves of notable individuals (Young & Light, 2016; Raine, 2013; Levitt, 2010). More notoriously, dark tourism also encompasses places of highly-planned mass murder such as Ground Zero (Stone, 2012; Sturken, 2007; Edkins, 2004), sites of genocide in Rwanda (Friedrich & Johnston, 2013), sites relating to the Transatlantic Slave Trade (Wales, 2008; Dann & Seaton, 2001), and perhaps the epitome of dark tourism, the Nazi concentration camps of the Holocaust (Stone, 2009c; Lennon & Foley, 2000b). Just as darkness has shades, arguably dark tourism too has shades in terms of the contents and themes of the differing sites; to this end, Stone (2006) devised the Dark Tourism Spectrum (see Figure 1, Chapter One) in order to conceptualise the typology of the industry. For example, the Brontë Parsonage Museum in Hawarth, Yorskhire, trades on the dark history of the family and can be said to be an example of dark tourism (Townshend, 2013), but it is clearly not dark to the magnitude of Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland, which was a major site in the genocide of millions. As such, the model allows sites to be differentiated on the grounds of political influence, historical accuracy, authenticity and other such variables. Raine (2013) adapted Stone's Spectrum to conceptualise the different types of visitors to graveyards (see Figure 6), and Sharpley (2005) devised a matrix to explain the typology of sites in the context of demand as well as supply (see Figure 7), which both complements and contrasts Stone's Spectrum (though their exact relationship is beyond the scope of this thesis).

Darkest	Darker	Dark	Darkish	Dark/Light	Lightish	Light	Lighter	Lightest
Mourners	Pilgrims	Morbidly Curious	Thrill Seekers	Information Seekers	Hobbyists	Sightseers	Retreaters	Passive Recreationists

Devotion   **Experience**   **Discover**   **Incidental**

Pre-planned visit

Deep engagement with the site as a burial ground

More spiritual experience

Interest in a specific aspect of the site

Visits one specific site for one reason

Visitation often more spontaneous

Little or no engagement with the site as a burial ground

Detached experience

No specific interest in the site

May visit several burial sites for the same reason

Source: Adapted from Stone (2006)

Figure 6: 'A Dark Tourist Spectrum' (Raine, 2013)

Demand
(palest)

Pale tourism

Grey tourism supply

Supply
(accidental)

Supply
(purposeful)

Grey tourism demand

Black tourism
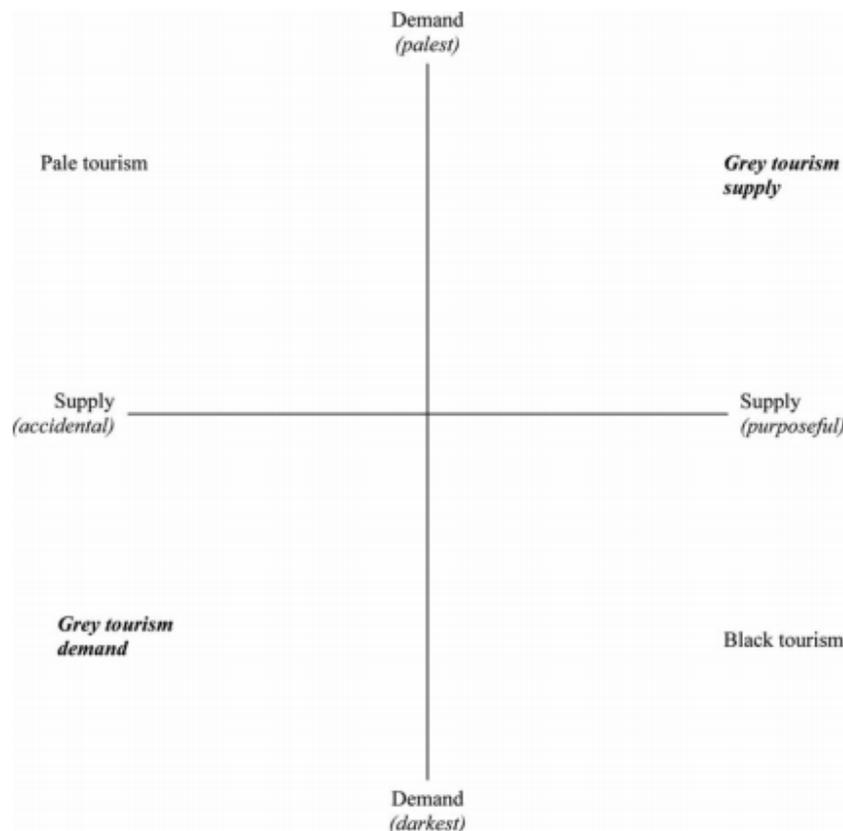
Demand
(darkest)

Figure 7: Matrix of dark tourism demand and supply (Sharpley, 2005)

Clearly, attempts have been made to conceptualise a phenomenon that is still relatively new to academic discussion, and the definition is relatively accepted (Lennon, Seaton & Wight, 2017; Buda & McIntosh, 2013; Lemelin *et al*., 2013; Nawijn & Fricke, 2013; Biran, Poria & Oren, 2011; Mowatt & Chancellor, 2011; Podoshen & Hunt, 2011). Therefore, this thesis will now consider how dark tourism manifests in practice.

3.2: Presenting Dark Tourism

Whilst the subject matter within the sphere of dark tourism is diverse, it can be shown that there are many similarities in the physical manifestation of dark tourism sites across the board. Lennon & Foley (2000a) suggest that dark tourism is a product of modern society – that its existence is indicative of modern social attitudes whereby everything must become public (Hall, 1986; MacCannell, 1976). As such, whilst the Western dominant discourse relating to grief in the 20th century was the concept of 'moving on' (Walter, 1999), it is now suggested that a preferential approach is to 'maintain a bond… indefinitely' (Walter, 1999, p. xiii) with the dead (also Jacobsen, 2016; Young & Light, 2016). This link can be maintained privately, but it is also evident in the increased attention given to dark tourism (Podoshen *et al.*, 2015; Stone, 2006) – the 'becoming public' of death. However, the attitude whereby everything must become public is not all-encompassing when it comes to death. This can be witnessed, for example, by the reactions to the footage of executions which has been released on the Internet; public reaction to terrorist propaganda from al-Qaeda or ISIS is generally that of outrage when faced with the prospect of such lurid footage being freely available (Parkinson, 2014).

Perhaps, then, MacCannell's aforementioned assertion that all must become public is not completely accurate. Dark tourism can instead offer a medium somewhere between the two poles of complete privacy and complete publicity. Dark tourism sites must offer tourists the chance to consume death within the accepted boundaries of modern tourism and taste (Young & Light, 2016; Stone, 2012b; Timothy, 2011) whilst simultaneously facing the elements of taboo relating to death in our society (Stone, 2012b; Baldwin & Sharpley, 2009; Stone, 2009a). This balance relies on the chronology of events (Lennon & Foley, 2000a) insofar as the time-frame in which the events in question occurred dictates the manner in which it is mediated to tourists, and arguably therefore dictates the realms of taste. For example, medieval torture is often looked upon for entertainment purposes (for example the 'Dungeon' attractions – Stone, 2009b) as it happened so far back as to have no relevance on a personal level, but merely exists for

historical curiosity or fun. Contrast this, however, with a dark tourism site dealing in the very recent past, such as Ground Zero in New York.

Since the events of September 11th, 2001, political and touristic discourse surrounding the former site of the World Trade Centre has evolved (Lisle, 2004). In the immediate aftermath of the atrocity, a viewing platform was erected in order to satisfy the vast tourist demand to visit the site, but was dismantled within a year (Edkins, 2004; Lisle, 2004). The platform required investment in infrastructure from the local government, and also necessitated a ticketing system – both of which are symptoms of commodification – despite an absence of official discourse at the site, which was supplied externally by Governmental policy of the time (namely military action in Afghanistan and Iraq) via the media. After the removal of the platform, in late 2002 (Stone, 2012a), the landscape of public sharing and understanding underwent further transition and controversy (such as the planning of the widely misrepresented 'Ground Zero mosque', in reality a multi-faith centre some distance from Ground Zero – Batstone, 2012) which was brought up-to-date by the opening of the 9/11 memorial and museum in 2014 (*9/11 Memorial*, 2014). This new tourist offering provides a fresh milestone in the commemoration of the mass death on a national and international level given its prominence in New York City. As such, it can be argued that this gestation period in which the discourse constantly developed is evidence of chronology playing its part in the form of specific milestones and anniversaries.

Milestones and anniversaries are often used to re-evaluate perceptions, or re-position tourist attractions within the marketplace (Lennon & Foley, 2000a; Rojek, 1993). Despite being arbitrary points in time after an event, the notion of 'round' anniversaries, particularly in multiples of five (Lennon & Foley, 2000a), is sufficiently cemented within Western life to have meaning ascribed to them whether, realistically, there is any there or not. For example, 2014's 450th anniversary of Shakespeare's birth is so obscure as to arguably have very little relevance to his work, yet it is sold as a meaningful milestone by a regional tourism board (*Shakespeare's England*, 2014). In terms of more recent chronology, 2014's centenary of the commencement of the First World War seems somewhat disingenuous on reflection as it is generally the end or resolution of conflict which is marked (specifically through the Remembrance Day memorials held on a yearly basis). Perhaps those responsible for organising the large-scale tributes did so in order to avoid criticism (a concept that will be explored in 3.6); indeed, political factors and their consequences fundamentally influence the presentation of dark tourism (Light, 2017; Yoshida, Bui & Lee, 2016; Ivanovic & Saayman, 2013; Sharpley, 2009b; Dann & Seaton,

2001).

Across the spectrum of sites, the starkness in which death is displayed varies yet, just as has been explored in Chapter Two regarding features such as gift shops and admission fees, there is little consensus on the matter – merely social mores relating to political ideology (Ivanovic & Saayman, 2013; Sharpley, 2009b; Dann & Seaton, 2001). On the lighter end of Stone's Spectrum (Stone, 2006), the Dungeon attractions display death and its trappings in lurid and kitsch detail, yet of course no actual death has taken place – the representations are models and actors in costume (Stone, 2009b). The intention is to shock and amuse with no risk of causing upset – there is little need for diplomacy or political awareness. This contrasts with the war cemeteries for soldiers killed in the First World War; all individual gravestones are identical in order to demonstrate equality and discretion in handling the death of millions of individuals. Whilst it is intended to inform visitors of the enormity of the death toll, it also serves as a place of mourning for those who knew the individuals buried there (Raine, 2013). As such, although it is a tourist attraction dealing with the consequences of geopolitical conflict, the reason for the death of so many is scarcely alighted upon in order to avoid politically sensitive issues.

However, this preservation of lurid detail does not apply to all sites on the darker end of the spectrum. At Auschwitz-Birkenau, the enormity of the genocide is never avoided; various human remains are displayed along with instruments of subjugation and execution (Miles, 2002; Lennon & Foley, 2000a). Likewise, the controversial BodyWorlds exhibition (Stone, 2009a), whilst not exploring the act of death (rather the state of death), starkly displays dead bodies in a way never done before; not since the furtive and controversial anatomy exhibitions or morgue tours of the 19th century (Vita, 2003) has the paying public had access to cadavers on such a scale. Whilst this poses the question of why an individual would actively seek to engage in potentially unpleasant experiences (explored in detail latterly in this chapter), it also highlights the wide variance in accepted means of presentation which is not present in other types of heritage or art tourism (Stone, 2016; Timothy, 2011). Perhaps the only dominant discourse present across dark tourism is the notion that death is an entity that is greatly subject to ethical consideration (Stone, 2017; Stone, 2016; Shondell Miller & Gonzalez, 2013); whether the approach is towards the condemnation of genocide, preservation of the sanctity of the grave, or the British tenet that one should not 'speak ill of the dead', ethical considerations are constantly to the fore (Timothy, 2011; Sharpley, 2009a). To that end, the effect of ethics on dark tourism will now considered regarding how experiences of death dictate the approach to dark tourism.

3.3: How experiences of death inform dark tourism

The aftermath of death for the Self remains a mystery to humans. Whilst the Abrahamic religions believe in life after death in heaven, other religions believe variously in the reincarnation of humans on earth, the existence of corporeal spirits (such as ghosts and poltergeists), and other out-of-body processes (Ariès, 1981). This contrasts with the *de facto* scientific acceptance that all of the above are simply unproven myths and that, at present, it must be said that there is no life after death of which we can be certain. The only way that the dead can certainly live on is through the memories of the living (Walter, 1999); if we take that as the purpose of the commemoration of the dead, then on a societal scale it can be said that this reconciliation is one of the purposes of dark tourism (Jacobsen, 2016; Lennon & Foley, 2000a). However, the presence of the various beliefs (though varying from country to country, there is, throughout the world, significant belief in life after death – Flannelly *et al*., 2012) ensures that when it is presented on a societal scale, site managers must be aware of the issues which arise when death is discussed. This section will explore two of these issues: firstly, how actual death is experienced in Western society, before considering the role of ontological security, as it can be shown that these have an effect on how views on dark tourism are formed.

The experiences which the living have with the dead fall within the dichotomy of 'present death' and 'absent death' (Jacobsen, 2016; Stone, 2009a; Mellor & Shilling, 1993). The former is one which is associated with past times (Hohenhaus, 2013; Ariès, 1981); a family member passing away at home, surrounded by family, with the body remaining *in situ* for a time in order for others to pay their last respects, and other such societal rituals (Walter, 1999; Ariès, 1981). Indeed, despite the migration of much dying to hospitals (Williams *et al*., 2013), the notion of a 'present death' is still considered to be beneficial for families and the individual concerned (Tawil *et al*., 2014) in a process that has been a termed a 'good death' (though that notion is deeply flawed – Stone, 2009a). The notion of what a 'good' death might entail – and its flaws – is broadly beyond the scope of this thesis, but it can be accepted that it involves little or no suffering, the presence of loved ones, ideally in a home environment and, importantly, at an advanced age. Critically, the death occurs in an open way, as does the mourning process (Walter, 1999).

Counter to this notion, Giddens (1991) states that contemporary society (whether one considers it to be post-modern or not) has facilitated a reduction of the confrontation of death in public forums. Rather than death being 'present', and despite its ever-present exposure in media outlets (Hearsum, 2012; Kyllonen, 2010), it can be said to have become absent (Stone, 2009a; Mellor & Shilling, 1993), and those in such societies can be termed

'death-denying' (Stone, 2012b; Cannadine, 1981). The 'absent' death occurs away from the idealised environment described previously, and has become the norm in the developed world (Williams *et al.*, 2013). This is the realm of the hospital, the induced coma, the chapel-of-rest, and other modern phenomena which reduce the visibility of the dying and the recently deceased to all but the closest relatives – a 'depersonalized' process (Stone, 2009a; Walter, 2003; Ariès, 1981), which in turn makes death and mourning a more abstract concept than before (Hohenhaus, 2013; Walter, 1999; Ariès, 1981). This abstraction of death has been termed the 'sequestration of death' (Hohenhaus, 2013; Stanley & Wise, 2011; Mellor & Shilling, 1993; Giddens, 1991), through which encounters with death, dying or suffering are side-lined from daily life and become more remote (Stone, 2017; Stanley & Wise, 2011; Mellor & Shilling, 1993; Ariès, 1981). This is not just due to the advancement of life-prolonging medical care (Stanley & Wise, 2011; Froggatt, 2001; Ariès, 1981); it is also argued that death and dying disrupt society's narrative of the importance of the security of the Self (Giddens, 1991; Stanley & Wise, 2011). In this sense, the sequestration of death allows the individual to be free of the burden which one's inevitable demise may bring if it is confronted on a constant basis (Froggatt, 2011; Stanley & Wise, 2011; Giddens, 1991). By extension of this sequestration, death becomes taboo (Stone, 2009a; Willmott, 2000), and so the sequestration of death is perpetuated – death is not forbidden as such (Stone, 2017), but side-lined.

The absent death (as a product of the sequestration of death) can be observed at sites of dark tourism, too, despite it being a fundamentally public arena. Take, for example, the uniform rows of graves at the First World War memorial sites. Coming to terms with the death of millions of individual people is arguably much more fraught than that of a collective group, and so the graves are almost completely anonymised. Furthermore, in Western societies, the cadaver is a 'problematic' entity (Metcalf & Huntington, 1991), and so it is seldom seen. It can be argued that, as an example of how death is sequestered, such decisions are taken by suppliers of dark tourism in order to preserve 'ontological security' (Stanley & Wise, 2011; Mellor & Shilling, 1993; Giddens, 1991) within the visitors to such sites. The concept of ontological security relates to how content one is with one's own identity and being (Obs, 2009, cited in Stone, 2011a); it is suggested, therefore, that death threatens this notion of security as it heightens the feelings of futility or fallibility towards living (Giddens, 1991). This uneasy feeling is therefore termed 'ontological insecurity' (see also Stone, 2017).

Furthermore, the mass media has a huge impact on how we consume and interact

with death (Hearsum, 2012; Hanusch, 2008) (although of course the reporting of death in the media is not new). There still exists a strong taboo on images of the dead – the BBC, for example, would only broadcast such an image if it were absolutely necessary (Petley, 2003) and, naturally, the media only report 'Significant Other Death' (Stone, 2011b; Seaton, 2009): celebrities, politicians and victims of accidents or killing, and ideally a combination (Hearsum, 2012; Kyllonen, 2010). Indeed, it is the lurid, often sensationalised deaths of the young and famous which tend to dominate in terms of newsworthy gravitas (Kyllonen, 2010; North & Sheridan, 2010), rather than the more 'absent' deaths of, say, Palestinian children in war-torn Gaza (Hanusch, 2008). The intense media attention paid to TV personality Jade Goody's gradual demise from cancer was unique for its coverage of dying rather than simply death (Jacobsen, 2016; Ashton & Feasey, 2014; Frith, Raisborough & Klein, 2013) – a process mirrored by the on-going media speculation in the lead up to Nelson Mandela's death in 2013. However, Mandela was 95 with recurring health problems at the time of his death, whereas Goody was 27. The loss of Mandela was treated as a means of re-evaluating his achievements and adversities after a long life at the forefront of world affairs (*Africa Research Bulletin*, 2013) – it could easily be claimed that he was among the world's most famous and revered people. Critically, perhaps due to his age, there was no controversy surrounding his death. Clearly, the world-famous anti-apartheid activist, political prisoner and first democratically elected President of South Africa had a vastly more prominent public profile than the reality TV star and tabloid antihero. As will now be shown, this may, by way of media representation, afford to those individuals a different 'type' of death.

Celebrities are afforded 'spectacular' attention in the aftermath of their death (Stone, 2017), which gives the media (particularly the tabloid media) the opportunity to make speculation or insinuations about the famous individual's private life (Kyllonen, 2010; Harris, 2008). This does not happen on such a scale when an 'ordinary' person passes away – thus, media representations of real (as opposed to that in works of fiction) 'ordinary' death are essentially non-existent: according to Kyllonen (2010, p. 130), death is 'everywhere and nowhere'. This blurs the lines between absent and present deaths; whilst death is frequently reported, often in sensationalist tones, photographic representations remain low (Hanusch, 2008), and discussion of death on a personal level, such as that of a family member, is generally resigned to the realm of novels or fictional TV dramas (Stone, 2009a; Walter *et al*., 1995) – arguably another contribution to the sequestration of death. Celebrities are venerated, condemned, eulogised, beatified, scandalised and mythologised (Stone, 2017; Hearsum, 2012; Walter, 1999), but the

attention which they are afforded in death is concomitant with the essence of celebrity – it is played out (both literally and metaphorically) 'in front of the cameras' (Raisborough, Frith & Klein, 2012, p. 252) as a manifestation of the Significant Other Death. This further blurs the lines between 'absent' and 'present' when one considers that the connection between celebrities and their fan base is overblown and almost completely one-way. The celebrity does not know their fans in the way that the fans know them – indeed, the fans do not 'know' them, rather they simply know *about* them (Stone, 2009c; Harris, 2008). Therefore, it can be said that a famous individual has neither an absent or present death, as that presence (i.e. video footage or photographs) is mediated. So whilst the tabloid media may claim to have supplied their users with a viewpoint of Jade Goody's death, they were still not present themselves; but then again, they were not completely absent. It can therefore be seen that a potential demand for more 'real' encounters for death may result from that sequestration of death as perpetuated by the media.

The sequestration of death, however, cannot be said to be the chief cause of demand for dark tourism, as visitations to sites of death have been recorded for centuries (Baldwin & Sharpley, 2009). However, it can be argued that it may greatly govern how it is consumed. The absence of explicit imagery of the dead – except for the few which trade on stark memorialisation such as sites of Rwandan Genocide (Friedrich & Johnston, 2013) or the taboo-busting sensationalism of BodyWorlds (Stone, 2009a) – suggests that the absent death has become a preferred *status quo* within our society (Young & Light, 2016; Hohenhaus, 2013; Mellor & Shilling, 1993; Giddens, 1991). This is something of a paradox; despite the technological advances over the past two decades (Best, 2013; Best & Kellner, 2001, cited in Stone, 2009a) of internet use whereby the vast majority of human knowledge is available at the touch of a button, the cadaver has continued to recede beyond the pale, rather than just the pall. It is possible to suggest that, because of dark tourism's socially-sanctioned lifting of taboos surrounding the dead (Young & Light, 2016; Stone, 2013; Stone, 2012b), a more 'present' experience of death may return in the future (Lee, 2002). However, it seems more likely that the notion of present death will become blurred by the skewed media representation as noted herein (Ashton & Feasey, 2013; Frith, Raisborough & Klein, 2013; Kyllonen, 2010) and, as a socially-sanctioned experience, dark tourism. Thus, rather than attempting to revive the present death, perhaps attention should turn to understanding further the role of tourism in our understanding of death both in its scientific reality, and our spiritual and societal conception, and, furthermore, what can be considered acceptable within dark tourism as a commodified entity.

On that note, it can be said that the sequestration of death, which has become the norm for much of Western society (Hohenhaus, 2013; Walter, 1999; Ariès, 1981) creates the unwritten rules regarding what may be displayed and what may not in that dark tourism 'may help explain contemporary approaches to death and mortality' (Stone, 2009a, p. 33). However, the presence of death in the media – distinct from its absence in aspects of life as described previously – may also contribute to our understanding of what is appropriate (Stone, 2009a; Walter, Pickering & Littlewood, 1995). Images and experiences which go against the accepted and socially-sanctioned encounters with death may lead to a heightened sense of ontological insecurity (Yoshida, Bui & Lee, 2016; Giddens, 1991; also Stone, 2009a) and so individuals and groups seek ways to deal with this insecurity as well as the grief. For example, Sturken (2007) notes the increasing reliance upon kitsch items and sentiment by citizens of the USA in order to cope with trauma in the 21st century, chiefly the events of 9/11. Whereas we now use the term 'kitsch' (see Chapter Four), such notions could become normal over time if the sequestration of death continues. Stone (2009c) acknowledges the prevalence of new contexts (Young & Light, 2016) in which we experience grief and loss both collectively and individually in line with the sequestration of death in contemporary society, and Best (2013, p. 203), similarly, notes the omnipotence of the 'individual and the personal' responses. Clearly, each and every personal belief and experience of grief cannot be represented within each site, and so there can exist only a few dominant discourses at sites. However, dark tourism must arguably do so in a way that sensitively handles ontological security.

Seaton (2009, p. 75) states that an inherent 'Otherness' is the 'defining feature' of dark tourism. Though this concept is little-discussed, and it can be argued that dark tourism is actually a way of connecting with a death as a relevant aspect of human life (Stone, 2012b; Walter, 2009), other research describes various dark tourism sites and concepts as Other (Stone, 2017; Stone, 2013; Wilson, 2009). Seaton (2009) describes how sites of thanatourism vary in style yet have that defining Otherness as a constant. Whether it is Gothic splendour, stark bareness, or somewhere between, dark tourism can be said to centre on evoking the mysterious otherness of death (Laws, 2013; Seaton, 2009) because, as mentioned previously, death is essentially unknown, but also sequestered from daily life (Walter, 1999 & 1995; Ariès, 1981). Therefore, it can be said that ontological insecurity is an inherent part of dark tourism; tourists choose to expose themselves to what may be termed 'extreme Otherness' – Other which is beyond true comprehension, itself a novel concept (as explored subsequently in this chapter). However, Giddens (1991) notes that those who are most susceptible to ontological insecurity are those who

are unable to block out 'impinging dangers' – that is, ultimately, their own eventual death, so perhaps it can be said that those who are most at risk of ontological insecurity are more pre-disposed to avoid dark tourism experiences. More exploration of the reasons why one might engage with dark tourism is detailed subsequently in this chapter.

This chapter thus far has served to elaborate upon what is still a nascent academic field in order to contextualise what is meant by 'dark tourism', whilst also highlighting certain issues which are of direct relevance to subsequent discussion. Building on this groundwork, focus returns to the 'search for meaning' when specifically concerning dark tourism to understand how demand is related to the supply of commodified dark tourism and the visitor experience. By noting that the sequestration of death removes concepts of mortality from daily life, it can be observed that by engaging in dark tourism, tourists are seeking novel experiences.

3.4: Dark tourism as novelty-seeking

As discussed in Chapter Two, the motivations to become a tourist can be complex. Arguably, the motivations to engage in dark tourism are more so, as the experiences undertaken can be considered unusual in that genocide, torture or war are far removed from normal life. Indeed, whereas as hitherto the examination of tourism has involved an implicit assumption that tourists seek overtly pleasurable experiences (Ooi, 2005), dark tourism presents the possibility of *unpleasant* experiences. As in the previous chapter, the question of why one becomes a tourist will be addressed in two perspectives: an inward motivation – a search for escape via novelty and risk – and the motivation of garnering esteem from others (in 3.6).

Tourism is inherently novel as it takes the tourist into a setting outside of normal life (Urry, 1990). However, it is important to make a distinction between implicit novelty, such as travelling to a foreign country, and the explicit novelty of individually unusual activities. If a British tourist travels to Malaysia for a holiday, it is not that act in itself which provides the novelty. Rather, it may be sampling Malay cuisine (Chang, 2011), or perhaps visiting a local place of worship; essentially, the novelty comes from seeking sensation borne out of curiosity (Jang & Feng, 2007), which can be influenced by one's location in a new environment (Lee & Crompton, 1992; Hirschmann, 1984). Due to the prevalence of the absent death, encounters with death can now arguably be described as novel. Therefore, it is logical that providers of dark tourism play on this (Lennon, Seaton & Wight, 2017), marketing their tourist products as novel – even dangerous or risky, in an ontological sense – and there is much precedent for this in the tourism industry *en*

masse which demonstrates the use and benefits of novelty as a motivator as it has been argued that encounters with death are 'alternative' (Young & Light, 2016, p. 69). The notion of risk has been emphasized in consumer markets for decades (Chang, 2011), suggesting that it is something which suppliers are keen to sell. Not solely the preserve of dark tourism, risk is inherent within many tourist activities (Cater, 2006), and is indeed implied when one undertakes variety-seeking behaviour (van Trijp, Hoyer & Inman, 1996). The risk associated with dark tourism is not a physical concern; rather, the risk of ontological insecurity is a key concept within dark tourism (Stone, 2009a; Walter, 2009; Giddens, 1991). The risk embraced within dark tourism is one associated with the feelings conjured by the sights and concepts on offer (Carnicelli-Filho, Schwartz & Tahara, 2010), such as sorrow, disgust, terror or insecurity – feelings associated with death which are generally side-lined from everyday life, as considered previously, and which can be accepted as undesirable emotions.

Risk, though, can be seen as a positive aspect within tourism (Chang, 2011; Petrick, 2002), such as through feelings of 'rush' (Buckley, 2012; Cater, 2006), a sensation which is derived from engaging in high-octane or adrenaline-fuelled activities such as bungee jumping or white-water rafting. Whilst the epitome of rush may well be such physically-demanding undertakings with obvious physical risks, the reach of rush extends to other types of novelty. Hirschmann (1984) notes the thoughts and sensations which are part of experiencing novelty; he suggests that it is these which dictate the enjoyment and seeking of novelty, rather than the physical engagement in a particular act. This can be explained by the psychological imbalance in humans caused by reduced risk in everyday life (Carnicelli-Filho, Schwartz, & Tahara, 2010), leading to a desire to break free of the security of normality. However, Cater (2006) suggests that risk-taking in tourism is not unbridled; rather, tourists expect a certain level of security from the activities which they engage in such as safety equipment or hygienic food preparation. The presence of these safeguards essentially dilutes (or even removes completely) the risk of physical harm, so it is possible to suggest that the physical risk is essentially an arbitrary consideration on the part of the tourist (Lepp & Gibson, 2008). Rather, it can be said that the psychological risk of, for example, fear, change of habits, or ontological insecurity present the true stimulus (Iso-Ahola, 1980, cited in Tse & Crotts, 2005). There is some parallel here with Boorstin's (1987) diluted authenticity ('authenticity – with conditions' as suggested in Chapter Two), and it is within this sense of illusion (Stone, 2013; Foucault, 1967) that the novel and 'risky 'quality of dark tourism will be viewed herein.

Whilst novelty may be an inherent part of some types of dark tourism (Sharpley, 2009a; Dann, 1998), it is perhaps not novelty in its true sense. Death as a concept of life in itself is not novel; rather, it may be that the increasing visibility of dark tourism as an industry (Sharpley, 2009a) gives it a new market position as a novel touristic subject in the context of nostalgia (McKenzie, 2013; Dann, 1998). However, as suggested previously, if the absent death has pervaded Western society, then perhaps *any*, rather than just an initial, encounter with death in a tourist setting can be seen as novel – indeed, Raine (2013) categorises repeat visitors to graveyards as 'morbidly curious' and 'thrill seekers'. As such, it can be argued that it is the location in which one encounters death that provides the novel attributes by virtue of its facilitation of such subject matter, and so the associated atmosphere of attributes of a given location may demonstrate the true novelty of dark tourism. As such, it is possible to examine the concept of 'heterotopia' as an embodiment of novelty: the 'novelty of place'.

3.5: Heterotopias: The Novelty of Place

The concept of the 'heterotopia' (Stone, 2013; Hetherington, 1997; Foucault, 1967) is still under-researched, but based on the current understanding it is possible to demonstrate that this concept offers a specific framework in which to explain the novel appeal of dark tourism – what is herein termed the 'novelty of place'. A heterotopia is a place (real or fictional) in which the everyday norms of society are transgressed, inverted, changed or somehow altered (Boedeltje, 2012; Hetherington, 1997; Foucault, 1967). They are 'places of Otherness' (Hetherington, 1997) which offer a temporary spatial relief from what is expected elsewhere in life (Boedeltje, 2012), and can offer one an alternative perspective on received wisdom. They may be places of hedonistic enjoyment such as holiday resorts or festivals (Boedeltje, 2012; Kaufman *et al.*, 2009), or they may even be nightmarish, immoral or illogical such as the bureaucratic courts of Kafka's *The Trial* (Hetherington, 1997). Furthermore, they also present opportunities to reflect on ideas or concepts which are removed from daily life; crucially to this thesis, one such concept is death. Within that environment, sites of dark tourism allow one to observe concepts related to death (Stone, 2013), and therefore society's sequestration of death is inverted (and thus desequestered) to allow novel interaction with concepts of death. The concept of heterotopia is complex, and so this thesis will now further ground the definition within existing literature whilst also exploring the notion that heterotopias facilitate novel experience within the commodification of dark tourism.

Pertinently to dark tourism, heterotopias may be sacred (Stone, 2013; Foucault,

1967) in ways which other places are not. Much is made of the 'sacredness' of many dark sites (Kidron, 2013; Osbaldiston & Petray, 2011), particularly burial grounds (Farmaki, 2013; Raine, 2013), which suggests a transformation of ordinary *terra firma* into something more extraordinary. It may not always be directly understood by visitors, however; there may be a feeling that a place is worthy of increased dignity rather than a specific sense of sacredness (Gutic, Caie & Clegg, 2010; Shackley, 2002), as in the case of places of worship visited by non-believers. Indeed, an alternative notion of the sacred – that is, not in the sense of a religious sacredness – is evident in many heterotopias; whereas Père-Lachaise cemetery, or York minster (Shackley, 2002) exude an evident religious sacredness, to others, the library or the museum offer an inviolable space in which a particular set of beliefs is preserved (Lee *et al.,* 2012). Access is granted to outsiders, yet specific guidelines exist to restrict access in order to maintain that inviolable nature and to arguably also convey a mythology or romanticism. The romanticism or spirituality associated with many heterotopias (Lee *et al.,* 2012; Gutic, Caie & Clegg, 2010) can create a 'safe space' in which individuals can reflect upon crises (Lee *et al.,* 2012; Foucault, 1967) – if such crises involve death or tragedy, then it can be said to be a novel concept as a result of the sequestration of death (as will be considered later in this section). If, as stated by Stone (2013), heterotopias offer a sense of an alternative to the norms of other places (Foucault, 1967; also Toussaint & Decrop, 2013), it can be said that they are novel to tourists, particularly in the face of identikit tourist services which erode the sense of place (Heyd, 1999; Walsh, 1992). Therefore, it can be said that the place, rather than the product, is the novel experience; hence, it can be termed 'novelty of place' and therefore sites of dark tourism can arguably be described as possessing it. In terms of ascribing specific attributes to a location, the dual concept of 'space' and 'place', and their various relationships in terms of how a 'place' can be ascribed meaning, is well researched (Hall & Page, 2014; Rose-Redwood, 2014; Plyushteva, 2012; Massey, 1994; Foucault, 1967). Though it is currently unclear as to how heterotopias can be delineated as such (Topinka, 2010) (which is broadly beyond the scope of this thesis), the nature of heterotopias themselves has been variously noted (Stone, 2013; Toussaint & Decrop, 2013; Foucault, 1967) as described previously. By using the typological model of Stone (2013, as shown below in Figure 8), this thesis will now explore how a site of dark tourism may display the properties and qualities of a heterotopia which therefore endow it with a 'novelty of place'. This will be done whilst also elaborating further on the concept of heterotopia in order to present a clear picture of its place within dark tourism.
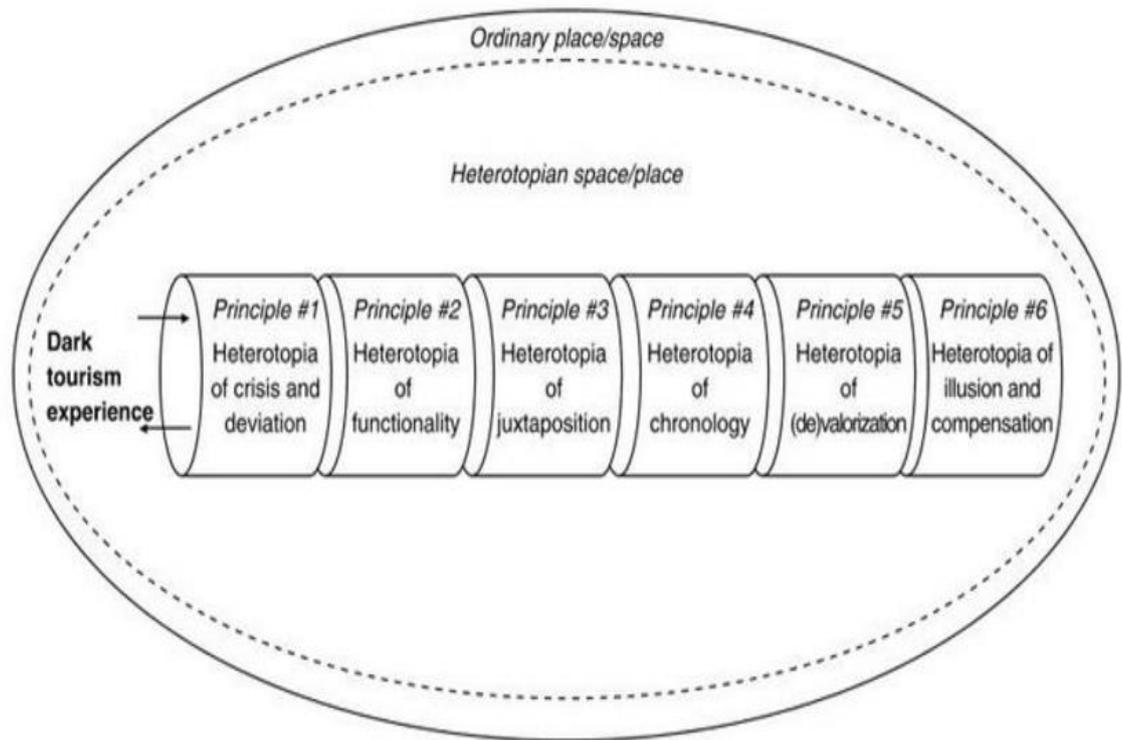
Figure 8: Heterotopia Model within Dark Tourism (Stone, 2013)

As inferred so far, heterotopias can be difficult to conceptualise as they differ widely. Stone (2013) – using Foucault's (1967) six principles to offer a typology of heterotopias (shown in Figure 8) – states that sites of dark tourism can be included within the concept of the heterotopia. For example, Stone (2013) suggests that, as a 'heterotopia of crisis and deviation', a site of disaster such as Chernobyl offers a complex convergence of past and present discourses which allow transgression from accepted ontological norms (those such as a disinclination to contemplate large-scale conflict or disaster, such as the aforementioned War Graves – also Rojek, 1993). However, as noted thus far, tourists also seek novel experiences through the desequestration of death. To this end, 'dark heterotopias' (Stone, 2013) offer an outlet or environment in which crises can be dealt with in a socially-sanctioned way (Young & Light, 2016). For example, the site of the 1988 Lockerbie bombing, specifically in the direct aftermath of the attack (Rojek, 1993), can be said to have become a heterotopia as thousands of people flocked there in order to digest the incident. Whilst it is easy to suggest that these tourists were there to grieve, it can also be inferred that they had other motives. Indeed, as much dark tourism research has found, visitors to dark tourism sites have varying individual motives (Cheal & Griffin,

2013; Raine, 2013; Mowatt & Chancellor, 2011; Stone & Sharpley, 2008) (more specific than the over-arching inward and outward motivations examined in this thesis, and which are largely beyond its scope). Therefore, the nature of the place itself, rather than what is displayed there, can be said to be a novel experience for tourists. However, visiting sites such as Lockerbie may not necessarily be socially sanctioned. Heterotopias of crisis and deviation (Stone, 2013) have a 'forbidden element' (Stone, 2013; also Hetherington, 1997; Foucault, 1967) (in this instance being accusations of insensitive voyeurism) which arguably lends more novelty to the location as it is further out of what is considered normal. This can also be observed at other sites of atrocity which are claimed as sacred; it is an attempt to resist the malevolence of the perpetrators and delineate a space as solely the property of victims, survivors or sympathisers by exerting some form of power (Hetherington, 1997). Indeed, that delineation may develop over time, offering new novel qualities to a site; this can be shown by further examining Stone's model.

The 'heterotopia of functionality' concept (Foucault, 1967, cited in Stone, 2013) suggests that a heterotopia develops over time; this means that new meaning can arise as older themes pale into irrelevance. Indeed, the notion that heterotopias are universal yet heterogeneous (Stone, 2013; Topinka, 2010; Foucault, 1967) demonstrates their inherent functionality; they serve a purpose to a range of groups. Take Auschwitz as an example in this respect; it serves functions as a museum, a tourist attraction, a memorial, a site of pilgrimage and, by the nature of its commodification, a workplace. Stone (2013) notes this multi-layered functionality at Chernobyl, as Foucault (1967) does with the cemetery. To that end, Raine (2013) also found several differing reasons for visiting cemeteries. In the 21st century, burial is becoming far less commonplace than it was previously, meaning that the function of the cemetery (as an example of a heterotopia) is changing. A lesser proportion of people will therefore visit cemeteries as mourners, and instead go for different reasons (Raine, 2013) – i.e. more novel reasons because, in its role as a heterotopia, it is a place removed from daily life where normal activity is allowed to change in that death is vastly more prominent. Thus in this heterotopia, being a 'thrill seeker' (Raine, 2013) of macabre encounters is socially-sanctioned in a way it would not be in other contexts due to the nature of the site.

A further conception is the 'heterotopia of illusion and compensation' (Stone, 2013). Stone again uses the example of Chernobyl to show that an illusion of impending danger is created at the site, whilst the tourist is nonetheless safe and is being offered a chance to reflect on the 'fragility of our modern world' (Stone, 2013, p. 14) and other such issues which are not part of our ontologically normal behaviour (as discussed

previously). Herein, it is possible to identify the novelty of such heterotopias; the very illusion of performance (similar to MacCannell's (1976) 'staged authenticity') is the essence of novelty in that something imagined is created for the consumption of the tourist. Equally, the notion of compensation may also be termed 'novel' as it is a direct symptom of the novel illusion. For example, a tour of a medieval dungeon gives tourists the opportunity to view a location that no longer has a 'working' role in society by transporting the modern-day individual into an historic and therefore novel situation. The compensation may come when one feels happy that such punishments are no longer a feature of our judicial system, or other such reconciliation (or indeed juxtaposition) of today's values and beliefs (Hetherington, 1997) with those of centuries past. As such, a heterotopia of this kind offers a novel perspective, and challenges the received wisdom of social norms (that being the reconciliation of conflicting ideas should be enacted in reality, not with abstractions – Walter, 1999).

As shown in Figure 8, there are three further categories of heterotopias – of 'juxtaposition', of 'chronology', and of '(de)valorisation' (Stone, 2013). Further analysis of these is beyond the scope of this thesis, as the exploration of the chosen three categories serves to aid the conception of heterotopias as the novelty of place rather than to discuss the full extent of the heterotopia as a concept. Beyond that typology, one further point adds more rationale from an overall perspective on the nature of heterotopias as novel places – the opportunity to rationalise one's personal feelings towards mortality.

Heyd (1999) notes that heterotopic locations provide an environment for a 'perfect order' of events and feelings. This is particularly key at sites of death that have become sacred, and need protection from the profane (Toussaint & Decrop, 2013); it allows individuals within that space to feel safe, that their feelings will not be offended or violated, and – perhaps crucially – that feelings can be compartmentalised to that site. If one confronts tragedies and atrocities at home, the associated ill feeling becomes part of one's personal life (Giddens, 1991). Conversely, heterotopic locations allow for such thoughts to be explored in isolation; the prevalence of the absent death (as discussed previously) means that death is excluded from many situations in life, and so a 'dark heterotopia' (Stone, 2013) provides a socially-sanctioned outlet for otherwise undesirable attitudes and behaviour (Hetherington, 1997) such as those described previously. Indeed, prisons and mental health institutions can be typified as heterotopias of deviation (Hetherington, 1997) as places where those who act on such attitudes may be sent to exclude them from normal society. This delineation of heterotopias is much like the 'enclavic' sites identified by Edensor (2000), though these are clearly demarcated in ways

that a heterotopia may not necessarily be. They are similar in that at both there is a regulation of a 'purified space' (Edensor, 2000, p. 328) which is done generally by implicit 'expectations' (Rojek, 1993, p. 141; also Toussaint & Decrop, 2013; Edensor, 2000). Encroachment upon such spaces can be met with resentment; whilst Toussaint and Decrop (2013) note the disdain with which crowds and kitsch are regarded by users of the Père-Lachaise cemetery, there was outright hostility towards the aforementioned 'Ground Zero mosque' (Batstone, 2012; Greenfield, 2011) (to use the misleading nickname conjured by its opponents). Perhaps it can be said, then, that the very notion of sanctity in today's increasingly public society (MacCannell, 1976) is unusual in itself, and so the heterotopia offers a novel experience in which to safely consume dark tourism.

This chapter has explored the search for novelty as a means of demand for dark tourism experience and, in doing so, demonstrated how sites might be viewed as inherently novel by way of the heterotopic place which can develop in sites which deal with death and related subjects. As a further exploration of consumer demand for commodified dark tourism experiences, and building on the notion as explored in Chapter Two, attention now returns to the outward-looking motivation of garnering of esteem through conspicuous consumption.

3.6: Conspicuously Consuming Death

The online retailer Amazon reported a huge increase in sales of Adolf Hitler's polemic diatribe *Mein Kampf* once it was made available in e-book form (Withnall, 2014). The primary explanation for this surge has been that the ability to download the text, rather than having to purchase it 'in person', removes any embarrassment or 'outing' as a supporter or apologist of the Nazi movement (Chayka, 2014) thanks to the anonymity afforded to e-book users. This may be the case for a certain proportion, but could it also be due to buyers being ill-informed as to the true nature and implications of the text and mistaking it for an introspective and enlightening diary, biography or autobiography? Book sales overall have risen with the advent of e-books, with texts now easier than ever to access; perhaps the increase in attention given to *Mein Kampf* (a book variously banned, stigmatised and associated with membership of neo-Nazi groups) is an attempt to garner esteem from peers by attempting to understand, from a sociological or historic point of view, the atrocities committed in line with Hitler's manifesto, and to show a level of empathy towards the victims. Obviously that standpoint is ill-informed due to the reality of the text (Musolff, 2007), and the revelation that someone owns the text would most likely be met with shock or consternation. This issue serves to introduce the intent

to garner esteem by undertaking an activity in which one would not normally partake but which, unlike those identified in Chapter Two, are not necessarily pleasant or hedonistic experiences. As noted in Chapter Two, the 'imagistic culture' identified by Morgan and Pritchard (1998) which exists within our society can lead to individuals engaging in behaviour which may counteract other motivations that one as a tourist might have, some of which have been examined previously in this chapter. The notion that leisure and tourism act as a 'life motivators' is well accepted (Burns & Holden, 1995), and so the mere act of engaging in tourism in itself is not worthy of esteem as noted in Chapter Two. However, just as one may wear a particular style of clothing in order to elicit a response, so too may one engage in dark tourism for the same effect. This is currently under-researched in dark tourism, but it can be observed in other types of tourism and will now be examined.

Note, as an example, the practice of middle-class school leavers taking a 'gap year' abroad. Many may do so purely for hedonistic reasons (Snee, 2013; Martin, 2010), although there is a large emphasis for those on such excursions to engage in charitable or other voluntary work (Lyons *et al*., 2012; Martin, 2010; Simpson, 2004). Indeed, across the board there is much evidence (Lyons *et al*., 2012; Martin, 2010) that many tourists, rather than being purely altruistic in their motivation, are clear in their pursuit of skills to boost their CV (Wright, 2013) and thus increase their attractiveness to future employers. This practice is not merely the preserve of teenagers with one eye on developing a career; it has also been noted that tourism in general for (outwardly) charitable reasons has established popularity (Tomazos & Butler, 2012; Sin, 2009). Arguably, this popularity is related to garnering esteem. The typical tourist in this field could conceivably afford a more conventional luxury holiday (Snee, 2013; McBride & Lough, 2010) which, as explored in Chapter Two, shows that such individuals are clearly exhibiting the received definition of conspicuous consumption within tourism. However, just as the teenage gap-year tourists demonstrate, the esteem which can be bestowed upon oneself from society as a result of building schools in Ghana or teaching English to orphans in Cambodia is a cause for which it is worth changing one's behaviour. Rather than taking a week in Verbier or on the French Riviera, an individual could decide that the relative esteem of travelling to an impoverished African community to volunteer with a charity stands to afford one more esteem from peers and society. This is the premise of the Veblen 2 theory of conspicuous consumption (in conjunction with the previous two outlined in Chapter Two) (Tilman, 2006), which suggests that one's financial means can produce not only esteem of one's pecuniary strength, but also from the interpretation of others that one is generous

(Tilman, 2006). Such craven attempts to garner esteem via social media networks now even have a term beyond conspicuous consumption: 'humblebrag' describes an individual showing insincere humility in order to impress others (Alford, 2012) which is essentially the 21st century's take on conspicuous consumption. It would be erroneous to claim, however, that the quest for esteem underpins such activities entirely (Wright, 2013; Guttentag, 2009; Ooi & Laing, 2010). The host community receives a service (Wright, 2013; Guttentag, 2009), and the tourists gains satisfaction on several levels (though they are mostly beyond the scope of this thesis), including, if conspicuous consumption is indeed transferable to volunteer tourism, the esteem of others. Though existing research suggests that the quest for esteem holds sway within tourists' motivations, it is most generally applied to the notion of mass tourism; in the case of volunteer tourism, it is not explicitly linked (McGehee, 2014; Guttentag, 2009), but, as has been briefly revealed here, a link can be observed by piecing together various sources of evidence. This approach is equally possible within dark tourism, as will now be demonstrated.

One increasingly notorious form of self-expression is the 'selfie' – a now-ubiquitous photographic form whereby one takes a photograph of oneself (either alone or with others), often for the purposes of sharing via social media. As the *site Selfies at Serious Places* (2013) shows, there is evidence showing that selfies are a form of conspicuous consumption (Lennon, Seaton & Wight, 2017); it appears that such photographs are used to demonstrate an individual's engagement with sites of dark tourism despite being generally met with ethical confusion or, occasionally, mass outrage (Benedictus, 2015; Salerno & Peter-Hagene, 2013). The effect is similar to the *Mein Kampf* example used previously; takers of these seemingly distasteful images apparently fail to appreciate the ethical minefield which they are traversing by, for example, taking a selfie inside a former gas chamber at the Auschwitz-Birkenau site, or a grinning group photo at the Iwo Jima memorial (both available at *Selfies at Serious Places*, 2013). Alternatively, though, they may indeed be well aware of the implications of such potentially outrageous imagery, and take the photographs in order to provoke or challenge taboos. Either way, tourists who engage in this type of media sharing can be said to exhibit the principles of conspicuous consumption by showing publicly that they are engaging in something that distinguishes them from others, such as 'cultural capital' (Lennon, Seaton & Wight, 2017, p. 232). Online photo-posting is said to be a key component in the formation of modern identity and self-expression (Lennon, Seaton & Wight, 2017; Stefanone, Lackaff & Rosen, 2011; Shim, Lee & Park, 2008), so it is clear to see how the dissemination of 'selfies' is a form of conspicuous consumption. Indeed, if they are used

to form an identity or image of oneself, then this relates to the aforementioned 'life motivators', and gives credence to the argument for conspicuous consumption as a motivation to engage in dark tourism.

As stated previously, the role of conspicuous consumption in tourism is currently under-researched but, as an example, Holocaust tourism (Friedrich & Johnston, 2013; Schaller, 2007) can shed some light on the concept. As conspicuous consumption necessitates products or experiences with maximum prestige or impact (Kerr, Lewis & Burgess, 2012), the aforementioned desire to show empathy towards victims of genocide can be used to further demonstrate the presence of conspicuous consumption. Visits to sites of, and dedicated to, the Holocaust are a well-established and identified facet of dark tourism (Kidron, 2013; Podoshen & Hunt, 2011; Reynolds, 2011; Lennon & Foley, 2000b). There has also been much examination of individual motivations which draw tourists to sites such as the concentration camps of Auschwitz-Birkenau, Dachau, Buchenwald and others (Hartmann, 2014; Reynolds, 2011), and also related institutions such as the Holocaust Memorial museum in Washington, D. C. (Kulašić, 2015), and Anne Frank House (Reynolds, 2011). Chiefly, these motivating factors include having ancestors or predecessors who were involved in the atrocity (Schaller, 2007; Beech, 2000), or to mourn or remember the victims (Buntman, 2008; Ashworth, 2002), along with more generally applicable reasons such as interest in the historic significance. It can be further argued, however, that conspicuous consumption is also at play here; such sites have become 'must-see' attractions from which one's experience can be recounted to others (Marcus, 2014; Farmaki, 2013; Partee Allar, 2013), just as physical commodities can become 'must have' items at a given time. However, an interesting perspective is gained when one considers this marketing approach in contrast to the notion of uniqueness. According to Burns and Holden (1995, p. 16), there is an underlying elitism within the perception of tourism that 'mass' is bad. Though Holocaust tourism has become part of the mass tourism industry (Reynolds, 2011; Beech, 2009; Lennon & Foley, 2000b), the dark subject material often coupled with the authentic location (Podoshen & Hunt, 2011) arguably contributes to a much higher sense of authenticity than other sites associated with 'mass tourism' (Oren & Shani, 2012), despite the identification of certain 'staged' aspects of, for example, the Auschwitz tourist experience (Podoshen & Hunt, 2011; Lennon & Foley, 2000b). This challenges the aforementioned assertion that conspicuous consumption requires a level of exclusivity (Kerr, Lewis & Burgess, 2012); it can be suggested, therefore, that the subject material on offer at sites of Holocaust tourism is different to other subjects of mass tourism in terms of the prestige or esteem it bestows

upon the tourist.

That perspective serves to strengthen the various typologies which differentiate between the subject matter at sites of dark tourism (Raine, 2013; Stone 2006; Sharpley, 2005), though those models do not specifically emphasise the effect of commodification on the visitor experience. The key issue to note within Holocaust tourism in terms of the approach to conspicuous consumption is that its evident popularity (Beech, 2009) does not dilute the potential for esteem. This suggests that the earlier notion of a 'must-see' attraction (Farmaki, 2013) applies greatly to sites of atrocity; perhaps, then, it is not the site itself which provides reason for esteem, but rather how we as visitors feel (or indeed appear to feel). To that end, in order to further supplement the argument of esteem-seeking behaviour, the notion of obligation towards the dead – what may be termed 'conspicuous compassion' – will now be examined.

3.7: Conspicuous compassion within consumption

West (2004) notes that, as a society, we are finely tuned to the reactions of others when it comes to death not only via the common tenet that one must not 'speak ill of the dead', but also in our public demeanour. On a trivial level, TV news presenters can be vilified for a failure to support the Poppy Appeal on-air (West, 2004); on a larger scale, failure to engage in accepted discourses of remembrance can be termed unpatriotic or callous (Sturken, 2007). West's (2004) use of the term 'conspicuous compassion' complements the notion of conspicuous consumption. Just as Veblen (1970) noted that conspicuous consumption is essentially a form of 'one-up-manship' (West, 2004, p. 4) in the form of possessions or experiences, conspicuous compassion is a way for individuals or groups to ascribe inferiority on those who do not engage in their compassionate displays (West, 2004) and in doing so project a particular discourse or agenda which may variously depict righteousness, compassion, or charity, (Sturken, 2007) whether it actually exists or not. West (2004) draws attention to the bizarre influx of 'grief tourists' to Soham, Cambridgeshire in the wake of the murder of two schoolgirls in 2002. Tourists reportedly came in droves to sign a book of condolences at nearby Ely Cathedral (West, 2004), and even see the 'sights' connected with the victims and perpetrators (Seaton, 2009, p. 90), despite having no personal connection with either. Seaton and Lennon (2004) suggest the numbers may have been misrepresented in order to further the conspicuous compassion agenda (also Stone, 2009c); either way, the notion of conspicuous compassion in this context is clear to see. Seaton and Lennon (2004) argue that encounters with dark tourism are a way of experiencing modernity; perhaps, then,

conspicuous compassion has been a way for Britons to cast off the cliché of the 'stiff upper lip' (West, 2004) and embrace a new form of emotional intelligence regarding grief (Young & Light, 2016; Walter, 1999 & 1995) as facilitated by the rise of dark tourism. Further encounters with modernity can be observed by the selfies discussed previously; in order to explore this issue further, let us briefly consider in this context the 21st century's ultimate dark tourism experience: Ground Zero.

Sturken (2007) notes that the 9/11 attacks ushered in a new era of American public paranoia; rather than fears directed inwardly towards the US Government, public anxieties now focussed on terrorist attacks and so a 'culture of security' was fostered. As a result, tacky and often crudely emotional representations were used to deal with the atrocity, an approach which flourished (Potts, 2012; Sturken, 2007). The omnipotent 'snow globe' (Sturken, 2007) provided a way for individuals to demonstrate that they opposed terrorism and mourned its victims; indeed, Potts (2012) notes the overt conspicuous consumption culture present at Ground Zero (also Simpson, 2006) in which an alternative approach is all but non-existent. Whereas humans are undoubtedly capable of expressing complex emotions other than purchasing a foreign-made trinket, to oppose such items may be interpreted as opposing the anti-terrorist sentiment (Sturken, 2007; Lisle, 2004). Indeed, a jarring *volte-face* in public sentiment can be observed in the aftermath of the attack; after the anxieties projected towards the US Government of the preceding period (Sturken, 2007), Potts (2011, p. 234) identifies the 'thoughtless complicity with state aggression' (regarding US foreign policy) undertaken by individuals when purchasing such sentimental objects. Furthermore, just as West (2004) noted the large-scale public mourning of Diana, Princess of Wales in the UK (also Walter, 1999), so too Lisle (2004) identifies the patriotic posturing, politicking, and – by extension – conspicuous compassion of Mayor Rudy Giuliani in exhorting Americans to travel in to New York in order to express sympathy for the deceased. His wish came true, and thus tourists descended on the city in great numbers, thereby buying into the commodification culture of not only Ground Zero, but also New York as a destination (Potts, 2011; Lisle, 2004). This suggests that public encounters with death are often inherently commodified both in terms of the effects of the product on offer, but also how we are expected to react. If one chooses to engage, the confines in which one does are tightly set, both by the agenda of commodification, and also by society's various attitudes towards death as has been explored in this chapter. As such, the perception of authenticity – described as a 'key pull factor' in the consumption of tourism (Kang & Lee 2013, p. 245) –may also be shaped by the commodification process. This chapter will now begin to consider how authenticity

can be understood within the context of tourism and, specifically, dark tourism experience.

3.8: Understanding and commodifying authenticity

This thesis has thus far centred on the processes that facilitate the engagement of visitors in touristic activity. However, whilst objectively speaking, multiple tourists to the same site may experience the same things, their respective understanding of authenticity may differ based on how and why one becomes a tourist (Packer & Ballantyne, 2016. To that end, this section will examine both the perception and presentation of authenticity within dark tourism. It is not as simple as a search for authenticity, though; as will be shown, the search for *inauthenticity* is also of note. Firstly, some definitions and typological considerations are provided to ground further discussion.

Sharpley (1999, p. 192) sums up the difficulty in accurately defining authenticity. In his view, it may be a 'description of the tangible quality' of an entity, but it may also consist of an 'intangible perception' when attempting to authenticate an experience (Ashworth & Isaac, 2015). Pinpointing the true essence of authenticity is fraught, as it is an unclear and subjective concept (Bolan, Boyd & Bell, 2012; Jarzombek, 2005; Berghoff, 2002) – indeed, in many non-Western destinations, the concept of authenticity does not figure in the culture of attracting tourists as it is a Western construct (Schouten, 2006). As a result, it is often suggested that tourism is inherently inauthentic due to the commodification of experience (Getz, 1998; Urry, 1990), a view particularly taken by Boorstin (1987) who argues that, by virtue of being created purposefully for the business of tourism, the experiences which tourists undertake are by their very nature inauthentic and merely a self-indulgent, self-perpetuating form of cultural colonialism (MacLeod, 2006). Conversely, MacCannell (1976) views tourism as a thoroughly modern attempt to conceptualise our understanding of the world, and suggests that tourists seek out authentic experiences as a means of truly appreciating the diversity of experience. However, the reality of tourist behaviour is arguably more likely to be somewhere in the middle of those two due to the variety of products within the modern tourism industry (Goytia & de la Rica, 2012; MacLeod, 2006). This can be seen in the way in which the lines of authenticity are blurred through the commodification process, as can be demonstrated in the case of Ground Zero.

Stone (2012a, p. 74) notes the speedy transformation of Ground Zero from hallowed ground into a popular tourist attraction, perceived by some as a site of 'questionable social value' as a result of the commodification process, even though it is

seemingly intended as a memorial to the victims of the attack (Johnston, 2011). Therefore, whilst tourists may attend the site seeking an authentic appraisal of the 9/11 atrocity and its aftermath, the reality is that they are doing so in the knowledge that it is commodified in order to facilitate this demand as an 'attraction' (MacLeod, 2006; Schouten, 2006). However, whether or not it is therefore inauthentic depends on how authenticity is defined. In order to demonstrate the various ways to define authenticity, Wang's (1999) typology of authenticity will now be examined.

3.8.1: A Framework for Authenticity

Wang (1999) suggests that there are three types of authenticity. The first, 'objective authenticity', bestows relevance upon experiences or objects which are not contrived as commodities. As an example, Auschwitz, as a site of death and atrocity (Miles, 2002), can be said to possess this type of authenticity – Lennon (2017) even describes such sites as 'primary objects' (p. 80) in the recounting of history. Taylor (2001), however, suggests that this type of authenticity relates to truth – an accurate representation of a phenomenon, and not a fake or fraudulent copy (Reisinger & Steiner, 2006a). Indeed, many objectively authentic items can be seen at Auschwitz, such as personal effects of prisoners and original architecture of the site (Hartmann, 2014; Miles, 2002). Furthermore, Sharpley (1999, p. 189) describes authentic experience as a 'sense of the genuine' that can be derived from the experience due to its 'locational authenticity' (Stone, 2012, p. 74) as a site of genocide. Indeed, many aspects of the site can be said to be in an 'authentic state' (Partee Allar, 2013, p. 192) and, as arguably the world's most notorious concentration camp, it is reasonable to expect objective authenticity at Auschwitz.

That expectation can be critiqued by comparing Auschwitz with the US Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM), Washington D.C. Whilst the former is a site of genocide, the latter is not – it is instead a site created to 'preserve the memory of the Holocaust' (Kulašić, 2015, p. 401) at a remote location. That does not necessarily mean that the latter is therefore inauthentic – that view of authenticity is rooted in traditionalism and is perhaps out of step with the diversity of modern tourism. Indeed, the USHMM exhibits many objectively authentic artefacts (Lennon & Foley, 1999). However, there is arguably a difference between the two sites deriving in this case chiefly from the nature of the location; though Auschwitz may possess a heightened sense of 'symbolic power' (Partee Allar, 2013, p. 198) due to its history, USHMM may, as a Holocaust memorial, nonetheless be imbued with relative importance and sacredness (Partee Allar, 2013).

To that end, 'constructivist authenticity', the second of Wang's (1999) three types, relates to this notion of ascribed value – it suggests that the concept of authenticity is fluid, and that it can change dependent on the views of the individual (Brown, 2013b; Wang, 1999; Cohen, 1988). In this respect, constructivist authenticity is more democratic than its objective counterpart; it allows separate or disparate (even contradictory) discourses to operate in tandem (Du, Littlejohn & Lennon, 2013), though Fees (1996) notes that this co-existence inevitably leads to a tussle to become the prevailing discourse in authenticating an entity (Lennon, Seaton & Wight, 2017; Stone, 2016). Indeed, this view of authenticity agrees with the idea that the authority to authenticate (or indeed *inauthenticate*) a location has migrated away from the location itself (Fees, 1996), and Sharpley (1999) notes that this mass interpretation can lead to a loss of authenticity as the cultural artefact has become a commodity. As such, authenticity itself can be described as a commodity (Fees, 1996), as discussed previously. Constructivist authenticity also takes into account the capacity for an experience or location to develop or evolve over time; Meethan (1996) notes the transition of Brighton from playground of the elite at its inception to a working-class holiday resort in the mid-20th century to its contemporary image as a liberal, cultural city with a large LGBT community. Authentic or inauthentic as it may be, the pertinent issue here is that authenticity can change, and therefore cannot be considered an inherent characteristic of an entity (Sharpley, 1999; Wang, 1999; Fees, 1996). Indeed, within the dark tourism experience, the function (and thus the constructivist authenticity) of the Chernobyl site can be seen to have evolved (Stone, 2013) just as Auschwitz has been renovated (Lennon & Foley, 2000a) and other sites such as the International Slavery Museum, Liverpool can simultaneously represent several historic periods within one place (Simine, 2012). Much rests on the individuals or organisations who hold power – alternative discourses can be denied a voice (Fees, 1996), certain groups may experience 'social exclusion' (Black, 2005, p. 50), and the very consumption of certain types of 'authentic' culture reinforces power structures (Meethan, 1996). Nonetheless, one inherent characteristic of constructivist authenticity is that meaning is derived in different ways by a range of consumers, and so such power structures are arguably less prevalent than with objective authenticity (Wang, 1999). However, a major limitation of this approach is that it is concerned with the trappings of an experience (Wang, 2000; Wang, 1999), rather than the inherent meaning. In this way, authenticity can be enshrined in law, such as the UK's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Fees, 1996), and as such is an attempt to authenticate particular places as authentically beautiful, without necessarily considering the overall meaning of a site.

Furthermore, it can lead to trivialisation of a site (Potts, 2012) or an emphasis on a physical presence (Lennon & Foley, 2000a) over inherently meaningful encounters which may be non-physical. In that respect, experience of authenticity at sites of dark tourism has been characterised as vicarious (Partee Allar, 2013) and so constructivist authenticity may not be an appropriate description of all forms of dark tourism, particularly those merely dedicated to death or suffering such as the USHMM.

The discussion here serves to demonstrate the difficulty in pinning down the true nature of authenticity within tourism and, more specifically, dark tourism due to the various type of authenticity, but also the purported incompatibility of commodification and true authenticity (Stone, 2012). Based on current understanding of the concept, it can be argued that authenticity and its role in the commodification process as a singular concrete entity is a misnomer not only because it is little understood, but also because it is perceived in a range of ways (Packer & Ballantyne, 2016; Ashworth & Isaac, 2015). Henning (2012, p. 26) suggests that tourism is never truly new, or it would be known as 'exploration'. Rather, it is possible that tourists are engaged, as discussed, in novelty-seeking behaviour in which authenticity may manifest itself, rather than simply seeking out authentic or inauthentic experiences *per se* (Henning, 2012 & 2006). MacCannell (2011, p. 215) suggests that tourists will accept that an inauthentic experience is actually authentic so long as the 'seamy side' – the 'back areas' (MacCannell, 1976; Goffman, 1959) of production – is hidden (Timothy & Boyd, 2003). Drawing from this, it could be said that tourists seek authenticity on their own terms; they can 'suspend their disbelief' if the attraction or experience satisfies their search for meaning and the intricacies of producing it are not evident. This analogy of ignoring the fallacy of the situation (such as ruined Japanese temples latterly re-built for tourist consumption – MacCannell, 2011) neatly fits with the concept of 'staged authenticity', which will be explored in Chapter Four as a by-product of the commodification process. It also suggests the tourist's rejection of the more traditional view of authenticity as described herein.

As such, it is entirely possible to examine authenticity in a post-modern perspective – that of the 'post-tourist' (Urry, 2002 & 1990; Feifer, 1985). This is necessarily a Western, specifically European, concept (Lennon & Foley, 2000a), and therefore it fits neatly within the context of tourism as perceived in the bounds of this thesis. The essence of post-tourism is that tourism is merely a game (Urry & Larsen, 2011; Urry, 1990) – that the tourist is superficial (Jamal & Lelo, 2011; Urry, 1995) and has many motivations to travel (Feifer, 1985), which is a departure from the received wisdom, as outlined thus far, that tourists approach their travel and interactions with attractions with

a degree of sincere pre-meditation. As Urry (1995) states, post-tourists generally have a less formal approach to tourism than their predecessors. If, as stated by Lennon and Foley (2000a), reality within the post-modern world is not objective but entirely subjective and debatable, then both objective and constructivist authenticity cannot accurately convey the intricacies of how tourists perceive experiences. Indeed, it can be said that there are an infinite number of realities in that respect (Urry, 1995). Cohen (2008, p. 331) notes that, under this ontological approach, the 'authentic sight' which might be sought by tourists no longer exists – a notion which is arguably accepted by the tourist (Urry, 1990). As such, MacCannell (2011) suggests that the post-tourist revels in inauthenticity, meaning that the purported erosion of authenticity (whether objective or constructivist) matters little as, despite some claims (Stolorow, 2011), they are not ashamed of the inauthentic. Authenticity in this approach comes from consuming, rather than experiencing anything else specifically (Ritzer, 1998), and so gives further fuel to the capitalist process of commodification.

Wang (1999) identifies existential (or 'post-modern') authenticity as a third and final type of authenticity. This concept supposes that authenticity, as a human construct, cannot be attributed correctly to objects, but can only occur from within the human mind (Brown, 2013b; Rickly-Boyd, 2013; Craig, 2009; Reisinger & Steiner, 2006b; Wang, 1999). Concomitantly, Ritzer (1998) observes that the post-tourist demands simulations of the experience, rather than what might be objectively authentic, which points towards existential authenticity, as does Craig's (2009, p. 294) notion of personal 'freedom' in the perception of authenticity and inauthenticity (also Packer & Ballantyne, 2016; Ashworth & Isaac, 2015; Zhu, 2012) rather than being specifically told by others. Furthermore, Craig (2009) notes the folly and difficulty of seeking to strictly typify the meaning of authenticity within tourism. For example, if one visits Disneyland, one is experiencing an authentic representation of Walt Disney's concept of entertainment, yet, within this experience, one does not actually meet Mickey Mouse, but a person in a Mickey Mouse costume – and a different person depending on the time of day. However, a child is likely to experience existential authenticity as she is not aware of the cravenly commercial environment (Kim & Jamal, 2007) in which her experience is fostered. Existential authenticity is most useful for addressing the myriad personal feelings associated with tourism (Rickly-Boyd, 2012), which is arguably particularly pertinent to dark tourism due to the conflicting and potentially taboo attitude to death within the absent-present death dichotomy (Stone, 2009a). Indeed, this type of authenticity seemingly bridges the gap between 'maintaining authenticity and performing reconstruction' (Partee Allar, 2013, p.

199), a gap of which the tourist is presumably aware (i.e. the renovation of Auschwitz). Furthermore, within the dark tourism experience, overtly entertaining sites such as the Dungeons (Stone, 2009b) or lurid prison tours with props and costumes (White, 2013) satirise the concept of the absent death by not only desequestering death and associated concepts, but also through the post-modern view that tourism is a relatively shallow game (Urry & Larsen, 2011). As such, it can be said that authenticity in dark tourism may be derived not through death in its 'unadulterated form' (Partee Allar, 2013, p. 198) but through its relatively inauthentic trappings or semiotic cues such as costumes and other aspects of the commodified experience as discussed herein.

Within Wang's (1999) typology of authenticity, the role of semiotics differs. 'Objective' authenticity is reasonably straightforward to signify; is, for example, the artwork on display an original or a copy? Was the building constructed at the time purported? The semiotics here might be professional opinion, factual descriptions or perhaps even security guards. However, the other two types are vastly more subjective by nature, and so the semiotics rely on a certain type of interpretation in order to signify the desired property. This relates to Urry's (1995) assertion that tourism is becoming less formal and structured, and that dominant discourses and norms are no longer imposed by an elite (a key trait, as suggested previously, of objective authenticity/ inauthenticity) (Rickly-Boyd, 2013; Zhu, 2012). Indeed, authenticity is not solely reliant on the choices or thought processes of the tourist – as shown thus far, the commodification process affects the experience in question and, therefore, the authenticity of an experience. In this respect, and as noted previously, Urry (1990) suggests that semiotics is key in the interpretation of authenticity; tourists need to be shown (overtly or subliminally) whether something is authentic before coming to their own conclusions. Whilst objective authenticity does not allow such conclusions, the constructivist and existential perspectives give space to personal interpretation which, as will be shown further in Chapter Four regarding the concept of taste, is key in the commodification and presentation of dark tourism experience.

As such, we begin to observe the way in which visitor engagement and behaviour is dictated – next, in Chapter Four, this shall be further explored through the lens of commodification in dark tourism by examining the concept of kitsch representations.

3.9: Chapter Summary

The purpose of this chapter has been threefold. Firstly, the parameters of 'dark tourism' have been set, and the industry has been explored as a means to contextualise

the remainder of this thesis. As has been found, the way in which dark tourism is interpreted can be said to depend much on how the host society views death; in Western societies – those home to 'death-denying' practices and the absent death – it differs to previous attitudes in which death was confronted more openly. Secondly, it has been shown that it is a wide branch of tourism, combining grim reverence and reflection with entertainment into a varied industry, which still has many questions to be answered as the academic research field, expands.

Thirdly, this chapter has considered why one might engage in dark tourism by using the concept of inward and outward motivations to frame an investigation – chiefly, the search for novelty, risk and esteem are noted as primary motivators within dark tourism, and as such the chapter has examined how these forces guide one towards dark tourism experiences by using examples from the industry. Finally, authenticity has been discussed as an outcome of commodification in several forms. This process is depicted below in Figure 9.
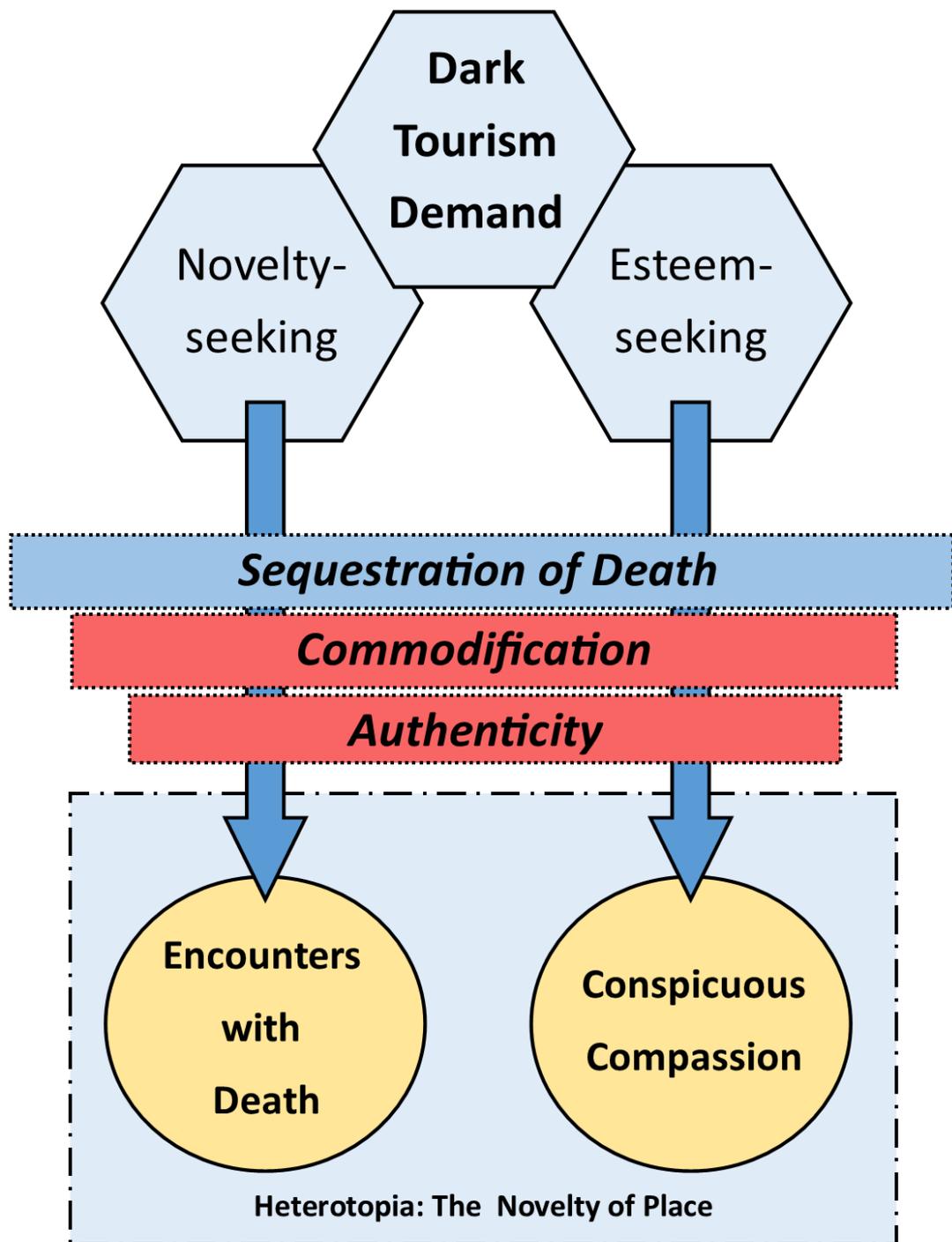
Figure 9: Conceptual framework for Chapter Three

The next step, in Chapter Four, is to consider more keenly the direct relationship between dark tourism experience and commodification by examining kitsch as a consequence of commodification in order to understand further how the visitor experience is affected by the commodification process.

Chapter Four

The 'Kitschification' of Dark Tourism

4.0: Chapter Introduction

As argued thus far, the central tenet of the commodification process is that experiences can be bought and sold. The product on offer is often an intangible experience, but physical products also play a key part. Central to that notion is the souvenir. It could be a profound item of significance to one's experience: the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial, for example, sells educational and commemorative literature to continue one's understanding of the concepts of the visitor experience at the former concentration camp. However, elsewhere, the picture is a little more profane. The clichéd pencils, keyrings, postcards and other such memorabilia are available *en masse* at a wide variety of sites, and dark tourism does not find itself immune from this particular encroachment of cheap items, sentiment and approach. This is the realm of kitsch, and it pervades tourism through a process which is termed 'kitschification' (Potts, 2012; Sharpley & Stone, 2009b). However, it is key to note at this juncture that the concept of kitsch does not only manifest in physical products; rather, its sentiments can be just as often conveyed in intangible ways. This dual approach will be conveyed throughout this chapter as the role of kitsch within commodification is examined, with specific attention paid to the purported 'kitschification' of dark tourism.

Building on the groundwork of previous chapters, this chapter will examine how dark tourism is commodified and the effects that commodification may have on the visitor experience by way of kitsch. To do this, firstly, the delicate nature of issues regarding the commodification process will be examined in order to highlight the nuanced arguments surrounding its implementation. Then, the chapter will discuss the concept of kitsch in order to uncover its nature and potential effects on the dark tourism visitor experience, before using that groundwork to explore the 'kitschification' of dark tourism in depth. Following this, the concept of myth-making and product development within that process will be examined. The contrasting concepts of 'pseudo-events' and 'staged authenticity' as noted in Chapter Two will be reintroduced in order to see how commodification can be used to create a specific dark tourism experience, and to examine how it can be diluted by the addition of myth and legend within dark tourism discourse. The concept of kitschification will then be further conceptualised by examining the presence of commercial outlets and souvenirs at sites of dark tourism. Finally, the chapter will examine how the commodification process within dark tourism affects attitudes towards mortality in order to further understand what effects the commodification process may have on the visitor experience.

4.1: 'Commodification critique' and its implementation

The discussion in Chapters Two and Three suggest that the way in which the visitor experiences a given site is shaped by the commodification process. When described in this manner, commodification appears to denote subterfuge – a manipulation of the tourist by cunning means, perhaps even by inauthentic processes. Indeed, much research paints the development of commodification as regrettable (Elkington, 2015) – even inherently bad (Boorstin, 1987). However, as will now be shown, the issue is far more nuanced, and the discussion herein will highlight the different levels on which an experience can be commodified. Walsh and Giulianotti (2007) highlight the concept of 'commodification critique', a philosophical approach to the nature of commodified entities including, but not limited to, tourism. Though much debate is distinctly partisan to either side of the debate (Sather-Wagstaff, 2011; Seaton, 2009; Boorstin, 1987), the reality is that commodification has a variety of both positive and negative aspects (Walsh & Giulianotti, 2007) which must be considered as a whole when discussing the effect of commodification on the tourist experience because, of course, the visitor experience is a lived experience, not theoretical. Therefore, the two opposing discourses for and against commodification will now be synthesised into one singular critique which, combined with subsequent sections of this chapter, will explore the effect of commodification on the visitor experience in dark tourism.

It is argued that commodification has become an inherent part of the modern tourism industry (Stone, 2017), and as such the tourist views a touristic encounter through its lens (Sather-Wagstaff, 2011). This can be explained as the result of the pervasion of capitalism and materialism insofar as material objects play a key role in human life (Morgan & Pritchard, 2005); in this sense, it can be said that tourists expect to be able (or be required) to buy something (whether physical or non-physical) which will satisfy a particular need (Seaton, 2009). This is because that concept underpins the worldview of Western society and is therefore accepted as normal (Toussaint & Decrop, 2013; Seaton, 2009). As noted in Chapter Three, however, dark tourism is different to other forms of tourism in that the role of money has an ethical taboo (Seaton, 2009). Despite this, money still pervades the industry, whether it is the blockbuster BodyWorlds exhibitions (Bouchard, 2010), the so-called 'dark fun factories' of the Dungeon attractions (Stone, 2009b) or the street-vendors around Ground Zero (Sather-Wagstaff, 2011; Sturken, 2007). To that end, Toussaint and Decrop (2013) note that the role of money is somewhat paradoxical within dark tourism; on one hand it denotes exclusivity or power whilst also, on the other, 'degrading sacred power' (Toussaint & Decrop, 2013, p. 21). Indeed, in that

vein Seaton (2009) identifies three key 'dimensions' of commodification (as shown below in Figure 10) which take on a particular relevance to dark tourism due to the aforementioned ethical issues. The model attempts to address the aforementioned paradox towards maintaining an appropriate balance for supply and demand.

1	'…whether financial transactions of any sort should be allowable'
2	'… if some commercialisation is allowed, who should benefit?'
3	'… if commercialisation is introduced, how should it be achieved in a way which does not adversely affect the site?'

Figure 10: Considerations of Commodification (adapted from Seaton, 2009, p. 87)

Based on the discussion throughout this thesis, it can be said that commodification will pervade to some extent, even if that is simply maintenance or renovation (Lennon & Foley, 2000a). The second 'dimension' is of more pertinence when considering the effects of commodification. Seaton (2009) notes that, ideally, the local or 'affected' community benefits in a material way. This demonstrates that the commodification of a site can be enacted for material gain; indeed, as can be observed at many types of tourist sites, the notion of 'not-for-profit' is often used to show the value and worth of that operation. It shows the visitor that money is used for the benefit of many people, rather than a select group of stakeholders who stand to benefit financially. However, this of course varies greatly from site to site for financial, political and other reasons (Stone, 2006), many of which are covered elsewhere in this thesis.

The third consideration examines how commodification can be implemented so as not to adversely affect the site (Seaton, 2009), a consideration self-evidently of greater complexity than the others, and it is almost ambiguously open. It appears to concern the physical manifestation of the site but must also consider the visitor experience and so, therefore, it can be said that this consideration aims to address how the visitor experience may be protected from the adverse effects of commodification and thus exploitation (Lennon, 2017). This thesis has noted the potential consequences that commodification can have on authenticity, and indeed Seaton (2009) notes that commodification can dilute dark tourism by stripping away a certain level of mystique. This links to the concept of heterotopia as explored in Chapter Three; if commodification is implemented incorrectly, the aura afforded to heterotopic spaces (Stone, 2017) could be diminished or even extinguished (Blain & Wallis, 2007). Indeed, this diminishment has been noted through

the use of kitsch and the so-called 'kitschification' process (Sharpley & Stone, 2009b) – though, as will be shown latterly in this chapter, kitsch and commodification are not necessarily deleterious to the dark tourism experience.

Nonetheless, much literature on commodification leans towards the degrading effects of money and therefore, by extension, commodification. For example, Elkington (2015) notes that the meaning of a site or experience can weaken as the result of commodification; furthermore, Lennon and Foley (2000a) note that The Sixth Floor, a memorial facility at the site of John F. Kennedy's assassination, has now incorporated retail and hospitality elements into the site despite the founders' intentions that it remain above such developments. That case conjures an image of an unstoppable force that can be held off for a time but, for the societal reasons stated previously, must ultimately become commodified in order for the site to remain viable. As much commodification critique favours the argument against commodification (Walsh & Giulianotti, 2007), the concept of 'market abolitionism' surfaces as an approach to combat commodification (Walsh & Giulianotti, 2007), though it is often derided as untenable within the confines of a capitalist society (Seaton, 2009; Walsh & Giulianotti, 2007). As such, there is also some argument to support the commodification process within tourism. For example, Boniface (2005) states that it is imperative to encourage visitors by conveying value, which is often difficult without symptoms of commodification such as entrance fees, marketing or interpretative materials (Frew, 2013; Willard, Lade & Frost, 2013; Boniface, 2005). Indeed, the twin terms of 'use-value' and 'exchange-value' are common when conceptualising the commodification process (Sather-Wagstaff, 2011; Walsh & Giulianotti, 2007). Whilst the former is self-evident in its meaning, the latter could refer to an exchange of several things, though it is primarily intended to mean the exchange of money. However, some sites are free to enter and can be experienced completely free of charge. Rather than detracting from the experience, then, it can be argued that commodification can be used to denote 'exchange-value' by demonstrating the aforementioned symptoms without necessarily requiring a monetary fee.

For example, consider how commodification can lead to physical improvements of a site. Walsh and Giulianotti (2007) note the power that improved access and facilities can have in influencing positive experiences. However, whilst they assert that the commodification of football has made the game more elite (due to increased ticket prices in modern stadiums, for example – Penn, 2008), it can be shown that the commodification process makes tourism more accessible and democratic as the availability of different products is so wide (Cooper & Hall, 2013; MacCannell, 2011). Even Auschwitz, as noted

by Lennon and Foley (2000a), must be renovated in order to preserve the site from further deterioration, and so stakeholders must therefore commodify the site by enacting modern refurbishment. Though this may have an adverse effect on the authenticity of the site (MacCannell, 2011), Timothy and Boyd (2003) note that tourists are often unable to distinguish between what is authentic and what is inauthentic (also Boorstin, 1987). This is a critical disparity, particularly at sites of historic or cultural importance; whilst Walsh and Giulianotti (2007) state that there is much potential for compromise within the commodification process, it has been observed that the presence of kitsch is a way of bridging that gap (Potts, 2012; Sturken, 2007). As such, discussion now turns to kitsch as a distinct phenomenon within the so-called 'kitschification' of dark tourism.

4.2: Excess and Irony: The Concept of Kitsch

A stroll along the seafront promenade at Blackpool leaves one in no doubt as to the deeply-ingrained presence of kitsch within tourism. Bawdy cartoon postcards and the famous 'Kiss Me Quick' hats hint at a debauched, carefree escape from home life; endless trinkets adorned with the town's eponymous Tower or British flags point to a simpler, down-to-earth sense of British leisure time; brightly-coloured miles of Blackpool rock entice with a promise of sweet indulgence for all ages. Tourists expect to encounter them, whether they enjoy them or not. Blackpool is not unique in this respect. This could be Morecambe, Hastings, Bridlington, Bognor Regis, or any of their ilk. Indeed, this type of merchandise is not even unique to those faded seaside resorts; visit York, Liverpool, Edinburgh, or even the global metropolis of London, and such outlets of cheap, disposable physical representations of a location and its heritage, history, experiences, landmarks, or traditions are easily found. As noted by Ward (1991), kitsch pervades many aspects of culture: tourism, music, fashion, teenage imagery and – as will be explored latterly in this chapter – impressions of Other. Therefore, let us briefly consider how 'kitsch' can be conceptualised.

Kitsch is a relatively common term, yet its exact meaning is somewhat ambiguous. It can be taken to mean items which embody concepts such as 'sentimental excess' (Sharpley & Stone, 2009c, p. 118), 'easily understood' or simplified messages (Lugg, 1999, p. 3), 'sweetness, schmaltz and comfort' (Emmer, 2014, p. 26), superficiality (Potts, 2012; Sturken, 2007) and questionable taste (Emmer, 2014; Potts, 2012; Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, 1998; Ward, 1991). Peter Ward's 'Kitsch In Sync' (1991) is a veritable cornucopia of 'bad taste' (Ward, 1991), with each page seemingly more tacky than the last, gaudy and edifying in its exposure of kitsch from a nutcracker designed as a pair of

legs, and on through religious iconography, novelty toys, and tourist souvenirs. Indeed, it appeals to a sense of novelty and simplicity that is generally absent from other forms of art. This inherent simplicity or 'naïveté' (Sharpley & Stone, 2009c) of kitsch ties in with the notion of 'escape' as explored in previous chapters, and will be used herein to frame the discussion of kitsch within the tourism industry, and specifically within dark tourism. In order to develop this concept, however, it is necessary to further explore kitsch as a distinct entity – firstly, the question of *why* kitsch is used and what it evokes.

As stated previously, kitsch items can be used to physically demonstrate certain aspects of an entity. However, despite purporting to do so, they do not neatly embody such notions – rather, an extremely simplified message is conveyed. It is a 'distanced' and 'uncritical' message (Potts, 2012, p. 238), and one which can manipulate 'emotional significance' (Lugg, 1999, p. 3) in order to sell a particular image or ideal – even government policy (Sturken, 2007; Lugg, 1999). In a tourism context, kitsch maintains a status quo, or communicates how life 'should be' (Lugg, 1999, p. 103) – or perhaps *would be*, if not for the complications of real life. At Blackpool, the kitsch image of the Tower as a striking monument, naturally presiding over a sunny day on the coast belies the reality that the resort has been in overall decline for decades (Lashley & Rowson, 2010), that the town itself has real social issues, and that the British weather often leaves much to be desired. However, the world of kitsch can conveniently forget those problems and sell Blackpool as a quintessentially British haven of fun and simplicity. This notion can therefore, within dark tourism, allow the reality of death to be avoided, compounding the notion of absent death as noted in Chapter Three. Indeed, to that end it can be shown that the context in which kitsch appears can engender a specific reaction. Sharpley and Stone (2009c, p. 125) note that 'nostalgic kitsch', such as the aforementioned images of Blackpool, reinforces a selective memory in which inconvenient aspects are erased. This is perhaps more in keeping with the accepted definition of kitsch, whereas 'melancholic kitsch' (Sharpley & Stone, 2009c, p. 125; also Sturken, 2007) presents a sense of loss or more melodramatic emotion whether serious in nature such as World Trade Centre memorabilia (Sturken, 2007), or essentially meaningless kitsch such as the commemorative 'Topsy the Elephant' figurines (Sharpley & Stone, 2009c, p. 120). Indeed, the contrast of two types of melancholic kitsch at opposite ends of an imaginary scale highlights the presence of kitsch within many parts of the tourism industry.

Perhaps, though, the sheer prevalence of kitsch is a testament to its place within our culture. Rather than being a deviant strand of meaningless, sentimental tat, it has been argued that kitsch is an established facet of our culture (Emmer, 2014). Morgan &

Pritchard (2005) describe such simple messages as 'touchstones of memory'; one interviewee explained the role of kitsch fridge magnets bought from a variety of holiday destinations as that of a prompt for the user to recall her own memories of the place in which it was purchased. Indeed, kitsch concepts may add value to a tourist experience; 'luxurious service' (Morgan & Pritchard, 2005, p. 40) hints at a certain kitsch pretension harking back to that aforementioned romanticised past (Lugg, 1999) – even a crass, kitsch evocation of imperial 19th century opulence serves a purpose in that the tourist receives an escapist product without necessarily appreciating the kitsch nature. It is in this way that kitsch pervades our culture with its own specific place within tourism, and the extent to which it affects our understanding of dark tourism will be considered subsequently. However, the true extent of its pervasion is unclear because kitsch is defined by taste (Sturken, 2007; Lugg, 1999), a subjective barometer which, as a final note on the conceptualisation of kitsch, will now be considered.

As explained thus far, kitsch is generally accepted to be of questionable taste (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, 1998), but it is also impossible to objectively quantify what constitutes 'good' or 'bad' taste. As suggested by Ward (1991, p. 6), humans have an understanding of taste based upon an 'amalgam of influences from different times and different places', such as is explained by Urry's (2005) 'anthropological gaze' in which visitors to a site interpret the various semiotic cues and place them within their own understanding which is itself based on previous semiotic cues (Urry, 2005). At those faded seaside resorts, the prevalence of nostalgic kitsch fits in seamlessly because, as suggested previously, they are a deeply ingrained and accepted aspect of our understanding of tourism. However, as shown throughout this thesis, dark tourism is subject to different influences. Perhaps, then, it can be said that taste, just like any other new tradition or product, may develop and change over time. As Mars and Mars (2000) note, the once-symbolic white ornaments given as gifts from seaside resorts in the inter-war period have receded from meaning, and now occupy a kitsch nostalgic role. As such, there appear to be some rules, but they remain unclear (Ward, 1991). This lack of clarity is perhaps why kitsch is such a divisive phenomenon. Potts (2012, p. 238) rails against its 'bankrupt destiny', suggesting that it offers nothing to, and clouds, our understanding of real issues within the dark tourism experience (also Emmer, 2014). Similarly, Westbrook (2002, p. 426) notes kitsch's inherent 'self-delusion' not only as an ultimately ineffective medium, but also in terms of the approach of those who buy into the sentiment without a sense of irony which, as noted by Sharpley and Stone (2009c), is a major factor in the perpetuation of kitsch. Kitsch can purvey an attractive and 'romanticised past' (Lugg, 1999, p. 106),

but, crucially, consumers must be able to discern that it is a simplified vision of a fictional past; if not, there is a real risk of kitsch trivialising the experience (Hewison, 1987) or a 'numbing of our historical sensibilities' (Walsh, 1992, p. 101). If kitsch does indeed have the ability to manipulate the understanding of conflicted history (Lugg, 1999), then that discernment can become difficult. As has been explored throughout this thesis, many difficulties afflict the presentation and consumption of dark tourism, and so distinguishing between reality and the myth of kitsch only adds to that relative trouble.

That distinction between fiction and reality is a key issue within kitsch in dark tourism. Just like dark tourism itself, kitsch occupies 'contested ground' (Emmer, 2014, p. 32; also Lugg, 1999). As such, the notion of taste, as mentioned previously, is acutely felt, despite there being a lack of clarity on taste as an objective entity, and it is into this grey area that this thesis will now turn. It has thus far been shown that kitsch is an established facet of tourism which can have an effect on the consumption of experience, and so now its effect on dark tourism will be explored by examining what has been termed the process of 'kitschification'.

4.3: The 'kitschification' of dark tourism

It may appear that kitsch and death are very far removed from one another. However, the so-called process of 'kitschification' has been noted specifically within the realm of dark tourism (Sharpley & Stone, 2009c), and has been observed at a range of sites: Ground Zero (Brown, 2013a; Potts, 2012; Sturken, 2007), the Dungeon attractions (Stone, 2009b), the Imperial War Museum North and the International Slavery Museum (Brown, 2013a), and even at sites of Holocaust memorial (Brown, 2013a; Kertesz, 2001). However, the concept of 'kitschification' itself is still unclear; as noted by Potts (2012, p. 247), the presence of kitsch at a given site does not necessarily mean that it has been 'kitschified'. Despite the presence of kitschification at the range of dark sites as identified, not all are at the same level. The overtly kitsch and sensational Dungeon attractions, for example, use kitsch as a central part of the experience (Stone, 2009b), whereas the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial actively avoids it (as will be explored latterly in this chapter). The reality of kitsch at sites of dark tourism will therefore now be explored.

As noted by Potts (2012, p. 233), there is a 'conspicuous commodity culture' at Ground Zero, in which visitors are actively encouraged to consume kitsch items ranging from snow globes and soft toys to gaudy trinkets bearing the date and location of the atrocities (Potts, 2012; Sharpley & Stone, 2009c; Sturken, 2007). As these are available on-site, this contradicts Brown's (2013a) suggestion that geographic distance enables

kitsch to be utilised without appearing insensitive to those affected by the death or atrocity commemorated; therefore, it can be said that kitsch may not always be divisive and may indeed contribute positively to the consumer experience. If kitsch is indeed 'chiefly for the benefit of the tourist' (Potts, 2012, p. 235) and kitsch has become more democratic in a multimedia society (Brown, 2013a), it points to a more contemporary concept of kitsch. Sturken (2007, p. 38) terms this 'comfort consumerism', in which, for example, kitsch items may be sold at dark tourism sites merely due to demand (Brown, 2013a); Lugg (1999) even suggests that the absence of kitsch items may upset or confuse tourists, leaving them with a lack of means to deal with the trauma at the site (Yoshida, Bui & Lee, 2016). This points to an increasing reliance on the process of commodification (kitsch being a symptom of that process) within dark tourism in order to mediate the concept of mortality in a society pervaded by the sequestration of death.

As such, kitsch representation can be noted in the presence of pseudo-events (Boorstin, 1987) within dark tourism. It is well accepted in current literature that dark tourism is best understood as encounters with actual events concerning death, suffering and other such concepts (Stone, 2006; Lennon & Foley, 2000a). However, just as tourism suppliers at large can create a convenient narrative in order to convey or portray a particular discourse and present a product to the market, so too can suppliers of dark tourism package and sell legend, myth, or falsehoods in the context of dark tourism as the term is a wide umbrella (Lennon, 2017). As will now be shown, kitsch can alter the understanding, and therefore the meaning, of dark tourism experience and encounters with mortality.

Whereas Lennon and Foley (2000a) are relatively steadfast in their definition, Stone's (2006) suggestion that dark tourism deals with 'death, suffering and the seemingly macabre' introduces a grey area of 'seemingly macabre'; it suggests that essentially fabricated tales or situations may also fall into the same arena as real atrocity and disaster. Indeed, one can observe many such attractions in the UK which promote mythic engagement with death or suffering: myriad 'ghost walks' (Edensor, 2004) in cities such as York and Edinburgh; Cornwall's Jamaica Inn at Bodmin Moor; 'haunted' Muncaster Castle (*Muncaster*, ND); even the Dungeon attractions, ostensibly entertainment experiences (Stone, 2009b), dabble in the supernatural. As such, it is possible to identify the established position of mythic and supernatural concepts within UK tourism whether one considers it dark tourism or not (more critique of which is beyond the scope of this thesis), though its influence can be said to affect the position of dark tourism overall. As supernatural and mythic phenomena are essentially invented and

embellished for entertainment purposes, it can be said that the employment of them within tourism can be typified as a form of 'pseudo-event' (Boorstin, 1987) and, furthermore, they therefore represent part of the 'kitschification' of dark tourism (Sharpley & Stone, 2009b).

Boorstin (1987) notes the heavy commodification of many forms of tourism, and suggests that tourists do not in fact seek authentic experiences, but essentially desire to be entertained in ways which satisfy other needs, such as convenience or the preference of familiarity (as discussed in Chapter Two). Indeed, the pervasion of commodification can even remove the potential for authentic encounters. Aitchison, MacLeod and Shaw (2000) note the contradictory narrative at Tintagel Castle, Cornwall; whilst the main exhibits largely ignore (or challenge the veracity of) the legends of King Arthur for which the site is known, the site nonetheless offers souvenirs associated with the Knights of the Round Table, Merlin and so forth (Laws, 2013; Aitchison, MacLeod & Shaw, 2000). This suggests that tourists prefer to seek out what they expect, rather than differing or contradictory experiences (Ooi, 2005); indeed, Lothain (2001, p. 97) notes a 'shift from historical representation to fictional depiction', which agrees with tourists' purported preference for the inauthentic (Boorstin, 1987). If, as stated by Ooi (2005), tourists seek out what they expect from an experience whether or not this is concomitant with the discourse at the site, then this makes commodification via 'pseudo-events' more justifiable. Indeed, Brown (1996) identifies 'genuine fakes' as inauthentic and commodified (yet benign) representations which address the needs of the tourist similar to the pseudo-events (though less reliant on a temporal element). Brown (1996) cites the example of a convention centre at what is now the Hiroshima Peace Park (Yoshida, Bui & Lee, 2016) that survived the nuclear explosion, but later decayed due to weathering. The building had gained symbolic power and so it was rebuilt in its ruined, post-detonation state. This, however, is not made clear to visitors (MacCannell, 2011), and so the commodification goes unnoticed to the casual observer. This perpetuates the chosen narrative of the Peace Park; whether or not this is necessarily ethical is debatable (Stone, 2016), though Aitchison, MacLeod and Shaw (2000) note that 'spurious heritage' is currently of concern in line with the aforementioned shift towards fictional depiction at sites of heritage.

Indeed, that performance element in the vein of the pseudo-event within dark tourism is observable elsewhere. White (2013) notes that costume is an established part of the dark tours of Melbourne not only in the entertainment-focussed ghost tours, but also on the altogether darker tour relating to crime in the city during which the guide is

attired in a prisoner's jumpsuit. Whilst one could not countenance a guide at Auschwitz wearing prisoner clothing, in other contexts such visual links and an almost playful attitude is seen to add value to a heritage experience (White, 2013; Taheri & Jafari, 2012). Culloden, as an example, played host to battle over 250 years ago and so can be said to have little political weight in today's society, and thus it has also been commodified in line with the 'genuine fakes' and pseudo-events as mentioned previously. For example, the interpretative materials are etched into wood or stone to give an air of authenticity (Willard, Lade & Frost, 2013). Indeed, just as Boorstin (1987) notes that tourists like to believe that their experiences are self-determined, the Culloden experience also factors in 'discovery' elements to the pre-recorded tour by using GPS technology to trigger certain media when a visitor enters a particular location (Willard, Lade & Frost, 2013; also Lennon, 2017). In that situation, the symptoms of commodification are employed in a way seemingly intended to enhance the visitor's understanding of the subject matter, and so, arguably, without them the visitor may leave the site having not fully grasped its significance. In this respect, the kitschification of dark tourism experience may be said to allow deeper engagement with the concepts and themes on offer – indeed, Yoshida, Bui and Lee (2016) suggest that entertainment and education are not opposite but in fact for part of a simultaneous cycle within any given site.

However, Boorstin (1987, p. 102) notes that all tourist attractions have a 'factitious' quality to them, suggesting that it is commodification which lends a *de facto* element of inauthenticity to tourism, if indeed commodification is an inherent part of tourism (as suggested previously). It is difficult to extract the essence of an 'experience' from the commodified aspects such as souvenirs; Morgan and Pritchard (2005, p. 34) suggest that souvenirs are 'material metaphors' of experiences of tourism, whilst they may also be said to have a powerful effect on the aura or meaning of a site (Sather-Wagstaff, 2011). Indeed, various supernatural walking tours attest to this (Frew, 2013; Edensor, 2004). It can be accepted that a large swathe of the clientèle at such events accepts that the supernatural subject is a hoax existing purely for entertainment, yet they nonetheless buy into what is ostensibly the commodification of the location (Edensor, 2004). Whilst Brown's (1996) 'genuine fakes' pander to tourists' expectations of kitsch (also Appleton, 2006; Ooi, 2005), MacCannell (1976) suggests that the tourist can accept these staged rituals as essentially fake, but enjoyable nonetheless (also Urry, 2011). As such, whilst kitsch may be tasteless or shallow, it forms an often seamless part of the tourist experience nonetheless.

To that end, Sturken (2007) writes extensively on the presence of kitsch at Ground

Zero and its associated memorials. It is 'charged with meaning' (Sturken, 2007, p. 168), but it is also apparently responsible for mediating the tragedy to the world, and more specifically the mediation of American patriotism, as can be seen with the proliferation of sentimentally nationalistic kitsch. As has been noted previously though, kitsch can be accused of being meaningless or even 'morally reprehensible' (Brown, 2013a, p. 243), and the often simplistic presentation of kitsch at the site (Sharpley & Stone, 2009c) gives credence to Westbrook's (2002) assertion that kitsch fills a void previously occupied by overtly political feelings or activity. Rather than railing against US-led aggression or impotent foreign policy, or even terrorism, the Ground Zero kitsch allows tourists to affirm their innocence by transferring these complicated issues into simple, non-human entities. A soft toy does not have personal politics: it is innocent, and therefore, by extension, so is the owner. This 'selling of comfort' (Sturken, 2007, p. 37) acts as a superficial symbol of an individual's engagement with the subject matter; in this respect it allows one to engage in both conspicuous consumption and, as a result of the invested meaning of the kitsch product, conspicuous compassion (as identified in Chapter Three). However, in the maelstrom of emotion directly after the atrocity, this issue of taste seems to have taken a back seat; as noted by Sturken (2007, p. 174), 'the need to connect to a space' may make any particular gesture 'seem appropriate and meaningful', whether in fact, after rational reflection, it may not be so. This evokes the concept of 'confirmation bias' whereby an individual processes new information in a way that 'confirms one's preconceptions and avoids contradiction with prior beliefs' (Allahverdyan & Galstyan, 2014, p. 1). Such a bias is ripe for exploitation by kitsch; as discussed in Chapter Three, individual approaches to dealing with death are varied and often incompatible, and so a simplified, even juvenile (Sharpley & Stone, 2009) representation may appear, to a tourist, to be the most acceptable way to publicly deal with the dark subject in question, which in turn reinforces the myth (Lugg, 1999) not just of kitsch, but of the potentially unsuitable engagement with the matter.

The individual kitsch discourses identified in this section point to the potential to dictate much vaster political discourses if mobilised on a greater scale. Indeed, they can indeed shape overriding public sentiment if mobilised in an appropriate way: they can become 'political communiques' (Sharpley & Stone, 2009c), acting as symbols of power (also Yoshida, Bui & Lee, 2016). These large-scale symbols are known as 'mass-mediated responses' and, as will be shown, they have become powerful (and often kitsch) tools in public understanding of disaster, death and grief.

4.4: Kitsch within mass-mediated responses and souvenirs

The concept of mass media is a recent phenomenon. Even just twenty years ago the vast majority of media outlets – print media, television, radio – were controlled by a relatively small group, making individual or alternative discourses difficult to disseminate on a mass scale. The advent of social media and other technology in the latter part of the first decade of the 21st century (as a more immediate and customisable facet of the internet at large) has led to the democratisation of media with a variety of results. From facilitating riots in London (Kirk, 2011), fostering political engagement (Xenos, Vromen & Loader, 2013) and its role in the so-called Arab Spring (Heitner, 2014; Papaioannou & Olivos, 2013) and the neo-fascist 'alt-right' (Marantz, 2016) to the more self-centred flood of 'selfies' (as covered in Chapter Three), the current state of the media is one in which the previously established powers at once observe an ability to reach an even wider audience than before, yet at the same time experience an increasingly congested queue for the figurative soap-box from which to be heard.

The ability of an individual, or organisation, to connect with others is greater now than at any time previously, and it can be observed that this has an effect on our relationship with death and disaster. The aforementioned 'conspicuous commodity culture' at Ground Zero (Potts, 2012, p.233) is a fertile breeding ground for the phenomenon termed the 'mass-mediated representation'. This concept evokes that of 'dominant discourse' (Siriyuvasak, 1991) and, as will be shown, the concept of dominance is key. As noted by Wales (2008), the mediator has a profound effect on how the representation appears; for example, Western depictions and understanding of slavery are mediated through European popular culture (Wales, 2008) and, depending on the position of the mediator, death can be presented as heroic, tragic, pathetic, deserved, or some other ascribed value (Coombs, 2014; Raisborough, Frith & Klein, 2012). As such, the key semiotic role that mass-mediated responses have in the visitor experience will now be examined.

The binary sentiment in distinguishing right from wrong (Hasian, 2014; Sturken, 2007), a feature of kitsch as suggested previously, becomes more potent on a mass scale. It can create a vast group or lobby which totally accepts the purveyed sentiment (even totalitarianism – Potts, 2012) – a process which can lead to the domination of the kitsch commodity within the notion of national mourning (Potts, 2012) because, due to its simple message, it neatly encapsulates the given sentiment. This simplicity allows it to be understood by a large swathe of the population; it encroaches upon the territory once

reserved for political activism (in a time before mass media – Westbrook, 2002) and replaces nuanced ideological standings with trivialised or distorted emotion (Potts, 2012) which can lead to a 'cultural conditioning of society' (Stone, 2016, p. 24).

In March 2012, footballer Fabrice Muamba suffered a heart attack on-field during a televised FA Cup match, and was subsequently in a critical condition in hospital (BBC Sport, 2012) before eventually recovering (though he retired from the profession immediately). During his critical period, there was an outpouring of support from all corners of the footballing world (Mokbel, 2012) to which fans and players alike contributed. The now-ubiquitous 'Keep Calm and Carry On' motif was subsequently customised to read 'Keep Calm and Pray 4 Muamba' [*sic*] (one of a myriad of such edits) and, even now, is available to purchase online in simple print form, but also on a variety of items such as keyrings and mugs. Leaving aside the religious element – slightly jarring in that it is one not associated with English football – it can be observed that, far from the seemingly omnipotent reach of the sport's governing bodies and clubs, kitsch mass-mediated responses can be distributed by anyone. This 'democratisation' of kitsch is noted by Potts (2012, p. 244), who uses examples relating to the USA's 'War on Terror', with Osama bin Laden toilet paper being a particularly tasteless specimen of customisable kitsch. Indeed, such was the sense of hysteria surrounding the 9/11 attacks, many such individually customised items proliferated in the vicinity as hawkers attempted to cash-in on Giuliani's speech (Sturken, 2007) (as noted in Chapter Three). The militaristic sentiment that later prevailed (Brown, 2013a; Potts, 2012; Sturken, 2007) sits well with Emmer's (2014) suggestion that kitsch and the military are natural bedfellows. However, Emmer (2014) also notes that the seeming simplicity – that good-v-evil dichotomy previously noted as purveyed by George W. Bush – clouds understanding of the real issues of whether such militaristic chest-beating is the most appropriate way to deal with mass murder.

Whether appropriate or not, mass-mediated responses are by nature selective, a quality that can be seen to affect the visitor experience in dark tourism. Within dark tourism, 'airbrushing' has been noted as common in so-called 'contested heritage' (Austin, 2001; Dann & Seaton, 2001; Lennon & Foley, 2000b) and is perpetuated with mass-mediated representations (Chuang, 2012). For example, the kitsch items associated with Ground Zero (Brown, 2013a; Sturken, 2007) ignore the factor of aggressive US foreign policy; in the world of kitsch sentimentality, the USA is innocent (Sturken, 2007), and the notion of 'foreign' or 'ethnic' is concomitant with threat (Chuang, 2012; Sturken, 2007). Sturken (2007) suggests that this, again, is intentional – it is an attempt to assuage

and eliminate feelings of guilt on the part of the American Self. What it does, however, is offer an insight into the reality of commodification at sites of dark tourism. As is to be expected at such sites, with them having a complex convergence of agendas and debates over decorum, power and representation, there are, as this chapter has examined, several factors that may affect the tourist experience as a result of commodification. As such, the way in which kitsch representations are incorporated in the experience will have demonstrable effect chiefly through souvenirs and commercial outlets, as will now be considered.

Stone (2009c) explains that dark sites encounter much difficulty in managing shops due to the delicate balance of difficult discourses and exhibits (Sharpley, 2009a). Indeed, as Brown (2013a) notes, there are many restrictions on what a shop may or may not stock. As such, it can be inferred that, in conjunction with Stone's (2006) Dark Tourism Spectrum, the relative gravity (in terms of temporal, political or other significance) of the site therefore dictates how much, and what kind of, retail activity can take place on site. The serious nature of Auschwitz-Birkenau is reflected in the almost complete absence of retail opportunities in the conventional sense of a 'gift shop'; rather, the outlet is stocked with educational materials, the emphasis on which allows the site to operate without 'appearing insensitive' (Brown, 2013a, p. 275). Lugg (1999) notes that kitsch can be disturbing; this would surely be the case if one was to exit a site where over one million people were executed only to see rows of gaudy gifts and branded stationery.

That juxtaposition leads into the role of taste within retailing. As a point of comparison, contrast the situation at Auschwitz-Birkenau with the other sites examined by Brown (2013a), and one can see how they differ. The Imperial War Museum North relies on a certain amount of kitsch novelty in order to 'bring alive' experiences on the Home Front during the Second World War: ration books, mess tins, and traditional toys being some of the items on sale (Brown, 2013a). Emmer (2014) notes that such items nonetheless toe a precarious line; in such a context, sincere items risk appearing jocular or trivial. To that end, Sturken (2007, p. 168) identifies the intense 'debates over aesthetics' which continue to rage over the representations at Ground Zero (Edkins, 2004). Representations – in this case kitsch souvenirs – which are necessarily dispersed away from the 'host site' essentially become ambassadors for the site itself; as noted by Mars and Mars (2000), souvenirs have meaning not only in terms of where they are bought, but also regarding where they go. Whilst the aforementioned fridge magnets figuratively transport the Caribbean into a suburban kitchen (Morgan & Pritchard, 2005), a Ground Zero snow globe clearly has a different purpose and effect – it is not to transport

the hell of 9/11 into the home. The World Trade Centre was destroyed, yet in those snow globes it remains intact and untroubled (Sturken, 2007) in a questionable representation which again appears to enact the sequestration of death, a denial of atrocity which therefore affects the way individuals may consume a visitor experience but also more generally how the atrocity in question is contemplated (e.g. Ashworth & Isaac, 2015.

However, there is some academic opinion to suggest that the use of kitsch is less intentional. Brown (2013a) states that kitsch items may be on sale merely due to their popularity at other institutions, and that therefore their presence is consumer-driven. Lugg (1999) even suggests that kitsch is something of a sop to placate tourists, that a lack of kitsch predictability can provoke 'irate reactions' (Lugg, 1999, p. 4) and is often present to maintain a status quo; in the case of dark tourism, kitsch arguably maintains the sequestration of death as a way of maintaining taste (Light, 2017; Stone, 2016). Indeed, Ward (1991) states that discernment of taste is based on prior experiences at different places, which further suggests that kitsch is used to deliberately perpetuate the absent death; it may explain why tourists engage in jovial behaviour in summer months at the Auschwitz Memorial (Keil, 2005). It shares some similar types of commodification with other tourist sites and so, because picnics and so forth are acceptable normally, visitors feel entitled to engage in similar behaviour at Auschwitz. This suggests that the kitschification process is not entirely supply-side led, and that other commodified aspects – not necessarily kitsch – may contribute to the (arguable) dilution of a site. This is in conjunction with the various symptoms of the commodification process as identified throughout this thesis but which, in a dark tourism context, may indeed remain a diluting influence. Therefore, we can see this as another way in which the commodification process affects the visitor experience – it changes visitor expectations for what is acceptable at sites of atrocity due to the proliferation of kitsch as a by-product of commodification. Therefore, kitsch can be seen to shape consumer views towards death and mortality.

4.5: How 'kitschification' shapes views of death

Lennon and Foley (2000a) describe the experience of visiting Arlington National Cemetery in detail. The site is described as 'strictly commodified' (p. 88) as at many points the visitor is not at liberty to explore the site, particularly at what can be said to be one of the USA's most solemn memorials – the grave of John F. Kennedy. Tourists are ferried by bus to the location of the grave and given an approximately 8-minute period in which to behold the plot, which, they say, leads to a 'scramble' for photographs (Lennon

& Foley, 2000a, p. 88). Signs dotted around the complex refer to the Cemetery as 'hallowed ground', and command visitors to behave as such. In any case, the commodification of the experience allows little deviation from the rules as the visitors are very closely managed.

As stated previously, visitors to heritage sites do so on the assumption that the information they receive is truthful and accurate (Willard, Lade & Frost, 2013). Therefore, by confronting death in a public setting such as Arlington, visitors accept advice on how to feel. The interpretative materials (or lack of) demonstrate to the visitor the preferred way (in the opinion of the supplier) of dealing with the death in question. At Arlington, the various political and military figures are almost deified; scant regard is given to any reasoning behind their death (Sturken, 2007), and it can be argued that this is a deliberate attempt to reduce the potential for dissonance between alternative discourses (see Sharpley, 2009), which guides the visitor towards an acceptance of US heroism (as the facility is with doubt a powerful symbol of nationalism – also Sturken, 2007; Stone, 2010). The presence of the dead within the graves, as opposed to a remote memorial, gives the visitor the opportunity to enter into mediation with the dead (Walter, 2009) though, as Woodthorpe (2010, p. 64) notes, the physical body is nonetheless 'unmentionable'. Indeed, it is arguably other physical representations, and not corpses (Petersson, 2010; Woodthorpe, 2010) which guide the behaviour and views of the tourist, such as mementos left at sites of death (Petersson, 2010), or architecture whether at sites such as Arlington or municipal burial places (Grainger, 2010). Commemoration or other such related acts is still subject to cultural or religious factors (Howarth, 2007; Walter, 1999; Ariès, 1981) which are generally understood to be developed and maintained through encounters with death (Woodthorpe, 2010; Walter, 2009; Walter, 1999; Ariès, 1981). However, as a site of dark tourism, Arlington and other sites of its type – that is, high profile burial grounds (Young & Light, 2016) – are necessarily commodified unlike, arguably, municipal cemeteries (Seaton, 2015). It can be argued, though, that commodification, within the bounds of sensitivity as explored thus far, actually enhances our understanding of death, as will now be explained.

Firstly, the commodification ascribes a value to the deceased just as value is denoted in the same way at other sites of tourism (Sather Wagstaff, 2011; Walsh & Giulianotti, 2007). For example, value can be added by the availability of souvenirs as an update of the pre-modern *memento mori* (Stone, 2010; Walter, 2009). This is particularly relevant at darker sites as it allows any commemorative narrative to continue away from the site and acts as a prompt for the visitor to recall the experience at a later date (Morgan

& Pritchard, 2005). Arguably, an absence of 'frivolous' items (Brown, 2013a, p. 278) also does this insofar as it suggests that the experience is above such run-of-the-mill items which are found at other, less profound sites. Furthermore, the presence of interpretative materials, marketing methods or infrastructure also demonstrates value; not only that it is significant enough a subject to warrant such exhibition or attention (Stone, 2010; Urry, 2005), but also because it allows the visitor to leave having appreciated in more detail the context which death occupies in that given narrative, thereby adding to their understanding of mortality (Stone, 2010). This adds to debate on the nature of death as 'taboo' (Woodthorpe, 2010) in that kitsch items allow a simplified message to be disseminated away from the site, rather than ignoring death entirely.

Secondly, and further to this, there may exist an overt political discourse which can arguably enhance our understanding of an issue. Lennon and Foley (2000b, p. 162) suggest that, at sites of Holocaust tourism, 'tolerance, rationality and progress' are commodified and passed on to visitors which, again within the bounds of sensitivity, is arguably a positive outcome. This is also arguably part of the process of allowing visitors to understand the processes and consequences of the act, which Frew (2013) notes is a key characteristic to facilitate through interpretative materials. Indeed, Stone (2010) notes that, at the Ground Zero memorial facility, significant emphasis is given to the emergency service workers who attended the site in the immediate aftermath of the attack, thereby giving visitors an insight into the human interaction with death and suffering which occurred at the time. Whilst Stone (2010) also notes a potential manipulation of the narrative at the memorial in order to provoke a particular sense of patriotism in American visitors, this does not necessarily compromise the understanding of the role which the emergency services played, but rather adds extra significance (though whether this is appropriate or not is beyond the scope of this thesis). Therefore, whilst the crude sentiments of kitsch may indeed be 'bankrupt' (Potts, 2012, p. 238), they nonetheless enable and promote engagement with mortality.

A final point to consider in terms of how commodification can enhance the tourist's understanding of death is the role of semiotics. Urry (2005, p. 21) describes the 'anthropological gaze', the process in which visitors to a site interpret the various signs and place them within their own understanding which is itself based on previous signs. Just as experiencing something new or novel may enhance or reinforce one's own understanding of a given phenomenon (in this case death), surely so too can an experience challenge one's perception and cause one to re-evaluate the previously held view. Stone (2010), for example, notes that exhibits at the Tribute WTC Visitor Centre cause visitors

to feel a duty of generosity towards emergency workers. However, Tang (2014, p. 1328) suggests that a pre-existing interest, for example religious faith when visiting a site of pilgrimage, is crucial to 'successful interpretation', which can be said to mean a positive engagement with the dominant discourse(s) at the site. Indeed, this pre-existing knowledge is further crucial when one considers the relative paucity of clear rules on how we should behave towards death (Walter, 1999; Ariès, 1981; Cannadine, 1981). At Arlington, for example, one is told that the site is 'hallowed ground' (Lennon & Foley, 2000a), without being told exactly how to behave. This suggests that the semiotics of dark tourism rely on a satisfactory level of understanding of societal norms regarding death, rather than an explicit set of rules (the consequences of an unsatisfactory understanding can be seen in Chapter Three's 'Selfies at Serious Places'). Indeed, Frost and Laing (2013) note that labelling certain events as 'dark' can cause confusion due to the lack of clarity on whether they should be approached joyfully or dolefully. Therefore, it can be said that it is the semiotics associated with dark tourism, such as kitsch representations, rather than the subject matter itself, which may mediate our understanding of death and so, by engaging in dark tourism, individuals are, through their 'anthropological gaze' (Urry, 2005), subject to ongoing revision of their views of death. As shown throughout this thesis regarding other entities within dark tourism, the commodification process is central to that process. In that respect, it can be said that commodification, in line with the various managerial considerations explored in this chapter, provides a variety of semiotic cues regarding the nature of the site, its significance in relation to death or atrocity, and even how visitors should behave and engage with the concepts. By utilising empirical research, this thesis will now provide primary data to demonstrate how the commodification process affects the visitor experience in UK dark tourism.

4.6: Chapter Summary

This chapter has explored the relationship between dark tourism and kitsch as a symptom of the commodification process. There is an apt symmetry to be observed between those two phenomena; both often deal in difficult issues, both have arguably become an accepted part of the tourism industry, both are deeply divisive and both are governed by questions of taste. As observed in this chapter and previously, the commercial pressure on cultural institutions is ever-increasing to the point that even the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial has a shop. This goes some way to demonstrate the normalisation of certain aspects of commodification, yet, as has been discussed herein, the rules of taste are unwritten, and as such are often interpreted as is convenient. Indeed,

this chapter has noted and explored the way in which kitsch representations may affect the understanding of death within dark tourism. That relationship is key within this thesis, and so this chapter has served to examine some intricacies within it, such as the influence of typological factors. It has found that commodification, whilst being a well-identified and accepted part of the tourism industry, is in fact a very fine balance when dealing with dark tourism. Not only can it be used to obscure or embellish the truth; not only can it be used to sell a given discourse and, not only can it influence how tourists think about death, as shown herein, but it may also make the experience somewhat more palatable or acceptable, particularly when considering some of the upsetting or disturbing content seen at sites of dark tourism. The conceptual framework for this chapter is summarised in Figure 11.
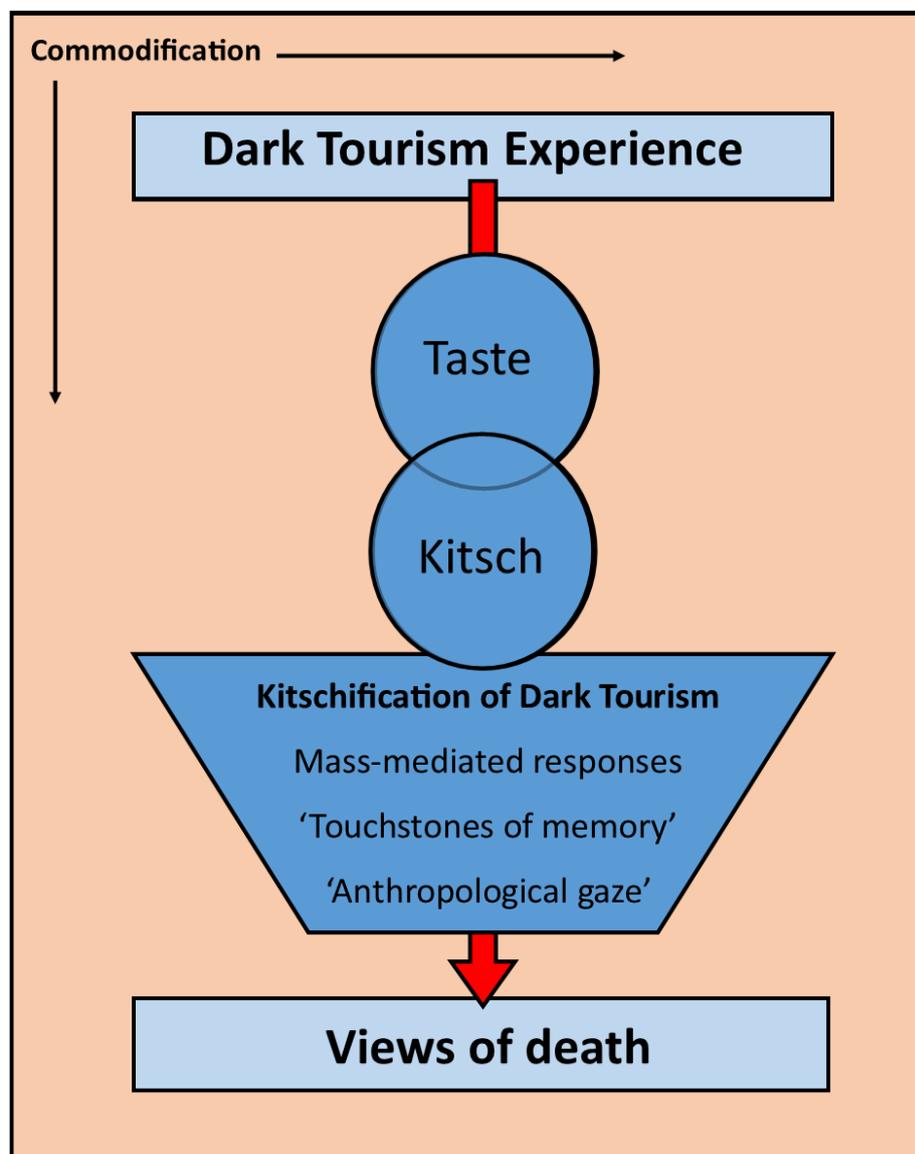
Figure 11: Conceptual framework for Chapter Four

This chapter has considered how kitsch appears within dark tourism as a way in which the commodification process affects the visitor experience. As a conclusion to the literature review, Chapter Four has therefore served to consolidate the various strands of discussion thus far to demonstrate the effect that the commodification process has on the dark tourism experience. Therefore, Part Two shall demonstrate empirically how the commodification process affects the visitor experience in UK dark tourism. Figure 12 summarises the conceptual framework presented within this literature review.
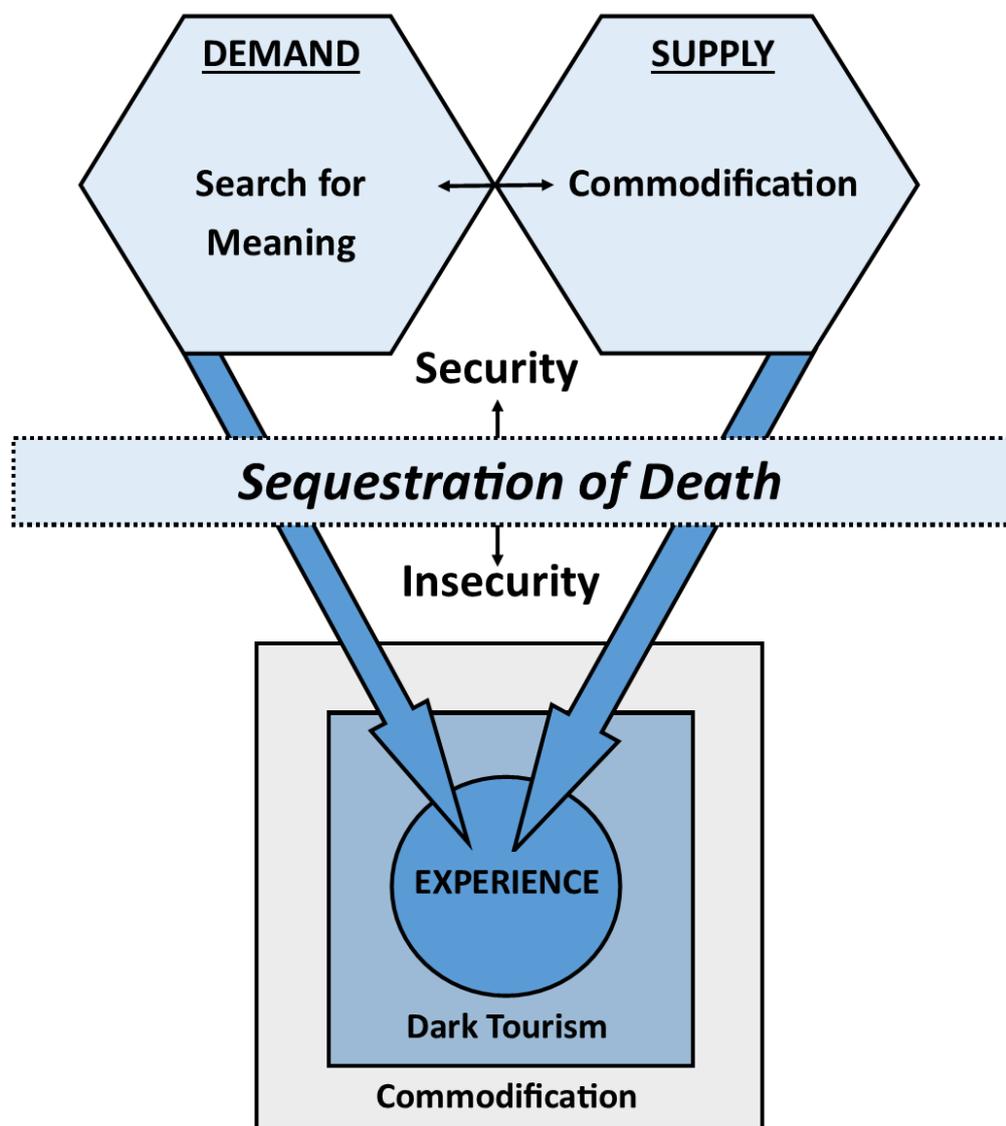
Figure 12: Conceptual Framework of the literature review

Chapter Five

Methodology and Approach to Research

5.0: Chapter Introduction

Tourism is necessarily an individual experience insofar as it is experienced and interpreted by the individual (MacCannell, 2011 & 1976; Wang, 1999) through the various lenses identified in the literature thus far such as commodification (Sather-Wagstaff, 2011), semiotics (Urry & Larsen, 2011; Urry, 1990), and how it may position us within society (Tilman, 2006; Morgan & Pritchard, 1998). As such, the presence of such wide variables in terms of interaction with, and interpretation of, touristic entities means that constructivist and phenomenological approaches are common to research of this kind (Jarratt, 2013; Szarycz, 2009) – indeed, as this chapter will detail in full, it is used within this research. This chapter will therefore explain and clarify all aspects of the methodological approach used herein. The approach is informed by the research question and aim and, as this chapter will show, a combination of methodological phenomena will be combined to produce a framework in which the research question can be addressed, and therefore in which the effect of commodification on the visitor experience in UK dark tourism can be examined.

Firstly, the chapter will examine the underlying philosophical concepts that provide the researcher, and research, with a specific epistemological and ontological approach. Then, the research design will be discussed, noting the considerations made in the construction of an appropriate and viable framework within which to operate. Thirdly, the two research methods will be explained in terms of a rationale of choice, how they apply to the individual case study sites, and how they relate to the research philosophy. Finally, the chapter will end by considering how the data is analysed in order to extract meaningful conclusions from the findings, and by also noting how ethical behaviour informs the research. Limitations to the methodology are discussed throughout in order to present a realistic portrait of the research. Figure 13 summarises the research parameters as noted in Chapter One.

Research Question	How does the commodification process affect visitor experiences within UK dark tourism?
Research Aim	Critically explore associated actions and feelings of visitors at sites of death and atrocity, including attitudes to mortality, aspects of commodification, sensitivity and authenticity as aspects of experience.
Research Objectives	1. Critically appraise visitors' engagement with dark tourism sites, attractions or exhibitions. 2. Critically examine fundamental interrelationships between producer and consumer within dark tourism. 3. Critically evaluate the extent of how and why commodification affects notions of authenticity at specific dark tourism sites.

Figure 13 – Research question, aim and objectives

5.1: Research Philosophy

A research philosophy is a way of seeing or approaching one's understanding of a given phenomenon (Veal, 2011); it is a means of interpreting or envisioning how research can be conducted and also how its findings can be interpreted (Bryman, 2008). As such, it is a fundamental underpinning to any type of research and one that has various implications on the outcomes. Research philosophy provides a means of justification for the findings and conclusions that one may draw (Audi, 2003), and so positions the research within a specific paradigm in order for it to be validated, transferred, and, ultimately, understood. This study utilises a phenomenological approach, an approach which will now be justified as suitable for the research.

<u>Phenomenology</u>

Phenomenology is an increasingly prevalent research philosophy within the realm of tourism (Szarycz, 2009). Essentially, it is an interpretative approach that prioritises the way in which 'individuals make sense of the world' (Bryman, 2008, p. 15); under its premise, the nature of human experience is entirely subjective and is based on prior experience (Szarycz, 2009; Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenology seeks to understand what the 'human experience is like' (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009) regarding the feelings and conception which it conjures in the individual, rather than a concrete or discrete positivist reality. That is reflected in this methodology generally, but, more specifically, it also reflects the nature of the research question. Consider that the research examines the 'visitor experience' (see Figure 13); whilst this may be typified in a general sense in terms of the commodified product which is sold to visitors, the very nature of the visitor experience is that it is experienced by the individual – the visitor. Therefore, it can be argued that it must necessarily be investigated in a way which reflects that notion of individual experience. Phenomenology acknowledges this; questions can be posed under the assumption that it will evoke responses based on the thoughts and feelings of the respondent, which are necessarily (according to the tenets of phenomenological research) based on a myriad of personal experiences, perceptions, knowledge and feelings (Gray, 2004; Husserl, 1977).

Phenomenology particularly suits this research because the research question seeks to understand the effect of the commodification process, not to test its existence or implications in a deductive, factual sense (a concept which is explained further latterly). The visitor may not necessarily perceive the commodification process as a distinct phenomenon *per se* (Boorstin, 1987; MacCannell, 1974), but its effect on the experience of a visitor almost certainly will be. For example, an admission fee may directly colour the enjoyment or perception of value in a consumer, but the reverse may be true in a different individual. Therein, it is clear to see that one's own personal circumstance (disposable income in this instance, for example) dictates how one perceives a given entity, and so the data must be viewed as a subjective measure – hence, a phenomenological outlook for this research is deemed suitable.

This can be further justified when one considers the nature of 'experience'. Packer and Ballantyne (2016) note the presence of a wide variety of different experiences which visitors may have 'multidimensional' experiences (p. 129). This has been variously noted through discussion of meaning-making in tourism (Paraskevaidis & Andriotis, 2015;

Brown, 2013a) as highlighted in the literature review regarding the role of souvenirs (e.g. Morgan & Pritchard, 2005). Therefore, it is logical that this potential for experience to vary widely between individuals visiting the same place and ostensibly consuming the same commodified product is reflected in a research philosophy which identifies experience as unique to each individual. Indeed, by characterising the experience as individual and unique (Packer & Ballantyne, 2016; Moustakas, 1994) and adopting a phenomenological philosophy, the research outcomes may, as a result, become richer and more indicative of the varied types of experience consumed at each given site.

To that end, this research is positioned within the Husserlian tradition (Moustakas, 1994) of phenomenology – that research is an insight into the experience as it appears to the individual (Moustakas, 1994; Husserl, 1977). Indeed, it requires a certain level of reflexive thinking from participants that, it can be argued, is not commonplace in the day-to-day life of most people (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). However, it is normal to be asked one's opinion on a given subject in everyday conversation, and so therefore the research design overall should be constructed to direct the respondent's thoughts to a specific area in order to gain a clear insight into their opinion. More open-ended and reflexive questions might be off-putting, vague, or even misinterpreted (as explored further in 5.3). Therefore, whilst phenomenology itself is a useful approach, it must be tailored into an appropriate manifestation for the research design; indeed, whilst various philosophies come with various prerequisites and associated effects (Bryman, 2008), it can be argued that they are nonetheless artificial constructs, and that we as humans can manipulate them, rather than being manipulated ourselves. Therefore, whilst this research is positioned within the phenomenological tradition, it will nonetheless be subject to the inherent and unavoidable human interpretation of the researcher. As such, it is (ironically) limited by the phenomenological interpretation of the researcher.

There is also the question of the inductive/ deductive dichotomy; this research takes an inductive approach for a number of reasons. Firstly, and most obviously, the research does not address an initial hypothesis (Audi, 2003). Although there is a research question, it is relatively open-ended and its answer is not as straightforward as a simple yes or no; rather, it is a case of 'how', 'to what extent', and 'when' – (implicit) questions which are more difficult to address within the more restrictive deductive approach (Veal, 2011). Furthermore, it is not possible to provide 'deductively valid' conclusions (Audi, 2003, p. 166) because conclusions will be inferred from patterns, relationships and other observable trends within the data. They do not, in an ontological sense, denote deductively valid conclusions, but rather lead to theory which is led by the research, not

pre-existing theory leading the research (as it would in the case of a hypothesis-led deductive study). That said, deduction could, in a similar study, be used to provide a more rigid framework in which to test specific aspects of the commodification process, but based on some of the other methodological concepts as described within this chapter, induction is very clearly the more versatile and appropriate choice.

This philosophy is affected by the more general limitations which have been attributed to phenomenology. Of course, whilst phenomenology may purport to offer a wide and thorough consideration of an individual's circumstance, in reality the scope of the researcher is limited by time, subconscious bias and analytical facilities (Nielsen, 1961). Furthermore, phenomenological research is conducted on the assumption that the participant is sufficiently capable of perceiving and expressing their thoughts, and will do so accurately (Ziakas & Boukas, 2014). This may not always be the case, which is potentially evidenced in the lack of qualitative data gleaned from the visitor questionnaire (see 5.3.2); though a participant may know instinctively how they feel about a specific stimulus/ question, they may not know how to express that instinct and so decline to answer. Equally, they may not be able to unpick certain thoughts from others and so are unable to respond correctly or accurately.

5.1.1: Research Epistemology

Epistemology is the theory of knowledge (Pritchard, 2010) – it is the means of understanding the basis of learning about the world, a concept which may be explained as 'how we know what we know' (Crotty, 1998, p. 8). This research follows the epistemology of constructivism, which asserts that 'knowledge is a human creation' (Golinski, 2005, p. 6), that knowledge does not exist independently of human consciousness and must necessarily be interpreted by the human mind in order to manifest itself. This epistemology therefore casts objectivity as a myth (Segal, 1986) in that no knowledge can be absolute because it will always be manipulated by humans in order to comprehend its meaning. Interpretations of the world are arguably too varied for objective fact to exist (Landesman, 1997), and so constructivism as an epistemology compensates for that by maintaining that knowledge is not absolute, and is therefore a human construct.

Constructivism is a suitable epistemology for this research as it fits within the confines of the phenomenological philosophy – indeed, it may be described as a logical extension of phenomenology (Gomm, 2008) because, arguably, true reality can never be perceived due to the necessary influence of the individual's interpretation and experiences (Gomm, 2008). On that theme, it is suitable for tourism research because tourism is a

man-made phenomenon. It is viewed through lenses, as described in the literature review, such as commodification and authenticity, lenses which lead to a variety of interpretations from individual to individual. Furthermore, this research, as explained throughout this chapter, is particularly concerned with the personal opinion of respondents which are, of course, developed through the past experience of the individual and therefore do not exist in independent, objective isolation. Hence, along with the other reasons described herein, constructivism provides an appropriate way to interpret the generation of knowledge from this research. Constructivism is further appropriate to this research because the nature of the research question locates the enquiry within the personal experience of tourism (Packer & Ballantyne, 2016; Jarratt, 2013) and in doing so assumes that 'experience' does not happen in isolation of the prior knowledge and understanding which all individuals possess in a unique way. Therefore, by incorporating the constructivist epistemology within the phenomenological philosophy, the purported spectrum of experiences (Packer & Ballantyne, 2016; Jarratt, 2013) can be taken into account and, in doing so, the research can present a rich picture of findings by treating each experience as individual yet shaped by commodification.

5.1.2: Ontology

Whilst epistemology is the concept of 'how we know what we know', ontology is the means by which we understand that knowledge through 'meaning-making' (Crotty, 1998, p. 10) or the notion of individual 'worldview' (Creswell, 2009, p. 8). Regardless of how knowledge exists, ontology allows interpretation into a meaningful context or framework. This research utilises interpretivism, which locates all knowledge within the context of 'culturally derived and historically situated' exchanges and phenomena (Crotty, 1998, p. 67), and thereby assumes that meaning comes from our own prior experiences, which are in turn shaped by culture and other such factors. Indeed, this ontological perspective generally separates the natural and social sciences (Matta, 2015); as this research is solely of the social world, that disparity is beyond the scope of this chapter. However, whilst that separation is superfluous herein, the link between interpretivism and constructivism is of key importance and must be appropriate if they are to be utilised in the same methodology. Both assume the key agency of the human in the development and interpretation of knowledge and so share a 'philosophical perspective' (Crotty, 1998, p. 66; also Creswell, 2009). Furthermore, Hay (2011) suggests that the combination of constructivism and interpretivism serves to bolster the insight that each viewpoint offers to a researcher, which is appropriate for this research because that combination can offer

keen insight into the reasons why actors (that is, individuals in a social situation who 'act out' a particular social role) hold certain views based on cultural or social tradition (Hay, 2011, p. 167). This allows the effects of commodification to be located within a specific social context which takes into account the phenomenological view that experience is rooted in the individual. Moreover, it benefits this specific type of research because it situates the experience within a 'multiple and socially constructed reality' (Decrop, 1999); this reflects the semiotic role of commodification in perception and experience of authenticity (e.g. Pennington & Thomsen, 2010; Nelson, 2005) as a man-made entity and other concepts such as motivation to visit a site as discussed in the literature review. Overall, however, it locates the research within a non-positivist perspective, and thus allows generalisation of an analytical nature (see 5.2.1). Indeed, this is reflected in the findings of the research as denoted in the 'semiotic framework' model (see Chapter Eight for further discussion).

5.2: Research Design

If the research philosophy describes the abstract approach which a researcher takes, then the research design can be described as its more physical manifestation. For this reason, the design must reflect not only the collection of data relevant to the research objectives, but also the philosophy itself and ensure that that philosophical approach is represented accurately. As phenomenology deals in one's own conception of a given entity – herein, the commodification of dark tourism – it is therefore imperative that the spectrum of opinion across stakeholders within the given sphere is represented. For this reason, three distinct features have been implemented within the research design: a case study approach, a mixed-methods design, and a supply-demand perspective. Each of these three key considerations will now be discussed in turn.

5.2.1: Case Study Approach: Nature and Rationale

Due to the wide phenomenological current which can be observed within the research of the consumption of dark tourism (Brown, 2013a; Brown, 2013b; Raine, 2013; Stone, 2010), an approach which can sub-divide findings into discrete groups can be seen to be beneficial both in terms of data analysis, but also in formulating conclusions. Bryman (2008) describes a case study as a 'detailed exploration' (p. 30) or 'intensive examination' (p. 53) of a singular example. Whilst this may be in isolation for the purposes of, for example, an audit of the case in question, case studies may also be used to examine

phenomena which may occur elsewhere in other such sites (Veal, 2011; Stake, 1995). In the case of this research, the latter is the case; by using two sites of dark tourism, the research attempts to draw findings and conclusions that may shed light on the commodification of dark tourism within the industry as a whole. By utilising the 'multiple case embedded' case study type (Yin, 2012; Gray, 2004), this design will allow the research to provide reliable and credible observations and inferences, rather than specific statistical significance (Gray, 2004). Based on the phenomenological philosophy, this approach, concerned with the individual nature of commodification at sites of tourism (which are by definition distinct from one another), is deemed an appropriate and suitable design. Importantly, the design is not comparative; rather than comparing the two case studies, this design utilises an intensive examination of two 'exemplifying cases' (Bryman, 2008, p. 56) in order to provide greater scope of issues and effects on the visitor experience of dark tourism.

This particular design is favourable to this research for three primary reasons. Firstly, due to the variety of dark tourism as reflected in Stone's (2006) Dark Tourism Spectrum, it would be ontologically difficult to draw firm theory from such a wide pool of sites which essentially exist for different reasons, from commemoration of recent events, to historic recounting of past events and sheer entertainment (Stone, 2009 & 2006). This is because, rather than attempting to give an account of an objective or positivist reality, instead this research, in line with the research question and objectives, attempts to conceptualise the way(s) in which commodification affects the visitor experience. Therefore, by focussing on individual examples (Veal, 2011), a richer picture can be painted from a concentrated sample in two specific cases, which can then serve to display a number of different realities of the relationship between commodification and experience in dark tourism. As case studies allow multiple sources of enquiry (Yin, 2012; Gray, 2004), the design therefore reflects a search for that rich picture.

Indeed, the second reason for using a case study design is the very nature of that experience itself. As explained in 5.1, within the philosophy of phenomenology, the visitor experience is necessarily individual and subjective. Therefore, by conducting research over a wide range of sites and individuals, there is arguably no material benefit over concentrating on specific cases as examples. This case study approach has logistical and planning benefits (Veal, 2011), but beyond those, there is the philosophical benefit gained when attempting to analyse the nature of the tourist experience. Discussion on the nature of the tourist experience lies within the literature review of this thesis. A key part of the conception of tourism experience is that it is not just framed within the

commodification process (Sather-Wagstaff, 2011; Boorstin, 1987), but that is also based upon prior personal experience and motivations (Raine, 2013; Lennon & Foley, 2000). Therefore, the use of a case study design is beneficial in this respect because it positions the research within one specific framework of commodification (that is, the site itself), and attempts to confine the visitor motivations to a limited number. Furthermore, as the tourist experience is necessarily rooted within the specific place of consumption (though it may be part of a wider place), the variety in typology which a non-case study approach would provide may lead to a data set which is not truly representative of the multi-faceted tourist experience, as the variety of sites would not necessarily be reflected in the data and the conclusions. Therefore, a case study design alleviates this potential limitation by focussing on two specific types of experience at specific sites which are separate within this model and not compared during analysis.

The third primary reason for utilising a case study design relates to the transferability of the findings and conclusions. Case studies can be used as a 'representative' or 'exemplifying' case (Bryman, 2008, p. 56) in order to note specific facets of the case in question. For example, within the case studies chosen for this research (as described in full latterly), Lancaster Castle charges an admission fee; this particular element of the visitor experience can therefore be used as an 'exemplifying case' within dark tourism. It is thus important to understand that the research explores commodification as a series of individual facets (such as those symptoms explored in the literature review) which make up the overall experience. Whilst the fundamental tourist experience may vary from site to site, many similarities can be observed in terms of the commodified aspects of the experience as explored within the literature review. When this is considered, one can see that the concept of an exemplifying case is fostered by this approach due to the presence of the symptoms of commodification at many sites across the industry. Furthermore, as this research is exploratory in nature, a case study approach can provide valid conclusions (Veal, 2011) which may not be possible in other types of research, for example evaluative research (Veal, 2011) or indeed an examination of a broad section of a given society as stated previously (Yin, 2014). As such, the case studies in this research are used as exemplifying cases and represent two examples of dark tourism.

Those reasons demonstrate that a case study approach is suitable; however, this approach is not without its limitations, such as the problem of providing external validity with case study research (Yin, 2014; Veal, 2011). That limitation suggests that, whilst the findings may be valid for visitors to those specific cases, is it adequately indicative of the

nature of experience elsewhere? Key to this is understanding the 'domain to which a study's findings can be generalized [*sic*]' (Yin, 2014, p. 46), and so whilst the question of external validity is a vital methodological consideration, there are several ways in which its negative effects on the case study's external validity may be reduced. Foremost, as identified by Yin (2014), case study research deals with *analytical* rather than *statistical* generalisation. Whilst statistical generalisation may be necessary in, for example, a political poll to capture opinions within an electorate (Yin, 2014), this is not easily achievable within case study research due to the very specific environment in which the research takes place. Therefore, it can be said that this is not possible in this research; using Lancaster Castle as a base for statistical generalisation would be akin to using the residents of a retirement home to predict the outcome of a general election, to use the aforementioned electoral analogy (Yin, 2014). Hence, it must be borne in mind that this research deals in analytical generalisation in conjunction with the three primary reasons for using a case study design. Furthermore, as this chapter has noted previously in conjunction with the research philosophy, the provision of external validity is not necessarily the object of this research. The findings themselves are inert; how we as humans choose to interpret them is a matter of epistemological approach and an understanding of the relative ontology of the interpreter (e.g. Bryman, 2008; Audi, 2003; Landesman, 1997). For this reason, future researchers who wish to use these findings to support further development of knowledge in this field can do so to build up a broader picture of dark tourism, acknowledging the limitations whilst using the underlying concepts to drive further conception of the dark tourism experience.

A further limitation concerns the nature of the sampling technique (as explained in full in 5.3). By limiting the research within the bounds of the case study approach, this reduces the ability to gain a truly representative sample of the population as a whole. However, again using the principle explained previously of analytical generalisation and the notion of the 'exemplifying' case, it can be said that this research does not need to represent the UK population as a whole, but rather a sample of those who visit the sites in question. Whilst those who do not visit sites of dark tourism may have a valid contribution to make to the conception of commodification, it is beyond the scope of this research to consider wider views as it is necessarily about the visitor experience.

Whilst under an alternative (positivist) research philosophy such an approach may be unreliable, within this methodology the case study approach can demonstrate valid and reliable rigour as denoted by several particular reasons. Firstly, experience of a site must necessarily be considered within the site in question (e.g. Jarratt, 2013), not within

abstractions which might dilute or skew findings towards hypothetical experience or feelings. Secondly, on a similar note, each site is a discrete entity (Edensor, 2004) and so cross-comparison would not necessarily provide relevant points in which to compare experiences of what are widely different tourism products. Thirdly, as discussed throughout this chapter so far, Furthermore, as reflected in the participant selection process (detailed in 5.3.3), the sample was a reliable 'snapshot' of site activity which can be expected to be broadly similar if the study was replicated. This is because, as a case study acting as an 'exemplifying case' (Bryman, 2008, p. 56), the research seeks the unique worldview and experience of participants, rather than, as stated, specific statistical significance (Gray, 2004) which could require a broader base than provided by these case studies. This research employs two case studies, which will now be briefly explored.

<u>Lancaster Castle</u>

Lancaster Castle is an unusual site within the UK dark tourism industry as it is a multi-use site not chiefly used as a tourist attraction. Owned by the Duchy of Lancaster, it serves as both a County Court and Civil Court. As such, court activity takes precedent over guided tours of the castle and if the courts are sitting, visitors are not taken in as part of their visit. The castle traces its history to the Roman settlement in Lancaster, though its current form was completed around 1400 and was extended over the following centuries. It was a continually used prison until 2011, when the last prisoners left the cells. Since then the visitor experience has expanded greatly; whilst a tour was available when the castle was a prison, it is now expanded to include much more of the castle building, though it is not yet a fully comprehensive tour as some areas remain out of bounds. Access to the castle courtyard, shop and café is free, however in order to enter the castle as part of a guided tour, a fee is payable. Entry to the interior is not permitted without a tour guide – a service which is operated by Lancashire County Council.

The content of the tour itself is varied, reflecting the multi-use nature of the castle throughout its long history, and as such one can hear different tales and perspectives on the tours depending on the tour guide, as there is no set script. However, the themes of death, suffering and punishment form a significant part of the Lancaster Castle story due to its role as a centre of law and order for centuries. It was the site of public (and later private) executions, corporal punishment, punitive incarceration, witchcraft trials, and (by modern standards) unethical penal conditions, such as a prototype 'panopticon' prison. As the majority of this activity happened in the distant past, and was state-sanctioned in line with the laws of the day which have little or no impact on current society, the castle can

be situated towards the lighter end of Stone's Dark Tourism Spectrum. In line with the research philosophy, the second study occupies a different position of the Spectrum.

<u>International Slavery Museum, Liverpool</u>

Situated in a former bonded warehouse, the International Slavery Museum (ISM) is a distinct museum within the larger Maritime Museum building in Liverpool that houses two other museums. It opened in 2007 as a development of the previous Transatlantic Slavery Gallery, and at present is the only museum in the UK dedicated to the transatlantic slave trade. It is a nationally-funded institution managed by National Museums Liverpool (NML), and so the museum's infrastructure is well-established and conventional. The ISM is reached via the Maritime Museum ground floor lobby, and as such has no dedicated exterior entrance, though it is advertised externally and through the considerable reach of NML marketing. The lobby area contains a café with views of the famous Albert Dock, and also a gift shop in which a small amount of books on the subject of slavery are available alongside the ubiquitous tourist merchandise relating to Liverpool and the UK in general.

The ISM itself, on the third floor of the building, is currently divided into three primary sections: Life in West Africa, Enslavement in the Middle Passage, and Legacy. What is notable, however, is that rather than taking a more traditional approach to the slave trade, the focus is on the individuals who were enslaved – it gives a 'voice' to enslaved people. Rather than focussing on chains, ships and plantation owners, the museum shows that enslaved people were real people who had lives and a history pre-slavery, and indeed that slavery did not end with the abolitionist movement's success. Furthermore, the role of Britain in the trade is to the fore in a move which is different to previous examination of slavery within UK history.

The ISM proves to be relatively difficult to locate on the Dark Tourism Spectrum (Stone, 2006). Whilst the political ideology is strong and the experience is history-centric, the museum benefits from well-established and strong tourism infrastructure and a significant portion of the content details with events from centuries ago. However, it is clear that the experience deals with unpleasant events which are mediated in a social history context to engender a sense of the personal effect of slavery, and whilst the supply could be described as purposeful due to its position as a nationally-funded museum in a state-of-the-art facility, it is arguably non-purposeful due to the innovative approach to the history of enslaved people and the slave trade (as explained further in Chapter Seven). For this reason, the ISM can be sited within the dark-darker section of the Spectrum and

offers a contrast to the relatively lighter Lancaster Castle.

<u>Case study selection</u>

As the respective descriptions have shown, both case studies fall into the category of dark tourism (arguably amongst others such as heritage), but also offer different experiences to each other. As also shown, they can be typified at different points on Stone's (2006) Dark Tourism Spectrum, and so based on those criteria as well as the more detailed examination of the visitor experience on offer, it is clear that they are viable and appropriate choices. However, the two case studies were part of a wider selection process which contained many other sites of dark tourism – a process which eliminated the other sites for a variety of reasons. The first stricture, in line with the research question, was that the sites must be within the UK. Whilst the research question specifically notes that the research is based in the UK, a range of sites across all four constituent countries was not considered necessary in addressing the aims of the research because doing so would place focus on micro-issues of sub-UK level cultural issues. Therefore, representation of all four of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales was beyond the requirements of the case study selection (purely through satisfying all other criteria, the two chosen cases are in England) as the UK-level focus was deemed sufficient. The next screen was one of a more philosophical nature, however, in that they must be generally in keeping with the research objectives and nature of the themes explored in the literature review. This excluded sites such as the Edinburgh Dungeon, which was felt to be overt in its commodification based on previous research studies (Stone, 2009b). Furthermore, the concept of 'ghost' walks or such experiences not based at a specific and clearly delineated venue (Edensor, 2000) was deemed to add an extra layer of meaning which would be beyond the scope of the thesis. Finally, sites were also favoured based on the relative financial and practical ease by which the researcher could access them. At the end of this process, Lancaster Castle and the International Slavery Museum were decided to be very appropriate based on the deliberate and purposeful selection against the set of criteria as outlined, which both sites satisfied entirely. Further explanation of the suitability of the case study site has been provided in 5.2.1, and is continued in further depths in Chapters Six and Seven.

5.2.2: Mixed-methods Design

This research employs a mixed-methods design, incorporating several aspects from both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Veal (2011) notes the various benefits

of each approach; qualitative research can be used, for example, to draw a rich picture of a given phenomenon, whilst quantitative research can enable a researcher to devise generalisations from statistical conclusions. Therefore, a combination of the two can allow one to benefit from both outcomes; however, there are considerations to make when using this strategy, as will now be considered.

Certain schools of thought exist which suggest that quantitative and qualitative research methods are diametrically opposed and therefore incompatible, but this is something of an outdated view that is fast becoming obsolete (Veal, 2011). Whilst there is the view that the two methods have their own separate ontological and epistemological 'commitments' (Bryman, 2008, p. 588), there is not necessarily any particular reason why these commitments may not be changed or ignored totally (Veal, 2011; Bryman, 2008), as long as this can be justified methodologically. Indeed, by observing this rationale, it can be said that there is no fundamental reason why the two cannot be married together into a seamless mixed-methods design (Bryman, 2008); the reality is that since the emergence of qualitative research, it has begun to merge consistently with the initially separate quantitative approach and thus continues to do so (Veal, 2011). However, the question is not only *if* the two should be combined, but also *how* they are combined, as will now be explained.

Firstly, as noted by Bryman (2008), wide-ranging responses from a relatively small qualitative research sample can be further investigated with a larger quantitative research instrument and sample; this notion is used within this research, as supply-side semi-structured interviews (as noted in 5.3.1) inform the content of the self-completion visitor questionnaires (see 5.3.2). However, there is only partial overlap due to the clearly different perspective, as discussed in the literature review, between supply and demand. Alongside this, by utilising complementing research strategies, one can cross-check the findings to observe further incidence or correlation (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009; Bryman, 2008); within this research, qualitative data can be latterly quantified in order to test their incidence as well as relationships with other responses.

Secondly, the two can also be combined seamlessly within the same research instrument. As detailed in full in 5.3.2, the self-completion questionnaires are designed to elicit both types of data. In this sense, a direct comparison of qualitative and quantitative outcomes (Bryman, 2008) is utilised in this research. For example, a wide range of qualitative responses can be grouped to form a much smaller set of themes which are more readily quantified; whilst this somewhat diminishes the richness of the data, it allows the common themes to be examined within a complementary framework of

quantitative and qualitative research. In essence, this research can therefore not only explore what the effects of commodification are, but also begin to understand why and how frequently such effects occur; whilst this may appear to augment the research question, it in fact offers depth and colour rather than extending its reach (Yin, 2014). This depth is due largely to the employment of a mixed-methods research strategy. Indeed, the mixed-method design is justified due to the nature of the case study approach; as noted previously, the case study design allows for multiple sources of evidence from both quantitative and qualitative methods (Yin, 2012; Gray, 2004), and so, therefore, it can be said that the case study design justifies a mixed-methods approach.

As shown herein, the rationale for combining the two approaches is wide-ranging. It offers flexibility and versatility, and allows a wide range of data to be gained and taken forward for analysis. It is for this reason that the research also takes a supply-demand perspective, as will now be explained.

5.2.3: Supply-demand Perspective

As a further aspect of the design, this research takes a supply-demand perspective. This is arguably also a facet of the ontological approach; it is a framework in which to make sense of the knowledge that is gained through the research. This perspective simply means that, rather than taking a one-sided view, the research actively investigates the role of both supplier and consumer within the effect of commodification on the visitor experience. Within dark tourism, this approach is a rarity; this research primarily uses Farmaki's (2013) study on dark tourism in Cyprus as an example that this approach can be implemented successfully. Whilst this approach adds depth and colour to the research, it also supplements the ontological underpinning as explained previously. Tourism cannot exist without the interplay between supply and demand, and so it is arguably imperative that both sides are considered when one is exploring commodification as a fundamental part of tourism. The supply-demand perspective allows the effects of commodification to be understood by recognising responses to stimuli not only in terms of how they are perceived by tourists, but also how they are implemented by supply-side stakeholders. For example, a gift shop may be seen as a benign commercial outlet by the provider, but is this necessarily the view of the consumer? This is essentially the crux of this research, and so a supply-demand perspective is central to its outcomes.

The two alternative perspectives – either solely supply or demand – would severely limit the outcomes of this research, though they would be feasible if the research question had a different focus. If this research focussed purely on visitors, then the

outcomes would depend on some assumptions about the commodification process in dark tourism that have not yet been empirically tested (as noted in the literature review). Whilst gift shops in dark tourism have been researched to a certain degree (Brown, 2013a), there as other aspects, such as the concepts of tour guides or shared-space (relevant to Lancaster Castle and the ISM, respectively) which have not, and are duly investigated within the supply-side semi-structured interviews. Equally, by focussing only on the supply-side, the research would quite obviously lack a proper insight into the true nature of the visitor experience.

However, this perspective has limitations. For example, there is the implicit assumption that the two sides have an equal relationship, when this is not necessarily the case. Commodification is enacted by suppliers, whereas visitors are far less able to change its effects or indeed how much they engage with it, bearing in mind that commodification is a lens through which modern tourism is viewed (Sather-Wagstaff, 2011). Furthermore, and as suggested previously, whilst suppliers may have specific intentions in terms of how a site should be consumed or interpreted, visitors will naturally make their own decisions and have their own personal reactions. For this reason, the research does not approach the two equally; quite apart from the different research methods and sampling/ selection strategies (as explained in 5.3), the two are utilised differently. Supply-side data are used for clarification of issues and to provide an underpinning for research into visitors, data from which are used to understand the effect that commodification has on the visitor experience. This has precedent in prior research; for example, Farmaki (2013) used the supply-demand approach to evaluate influencing factors in drivers of demand and supply in dark tourism. Other research in the field has, alternatively, focussed on the nature of supply (Brown, 2013a; Stone, 2006; Sharpley, 2005) or the experience of the visitor (Raine, 2013; Stone, 2010). This design therefore denotes an attempt to contribute dark tourism research from a currently under-utilised perspective.

5.3: Research Methods

Research methods are the instruments by which data are collected; as stated previously, they must accurately reflect the research design and philosophy so that the desired findings are collected. This section examines the two research methods utilised in this research, and also outlines how participants were selected.

5.3.1: Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews form the first phase of the research, and are used to understand the approach of site managers to the supply of dark tourism. This was chosen as the first phase of research primarily to develop a clearer picture of the nature of the institution and its implementation of commodification in the mind of the researcher, but also, as stated previously, to clearly inform the visitor questionnaire with accurate reflections on the intended visitor experience. Semi-structured interviews (also known as qualitative or in-depth interviews) are substantial person-to-person encounters which involve a pre-determined schedule of questions. However, one key aspect of this method is the flexibility; the interviewer will generally deviate from the schedule, reacting to the responses of the participant (Bryman, 2008). It is essentially a one-sided 'conversation' (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 56) with the aim of 'producing a picture' (Gomm, 2008, p. 231) of the participant's thoughts and understanding of the subject in question. In this respect, it can be said to be a rich vein from which to draw detailed qualitative data. Due to the relative lack of literature on dark tourism as stated in the literature review, the potential to miss key points is therefore high. As such, the semi-structured nature gives the interviewer 'latitude to ask further questions' (Bryman, 2008, p. 196) in the event of a new avenue being opened by the interviewee which did not emerge in planning. Further to this, the semi-structured design allows for 'probing' (Bryman, 2008, p. 206) of the interviewee; in a more structured interview, or indeed a remote interview with little or no personal interaction, the interviewer cannot ask the participant to further explain a given response. Furthermore, interviews are used to approach the research question 'sideways' (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 58); rather than directly asking the participant to answer the research question, a semi-structured interview allows the various facets of the over-riding question to be approached, developed, and linked where possible.

The semi-structured interview is particularly suited to this research. Whilst such interviews are common in case study research (Yin, 2014), it is particularly helpful within dark tourism research to utilise the unique benefits of the method. Due to the aforementioned lack of understanding of the commodification of dark tourism, the ability to deviate from or add to the pre-designed schedule is vital as new perspectives may emerge, whether solicited or unsolicited by the researcher. This richness can be engendered by positive interviewer effects such as rapport (Bryman, 2008, p. 201) which would not be possible under different methods. Semi-structured interviews are also suitable for this research due to the relatively small potential sample size; Veal (2011) notes that viable data can be gleaned from relatively few participants. Indeed, due to the size of the organisations in question, and the nature of the questions, a greater number of

interviewees (described in detail in 5.3.3) is likely to have produced much duplicated data which would have no material benefit on the outcome. This is because the interviews were also used to inform the second phase of research – the self-completion questionnaires (see 5.3.2). For this reason, the interviewee selection was purposeful and deliberate to choose the individuals who could provide optimum insight. This is another benefit of this research method, as it can be used for that very purpose – as a base for a larger or more substantive study (Veal, 2011). Whilst the interviews stand as a research phase on their own, and have their own merits in terms of findings and conclusions, they also perform the important function of dictating the future progress of the research overall.

Of course, there are also limitations to this method. Seemingly minor points, such as the order of questions asked (Bryman, 2008) can affect the outcome of the interview; indeed, the very wording of the question can have a major impact on the quality of the data. However, primarily these come from the effects of the interviewer on the interviewee as an individual (Bryman, 2008), such as a reluctance to give certain responses out of fear, professional discretion or a disinclination to help the researcher. This could also relate to the quality of the questions – they may appear ill-informed to the participant who may respond negatively. Furthermore, if the interview is recorded, participants may not feel comfortable and may respond as such (Bryman, 2008). Therefore, it is the responsibility of the interviewer to negate these effects where possible, as will now be discussed.

The interviewees were contacted beforehand and provided with a research proposal which enabled them to give full informed consent. The interviews were all conducted at the site in question (except where noted in Figure 14) and all lasted approximately one hour. Prior to the interviews, a schedule was devised which addressed the research objectives in conjunction with the phenomena identified and discussed in the literature review, and also tailored to the specific site in question. At the interview, the participants were given a brief overview and explanation of the format of the interview, and their right to pause or terminate the interview was also explained. The interview was then undertaken in one sitting (as no participants chose to pause/ terminate), following the schedule whilst also probing/ deviating where appropriate. Where permission was given, participants were audio-recorded during the interview; whether recorded or not, they were later provided with a transcript/ notes from the interview in order for them to raise any objections (though none were raised). Participants were also offered anonymity, though all gave consent to be named. Further explanation of the purposeful selection

technique is provided in 5.3.3.

Site	Name	Position	Recording	Code
Lancaster Castle	Dr. Colin Penny	Museum Manager	Audio, full transcript	CP
	Rachael Jackson	Deputy Museum Manager	Audio, full transcript	RJ
International Slavery Museum	Stephen Carl-Lokko	Curator	Audio, full transcript	SCL
	Julia Bryan	Education Manager, National Museums Liverpool (interviewed off-site)	None, interview shorthand notes	JB

Figure 14 – research interviewees

5.3.2: Self-completion questionnaires

The second research method is a survey of self-completion questionnaires for each case study. This method was chosen in order to examine the effects of previous knowledge both in terms of existing literature, but also from the semi-structured interviews. A self-completion questionnaire is a 'schedule of questions including a framework for recording answers' (Veal, 2011, p. 255), whether virtual or printed (in this instance it was printed). They are generally used to glean a 'specified range of information' (Veal, 2011, p. 256; also McIntyre, 2005), ideally through 'straightforward questions' (Gray, 2004) from a given sample by using a relatively rigid format to negate any potential digression from the aims of the questionnaire. Though there are several ways in which they can be distributed and returned (such as via e-mail, post or workplace collection), this questionnaire was administered by the researcher, completed immediately by the participant privately, and then returned directly to the researcher in person upon completion (Aldridge & Levine, 2001). This particular form of questionnaire was deemed to be by far the most suitable means of collecting data of this type. The data, though qualitative in some respects, undergoes 'quantification' (Veal, 2001, p. 257) insofar as the

participant is given options to choose from, rather than a free rein on which to express opinion; this means that relatively complex or varied data can be succinctly collected and analysed (Veal, 2011). Furthermore, it is an effective way of identifying the range or incidence of a given opinion, which can also be cross-referenced with other responses. This allows the researcher to identify complex trends within respondents which would be more difficult in a more open interview-type method (Veal, 2011; Bryman, 2008; Gray, 2004).

There are also some more practical points to consider in the choice of this method. The type of interview effects as identified in 5.3.1 can be largely or even totally negated by the self-completion element. If respondents are not directly supervised by an interviewer, they are more likely to be open and honest in their responses (Bryman, 2008). Also particularly useful within this study is the ability to ensure that the respondents had indeed visited the site in question at that time, and were not basing responses on a perception of what a visit might be like, or perhaps older or fragmented memories of a past visit. Furthermore, Bryman (2008) notes the relative low cost in terms of finance and time in conducting a self-completion questionnaire. However, the self-completion element also eliminates the ability for the researcher to probe answers or to gain further clarification. Although the researcher can be available to answer questions from participants during completion, participants may not realise that they have misunderstood or misread a question and so will not seek help. For that reason, whilst interviewer effects are negated, other specific limitations can affect the outcome of the questionnaire. Therefore, the researcher must ensure that the design is clear, legible and lucid, but also that it can be understood by the intended sample (McIntyre, 2005) by using appropriate language.

The questionnaires were designed based on the findings of the semi-structured interviews alongside pre-existing theory as discussed in the literature review; the questionnaires for the two sites were broadly similar, though some questions were altered to suit the presentation of the site. For example, the ISM is a free site, whereas Lancaster Castle commands a fee, so the question of the effect of an admission fee differs. Similarly, the ISM shares a building with other attractions, which does not apply to Lancaster Castle. Further to this, the geography of the two sites differs, and so the approach to conducting the two sets of questionnaires differs slightly, as will now be explained.

As stated in 5.2.1, visitors to the interior of Lancaster Castle must do so as part of a guided tour. This meant that, upon completion of the tour, the visitors could be addressed *en masse* by the researcher, given information about the study and asked to participate.

Those who agreed were then taken to the café area, where they were given the questionnaire and left alone to complete it with the knowledge that they could also ask further questions if needed. All participants were informed of their anonymity and right to withdraw at the point of receiving the questionnaire. On completion, they were collected and immediately randomised within an opaque bag.

The survey was conducted slightly differently at the ISM. As the museum is entirely self-guided (unless attending as part of a pre-arranged educational visit), this meant that potential participants could not be addressed *en masse* as at Lancaster Castle. Instead, the researcher was positioned adjacent to one of the two exit points, and visitors were intercepted as they were about to exit the gallery. They were given a brief description and asked to participate; if they agreed, they were given further ethical information and left alone to complete the questionnaire. Again, responses were randomised immediately on submission. In both cases, the researcher was in the vicinity of the participants during their completion of the questionnaires so that questions could be answered where needed.

One particular limitation of this method was exposed in the data for both cases. Whilst respondents were overwhelmingly willing and likely to complete all of the quantitative 'tick-box' type question, very few gave in-depth qualitative answers to the question which provided space to reply in this manner. As such, this reduced the richness of the data and did not provide the breadth of information anticipated by the researcher. This suggests that the questionnaire should either eliminate that type of question in order to focus on other aspects or, alternatively, consist as a majority of qualitative questions so that the respondent does not skip them as a matter of course because they represent the bulk of the questionnaire. As stated in 5.1, this may also represent a specific limitation of the research philosophy (Ziakas & Boukas, 2014).

5.3.3: Sampling of Questionnaire Respondents

The issue of providing a viable sample of a given population is not straightforward. Indeed, it can be said that it is not possible to prescribe one specific method in which to define a viable sample (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009; Bryman, 2008). For this reason, the researcher must use a level of discretion based on a variety of factors affecting the research (Bryman, 2008), with two areas of particular importance as identified by Veal (2011): the size of the sample, and also the procedures taken to ensure that the sample is representative of the population of which it is part.

For the self-completion questionnaires, convenience sampling within a specific group (visitors) was deemed the most appropriate technique. Convenience sampling is a

method whereby participants are chosen simply by ease of access and participation (Bryman, 2008), which is a recognised means of fulfilling a sample (Veal, 2011; Bryman, 2008; Aldridge & Levine, 2001); indeed, for a study of this kind, it is ideal for a number of reasons. Firstly, it allows for an economical use of money and time (Bryman, 2008) by minimizing selectivity. Secondly, due to the nature of tourism sites regarding visitor movement and numbers (Veal, 2011), convenience sampling makes it straightforward in selecting and approaching participants by using the 'interviewer stationary – user mobile' technique as identified by Veal (2011, p. 357). Furthermore, it ensures that a large proportion, essentially 100%, of visitors to the site at the given time are potential participants as there is no selectivity or discrimination as to who can contribute, providing they were aged 18 or over (see 5.5). Also, a truly purposive sampling method would be impossible to use, as one would not necessarily know who is to visit a given site on a given day beforehand in order to make a selection, and engaging in a conversation with potential participants regarding their suitability would be time-consuming and potentially invasive. As such, this research used a combination of purposive and convenience sampling – visitors to the two sites were purposively selected whilst non-visitors were excluded, though within the visitor group the only other purposive target was that respondents must be adult, and so otherwise respondents were simply chosen from convenience.

In terms of a viable sample size, the number of 150 per site was chosen based on the realities of implementing the convenience sampling technique, but also on time and financial constraints. Based on preliminary observations of visitor activity at Lancaster Castle, it was estimated that a response rate of 30 participants per day could be achieved over five days, which was the maximum amount of time allotted to the study. For reasons of parity, the number 150 was also applied to the ISM; whilst Liverpool is a busier location than Lancaster, the expected response rate was not substantially more than at Lancaster, and so a minor increase in sample size would have no effect on the representation offered by 150 participants. As a 'snapshot' of activity at a tourist site, a period of five days, including a variety of weekdays and weekend days, was deemed a sufficiently representative of the activity at each case study.

This method has provided a valid sample as can be explained in three primary characteristics. Firstly, this is arguably the most representative way of selecting as wide a variety of participants as possible, making the potential sample as high as possible and therefore giving a valid insight into the different types of visitor to each site. Secondly, it does not discriminate against visitors on any level (beyond a minimum age of 18, for

ethical reasons) and so pre-existing biases of the researcher cannot influence participation or lead to 'confirmation bias' whereby the researcher's expectations could skew participant selection towards those deemed more likely to give a specific response. Hence, it can be said that reliable conclusions can be drawn based on a data collection method which reduces potentially unreliable biases. Furthermore, the fact that the sampling method takes place immediately after the castle tour maximises the validity of the individual responses by ensuring that there is little time between the experience and the recall of thoughts and feelings as per the questionnaire questions.

5.3.4: Selection of Interviewees

The semi-structured interviews were conducted within an extremely small population because participants needed executive involvement with their respective case study site. At Lancaster Castle this amounted to four individuals, with the ISM having less than ten (the exact number was unclear due to the size and operation of the organisation of NML). As such, it was decided that, for both cases, a sample of two individuals would be sufficient due to the likelihood of similar views being repeated. Under this system, the aim was to gain the expert voice through extended in-depth interviews in order to justify the small sample size, and so the interviewees were chosen deliberately due to their position. The aim of this phase, as stated previously, was not to quantify their views as a means of generalisation, but rather to develop a picture of the thoughts of those individuals (Gomm, 2008); therefore, it could be argued that one interviewee would suffice. However, in order to provide a substantive base of findings, and to improve the richness, it was decided that a sample of two interviewees per case would be ideal in order to further gain the 'expert voice' and in-depth findings.

A 'purposive' approach was taken to selection (Aldridge & Levine, 2001, p. 80), as this involves choosing participants based specifically on their personal characteristics, position or responsibilities. The individuals chosen were selected with help from staff at each site in order to ascertain the individuals who have executive input at the site in question. Whereas this technique could be described as biased, it fits within the phenomenological research philosophy as it is concerned with the thoughts and experiences of specific individuals (in this case the 'expert'). In this respect the bias is unavoidable, but arguably does not affect the potential to represent the population as a whole. For this reason, random selection would not be beneficial as it would not increase the representation and may lead to the most 'expert' voice being excluded.

5.4: Research Analysis

Research findings exist as a series of outcomes, whether qualitative or quantitative, and it is up to the researcher to interpret them to find meaning. As such, data analysis serves to turn raw data into meaningful knowledge which satisfies the research objectives and ideally provides transferable utility. Grbich (2013) notes that there are three variables which affect the analysis of data: issues of epistemology and ontology, research methods (all of which have been discussed in this chapter) and also the research analysis. Indeed, Bryman (2008) states that it is crucial to consider analysis techniques *before* data collection occurs to ensure that the data is collected in a way which allows for that particular type of analysis. Therefore, this chapter will now consider narrative analysis and statistical analysis as the two means of interpreting the raw data.

5.4.1: Narrative Analysis

Narrative analysis is a means of unpicking the details within a given account or 'story' from a participant (Grbich, 2013, p. 216); it is a process by which deeper meaning can be drawn out based on the language used in isolated passages, and also by linking responses from within the interview to form an overall discourse. There is little consensus on the exact nature of narrative analysis (Bryman, 2008), which gives the researcher a level of flexibility regarding the mechanics of the analysis, as well as in epistemological and ontological approaches. One such concept is the sociolinguistic approach (Grbich, 2013), which states that all narrative can be broken down into much smaller 'units of meaning' (Grbich, 2013, p. 219) in order to observe and interpret emergent themes (Grbich, 2013; Bryman, 2008). By utilising this, the researcher may begin to unpick the complex mix of perceptions, motivations and actions (Polkinghorne, 1995) which go together to form the basis of one's narrative on a given subject. This is in contrast to the socio-cultural approach (Grbich, 2013), which ignores individual themes in order to understand the overall meaning of a narrative. That socio-cultural approach is not suitable for this research as it ignores the complex aspects of the commodification process as explored in the literature review. Therefore, this research uses the sociolinguistic approach to narrative analysis.

In practice, the analysis is implemented by linking the interview responses to each of the research objectives. During analysis, responses to questions can be dealt with in one of four ways. A given passage:

- may be relevant to one of the research objectives
- may be relevant to multiple research objectives;
- may not address any objective in particular, but it may clarify other points or provide an overall perspective useful to interpretation of the interview;
- may appear to be irrelevant to the research and so can be disregarded.

From these categories a set of emergent themes ('sub-themes') were identified, based on their similarities and relative position on the aforementioned eleven lists, and then taken forward for further interpretation in line with the research question and objectives to develop over-arching 'themes'. In essence, therefore, this is a thematic analysis (Bryman, 2008) as the emphasis is on what was said, rather than how it was said. This approach, rather than the use of analysis software programmes, was chosen chiefly due to the phenomenological philosophy. Under this approach, the researcher uses their own knowledge and analytical skills to develop meaning in an immersive, human manner, and also uses the knowledge of the interviewee and their role and experiences, rather than focussing on, for example, more passive incidence of terms. Furthermore, due to the nature of the semi-structured interviews, which involved probing and some unprepared questions based on a given response, prior knowledge and context was deemed imperative to a deep and full understanding and interpretation of the findings, hence computer analysis was not used herein. Figure 15 denotes the narrative analysis process used in this research.
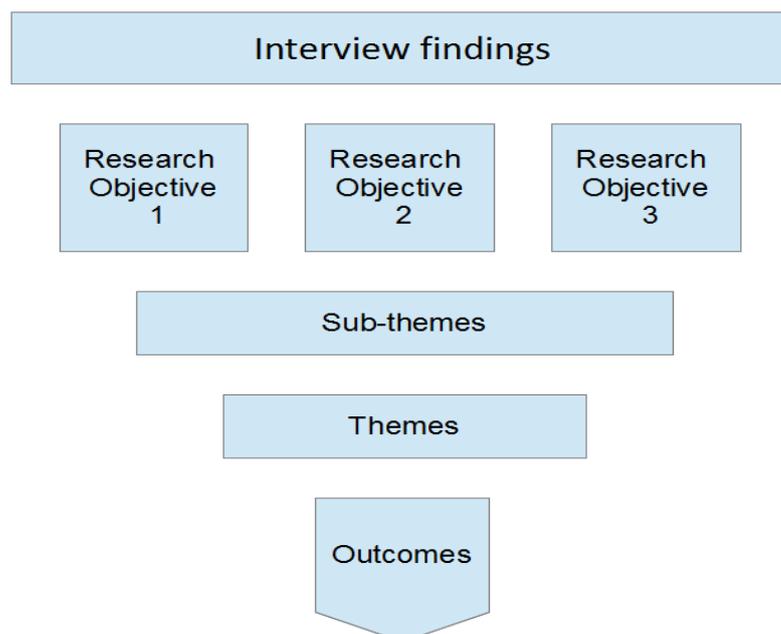
Figure 15: Narrative analysis process in this research

Using this process, Figures 16 and 17 denote the narrative analyses used for each case study.

(De)-sequestration of death	Heterotopic supply and consumption
Voyeurism	
Theme A: Novelty of Place	
Visitor expectations	Events as a frame
Admission fee as a frame	Corporate strategy
Theme B: Framing	
Different enactment of symptoms	Geographic separation
Differing effects of symptoms	
Theme C: Separation of Elements	
Diverse product offering	Product development
Points of access	Target markets
Theme D: Expansion of Experience	
Objective authenticity	Geographic separation
Tour guide as enhancing authenticity	Factual accuracy
Theme E: Separation of Authenticity	

Figure 16: Narrative analysis: Lancaster Castle

(De)-sequestration of death	Heterotopic supply and consumption
Voyeurism	Engagement with atrocity
Unique approach to discourse	ISM as unusual
Theme A: Novelty of Place	
Visitor expectations	Events as a frame
Free admission as a frame	Organisational mission
Appropriate environment and approach	Facilities as useful tools
Theme B: Framing	
Minor link between gallery and shop/ café	Effect of absence of symptoms
Differing role of symptoms	
Theme C: Separation of Elements	
Diverse product offering	Product development
Points of access	Commodification used to engage visitors
Use of media stimuli	Place of the ISM within Maritime Museum
Theme D: Expansion of Experience	
Authenticity from approach of discourse	Events as bestowing authenticity
Authentic representations	Visitor interpretation of authenticity
Theme E: Authenticity Through Commodification	

Figure 17: Narrative analysis: International Slavery Museum

The validity of this analysis technique has been considered and can be shown; primarily, that the data gained is valid to ensure a valid analysis. Firstly, the interviews were recorded using appropriate and standard technique in order to ensure that, as far as practicable, verbatim accounts were recorded. In three cases (as shown previously in Figure 14) the interview was audio-recorded at the consent of the participant, meaning that there was virtually no opportunity for misunderstanding (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2014). The fourth interview was not audio-recorded because the participant did not wish that to occur. In that case, responses were hand-written but stripped of extraneous words such as fillers, phrases/ words which were repeated, and questions from the participant to the researcher. This meant that, whilst self-evidently less thorough than the audio recordings, the written transcription can still be considered valid because it contains

the majority of total response from the participant with particular care given to take as much verbatim data as possible. Furthermore, the interview was taken at a slower pace to ensure that responses could be accurately written against the correct question (i.e. to ensure a response was not attributed to a different question by mistake). Responses were typed into a standard format immediately after the interview in order to reduce the potential for the researcher to forget or misremember any specific details. In this way, the research instrument was adapted in order to maintain the validity of the research and the reliability of the data gained (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2014) meaning that, crucially, the narrative analysis was based on accurate data. Furthermore, by using the research objectives as 'filters' (as shown in Figure 15), the analysis undertaken by the research can be said to possess 'face validity' (Bryman, 2008, p. 152) in the context of the intended outcomes of the study and is thus appropriate to develop meaning reflective of the research philosophy which has been thoroughly explained in this chapter.

5.4.2: Statistical Analysis

The self-completion questionnaire stage required an alternative form of analysis because the purpose of this method is to note specific responses to specific stimuli, rather than an overall narrative or approach. Furthermore, this purpose benefits from the use of univariate, bivariate and multivariate analyses (Bryman, 2008) in order to observe incidence of certain responses, the relationships between two or more responses, and, furthermore, the significance of those incidences and relationships. Therefore, the analysis of the data takes a quantitative statistical approach (Bryman, 2008; Argyrous, 2005). For this reason, the use of computer software – in this case SPSS (Argyrous, 2005) – was deemed to be the most efficient means of collating and analysing the data due to the sample size (a total of 300 responses across two case-studies), as well as the versatility of SPSS in handling data and performing calculations beyond the expertise of the researcher (Argyrous, 2005). Those calculations are used in order to examine themes which emerged during the semi-structured interviews and to explore how certain statistically significant visitor responses agree or contrast with interview responses in line with the supply-demand approach (as detailed in 5.2.1). Based on those relationships, conclusions and generalisations can be formulated in order to shed light on the effect of the commodification on the visitor experience in UK dark tourism. Within this, univariate, bivariate and multivariate analyses were conducted in order to examine incidence of responses in isolation as well as potential correlation (whether positive or negative) between specific responses.

5.5: Ethical Considerations

When conducting research, there is also the responsibility and requirement of ethical practice. In this respect, the research design was submitted to the University of Central Lancashire's Ethics Committee and was approved as ethical. In order to do this, several ethical considerations were made prior to submission to the Ethics Committee, as summarised in Figure 18.

Ethical Consideration	Actions
Informed consent of participants	- All participants received an explanation of the research aims - Participants were able to ask further questions before consenting - Interviewees gave written consent
Protection from harm	- Subject of the research was made clear from the start - All participants were aged 18 or over
Right to withdraw	- Right to withdraw and its point of expiry was explained - Interviewees received an interview transcript

Figure 18: Ethical considerations

These ethical considerations were found to be appropriate and so the research design received full ethical clearance from the University of Central Lancashire to proceed.

5.6: Chapter Summary

As this chapter has demonstrated, close attention has been paid to the construction of an appropriate and viable research approach. Though an alternative approach could conceivably be chosen, based on the knowledge, experience and informed opinion of the researcher, the chosen approach is deemed to be appropriate for this particular research. Furthermore, limitations of this methodology have been provided within the discussion – as summarised below in Figure 19 – and mitigated where possible. The methodological

concepts are summarised in Figure 20.

Limitation
Phenomenology places interpretation within the researcher's experience, and so is inevitably prone to bias
External validity – research design provides *analytical* rather than *statistical* generalisation
Purposive selection of interviewees may incur bias by excluding certain individuals
Questionnaires may be misinterpreted by the participant as there is little scope for 'probing' or clarification
In choosing narrative analysis, there is the potential for the human interpretation to overlook key incidences or relationships which could be identified by computer software

Figure 19: Summary of Methodological Limitations

Summary of Methodological Concepts	
Research Philosophy	Inductive Phenomenology
Research Epistemology	Constructivism
Research Ontology	Interpretivism
Case-studies	– Lancaster Castle – International Slavery Museum, Liverpool
Research Design	Supply-demand perspective mixed-methods
Research Methods	– Semi-structured interviews – Self-completion on-site questionnaires
Research Analysis	– Narrative analysis (Semi-structured interviews) – Statistical analysis (Self-completion questionnaires)

Figure 20 – Summary of Methodological Concepts within Chapter Five

Insofar as the data collection was successful in terms of both raw data and desired information gained, it can therefore be shown to be appropriate and viable. The

subsequent chapters detail the data analysis of both case studies; as Lancaster Castle was the first case study chronologically to be addressed, Chapter Six begins the analysis of findings with that case study.

Chapter Six

Analysis of Case Study One:

Lancaster Castle

6.0: Chapter Introduction

This chapter maps the process of analysis undertaken on the findings from Lancaster Castle by noting characteristics of the data and by exploring the themes as identified by the researcher. This is done by addressing the research aims and question to understand the relationship between supply and demand towards a conception of the effect of commodification on the visitor experience in UK dark tourism. The chapter begins with an explanation of Lancaster Castle as a touristic entity, including its history, development, and its symptoms of commodification from both a supply and demand perspective. After that grounding, analysis of the data begins. This incorporates both elements of the research – semi-structured interviews and self-completion questionnaires – and synthesises the findings of both methods into a set of emergent themes. This analysis consists of empirical evidence alongside the interpretation of the researcher and has produced outcomes relevant to the theoretical underpinning provided within the literature review, as will be discussed within in each section in order to provide a clear explanation of the conceptual framework. Throughout, the 'mapping' process is explained with schematic diagrams detailing the emergence of the themes, and how they contribute to the conclusions of this thesis (as discussed in detail in Chapter Eight).

6.1: Lancaster Castle: Centurions, Servitude, Sovereigns and Souvenirs

Although there has been a fortification on the site since the Roman period, Lancaster Castle in its currently recognisable form can be said to begin with the completion of the iconic John O'Gaunt gatehouse in c. 1150 (Champness, 1993). Since that time it has been in constant use; whilst it has negligible history as a Royal residence, it has a rich tradition in the law and order of the area and, to this day, is home to working Crown and Civil courts. For the vast majority of its life, the castle served as a prison in various guises until being decommissioned in 2011 (ConVerse, 2011). Notoriously it housed the Pendle Witches and hosted their trial, but it has also had a debtors' prison on-site, condemned troops of prisoners off on marches to deportation, held the high-profile trial of the Birmingham Six, and had a latter-day reputation as a prison for low-level drug offenders up to its closure. It has played a key role in the local history of Lancaster, whilst also having the prestige of being owned by the monarch as Duke of Lancaster – an inheritance dating to the creation of the Duchy of Lancaster in 1265 (Champness, 1993).

Plate 1: John O'Gaunt Gatehouse, Lancaster Castle

Due to its central role in the justice system of Lancashire (which was only brought into decline by the emergence, in the 19th century, of Liverpool and Manchester as urban centres requiring dedicated courts), Lancaster Castle has been an icon of interest for centuries (Champness, 1993). As such, tours of the castle have existed in some form since the mid-20th century, a phenomenon preceded by its regular public executions which, reflecting national attitudes to such punishment at that time, drew large crowds. The tour of the castle gained further traction in the years after the Second World War, with the instalment of a gift shop allowing souvenirs to be sold. However, major change came in the aftermath of the prison's closure in 2011. For the first time, the public could access the castle courtyard through the majestic John O'Gaunt Gate to explore the exterior architecture of the keep as well as the interior walls, the Well Tower, and other aspects of the building which had been off-limits due to the prison operation. The Castle has also become host to a wide programme of public events throughout the year, from Christmas fairs to club-nights in the former 'A' Wing penitentiary. Furthermore, tour access is now granted to 'C' Wing, the penitentiary used up until the 2011 closure which is of wider interest as it is one of only a handful of surviving 'panopticon' prisons in Europe, a still-controversial concept developed by Sir Jeremy Bentham (Semple, 1993). However, access is not currently permitted to all areas of the castle; some are still off-limits, whilst others are under renovation and are not yet ready for visitors. Crucially, access to the interior of the castle is only permitted by guided tour which is operated by Lancashire County Council.

6.2: Dark History at Lancaster Castle

Due to the post-2010 developments, Lancaster Castle is now arguably the showpiece tourist attraction of Lancaster, and also a major icon in the tourism industry of Lancashire at large. Castles are a well-established component of UK tourism (Hewison, 1987), and exude a certain gravitas which marries striking architectural significance with the prestige of royalty, but which also conveys a very notable part of English history – that being the Medieval period of knights, kings, bloody power tussles and barbaric punishments wrapped up in the proverbial Englishman's imposing home: his castle. It is the dark overtones which signify that, whilst not attractions of dark tourism by design, castles nonetheless encompass many of the concepts that, as discussed in Chapter Three, form the current conception of dark tourism. Indeed, one can note that between 1800 and 1865, 213 public executions took place at Lancaster Castle. Hence, it can be shown that Lancaster Castle is indeed a site of dark tourism, as noted in Figure 21. Two of the below

themes will now be explored in more detail for further background to the history of Lancaster Castle.

Area of Lancaster Castle	Dark Tourism Concepts Displayed
'C' Wing	Prisons Unethical (by today's standards) penal conduct
Crown Court	Corporal punishment Unethical penal conduct
Drop Room & Hanging Corner	Death Execution Unethical penal conduct
Hadrian's Tower	Corporal punishment Instruments of pain/ torture Unethical penal conduct
Old (Medieval) Cells	Prisons Unethical penal conduct
Well (Witches') Tower	Dark mythology Unethical penal conduct Witchcraft

Figure 21: Dark tourism concepts at Lancaster Castle

6.2.1: Lancaster Castle and the Pendle Witches

In 1612, a group of residents of the area around Pendle Hill, Lancashire, were accused of murder and other crimes allegedly committed by witchcraft in a move which reflected a national paranoia of witches, a fear legitimised by the beliefs and writings of King James I. His accession to the throne of England (thus uniting the crown of England, Scotland and Wales) in 1603 preceded by a year the enactment of a law whereby a litany of crimes committed by witchcraft became punishable by death. Under that scrutiny, eleven of the accused stood trial jointly at Lancaster Castle to answer the charge of witchcraft. Much evidence rested on the testimony of Jennet Device, a nine-year-old relative of several of the accused, and seemingly played to many preconceptions of the time about rural communities (seen as lawless), those with physical abnormalities (cursed or demonic), and indeed confounded common judicial practice as, normally, the

testimony of a young child would have been inadmissible. Though they were not executed at Lancaster Castle (at that time, public executions took place on nearby 'Gallows Hill'), the story of the Pendle Witches nonetheless centres on Lancaster Castle, and its facts and mythology form a notable aspect of the history of the castle. Indeed, the tale also forms part of wider tourism to Lancashire; the 400th anniversary of the trials was commemorated in 2012 with a series of events and installations across the county. The story of the Pendle Witches is not confined to any one area of the castle; indeed, there is still some discrepancy as to the full account of their time at Lancaster Castle – an issue often explored during guided tours of the site.

6.2.2: The Drop Room

Though it had been a court for centuries previously, Lancaster Castle was not an execution ground until 1800, a status it retained until the abolition of capital punishment well into the 20th century. However, after 1865, executions were no longer permitted in public, and so public executions play only a relatively small part in the history of the castle. Nonetheless, 213 people were executed in public during that time, a legacy that can be observed within Lancaster Castle's fittingly-named Drop Room. Though criminals were executed outdoors, on a platform adjacent to the Drop Room, the chamber itself was used as a preparation area; the condemned were pinioned inside, and then led out to the scaffold for the crowd to behold. Bizarrely, the current-day Drop Room is used as the jury deliberation room; thus, visitors to the site can observe its dual purpose across time. However, the majority of artefacts and accounts of the room relate to its bloodier role; indeed, various hangman's accoutrements are displayed, including rope and various mechanisms used to kill. One may also receive a lurid account from the tour guide of the execution process and the manner of death for the victim. As a locality upon which hundreds died, it is arguably the 'darkest' of the locations within the tour of Lancaster Castle. Perhaps fittingly, visitor photography is prohibited by law in the Drop Room due to its role in court proceedings. The Courts Service declined permission for a photograph of the Drop Room for this research.

6.2.3: 'C' Wing Penitentiary

Plate 2: 'C' Wing cell from doorway   **Plate 3: 'C' Wing cell interior**

In use until the prison's closure in 2011, C Wing was originally built in order to house female prisoners separately from their male counterparts, although, as later in its life Lancaster Castle became a male-only facility, the wing housed men well before its closure. The most interesting aspect of this area, however, is its unusual and, by today's standards, unethical design: C Wing is one of few remaining prisons constructed in the panopticon style, and indeed the only one in the UK. That concept, propagated by Sir Jeremy Bentham, aimed to maximise surveillance of prisoners whilst reducing the number of staff needed to keep watch. Cells were assembled around a central 'watch tower' which had one-way vision into each cell; this meant that prisoners did not know whether they were being watched at any given time, and, according to the panopticon philosophy, would therefore behave at all times as though they were being watched. Unsurprisingly this caused mental health conditions associated with the deprivation of privacy; by the time of its closure, the facility had been modified to remove its panopticon traits. What is striking to the visitor unaccustomed to penal institutions is its rudimentary appearance; the room and cells are dingy and dilapidated, with two bunks to a cell and

basic washing facilities that needed to be 'slopped out' by inmates. Much graffiti remains intact, and so C Wing serves as an insight into current, as well as historic, penal conduct and conditions.

Beyond its history as a site of death, Lancaster Castle is also clearly a commodified touristic entity. It displays many of the symptoms of commodification detailed in the literature review with clearly developed tourist infrastructure such as a café, shop, toilets, some disabled access, and interpretative materials. As such, the next section will detail the exact nature of the experience that one will receive upon visiting Lancaster Castle in order to clearly display its commodification.

6.3: A 'Living Monument': Visitor Experience at Lancaster Castle

Plate 4: Lancaster Castle courtyard

Lancaster Castle is situated on Castle Hill, rising up between Lancaster's main high street, its railway station, and the River Lune. As such, it is centrally located within Lancaster, and is easily accessible both to those specifically visiting, but also to those who may decide to visit spontaneously when passing by. Access for users of the Crown and Civil courts is to the rear of the building, and so recreational visitors have sole use of the John O'Gaunt gate in order to enter the building via a steep cobbled ramp. Through the

gate is the castle courtyard, surrounded by the imposingly high walls, several towers and turrets, large cast-iron gating, and the castle keep. This area is free to access, and, as stated, often holds events open to the public. The visitor reception is situated in a prefabricated building (formerly used for prison functions) within the castle courtyard. This is where tickets for the guided tour may be purchased, and where tours commence. This is also home to a café, currently managed by an external company and serving hot and cold refreshments with a large seating area. Adjacent to the café is a gift shop area, which stocks a wide range of products relating to Lancaster Castle and the wider geographic area. However, quite obviously, attending the guided tour of the castle offers the main bulk of experience and information regarding its history. As of 2016, the tour costs £8 for adults, with various discounts available for families and concessions, and is operated by Lancashire County Council, offering knowledgeable, professional tour guides. The tour begins in the reception building, and then incorporates both exterior and interior areas of the castle. However, due to time constraints or the nature of the audience, the tour guides tailor each tour accordingly, and so each tour may take in a slightly different route or offer a slightly different choice of content from the large amount of history available to them. Indeed, if the Crown Court is in session, then the tour cannot incorporate that aspect of the castle. Figure 22 details the range of locations at Lancaster Castle alongside a selection of information that tour guides may deliver at each one.

Area	Example Content
'C' Wing	The architectural history of the wing; the change of use throughout its history; design and nature of the panopticon; unethical penal conduct; prisoner life in the recent past.
Castle Courtyard	Ownership of the castle; an overview of the castle's lifetime; a chronology of its construction; the Well Tower; the Pendle Witches; prisoner life in the recent past.
Civil Court	The nature of civil court proceedings past and present; heraldry; architecture; portraiture.
Crown Court	Unethical penal conduct; corporal punishment; law and order; crown court proceedings past and present; portraiture.
Debtors' Prison (exterior only)	Prisoner life in history; architecture of the castle; the versatile and changing uses of the castle through time.
Drop Room	Death; execution; corporal punishment.
John O'Gaunt Gate	Architecture; castle life.
Gillow room	Gillow furniture.
Hadrian's Tower	Corporal punishment; unethical penal conduct; weaponry.
Old Prison Cells	Castle architecture; prisoner life in the distant past; the Pendle Witches.

Figure 22: Areas and content at Lancaster Castle

The experience on offer at Lancaster Castle provides a tour of the site which highlights the various facets of its history as well as its current use as a Crown and Civil Court. The guides take a factual approach; they are dressed in normal clothing, not costume; they make little or no reference to unverified myths without qualifying them as such, and, thus, the overall approach prioritises factual information and understanding over other more overt or kitsch types of entertainment as can be observed at other sites of history or dark tourism (as discussed within the literature review). This, of course, is a symptom of commodification itself; by using tour guides (despite this being a practical necessity), the experience is necessarily viewed through the lens of commodification (Sather-Wagstaff, 2011). Whatever the effect of that may be (as explored subsequently in

this chapter), the tour guides nonetheless attempt to immerse the visitor in the history of Lancaster Castle through the aforementioned factual approach, and also by using engaging terminology and enthusiastic storytelling. Of course, the main player is the castle itself; as a 'living' site by virtue of its court functions, one can delve through the history of the castle by way of the myriad individuals to have passed through its winding corridors across time. As such, by entering, one enters its history.

Whilst the exterior is impressive, the interior is simultaneously forbidding and curious. Many walkways are not renovated or refurbished; there is much exposed stonework, which is itself a window to past centuries, and by winding through corridors and dimly-lit stairways, passing proud barristers or anxious defendants outside the Crown Court, or inspecting the centuries of heraldry displayed in the Civil Court, the gravitas of the building stemming from close to a millennium of official use is clear to see. The experience is no whistle-stop, however; at several points, the tour guide brings proceedings to a halt in order to describe the area in question, and some (such as the Civil Court) allow for a few moments of personal exploration once the guide has finished speaking. In order to further establish the visitor experience, several of those stops will now be explored.

6.3.1: Old Cells

If asked to imagine a medieval prison, one could quite easily imagine Lancaster Castle's own erstwhile gaol cells. Stone boxes with no window, little ventilation and an enormous wooden door with imposing metal latches and locks, these quarters were used to accommodate criminals (debtors had much more relative luxury in a separate prison) before or after trial. Indeed, due to the gap between sessions of the Assize courts (of which there were two per year), inmates could be incarcerated for six months in these squalid and fearsome cubicles before facing trial. The visitor is shown the cells in their stark and bare reality and tasked with imagining life in such circumstance. Indeed, certain tour guides even allow for the sensation of being locked up by allowing visitors to be shut in a cell in complete darkness for a brief moment – an optional extra, of course.

Plate 5: The Old Cells

6.3.2: Hadrian's Tower

Hadrian's Tower sits in amongst the warren of passageways which intersect the castle, and presents something of a quandary within the discourse of Lancaster Castle: its original use remains largely unknown. However, despite this, its presentation to the visitor is the most conventional of all the areas visited in the tour; it contains boards of interpretative materials, the walls are adorned with tools of corporal punishment, and some are even available to be handled by the visitor. As such, it presents something of a *carte blanche* for the tour guide; as there is no definitive consensus on the Tower's use, the time spent in what is a visually impressive and atmospheric area can be used to offer general historic information about crime and punishment. This is an important facet of the tour of Lancaster Castle: it is not restricted to events which occurred solely on-site, but also incorporates broader social issues that relate to the castle as a notable public institution as well as noting its architectural development through its lifespan. Indeed, that approach arguably makes the discourse more coherent; rather than viewing the castle as an isolated singularity, it roots the castle within society and shows how its use and development reflects various needs and developments within wider society.

Plate 6: Exhibits in Hadrian's Tower

6.3.3: Crown Court

The Crown Court in its current form was initiated in 1798, and has served Lancaster and the area ever since. Indeed, its antiquated appearance is somewhat at odds with the sterile and uniform courtrooms of the modern era; nonetheless, all the facilities required of a 21st-century court are present. This point in the tour is perhaps the most multi-faceted as it covers the judicial heritage and history of the castle alongside the function of the current legal system. For those who have never entered a courtroom before, it serves as an insight into how Courts operate – one can observe the dock, the clerks' bench, the jury box, the public gallery and so on, elements which, by and large, have seldom changed over the years. However, due to the rich history of law and order at Lancaster Castle, the tour guide can also provide accounts of real people who have populated the seats. For example, the notorious trial of the Birmingham Six was held at Lancaster as an example of a modern-day trial; further back through time many were tried for murder and condemned to death, whilst other were sentenced to penal servitude in colonies, and they and many others received corporal punishments too. Indeed, as a nod to the past and perhaps the way in which society has changed, the restraining mechanism used when 'branding' criminals retains its place on a ledge in the dock. Above the court stands a wooden gallery (once the women's gallery but now out of use), above which are fixed a number of enormous and splendid portraits, chief of which is that of King George

154

IV, who was reigning monarch – and thus Duke of Lancaster – at the time of the court's renovation. This extra facet to the room means that the tour guide has a plethora of angles from which to approach the Crown Court; not only current legal practice, and that of previous centuries, including punishments and conduct, and also the patronage of the aristocracy and the related meaning of the court's architecture. There is also the scope for puerile levity – one such account notes the toilet arrangement for jurors who, under old rules, were not permitted to leave court for that purpose, and the visitor can note the now-defunct trapdoors that remain at the rear of the juror box.

The castle certainly projects a sense of authenticity, an aura or gravitas that only comes from phenomena of real historic stature. That said, it retains its status as an obviously commodified tourist site necessarily through the guided tour. As stated previously, the presence of the shop and café, as well as the occasional events, show that commodification is overtly ingrained into the experience. The research question therefore re-emerges at this point – what effect does the commodification process have on the visitor experience? Having now provided a through description of Lancaster Castle and the visitor experience, this chapter will turn to the empirical data in order to address that issue.

6.4: Lancaster Castle Outcomes: Identifying Themes

This research takes an integrated approach, and thus presents all data within one synthesised analysis, in line with the analysis strategy outlined in Chapter Five. The qualitative semi-structured interviews were subject to a manual thematic analysis in order to draw out key information, whilst the quantitative self-completion questionnaires underwent statistical analysis using SPSS software. The outcome of those analyses was a set of six distinct themes, which shall be explained in turn within this section towards addressing the research question and objectives, also drawing upon the findings of the literature review in order to produce a rounded set of outcomes. Figure 23 summaries the emergent themes to be explored in sequence within this section.

	Research Question	Theme Number	Theme Title
Case Study One: Lancaster Castle	1	1	Novelty of Place
	2	2	Framing
	2	3	Separation of Elements
	2	4	Expansion of Experience
	3	5	Separation of Authenticity

Figure 23: Emergent Themes for Lancaster Castle

Within the analysis, 'Q' refers to a questionnaire question (e.g. Q1). Interview transcripts are available in Appendix i (interview A) and ii (interview B). A sample questionnaire is available in Appendix iii. Interviewee names, positions and codes are detailed in Figure 24.

Interview	Name	Position	Code
A	Dr. Colin Penny	Museum Manager	CP
B	Rachael Jackson	Assistant Museum Manager	RJ

Figure 24: Case Study One interview respondents

6.4.1: Theme A: Novelty of Place

As noted within the literature review, novelty is a notable facet in the supply and demand of tourism in general as well as dark tourism. Indeed, this was a notable theme within the data. The theme demonstrates that visitors engage with dark tourism in various ways which point towards its conception as a novel entity, as will now be shown through several sub-themes. It is, however, notable that the garnering of esteem – noted as a distinct motivation based on the review of current literature – falls under this theme, rather than as a distinct outcome in its own right. This, along with several other aspects of dark tourism as novel, will now be discussed.

<u>Sub-theme A1: (De)-sequestration of death</u>

As shown in Chapter Three, the sequestration of death – the social mechanism by which death is side-lined from normal daily life – is as a force dictating the terms under which mortality is encountered. Under that premise, a desequestration of death through dark tourism has been identified previously (Hohenhaus, 2013; Stanley & Wise, 2011; Mellor & Shilling, 1993; Giddens, 1991) and can be identified thus at Lancaster Castle. As it is out of the ordinary (i.e. the normal thought processes of daily life), the contemplation of mortality can therefore be described as novel behaviour; however, it is key to note that the novelty is necessarily attached to the activity within Lancaster Castle itself as a site of dark tourism. To that end, in interview A, CP expressly notes the notion that the subject of death and suffering has an element of the '*forbidden*' (line 15), an overt identification that those themes are not normally countenanced in daily life and thus showing that dark tourism not only allows that veneer to be peeled back, but that its novelty in the eye of the visitor is understood by the supply side. Furthermore, in interview B, RJ notes the sequestration of death by stating:

'...I think for us today, we don't witness death, and we don't see as much of it as we would have done in the past, so I think people are really interested and drawn to that...'

[Interview B, line 15]

Again, this shows a supply-side awareness of the novel experience of visitors to Lancaster Castle by virtue of the themes of death and suffering. However, visitors are relatively unlikely to describe encounters with death as 'novel'; 17 of 73 respondents (23.3%) who thought about their mortality more than during day-to-day life (Q5) described those thoughts as '*novel*'. Perhaps rather than being seen as overtly novel in the eye of the visitor, the novelty acts as a subconscious element of demand that is nonetheless present. This is suggested by the 73 of 147 respondents (49.66% – shown below in Figure 25) who did indeed think about their own mortality more than during normal day-to-day life – by its nature out of the ordinary, and therefore novel by definition.
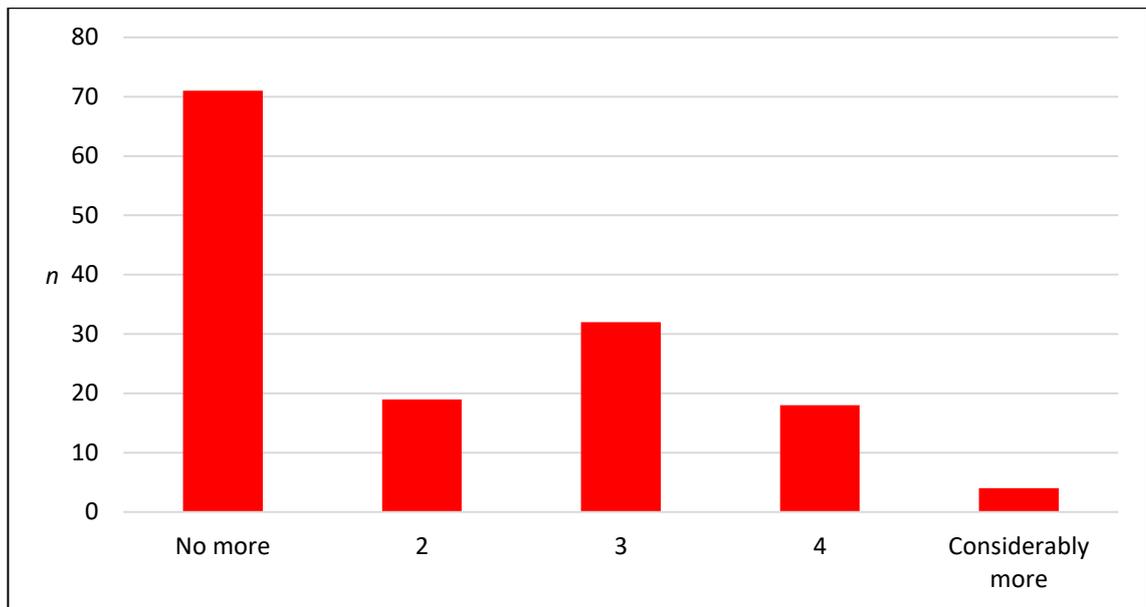
Figure 25: Q5: 'From 1-5, at Lancaster Castle today, did you think about your own mortality more than you would usually during your day-to-day life?'

This gap between the nature of the experience (that, by virtue of the sequestration of death, contemplating mortality is novel) and its perception by visitors (that it is not overtly novel) can therefore be seen as a component in the supply-demand relationship. Rather than a distinct sense of novelty, the issues of mortality at Lancaster Castle arguably have 'implicit novelty' (as noted in the literature review – Rojek, 1993). However, by virtue of the findings above, the novelty can be seen to de-sequester death when compared to normal life. Based on the supply-side responses, it can be said that the desequestration is commodified as a specific managerial aim, and it can also be observed, based on the overwhelming majority of respondents describing the tour guide's approach as '*appropriate*' (Q12; 144 respondents stating 3+ on the Likert scale), that this commodification takes place within an ontologically safe space, as discussed in the literature review (Giddens, 1991). The tour guide acts as a medium in this respect and can tailor the approach to suit the preferences or reactions of the given tour group. Indeed, the '*matter-of-fact*' description (Q6) also suggests that while the experience enacts the desequestration of death to some extent, it also perpetuates some aspects of the absent death in that it approaches death in an ontologically secure context. That context could be suggested to be the context of law and order; barbaric as the practice of execution is now seen, at that time it was legally sanctioned. Indeed, the concept of safety can be observed further in the engagement with mortality at Lancaster Castle, as can be shown in the

context of the heterotopia.

The concept of heterotopia within dark tourism, as discussed in Chapter Three, suggests that sites of dark tourism offer an environment which subvert normal attitudes and approaches to death; in that sense, death is discussed openly and its consequences may be observed. The concept of heterotopia is distinct from the theoretical desequestration of death; the desequestration of death is a process of re-unveiling death, whereas a heterotopia is necessarily a location (whether real or fictional – Hetherington, 1997) and thus rooted in the physical despite having mostly intangible qualities. Within that context, it can be observed that, by virtue of its novel desequestration of death, Lancaster Castle embodies that subversion and can thus be described as a heterotopia – an assertion that can be further demonstrated with more primary research findings.

Although heterotopias may be nightmarish or unpleasant (Hetherington, 1997), one specific quality of some heterotopias which the supply-side may wish to promote is the concept of the site being an ontologically 'safe space' in which to contemplate dark subjects (Lee *et al.,* 2012; Foucault, 1967). To that end, CP states that part of the appeal of encountering dark subject matter is the relative safety afforded by the context of dark tourism; whilst one may be faced with accounts of death and suffering, '*you know nothing's going to happen* [to you]' (interview A, line 12). Whilst this stems from the chronological disconnect with past times, the safety can also be said to be engendered by the familiarity given to visitors by the availability of the café and shop facilities; CP further notes that the familiar environment allows visitors to '*relax*' (line 270), a familiarity which visitors expect (also interview B, Q6), whilst RJ describes those facilities as '*the familiar*' which '*puts* [one] *at ease*' (interview B, line 380). Therefore, it can be said that, unlike other places in normal life, Lancaster Castle, as a site of dark tourism, offers a novel environment in which to safely contemplate thoughts of mortality which are otherwise sequestered from normal life.

This is further evidenced by the reaction of visitors to their tour guide's approach to the subject of dark tourism – 126 of 147 respondents (85.71%) rated the approach as 4 or 5 (61.11% of which selected 5) on the Likert scale up to 5 (5 being '*very appropriate*' as shown below in Figure 26). This suggests that the dark history is handled sensitively in the view of the vast majority of visitors (just 1 respondent described it as '*very inappropriate*'), an approach which contributes to the heterotopia at Lancaster Castle – the novelty of place – in which death can be contemplated safely. Under that observation, Lancaster Castle exhibits the characteristics of a 'heterotopia of chronology' (Stone, 2013, p. 87) in that the majority of dark events happened in the distant past and so are observed

from a safe 'distance'; by the same token, however, the characteristics could also be said to reflect the 'heterotopia of functionality' (Stone, 2013, p. 86) in that Lancaster Castle has several purposes beyond that of a tourist attraction. As an institution which upholds the modern rule of law, Lancaster Castle simultaneously displays now-unethical penal practices in a place which is associated with rational and ethical penal practice, a disconnect which can be said to further increase the distance between the visitor and the issues of death. Indeed, 40.1% of respondents described the tour guide's approach as '*matter-of-fact*' (Q6), an approach which can be said to preserve ontological safety by ignoring sensational representation. Therefore, by noting that heterotopias by nature embody a novelty of place, it be can be further noted that Lancaster Castle holds novel appeal by enabling the desequestration of death.
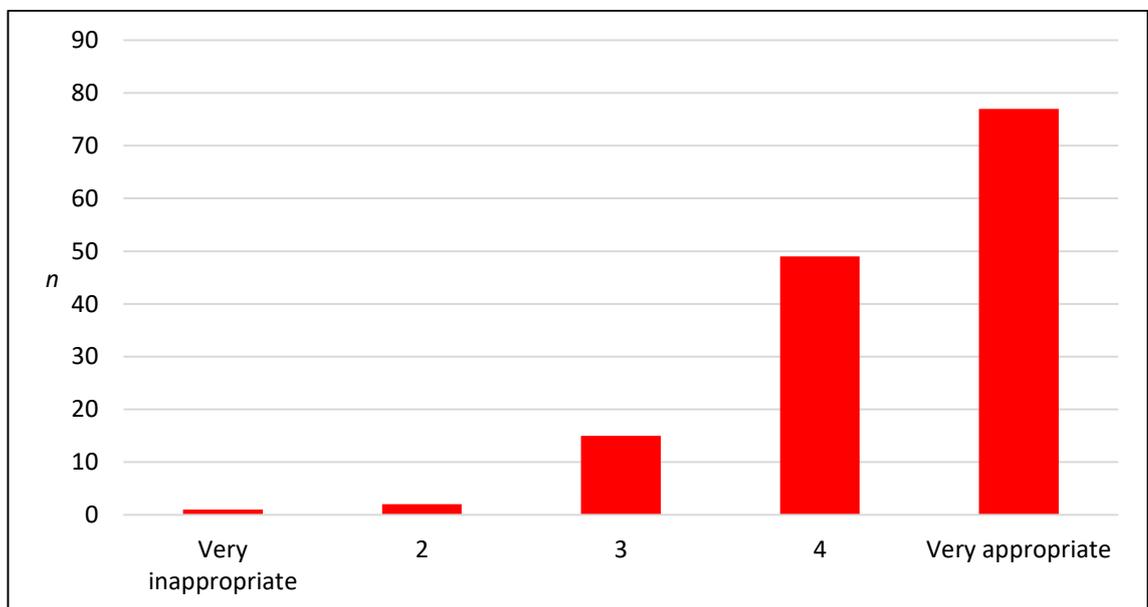
Figure 26: Q12: 'How would you describe the tour guide's approach to the subject of dark history?'

Sub-theme A2: Voyeurism

Whilst the previous sub-theme points towards a meaningful engagement with mortality, this may not always be the case with visitors to Lancaster Castle. As an aspect of novelty, the concept of voyeuristic engagement with the themes of dark tourism surfaces several times in the data. This is expressly noted by CP who states that there is an undercurrent of voyeurism within the appeal of dark tourism:

'They like the appeal of the forbidden or the unusual; there is a certain amount of [pause] voyeurism, I think, involved. If you go back 2,000 years people were going to see gladiators. Very few people wanted to be the gladiators, but nevertheless they were going to see people die. That's on a much more basic and ruthless scale of what we do, but nevertheless it appeals in a way to the same instinct, you know, that people are fascinated by... hangmen.'

[Interview A, line 15]

Furthermore, 35 of 147 respondents (23.80%) – the second highest response rate for Q3 – stated that the appeal of learning about death, punishment and witchcraft at Lancaster Castle was '*grim fascination*'; this was substantially less than '*general historic interest*' (at 70.75%), but represented substantially more than the next highest response, and so can be considered to be a notable minority response (shown in Figure 27). Indeed, that '*fascination*' is also noted by RJ (interview B, line 17) as an explanation of the appeal of dark tourism. Overall, these findings point to voyeurism as a motivating factor to engage in this type of dark tourism – it offers a novel perspective from which to view concepts of death and suffering which is not afforded in day-to-day life.
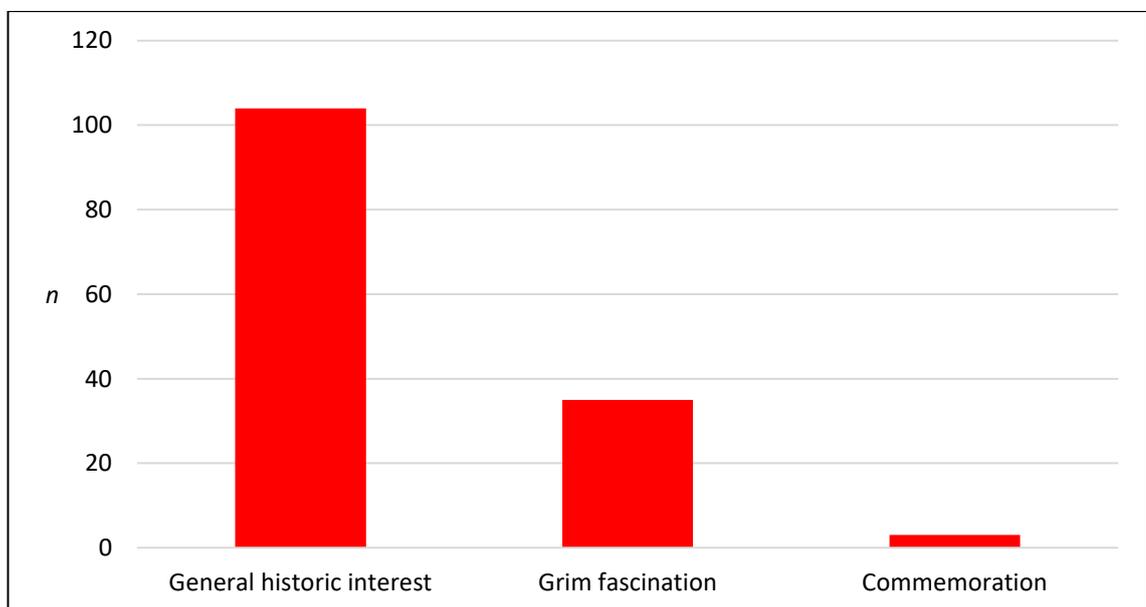
Figure 27: Q3: 'What do you think is the appeal of learning about death, punishment and witchcraft at Lancaster Castle?' [highest three responses]

However, as noted in sub-theme A1, visitors do not necessarily term this perspective as

'*novel*'; those who selected '*grim fascination*' as the appeal of learning about dark tourism concepts were no more likely to view thoughts of mortality as '*novel*'. Despite this, it can still be described as novel by definition as stated previously, though it is important to note the definition and the view of visitors as a disparity between supply and demand perspectives. Indeed, just as there is much disparity (as noted in the literature view) in concepts such as sensitivity and cultural approaches to death, so too may dark tourism be used for a variety of reasons, because neither the de-sequestration of death nor the concept of heterotopia necessarily promote meaningful or pro-active engagement with mortality. Indeed, an interesting observation to be made on the matter of novelty is that respondents were more likely to describe encounters with mortality as '*novel*' if they were unaware of the castle's dark history before visiting. As shown in Figure 28, 50% of respondents who termed the thoughts of mortality as '*novel*' (Q5) also selected '*was not aware*' when asked how the castle's dark history figured in their decision to visit the site (Q2). This further affirms that dark tourism presents novel experience, because, arguably, it shows that those who were unaware of the history, and so therefore unprepared for the encounters with death, were more likely to rate them as novel as compared to those who attended the castle in the knowledge that they would be encountering the issue of mortality.
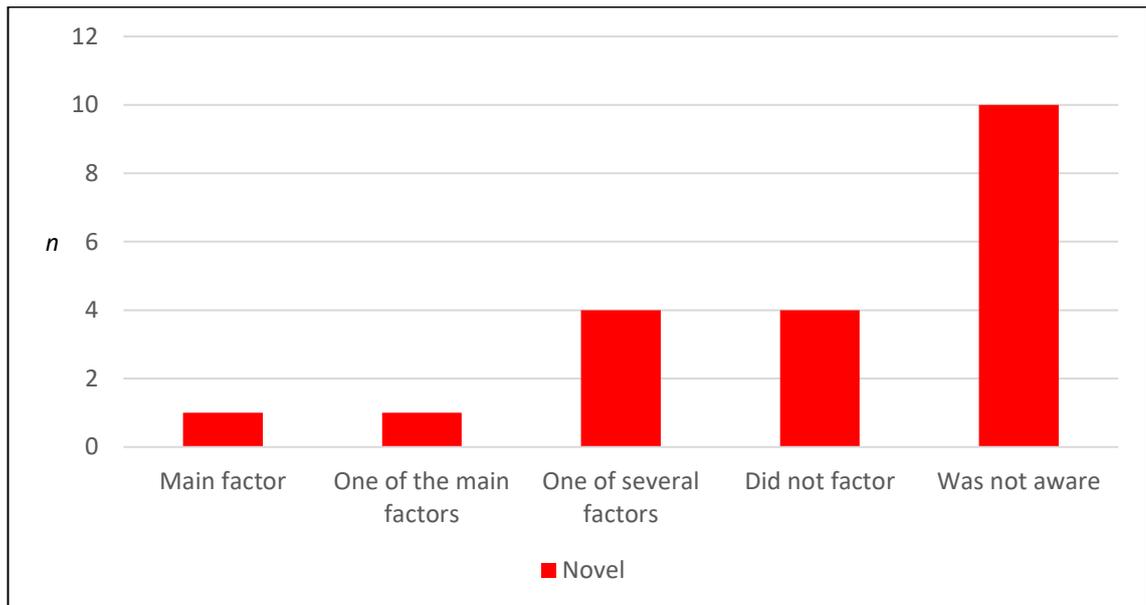
Figure 28: Bivariate analysis: Correlation between '[if you thought] *about your own mortality more than you would usually during your day-to-day life… did you find it to be novel***?' (***n***) (Q5) and '***Did the history of death, punishment and witchcraft affect your decision to visit Lancaster Castle***?' (Q2)**

Sub-theme A3: Esteem from Dark Tourism

Whether through conspicuous consumption, conspicuous compassion, or perhaps due to the prevailing 'imagistic culture' within tourism (Morgan & Pritchard, 1998), the literature review shows that certain aspects of tourism can be used to garner the esteem of others. Whilst Lancaster Castle, for typological reasons, is not directly comparable to sites of holocaust tourism (the example taken in the literature review), it can nonetheless be observed to be interesting to others by virtue of its novelty, and so can therefore be used to garner esteem. Indeed, in order to show that engaging with dark tourism can elicit the esteem from others, it must be shown that it is in itself interesting to others; if an individual does not find it interesting then they are unlikely to esteem somebody for partaking in dark tourism.

The data suggests that it is indeed viewed as interesting and therefore esteem-worthy. When asked to state the main reason for visiting Lancaster Castle, 43 of 147 respondents (29.25%) answered that they were either bringing another individual, that they brought by another person, or that they were recommended by another person/ organisation. Furthermore, 117 of 147 respondents (79.6%) answered either 4 or 5 – 5

163

being '*extremely likely*' – when asked how likely they were to tell others about their experience at Lancaster Castle. This links to the notion of the 'imagistic culture' (Morgan & Pritchard, 1998) whereby individuals are likely to present the image of their leisure activities to others (whether in the physical form of a photograph or object, or merely through verbal imagery) and the worth of the experience is based on the resultant imagery. The data also suggests that part of the experience is rooted in the reaction of others, which therefore suggests that it is novel in line with the previous sub-themes. Indeed, whatever the specific cause of the novelty, the very fact that its image is perceived as interesting to others can be linked to the Veblen 1 theory of conspicuous consumption (Tilman, 2006) whereby one seeks to demonstrate a specific sense of cultural capital by engaging in dark tourism. In the case of Lancaster Castle, it can be said to come from the novelty of lurid voyeurism as well as that of the desequestration of death within a heterotopic location.

This is shown through bivariate analysis as it denotes a link between esteem and the novelty borne from the de-sequestration of death. 75% of those who described the contemplation of mortality as '*novel*' (20 respondents, Q5a) stated that they were '*extremely likely*' to tell other about their experience (compared to an overall percentage of 42.2% for all respondents, as shown below in Figure 29). As the encounter with mortality was novel, they were therefore more likely to tell others, potentially as a means of garnering esteem. Therefore, it can be inferred that dark tourism can be used to garner the esteem of others. If such meaningful engagement with mortality is indeed interesting to others, it also points to Veblen 2 (Tilman, 2006) whereby conspicuous consumption – or in the case of mortality, conspicuous compassion (as discussed in Chapter Three) – is a form of 'one-upmanship', and so one can garner esteem by telling others about one's contemplation of the suffering and death of others in conjunction with one's own mortality.
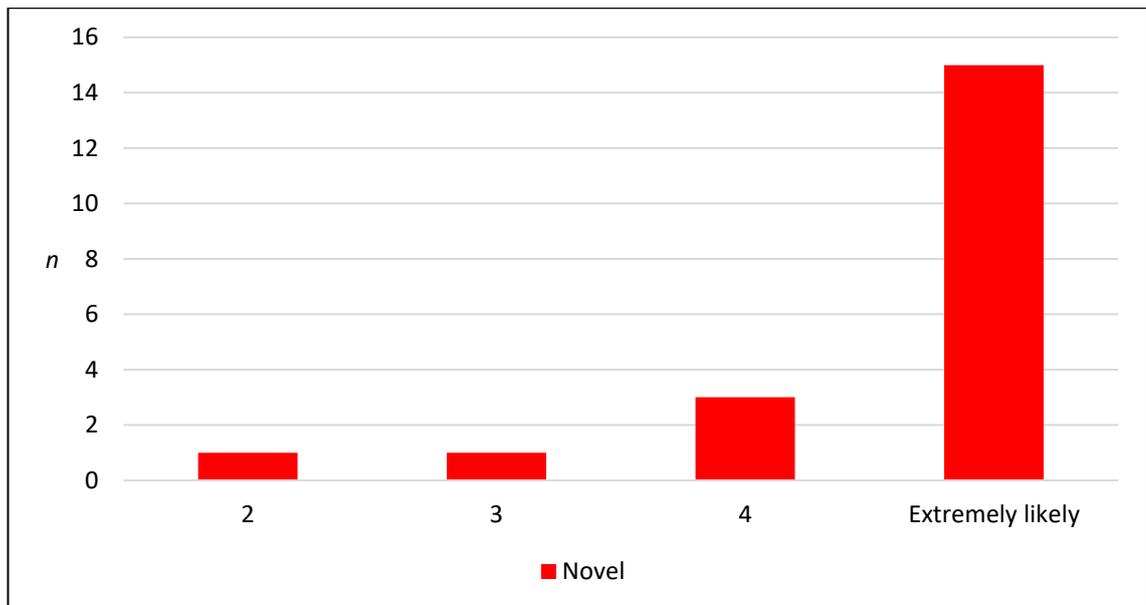
Figure 29: Bivariate analysis: Correlation between '[if you thought] *about your own mortality more than you would usually during your day-to-day life… did you find it to be novel*?**' (***n***) (Q5) and '***From 1-5, how likely are you to tell friends and family about your experience of the (dark) history of Lancaster Castle?***' (Q4)**

Mapping Theme A: Novelty of Place

The individual sub-themes observed from the findings divide into three distinct groupings. The first, A1, points towards novelty through engagement with mortality, whereas A2 suggests novelty from a potentially less meaningful 'dark entertainment' (Stone, 2009b). Whilst both relate directly to the overall novelty of dark tourism, they all imbue the site with qualities which are interesting to others (A3), and so therefore can be used to garner esteem – a facet which also feeds into the overall conception, as shown below in Figure 30 (though this may not always be the case and so conspicuous compassion may be bypassed. As such, three specific areas of findings can be observed which, grouped together, point towards dark tourism at Lancaster Castle as having a 'novelty of place'.
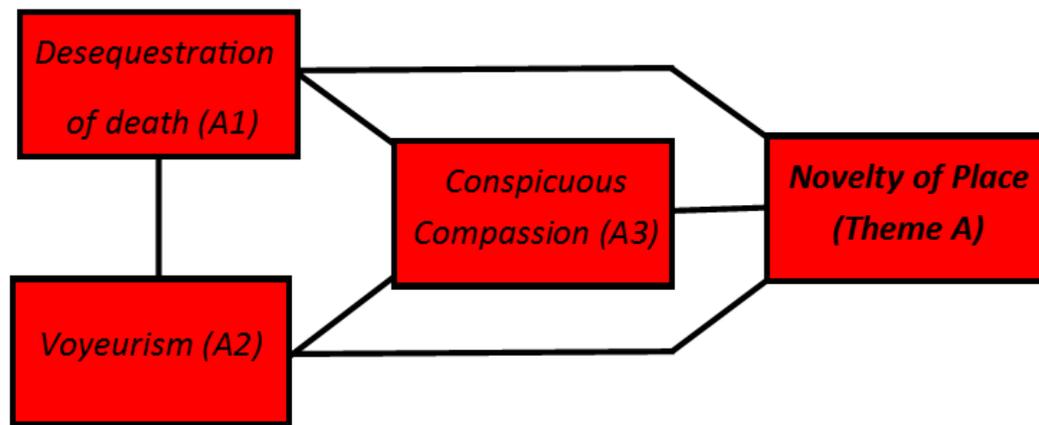
Figure 30: Mapping Theme A, Lancaster Castle

6.4.2: Theme B: Framing

Another theme emerging from the data relates to the role which the symptoms of commodification play at Lancaster Castle. This theme suggests that the semiotic role of those symptoms serves to 'frame' the experience; rather than affecting the content of the tour or the information that visitors receive, the shop, café and tour in fact 'set the scene' in which that experience takes place. That means that commodification is not an inherent part of the encounters with mortality as such, but provide cues and facilities for the visitor – it 'signposts' the experience, a phenomenon discussed in the literature review, providing 'cues on how to behave' (p. 45), and also provides cues noting the context of the experience. Essentially, this theme suggests that these cues are superficial, even at times superfluous, items that visitors interpret as such but are nonetheless influenced by them.

Sub-theme B1: Visitor expectations of commodification

Joy (1998), as noted in the literature review, states that an admission fee frames an experience as exclusive. However, the primary data shows that it has no effect on the experience to a majority of visitors at Lancaster Castle; indeed, it points to the notion that visitors expect to encounter the symptoms of commodification, and even welcome them within the context of a visitor experience. The overwhelming majority of respondents accept the admission fee (87.8%, Q7), with 89.12% of all respondents stating that the fee has '*no effect*' on their experience (Q8). This suggests it is an accepted concept which visitors expect and so has no effect on how they engage with the subject matter – it merely frames the experience as normal. As a majority of respondents (59.2%, Q7a) stated that

166

the fee serves a tangible purpose (such as paying for upkeep or staffing costs) – or that it is an 'accepted part' of tourism – it can be inferred that, rather than changing the nature of the experience, it frames Lancaster Castle a valuable asset. Indeed, with recent budget cuts to local government services, there could be political reasons why visitors accept the admission fee too, though further exploration of that possibility is beyond the scope of this research.

Furthermore, the shop and café, also symptoms of commodification, were generally accepted by visitors. As noted in the literature review, the shop (Brown, 2013a) – and the café – are overt expressions of commodification as they exist in a conventional commercial context. Respectively, 25.2% and 67.3% used the shop and café (Q9, as shown below in Figure 31; indeed, whilst both have notable use from visitors, in interview B, RJ notes that the café is of particular importance to visitors as it comes under what RJ terms 'facilities' (interview B, line 168).
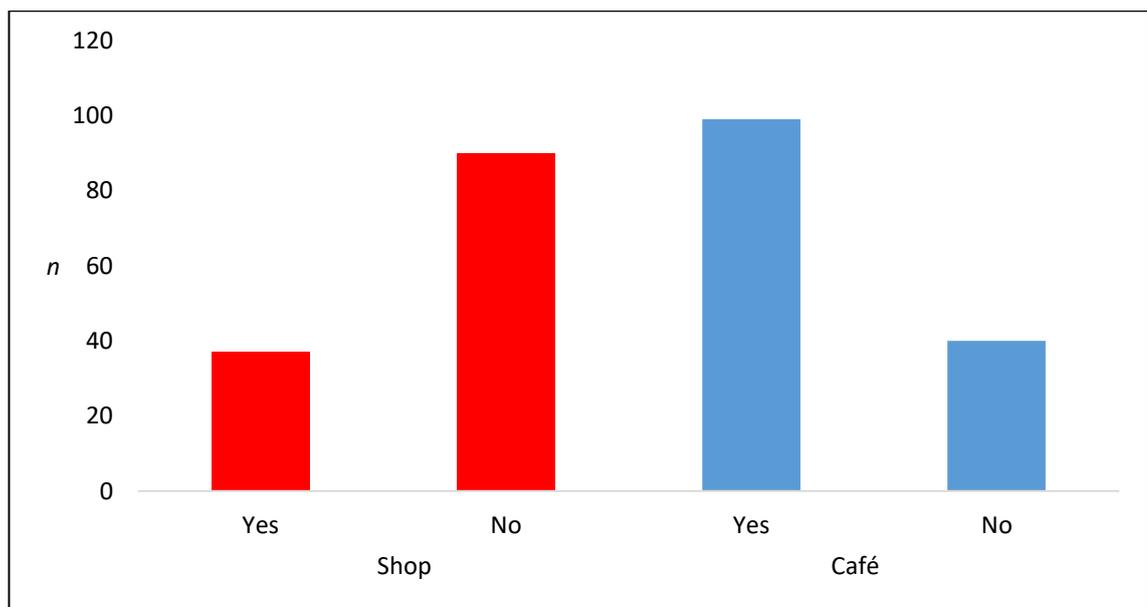
Figure 31: Q9: 'Have/ will you use the on-site café and shop today?'

These, essentially, facilitate the experience without (in the view of RJ) affecting the nature of the tour; this point is supplemented by CP, who notes that the tour of the castle was mostly the same before they had an on-site café (interview A, line 323), but also that there was a demand for a café before such a facility existed (interview A, line 343). As such, it shows that visitors expect and desire commodification and it serves to frame the core experience rather than forming a significant part of it because it is only

tangentially connected. As noted in the literature review, Urry and Larsen (2011) show that tourists understand tourism within the context of purchasing items; in tandem with that assertion, the data shows that the café and shop can be described as accepted facets of the tourist experience and as such their presence of a shop or café does not cause visitor behaviour or interpretation to change.

Indeed, CP draws further attention to visitor expectations. He states that a key managerial consideration is:

'customer satisfaction. They have to come and feel that they have got something out of it in terms of information – that they've gone away learning something new that they didn't know, and had a good time. The two are inextricably linked – if you just give people an informative experience, they won't have enjoyed it as much because they've not… had the entertainment part of it.'

[Interview A, line 162]

This shows that visitors anticipate the presence of commodification, and to find its symptoms absent would be strange or disappointing. CP also notes a sense of disappointment – that visitors would '*go away upset*' (interview A, line 255) if there was nothing to buy from a shop, suggesting that the shop serves to frame the experience as a consumer product. Crucially though, as shown previously, it does not impact upon what the visitor experiences elsewhere. RJ refers several times to the '*facilities*' (interview B, e.g. line 130) or '*points of access*' (line 532) which visitors expect such as toilets, refreshments, and consumer goods:

'...people come to a site and expect to be able to have a route around a gift shop and get a little souvenir, a memento, a reminder of their visit'

[Interview B, line 251]

However, as stated previously, only 25.2% of visitors used the shop (Q9); perhaps that whilst they may expect to encounter it, they may not necessarily use it and it acts only as a passive frame for the rest of their experience. Therefore, it can be said that these aspects of commodification establish the context in which the experience occurs – one that is ontologically safe and commercially conventional. By relating this to Peirce's theory of semiotics (cited in Pinto Santos & Soares Marques, 2011; also Pennington & Thomsen, 2010), we may observe the three variables which combine to create that frame. The sign

168

itself (for example the shop), and the experience which it denotes, are both enacted by the supply-side; ostensibly the shop exists for the reasons above, but in reality it also fulfils a semiotic role. Of course, this is dependent on the third variable – the 'interpretant' – but, as stated, the survey data shows that there is some consensus that the shop (alongside the other symptoms as tested) acts as an expected facet of experience which frames the context without notable effect elsewhere.

Sub-theme B2: Admission Fee as a Frame

Whereas sub-theme B1 shows that commodification acts as a frame, the concept of framing can also be attributed to specific symptoms of that process. As shown previously, visitors were extremely likely to accept the admission fee as an expected part of visiting Lancaster Castle (Q7). However, by using bivariate analyses, it can be observed that the attitude one has towards the admission fee is reflected in one's attitudes to other symptoms of commodification – that the admission fee, as the initial act of engaging in the commodified experience, frames how one views the rest of the experience.

As Figure 32 below shows, visitors who described the admission fee as inappropriate (Q7) were over twice as likely to reject the café as being '*unimportant and separate*' – 50%, compared with 23.8% overall (Q10). This trend is replicated in the role of the shop – Figure 33 also shows in comparison that 33.3% of respondents reject the shop and the admission fee, compared to only 23.8% overall describing the shop as '*unimportant and separate*'.
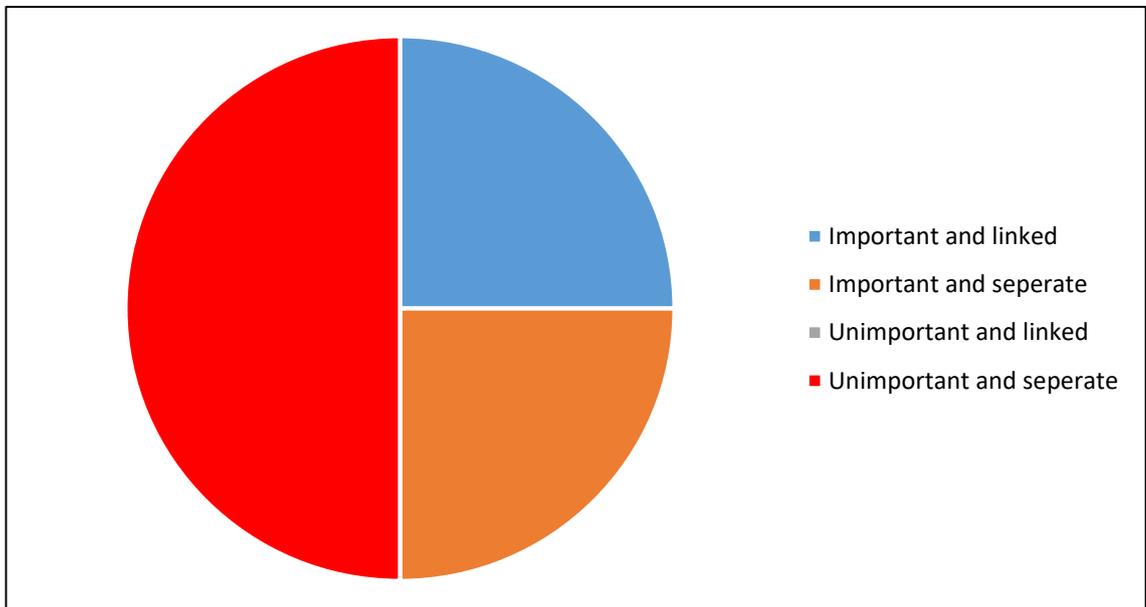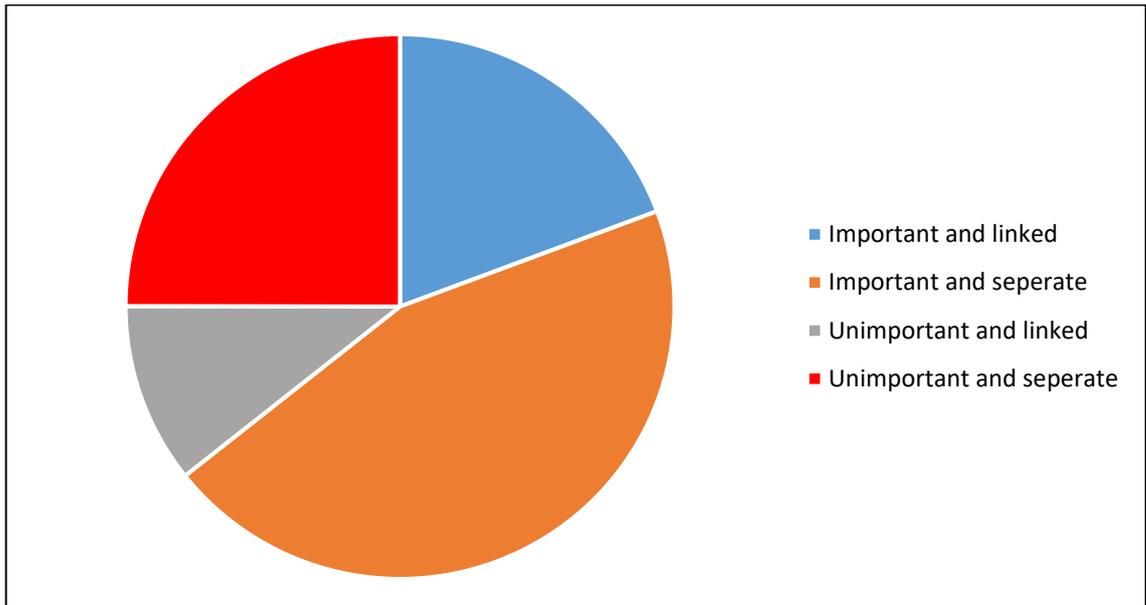
Figure 32: Univariate analysis of Q10 (café)/ bivariate analysis: proportions of the role of the café (Q10) amongst response of fee is '*inappropriate*' (Q7)
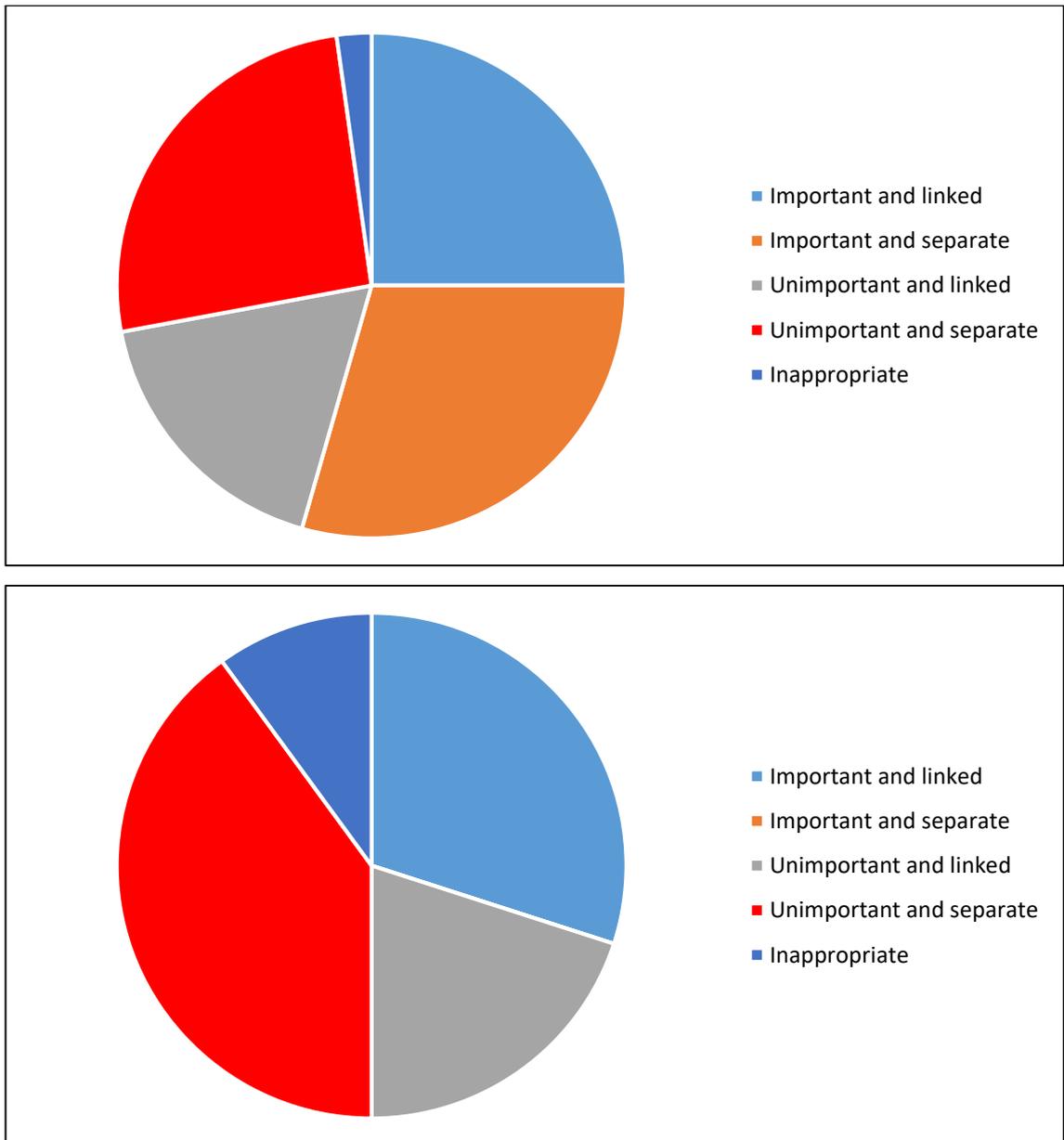
Figure 33: Univariate analysis of Q10 (shop)/ bivariate analysis: proportions of the role of the shop (Q10) amongst response of fee is '*inappropriate*' (Q7)

This suggests that one's opinion frames how one views the other aspects of commodification and, arguably, depends on one's perception of taste and appropriateness. This relates to certain aspects of taste and kitsch as discussed in the literature review; Lugg (1999) states that tourists may desire kitsch predictability, and the concept of buying items is entrenched within our culture (Toussaint & Decrop, 2013; Seaton, 2009). This, alongside the aforementioned data, suggests that individuals base their view of commodification within that context – a context framed by virtue of having to pay to enter. Conversely, however, Ràtz (2006) notes the complex nature of dark subjects, and

so it can be seen that certain individuals may therefore reject the fee as inappropriate, and thus similarly reject other symptoms of commodification as a result. Concomitantly, and despite a majority of responses for the positive effect of the tour guide (Q14), those who described the admission fee as inappropriate (Q7) were less likely to describe the tour guide as making their visit '*more of an experience*' (41.7%, compared to 52.4% overall, shown in Figure 34), which suggests that the frames build into a bigger picture of commodification.
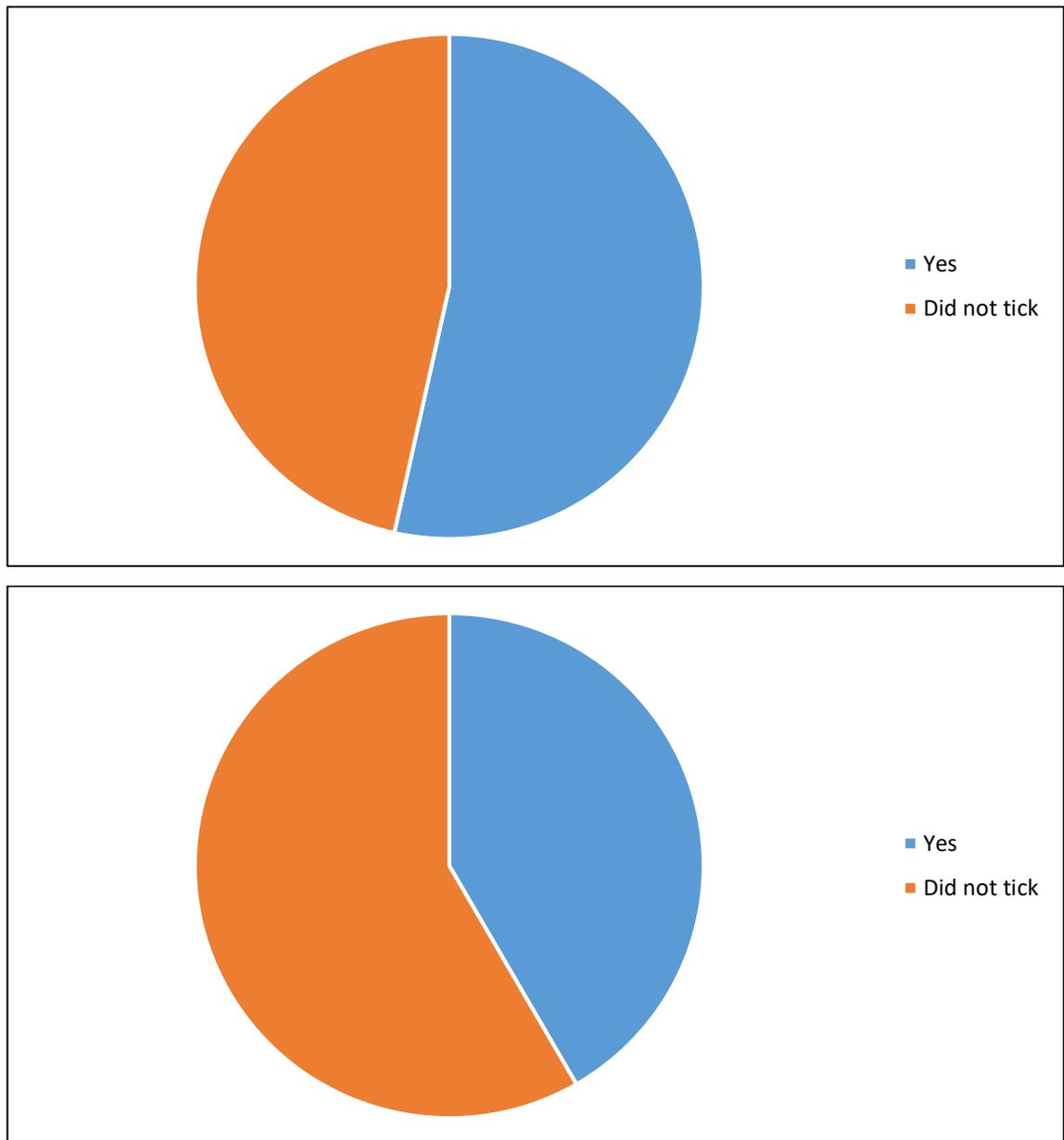
Figure 34: Univariate analysis of tour guide makes Lancaster Castle '*more of an experience*' (Q11)/ bivariate analysis: proportions of tour guide makes Lancaster Castle '*more of an experience*' (Q11) amongst response of fee is '*inappropriate*' (Q7)

Pertinently, what is clear across both views of the admission fee is that there are no observable negative effects on the rest of the visitor experience; indeed, it is not clear that it has any effect whatsoever. Rather, it can be said that it forms a frame in conjunction with other aspects of commodification; whilst the act of paying the fee is not observed as changing the experience, it is seen as having a practical purpose (59.2% noted that the fee was appropriate for this reason). Indeed, unlike the shop and café, visitors must incur the admission fee to be part of the tour (the tour also, of course, being an imperative aspect of the castle visitor experience), and so it necessarily impacts upon how one views the experience, as it is not optional.

<u>Sub-theme B3: Events as a Frame</u>

As a further symptom of commodification, events held at Lancaster Castle operate outside the standard experience as described previously – they may supplement it by facilitating a visitor's engagement with the tour, or they may stand alone as the visitor's sole reason to visit. This was not clearly tested within the questionnaire, although 11 respondents (7.5%) stated that their main reason for visiting to castle was to attend an event. These events could therefore be described as relatively superfluous to the experience at Lancaster Castle, but both interviewees noted that the programme of events (many of which are externally-managed) raise the profile of the castle in the mind of potential visitors. RJ noted that the events contribute to the castle's role as a '*cultural hub*' (interview B, line 302) and demonstrate its value to the local community, whilst CP noted that the events were particularly useful in attracting local residents to visit the castle. They therefore 'frame' the castle as a notable venue which is both rooted in history and Lancastrian culture, but also one which has relevance to modern life, a concept observable in event management theory (Getz, 2011).

That this can occur at a site of dark tourism relates to 'reduced dissonance' (Sharpley, 2009) due to an absence of a political element within the tour, and so overtly entertaining events can exist without discord; indeed, tours such as the costumed 'adult-only' tours (as described by both interviewees) can even be seen to add value to the experience (White, 2013; Taheri & Jafari, 2012), an approach which agrees with Appleton's (2006) observation that sites may seek to attract visitors by any means possible – in this context, by diverging from the stated aim of factual objectivity. In that vein, RJ also noted that the event programme contributes to the '*different offers*' (interview B, line 515) of Lancaster Castle, a managerial approach which can be said to offer multiple

frames used to engage with diverse groups. Again, the diverse product offers (as discussed in 6.4.4) can be seen as a set of semiotic perspectives; the experience of the guided tour itself is not altered, as the data offers no suggestion that the aspects of commodification as discussed herein alter the fundamental nature of the experience. Rather, the frames – necessarily perceived in the mind of the visitor – provide for either the familiarity of a conventional experience as posited by Boorstin (1987) or the illusion (whether real or not) of an authentic experience which can exist beyond the role of commodification (a concept further discussed in 6.4.5), depending on the visitor's perception of taste and the appropriate implementation of commodification.

<u>Mapping Theme B: Framing</u>

This theme clearly delineates the respective roles of supply and demand. B1, in discussing visitor expectations of commodification, can be seen to provide (pre-existing) cues in terms of how an experience unfolds, whether that is through active engagement with symptoms of commodification or not. Parallel to this is the supply of commodification such as the admission fee (B2) and events (B3), which frame the reality of experience at Lancaster Castle whether fulfilling, confounding or upsetting the expectations of the visitor. Both of these distinct perspectives (despite some overlap as discussed herein) demonstrate the semiology involved in the experience as provided by commodification which, overall, can thereby described as 'framing' the experience.
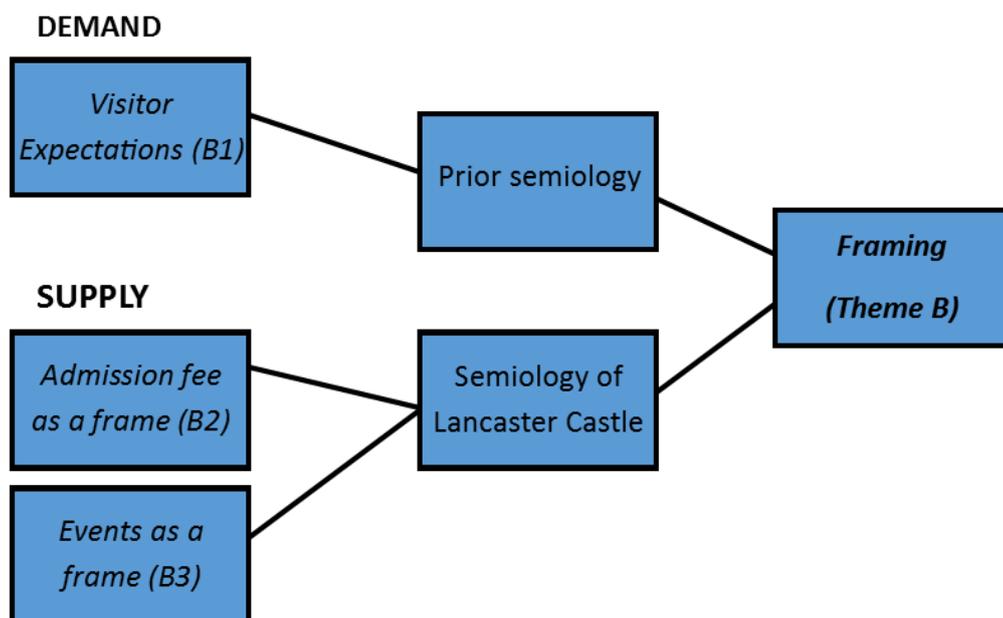
Figure 35: Mapping Theme B, Lancaster Castle

6.4.3: Theme C: Separation of Elements

Both research methods produced findings suggesting that, in the view of the supplier and visitor, the individual symptoms of commodification can be separated from one another physically, mentally, or both. Despite being part of one single overall experience, individual symptoms do not necessarily directly link to one another, nor do they have the same effects on the perceptions of visitors. This can be demonstrated in several cases as will be shown in this section; however, before demonstrating and explaining the differences, firstly a brief exploration of one way in which symptoms can be separated from the outset is provided.

In interview B, RJ notes that the shop and café can be described as 'facilities' (interview B, line 169) in the manner of parking spaces and toilets. She further states that these exist separately from the tour and have no effect on it (as shown previously in 6.4.2), a sentiment echoed in interview A (line 269). This is unlike the tour, which forms the centrepiece of the visitor experience, and so with that distinction in mind it is possible to delineate between the 'facilities' of the café and shop, and the 'subject matter' of the tour and the physical items encountered during the tour. In the discussion of commodification critique (as outlined in Chapter Four), 'facilities' are noted as having an influence on, rather than actually creating, positive experiences (Walsh & Giulianotti, 2007). Indeed, such facilities are also observed as engendering the 'democratisation' of tourism (Cooper & Hall, 2013; MacCannell, 2011) by making experiences more accessible and welcoming to all. However, whilst dilutory effects of such facilities have been identified (Timothy & Boyd, 2003; Boorstin, 1987), the data outlined in this section shows that, by way of a separation process, certain symptoms of commodification have little relation to one another and also little effect on the overall experience.

Sub-theme C1: Difference of Visitor Attitudes

It can be said that visitors do not view every aspect of commodification in the same way. A bivariate analysis of visitor use of the shop and café shows no demonstrable link between use of one compared to use of the other. This lack of correlation demonstrates that the shop and café are not generally linked as aspects of experience – rather, the visitor chooses whether to use each one individually; therefore, it can be said that in the mind of the visitor, the café and shop, despite both being overtly commercial symptoms of commodification, are separate to each other. According to Seaton's (2009) considerations, commodification must be implemented so as not to adversely affect the site (a relatively open issue as discussed in Chapter Four); indeed, at Lancaster Castle,

the café and shop are sited in discretionary locations which the visitor does not have to directly enter, and so visitors have the option to decide the role that each will play in their experience. Whilst both can be described as facilities (Walsh & Giulianotti, 2007; also interview B), as demonstrated previously by the relative use of each one, they appear to also have distinct functions. Indeed, shops are an institutionalised part of tourism (Mars & Mars, 2000), and so it can be said that visitors are relatively ambivalent about their existence (also Brown, 2013a). Little research currently exists on cafés within dark tourism – this, along with the findings of relative use herein suggests that they are distinct from the role and function played by shops, though, and are seen as such by visitors.

Furthermore, visitor attitudes on the role of the shop and the café can be shown by the findings from Q10. A majority of respondents for each symptom selected a '*separate*' variable, which, as noted herein, obviously shows that the visitors as a majority see them as separate entities to their overall experience of Lancaster Castle. However, a large majority for both symptoms (99 respondents for the shop/ 113 for the café) selected either a '*separate*' and/ or an '*unimportant*' variable. This further shows that they are not a key part of the experience, and clearly separate to the tour, which is the central part of the experience by virtue of the assumption that one can consume the shop and café without paying to attend the tour. Indeed, Kang and Lee (2013) observe a lack of clarity on what is acceptable at sites of dark tourism, and so it can be said that this separation of elements allows individual visitors to use discretion to formulate personal ethical responses based on the variety of semiotic frames (as discussed in Theme B).

Contrast the attitudes towards the shop and café – as stated previously, the overtly commercial symptoms of commodification – with attitudes towards the tour guide; whilst the tour guide is far less overtly commercial, it is nonetheless a symptom of the commodification process; however, the attitude of visitors towards the tour guide is vastly different. 78.2% of visitors stated that the absence of a tour guide would '*worsen*' the '*overall experience*', compared to 34% for the shop and 53.1% for the café (Q14). This difference is stark (as shown in Figure 36).
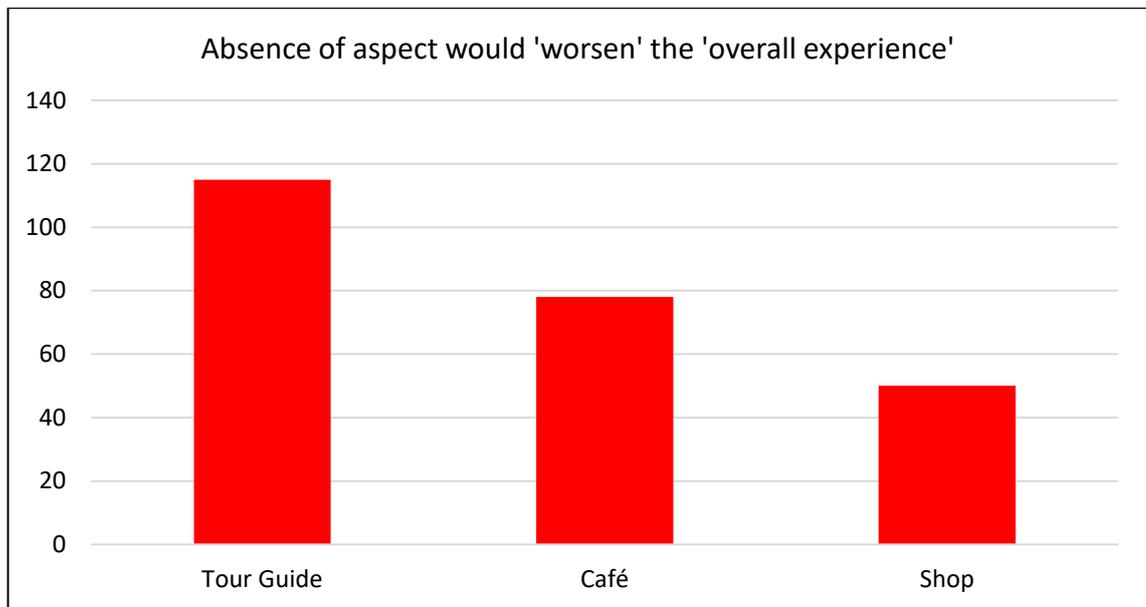
Figure 36: Univariate analysis of Q14 (overall experience)

Further support for this sub-theme emerges from a bivariate analysis of the role of the shop when compared to the tour guide. Across all responses for the café and the shop in terms of their role in the visitor experience (Q10), the majority of respondents also stated that the absence of a tour guide would '*worsen*' the experience (as shown in Figure 37). Whilst this is concomitant with the resounding majority of '*worsen*' regardless of the comparison, it also shows that there is no real change in opinion regarding the tour guides whatever the visitor thinks of the café or shop. In this way it can be further seen that the three symptoms of commodification are separate in the view and actions of the visitor.
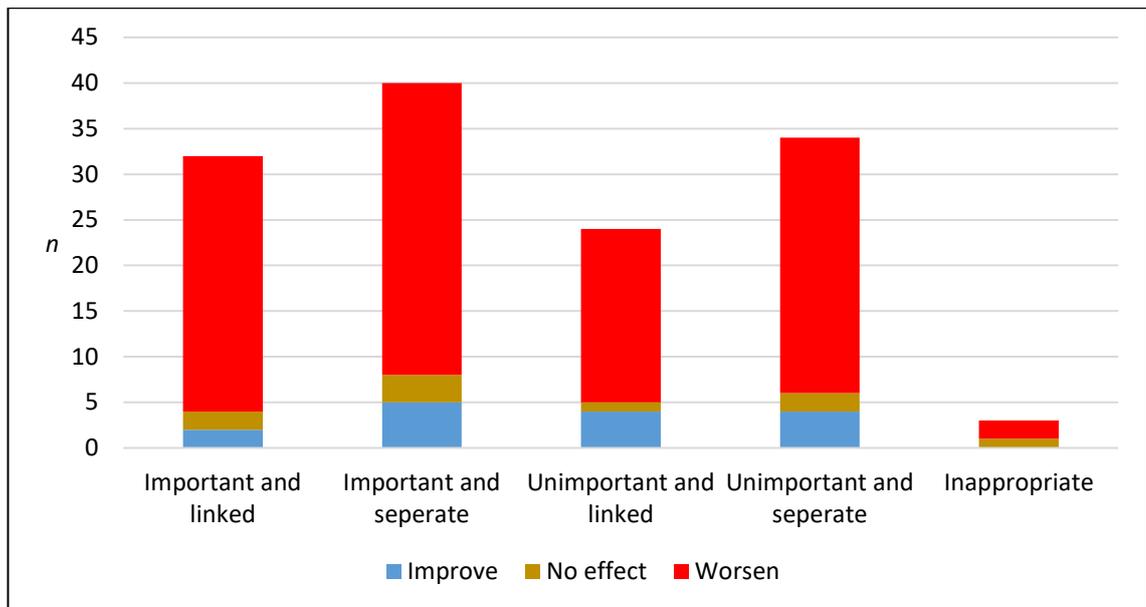
Figure 37: Bivariate analysis: Correlation between the effect of the tour guide on the overall experience (*n*) and the role of the shop (Q10)

This disconnect may stem from the notion of monetary value. As visitors pay for the tour guide experience, rather than to access the shop and café (which can be accessed free of charge), the tour attains an elevated value. This could come from the human element provided by the tour guide; Willard, Lade and Frost (2013) note the need from visitors to receive a balanced discourse, which is provided by a tour guide, not by the shop or café. As such, in the absence of a tour guide, that balance is decreased or removed and thus the experience worsened; indeed, the guide may also add to the novel value by using humour or other such personal touches as intended by the supply-side managers. The findings in this section point towards a separation of elements within the commodified experience in the mind of the visitor; indeed, as the next sub-theme shows, the supply-side can be seen to enact each individual symptom differently.

Sub theme C2: Difference of Enactment

In can be seen from the data that commodification is enacted by the supply-side in different measures across the various symptoms within the servicescape, demonstrating that the symptoms can be, and are, separated by the supply-side. This is most starkly observed in interview B; RJ notes specific ways in which the commodification process in enacted differently. Firstly, the café and shop appear in a standardised servicescape, offering little or no scope for personalised service encounters. By contrast, the tour is

specifically presented as an individually tailored experience; RJ further notes that the individual style of the tour guides is a '*high consideration*' (interview B, line 138) and that each tour is tailored based on the group of visitors and the choices of the tour guide as there is no script (interview B, Q5; also interview A, line 74). Thus, the shop and café are commodified to standardisation, whereas the tour is not commodified to that level; for that reason, they can be described as separate from each other.

A further example of how the symptoms may be delineated and enacted in different ways relates to geographic separation which is possible at Lancaster Castle. It is noted in interview B that, because the Castle has throughout much of its history been a multi-use site, there are distinct areas which are subject to different managerial approaches. As stated in interview B:

'... there's [sic] *certain areas of the castle that are more hallowed if you like, the Well Tower potentially is a place where they held the Lancashire witches, there's Hanging Corner, the Chapel Yard potentially as well, and then obviously the idea that there's quite a lot of those executed were buried on the castle grounds, whereas you would see much of the cultural activity happening, at the moment anyway they've been held in the main courtyard.'*

[Interview B, line 334)

As shown in the above quote, the castle courtyard is the venue for many events, and the guided tour at that point generally provides an upbeat introduction to the castle's history. This contrasts with some interior areas, such as the Crown Court, which are approached with a degree of reverence not observed elsewhere. Crucially, these areas are not affected by any other parts of the commodification process. Further contrast this with the prefabricated building which houses the café and shop; this is geographically separate from all of the above areas, and so is commodified accordingly; this is seemingly in line with the organisation's corporate strategy, which is noted as a key consideration in the implementation of retail environments in tourism (McLean, 1997). It demonstrates that the commodification process is not enacted in the same way across all of its symptoms. However, RJ, in interview B, also notes that '*things move on*' (line 324), suggesting that in the future, the effects of that separation may be reduced (and also relating to the 'heterotopia of chronology' as discussed in 6.4.1).

Furthermore, the example of the infamous Birmingham Six trial is given in interview A (line 128); to cast doubt upon the Court's verdict could incur legal

consequences for the tour guide if their own interpretation was included in reference to the trial. Therefore, it can be further demonstrated how even segments of the tour itself can be separated and commodified in a certain manner distinct from other sections, and points towards ethical considerations which the tour guides must observe in line with the assertion that political controversy must be separated from kitsch levity (Sturken, 2007; Ràtz, 2006). As such, the separation of elements means that the experience can be different to individual visitors; indeed, the final sub-theme shows that each symptom can have a different effect on the experience.

<u>Sub-theme C3: Difference of Symptom Effects</u>

As will be shown herein, the difference – and thus separation – of elements is not only a subconscious or mental separation on the part of the visitor. It is also demonstrable in terms of each symptom's individual effects on the experience, and can be seen both in the visitor questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews. Question 17 has been used in two bivariate analyses with two other questions; this, as will be shown, demonstrates how an overtly commodified and less tailored tour more akin to the standardised shop and café – what is referred to in Q17 as an '*entertainment-focussed tour, including... actors..., costume and ghosts'* – might link with the role and effects of the current symptoms in order to observe different effects.

This sub-theme essentially relates to the question of sensitivity as covered in the literature review. In comparing Q17 with Q12 – a Likert scale from 1-5 denoting the tour guide's perceived appropriateness in dealing with the dark history – a link can be shown. As the level of appropriateness rose, so too did the likelihood of the respondent selecting '*worsen*' to describe the effect of the implementation of an entertainment-focussed tour on the '*entertainment value*' of the experience (as shown below in Figure 38).
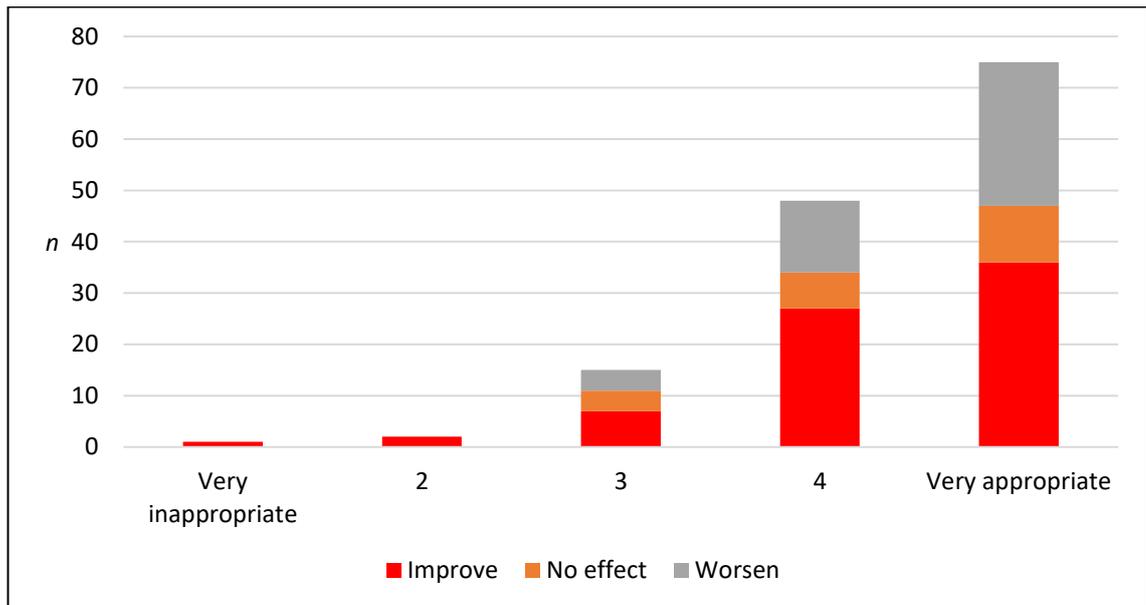
Figure 38: Bivariate analysis: correlation between the effect of '*entertainment-focussed tour*' on the entertainment value of the experience (*n*) (Q17) and the appropriateness of '*the tour guide's approach to the subject of dark history*' (Q12)

This shows a clear link between how one views the current state of the tour and how one perceives a change in how it is commodified. Furthermore, those who in Q6 described the tour as '*entertaining*' were more likely to see the entertainment-focussed tour as having improved '*entertainment value*' (as shown below in Figure 39). This further demonstrates that one's vision of a difference to the way that the tour is commodified is directly related to how one views the current level of commodification. These relationships also show a disparity of attitude across the various symptoms, which arguably denotes their separation from one another. By contrast, there is no observable link between the role of the shop (Q10) and the perception of the commodification of the tour (Q17).
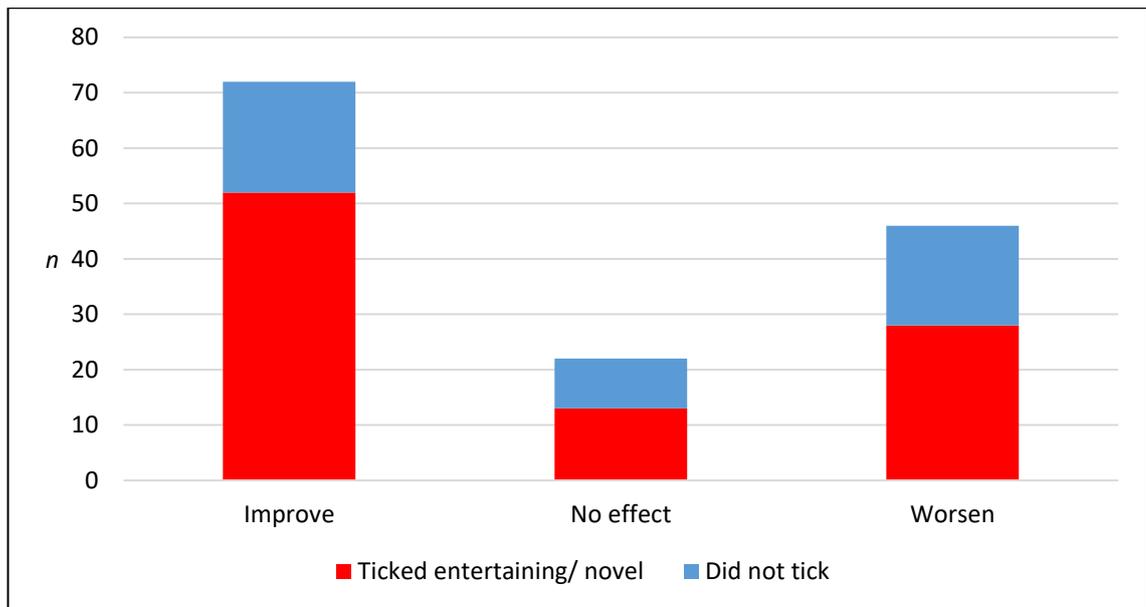
Figure 39: Bivariate analysis: correlation between the effect of '*entertainment-focussed tour*' on the entertainment value of the experience (*n*) (Q17) and description of the tour guide's approach as '*entertaining/ novel*' (Q12)

This suggests that, by introducing the possibility of kitsch entertainment to the tour, visitors can generally distinguish a (nonetheless self-evident) change, whereas the presence of kitsch items in the shop has no observable effect on the appropriateness of the tour. As such, though it is suggested that kitsch may shape the consumer experience (Allahverdyan & Galstyan, 2014; Lugg, 1999), it only does so through direct association as shown by the above data – the tour is affected by introduction of kitsch to its design, whereas other separate elements involving kitsch do not change the tour.

Finally, both interviewees note that the 'facilities' (the shop and café) are indeed separate, and so have no effect on how the tour operates. As noted in interview A:

'I think the fact that the gift shop is, to a large degree... separate from the 'main event' [the tour] *... You go in the gift shop, you go in the café, you buy your ticket, whatever, then you leave that place and you enter the experience'*

[Interview A, from line 491]

This demonstrates that the supply-side view the café and shop as separate to the tour; it is also specifically noted in interview B that RJ sees the café, shop and events as '*separate entities*' (interview B, line 463). This relates to the design and implementation of a specific

servicescape (Cooper & Hall, 2013; Dong & Siu, 2013), as the manager clearly delineates the environment into an appropriate product (the shop and café) / service (the tour) mix (McLean, 1997; Swarbrooke, 1995). This suggests that, by separating the elements in this way, the ideal mix for Lancaster Castle can be achieved. Indeed, that separation is also used to build anticipation in visitors before they embark on the tour – '*in terms of the shop, I think it can build a sense of expectation*' (interview A, line 496) – which shows that the supply-side also note the separation of symptoms by way of the effects which they can have on the overall experience despite being separate. That process of experience within separated elements is depicted in Figure 40.
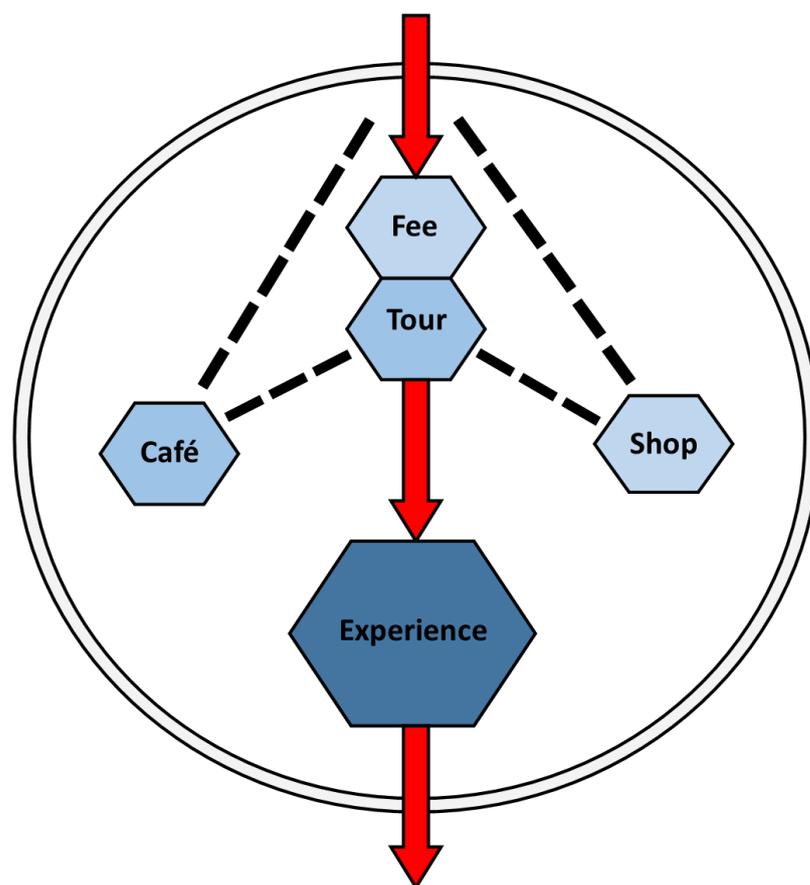
Figure 40: Separation of elements at Lancaster Castle

Mapping Theme C: Separation of Elements

  Though both supply and demand can be observed to separate the experience into distinct facets, there is some clear overlap in terms of opinion and effects. As such, the way in which visitors view commodification (C1), and the way in which it is enacted (C3) can be seen to impact upon the way in which it is believed to effect the experience by

both sides. As a result of that, it can therefore be observed that aspects of experience are separated by both demand and supply within the servicescape, which leads to the conclusion that the separation of elements exists and affects the visitor experience at Lancaster Castle. This is summarised in Figure 41.
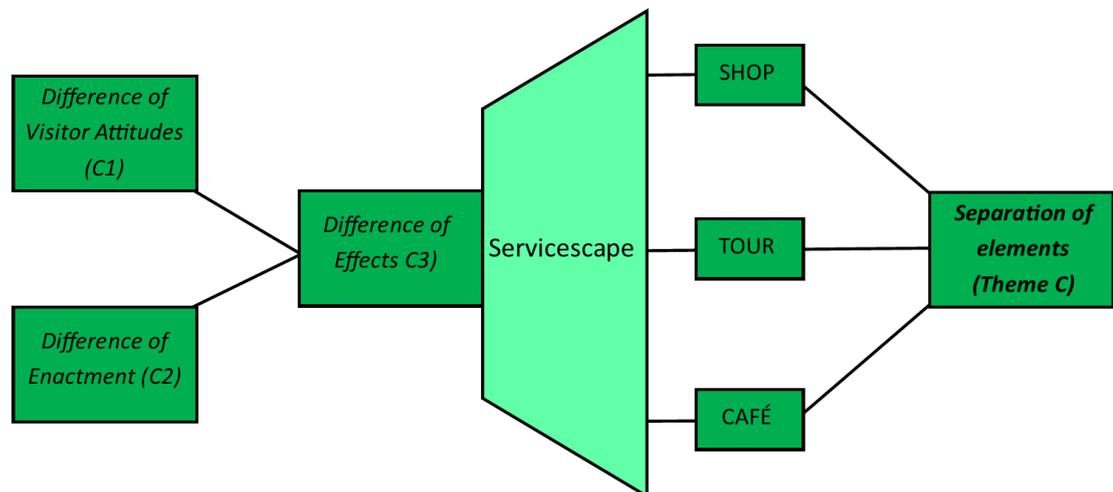
Figure 41: Mapping Theme C, Lancaster Castle

6.4.4: Theme D: Expansion of Experience

This theme notes that, rather than fundamentally altering the nature of the experience, the commodification process instead serves to add extra elements to the experience – it 'expands' the experience in certain ways to create a larger body. Therefore, rather than affecting the nature of the experience, commodification can be seen to 'add-in' new facets which, while adding a different perspective for the visitor, does not necessarily, for example, cheapen the experience or even alter the authenticity of the site.

Sub-theme D1: Product Diversification

As a tool of the supply-side, commodification can be shown to develop a given touristic product into a diverse offering which appeals to a wide audience. At Lancaster Castle, this can be seen both in terms of managerial approach, and also by the practical reality of the site; indeed, this agrees with the modern notion that sites of tourism have an imperative to become products (Abbot-Chapman & Robertson, 2015), a notion also concomitant with Lancaster Castle's development as a tourist attraction (as discussed previously in this chapter). In interview B, it is noted that '*it's great to be able to have different offers to meet different audience needs*' (line 526) – offers which can be seen

through the various symptoms of commodification. At its most basic, this is demonstrated in the provision of a fact-based yet entertaining tour, rather than simply a dry retelling of fact; it is the intention that visitors:

'[learn] *something new that they didn't know, and had a good time. The two are inextricably linked – if you just give people an informative experience, they won't have enjoyed it as much because they've not... had the entertainment part of it*'

[Interview A, line 164]

This can be described as the diversification of experience, because, arguably, the expansion develops from the tour as the central part of the experience. For example, beyond the standard daytime castle tours, both interviewees noted the use of more theatrical tours around Hallowe'en, with CP (interview A, line 99) also noting the night-time adults-only tour. Both of these harness the commodified product of the guided tour and expand into a new context in order to attract a certain audience. The importance of various '*access points*' as noted by RJ (interview B, line 532) – facets to the experience which appeal to potential visitors – are also an indicator of diversification as a supply-side strategy; this is alongside the café as a sole facility in its own right [interview B, line 293] and the programme of events (as explored previously). The points of access serve to expand the experience of Lancaster Castle; the tour itself is unaffected, but there are extra facets to that experience in that it is more diverse and appealing.

This diversification is evidence of commodification as a vehicle for product development – the 'golden egg' of Rojek (1993), but also the multi-purpose nature of dark tourism (Ràtz, 2006). Whilst Ràtz (2006) notes only two purposes (one for locals, and one for tourists), Lancaster Castle can be seen to take this further to incorporate more diverse groups of stakeholders. As such, this engenders a commercial imperative (Abbot-Chapman & Robertson, 2015), and even extends to what can be termed pseudo-events (Boorstin, 1987); despite a commitment to factual evidence and discourses (evidenced in both interviews), the obviously tongue-in-cheek occasional costume tours (as discussed in both interviews) and kitsch toys in the shop serve to democratise access to the castle.

Indeed, those products offer another interesting point. Both interviewees note the various tiers of products that make up the retail offering in the shop, as shown in Figure 42.

Product Tier	Example Products
Royal Items	Queen Elizabeth II commemorative plate.
'Period' Items	Medieval knight figurine; Viking helmet.
Crime & Punishment	Toy handcuffs; police truncheon.
Branded Goods	Lancaster Castle bookmark; postcards.
'Low price-point' items	Yo-yo; wind-up toys.
Literature	Various books relating to Lancaster Castle and the local area.

Figure 42: Products at Lancaster Castle's shop

This is strong evidence to show that the supply-side use commodification in order to expand the experience away from one single discourse and into a multi-layered experience of the vast history of Lancaster Castle. As noted by CP in interview A, the managerial intention is to '*connect the tour with the shop'* (line 257), a decision which itself allows the reach of the tour to be expanded; indeed, by offering physical products (as noted in the literature review), the experience may be extended for as long as the product is used. As such, the commodification process facilitates that expansion – indeed, as noted by RJ in interview B, the tour guides also often recommend certain items in the shop if it relates to the interests of a particular visitor (lines 258-260). That points towards two distinct purposes in terms of expanding the experience through certain products: expansion of *temporal* experience, whereby the visitor extends the amount of time spent on-site, and expansion of *retained* experience, whereby visitors can take away items to increase their knowledge of Lancaster Castle, as demonstrated below in Figure 43.
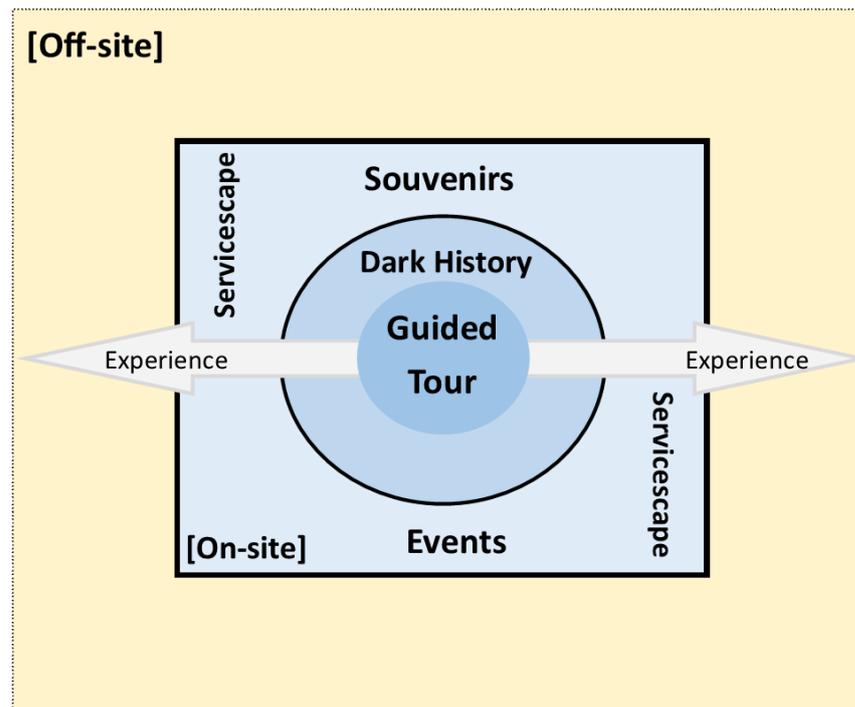
Figure 43: Expansion of experience at Lancaster Castle

This is further evidenced in the nature of the tour whilst the Castle was still in operation as a prison; as noted by CP (as stated previously), the current tour remains in essence the same as it was before the prison closed. It may have 'expanded' into the courtyard and now include a more substantial shop alongside the café, but these symptoms, as shown, serve to expand the experience and to provide the visitor with further facilities, rather than changing or altering the essence of the experience.

From the interviews with the managers, it is clear to see the managerial approach which uses commodification as a tool to diversify the product at Lancaster Castle for a wide audience; as a result, the experience has not fundamentally changed, but, as noted in interview A, chiefly gives the visitor more '*dwell time*' (line 336) with extra facets such as a shop and café in which to spend time. Indeed, the data also suggests that the concept of dark history is itself one of those facets at Lancaster Castle, as will now be shown.
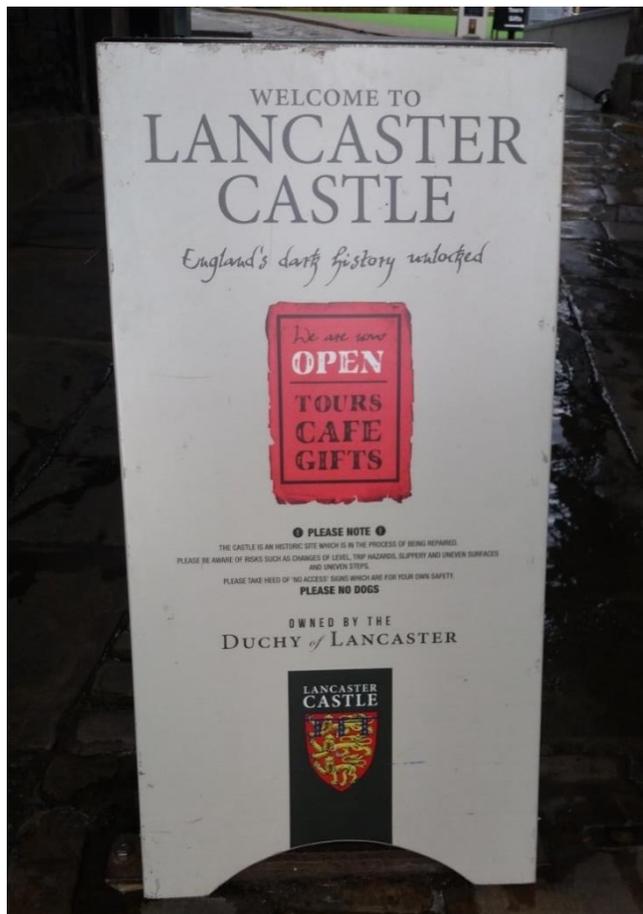
Plate 7: Marketing board at Lancaster Castle

As seen in Plate 7, and also on the castle's website (*Lancaster Castle,* 2016)*,* the dark history of Lancaster Castle is specifically marketed as part of the visitor experience. Indeed, as explored in Theme A, it offers a clear novel element to the experience as perceived by the visitor. However, when visitors were asked to what extent the dark history affected their decision to visit the castle, the highest response was '*was not aware*' (42.2%), shown in Figure 44 below in relation to other responses.
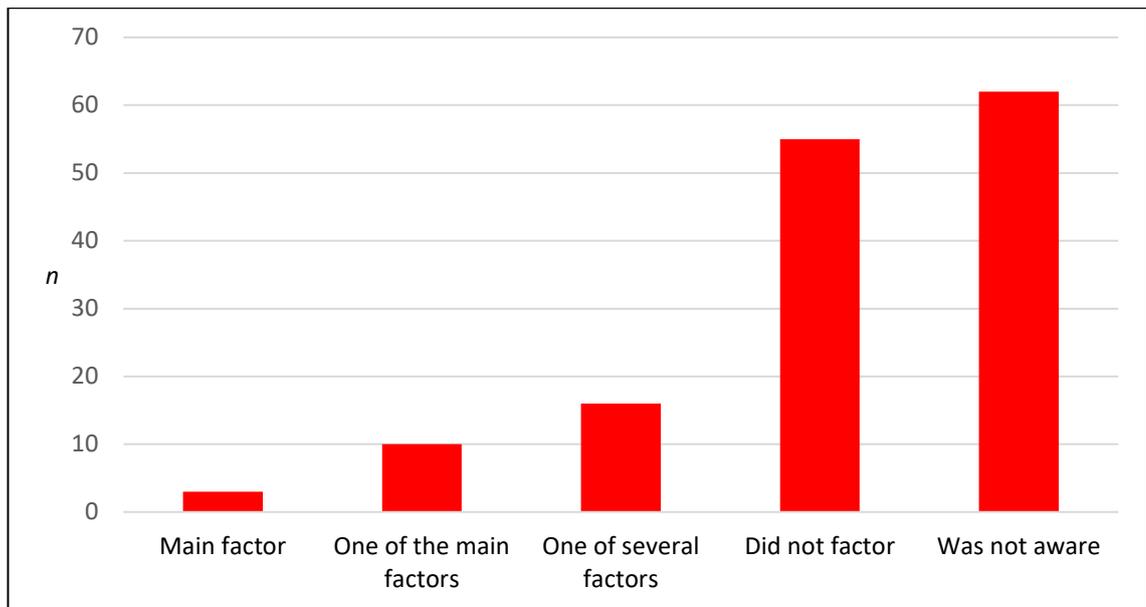
Figure 44: Q2: 'Did the history of death, punishment and witchcraft affect your decision to visit Lancaster Castle?'

Therefore, whilst the dark history may not be a clear motivation for a majority of visitors, the commodification of dark tourism – in this case through the guided tour – serves to expand the experience for the visitors by adding in aspects of history which are perhaps less appreciated or apparent to the general public. This shows that, by incorporating dark history into the tour (as a symptom of commodification), the supply-side expand the experience. It is not fundamentally changed, but the breadth of its content is increased (as evidenced by the two most popular reason for visiting Lancaster Castle in Q1, shown below in Figure 45).
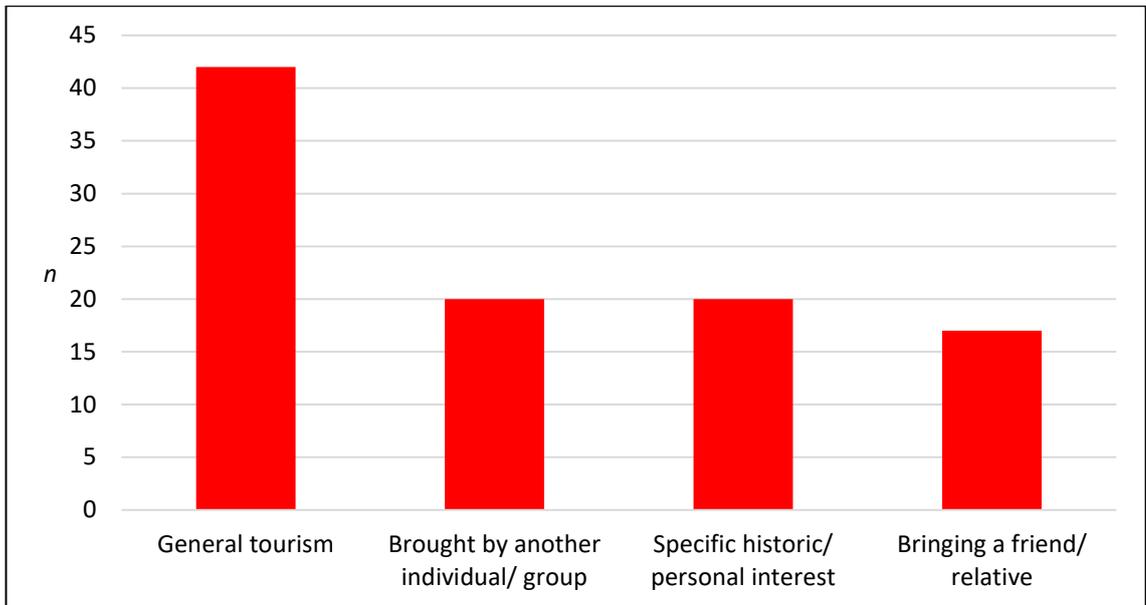
Figure 45: Q1: 'What was the main reason for your visit to Lancaster Castle today?'

Mapping Theme D: Expansion of Experience

Slightly different to other themes, Theme D has only one sub-theme which incorporates several factors within its scope. However, by drawing on the separation identified in Theme C, the expansion of experience is revealed. Lancaster Castle exists beyond the visitor experience, and indeed the visitor can experience the tour of the site without engaging in the other symptoms of commodification: the shop, café and events. However, in engaging with the extra aspects of the diversified experience, the experience is thus expanded rather than changed because of the discretionary nature of those aspects. The implications of diversification (D1) is conceptualised in Figure 46.
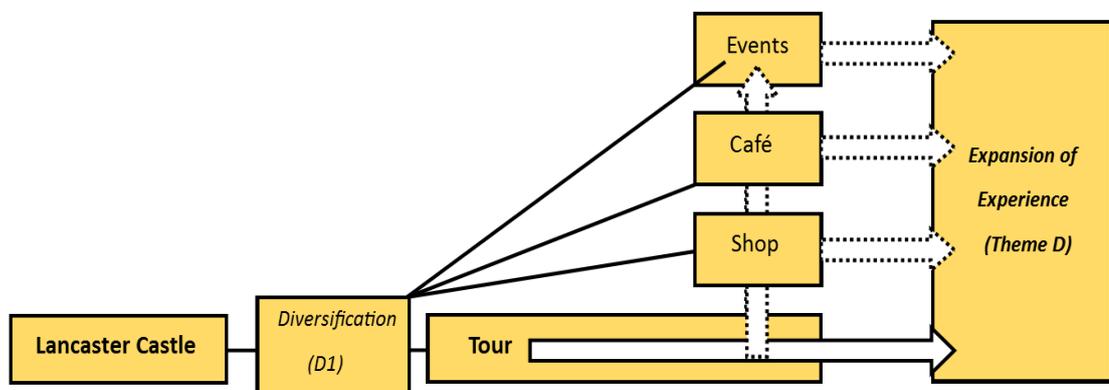
Figure 46: Mapping Theme D, Lancaster Castle

190

6.4.5: Theme E: Separation of Authenticity

Findings from Lancaster Castle suggest that authenticity and commodification may be separate concerns and only partially linked. Commodification critique often focusses on the negative effects of commodification (Elkington, 2015) – indeed, there is much existing theory which intrinsically links the commodification process with inauthenticity (Elkington, 2015; Toussaint & Decrop, 2013; Lennon & Foley, 2000; Boorstin, 1987). However, as will be shown, although there is some relationship, there is also evidence to show that the two can exist independently of each other and do not automatically, as discussed in the literature review, result in an erosion of authenticity.

Sub –theme E1: Objective Authenticity Beyond Commodification

As stated in the literature review, authenticity can be said to manifest in numerous ways (Wang, 1999). The evidence herein suggests that Lancaster Castle possesses objective authenticity (Wang, 1999) which is not changed or altered by the commodification process on site. For example, in interview A, CP notes that the Castle contains an active Crown Court, and so the presence of a tour, or indeed the further symptoms of commodification, do not change that: '*we are walking around an authentic experience without making it up. So there's no friction between the two*' (line 537). That notion of site authenticity is echoed in interview B, in which RJ states that:

'*We're not trying to recreate anything, we're not changing anything to try and create an experience, we have the building as it is, it's our biggest object*'

[Interview B, from line 412]

These responses note a supply-side decision to harness objective authenticity rather than to use commodification to create an alternative discourse that could be less authentic. To that end, by also noting the separation of elements, the effects of geographic separation on authenticity can be observed. Indeed, RJ [interview B, line 465] believes that the separation of elements means that the café and shop do not alter the Castle's authenticity, and CP [interview A, line 488] also suggests that visitors, not just the supply-side, can easily discern that separation, and so do not perceive an erosion of authenticity. This goes against the received wisdom of commodification as having a weakening effect on authenticity; however, it equally does not suggest that Lancaster Castle exhibits constructivist authenticity rather than its objective counterpart (Wang, 1999). This is because it possesses a current working court, real cells and architecture relevant to the

individual periods covered in the tour. Therefore, whilst the retail servicescape may shift perception of the site towards that of a tourist attraction rather than a castle, the inherent nature of the building has not been altered, as shown by the previous themes and as will now be shown further.

The questionnaire data shows that a majority of respondents observe no link between the shop or café and the authenticity of the site; respectively, 73.5% and 78.2% of respondents noted that those two symptoms have '*no effect*' on the authenticity of Lancaster Castle (Q16, as shown below in Figure 47). This demonstrates that the presence of such entities does indeed have little impact on the visitors' conception of authenticity. However, it is also pertinent to note that, whilst no means of eroding the objective authenticity were identified, both interviewees noted that neither the café nor shop enhanced the authenticity of the castle. As such, both supply and demand agree: the café and shop form an area distinct from the main experience, and so are therefore not part of the consideration of the relative authenticity of Lancaster Castle. As authenticity manifests in many ways (Wang, 1999), it is difficult to definitively endow an entity with authenticity, but within the context of the current commodification of Lancaster Castle and its effect on the visitor experience, the site's relative authenticity can be seen to exist outside the confines of much commodification. This can be further demonstrated, as the next sub-theme shows.
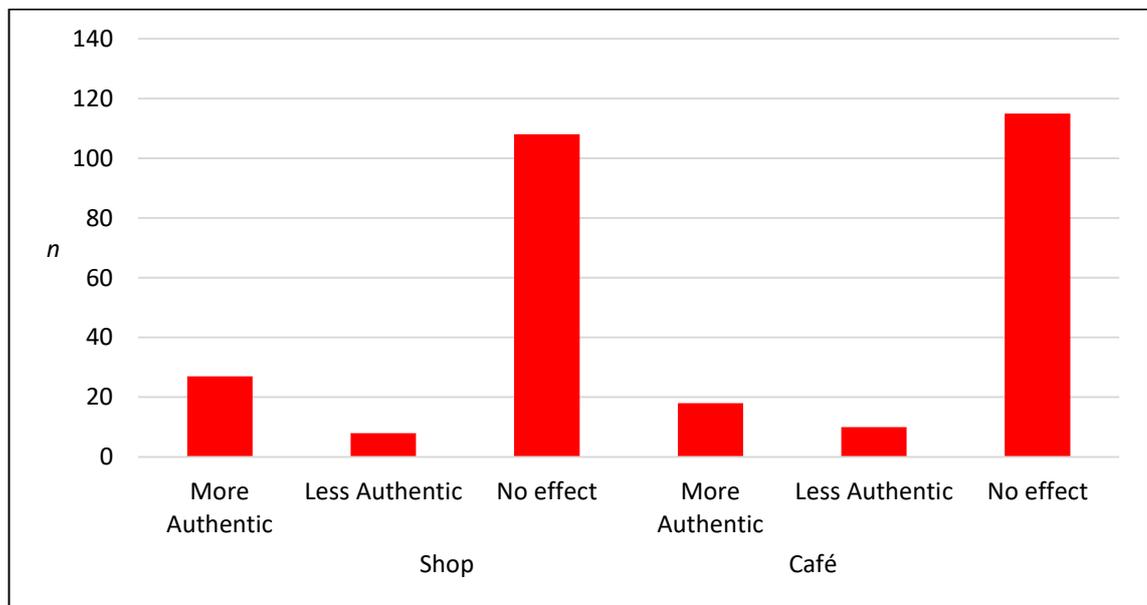
Figure 47: Q16: 'Does the presence of a shop, café... affect the authenticity of Lancaster Castle?'

192

<u>Sub-theme E2: Commodification Can Have No Effect</u>

This sub-theme further reinforces the notion that certain symptoms have no effect on the authenticity of the castle; by focussing on the effect of a variety of symptoms on the experience, benign characteristics within the commodification process can be observed which are conspicuously absent from current discourses on the process (Elkington, 2015; Sather-Wagstaff, 2011; Walsh & Giulianotti, 2007). The univariate analysis of Q16 shows a large majority of respondents observe '*no effect*' from the café and shop on authenticity (Figure 47). Indeed, a bivariate analysis of those two individual responses against the respondents' perception of authenticity shows no significant correlation between the rating of authenticity (Q15) and the effect of the shop/ café on the experience; ratings remain relatively average across all responses. This relates to the concept of separation, as, by removing the shop and café as meaningful entities, they cannot therefore affect the authenticity of the site. This is arguably because they do not affect the tastes of either the supply-side or visitors, a key consideration within the implementation of commodification (Brown, 2013a; Seaton, 2009; Sturken, 2007). Indeed, Seaton (2009) notes that aspects of commodification must not adversely affect the site; in this way he implies that if such symptoms are benign in their implementation then they will not affect, for example, the overall authenticity. Lancaster Castle's use of a retail servicescape is shown to operate within that paradigm. As such it can be seen to invoke 'reduced dissonance' in its commodification (Sharpley, 2009).

Furthermore, the role of the café – in terms of the combinations of separate/ linked and important/ unimportant – has no clear link with the rating of authenticity; if that was the case, then the incidence of reporting '*unimportant and separate'* would be expected to increase as the rating of authenticity increased. As this is not the case, it can therefore be seen that the role that the café plays in the experience of the individual does not conclusively impact upon perceptions of authenticity. This is in agreement with the interview responses as detailed in the previous sub-theme that visitors can observe a separation of elements and so the café and shop do not interfere with their notions of authenticity. It is also in agreement with theory on the role of shops within tourism (*Retailing for Visitor Attractions*, 1997; McClean, 1997) noting that retailing can be conducted within the realms of taste, and is not inherently deleterious to the experience or authenticity. Indeed, by noting that retailing is not necessarily tasteless when combined with dark tourism, the concept of the 'commodity culture' (Sturken, 2007) is also brought into question. Whilst Sturken (2007) notes such culture at Ground Zero as kitsch, and Toepler (2006) believes that retailing detracts from the cultural aims of an institution,

Brown (2013a), concomitant with the findings presented herein, notes that it can become an appropriate (or even positive, as explored latterly in this section) facet of the experience. Whereas that commodity culture may be prevalent at certain sites, it appears to be paradigmatic and could therefore depend on the typology of the site (Brown, 2013a; Sturken, 2007; Seaton, 2009; Stone, 2006). In the context of Lancaster Castle, we can note an appropriate implementation because the data consistently shows no general effect on the experience. These findings all suggest that the symptoms of commodification can be separated from other aspects of the experience to the end that they have little or no effect on the conception of authenticity. This must be considered in conjunction with the separation of elements because that separation – whether geographic, discretionary or, as discussed in this sub-theme, by removing significance – alters the meaning of the symptoms of commodification within the context of the visitor experience and thus their effect on authenticity. However, as the next sub-theme shows, this only holds true for certain symptoms of commodification; herein, the example of the shop and café have been used. The tour guide appears to enact different effects.

<u>Sub-theme E3: Commodification Can Increase Authenticity</u>

As discussed thus far, authenticity can be observed as separate to commodification, but in line with the separation of elements, not all symptoms of commodification have the same effect on authenticity. Unlike the shop and café, which were overwhelmingly said to have '*no effect*' on the authenticity of Lancaster Castle (73.5% and 78.2% respectively, Q16), the tour guide overwhelmingly makes Lancaster Castle '*more authentic*' (84.4%, Q16). In interview A, CP notes that this is expected, because visitors are more likely to avoid misconceptions and fully understand the history of the Castle when accompanied by an expert who can answer questions and provide an accurate account:

'...in terms of the tour and authenticity, I would say that it [the tour] *enhances it* [the authenticity of Lancaster Castle]. *So, again, people will go into the Shire Hall and go 'oh, the council chamber!'. Council chambers do look like court rooms, they're very similar, but it's not, it's the civil court room. So people would leave, I think, quite a lot of people would leave with the wrong idea of what certain rooms were for and how they operated.*

[Interview A, from line 462]

This is echoed in interview B, where RJ also states that the ability of the tour guide to answer questions from visitors enables the history of Lancaster Castle to emerge:

'… *we are usually able to give that extra information where people require it or people request it, so I think that would add to the authenticity.*'

[Interview B, from line 448]

RJ further notes that all the information disseminated by tour guide is '*primary source material and information which we know to be fact*' [line 410]; indeed, she goes on to note that this is paramount to the tour's effect on authenticity because a less factual approach would dilute the authenticity:

'...*as soon as you start to move away from that and start to get a little bit artistic with it… then that's moving away from the authenticity and I think that's a different kind of experience.*'

[Interview B, from line 514]

As shown, the supply-side clearly views the tour guide as a key tool in demonstrating the authenticity of Lancaster Castle, and the aforementioned questionnaire data notes its success. Indeed, the questionnaire data further shows this effect; unlike in the cases of the café and shop, which show no correlation, respondents were more likely to rate the tour guide as making the experience '*more authentic*' as the rating of the overall experience as authentic increases, as shown in Figure 48 below.
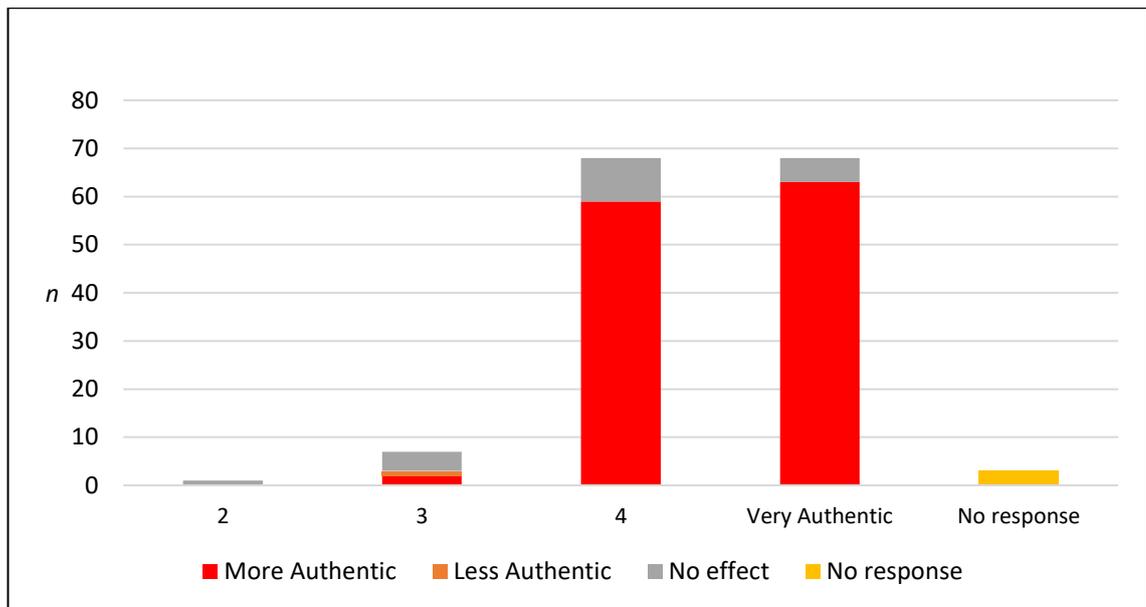
Figure 48: Bivariate analysis: Correlation between the effect of the tour guide on the authenticity of Lancaster Castle (*n*) (Q16) and the overall rating of authenticity of Lancaster Castle (Q15)

This show that commodification can engender meaning-making within dark tourism (Brown, 2013a); it gathers further credence when one considers that, in order to perceive objective authenticity, visitors require a maximized 'epistemological experience' (Wang, 1999, p. 353) whereby they can fully understand what it is they are experiencing. However, whilst the questionnaire specifically asked the visitor to rate the authenticity of the experience, and the interviewees were asked about the authenticity of the visitor experience, it is likely that the perception was based chiefly on the authenticity of the building, rather than the touristic activity. The authenticity of the Castle and the authenticity of the visitor experience are necessarily dependent on one another within the overall commodified visitor experience as they are packaged together by commodification; therefore, it is hard to unpick the exact criteria on which the perception of authenticity is based. Whilst those criteria are broadly beyond the scope of this thesis, that observation serves to demonstrate how commodification blurs that line, but nonetheless provides a frame (as noted in Theme B) through which to form meaning towards the perception of authenticity. Therefore, the evidence presented herein, along with the above critical analysis, suggests that, when used in certain ways, the commodification process can actually improve the perception of authenticity at Lancaster Castle.

Mapping Theme E: Separation of Authenticity

Theme E has presented several theoretical points from which to observe a separation of authenticity from other aspects of experience. It was first noted that Lancaster Castle possesses objective authenticity (Wang, 1999) which has developed from its long history and official use (E1); as such, this is not removed or altered by virtue of its function as a tourist attraction and so the authenticity is separate from the commodified experience offered on site. As discussed within this theme, the interpretation of authenticity is therefore dependent on the 'frame of consumption' in which the visitor consumes Lancaster Castle (supplementing the notion of framing in Theme B). Based on the dichotomy identified within this case study, that commodification can have either no effect on authenticity (E2) or that it can increase authenticity (E3), it can be said that authenticity has only a partial relationship with commodification and thus can be seen as a separate entity. This is depicted in Figure 49.
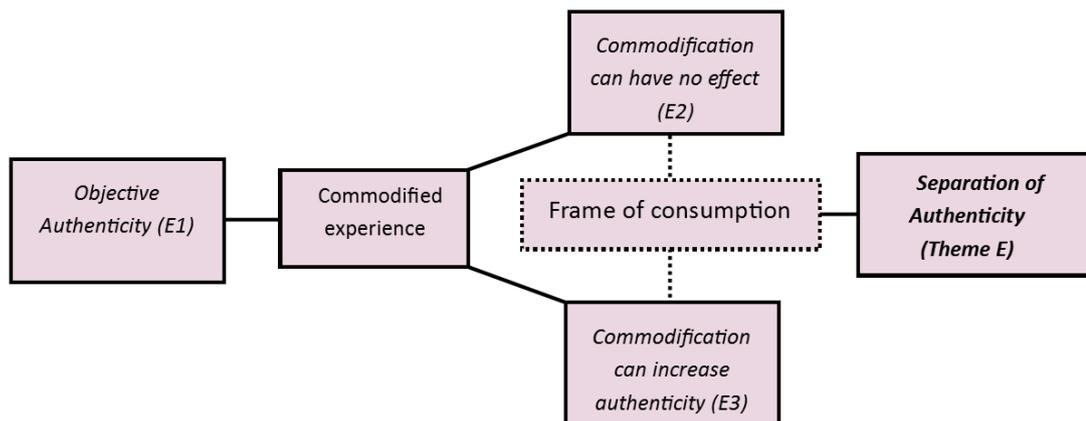
Figure 49: Mapping Theme E, Lancaster Castle

6.5: Mapping New Knowledge

By identifying links between individual sub-themes, substantial themes emerged which address the research question towards a conception of the effect of commodification on the visitor. Figure 50 maps that process by identifying the overall development of knowledge, linking each individual sub-theme and theme together to create outcomes for discussion in Chapter Eight.

Figure 50: Knowledge map for Case Study One: Lancaster Castle

6.5.1: Demographic Information

Figure 51 details the demographic information for the visitor questionnaire.

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	61	41.5
Female	72	49
No response	14	9.5
Age Group	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
18-24	14	9.5
25-34	31	21.1
35-44	24	16.3
45-54	29	19.7
55-64	24	16.3
65+	23	15.6
No response	2	1.4

Figure 51: Case Study One visitor questionnaire demographic information

6.6: Chapter Summary

This chapter has demonstrated the outcome of the empirical research into the Lancaster Castle case study. As demonstrated throughout the chapter, by analysing the key content within both qualitative and quantitative data, distinct themes can be drawn out in order to formulate original findings as per the research objectives. As shown, the findings point towards commodification as tool which, rather than fundamentally changing the experience, subtly guides the visitor to behave in certain ways and to consume the experience in a prescribed manner, and other such outcomes as explained herein. As such, this concludes the sole analysis of Lancaster Castle; therefore, Chapter Seven moves onto Case Study Two: the International Slavery Museum, Liverpool.

Chapter Seven

Analysis of Case Study Two:

International Slavery Museum, Liverpool

7.0: Chapter Introduction

This chapter continues in the vein of Chapter Six, taking that framework of analysis and applying it to Case Study Two: The International Slavery Museum, Liverpool (hereafter abbreviated to ISM). The chapter begins with a thorough exploration of the ISM: its development, current guise, content, themes, and commodification both in terms of supply-side approach and the visitor experience. Then, analysis of the data ensues firstly with the mapping of findings into a schematic diagram designed to clearly denote the thought process involved in the analytical synthesis. Secondly, the analysis incorporates both elements of the primary research with the concepts explored in the literature review to display a set of emergent themes from the findings which, in conjunction with the findings from Case Study One, will be taken forward to Chapter Eight in order to provide further discussion and a conclusion for this thesis.

Plate 8: Exterior of the Merseyside Maritime Museum

7.1: International Slavery Museum: Exposing the Middle Passage

The Transatlantic Slave Trade has often been seen as an atrocity chiefly part of American history. The American Civil War, the famous plantation houses and Antebellum-period architecture form key touchstones in the perpetuation and eventual abolition of slavery. They sit alongside the rich vein of American blues artists (an art form finding its roots in enslaved people), and well-known figureheads of the civil rights movement from Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth to those of the twentieth century such as Martin Luther King, Malcolm X and Rosa Parks. Indeed, even today, deep-rooted and visible racial problems are a problematic part of American society – problems which can be traced back to the practice of black African people subjected to kidnap and subjugation in order to expand the wealth of white owners. As an atrocity which enslaved at least 12 million people (*Transatlantic Slavery: An Introduction*, 2010) and affected many more in Africa through ruinous cultural and economic impacts, the Transatlantic Slave Trade (henceforth TST) is arguably unrivalled in scale as a human-enacted atrocity against fellow humans, and has left long-lasting legacies.

However, the reality is that the TST was not (and *is* not) merely an American concern (Gbadamosi, 2011). Alongside the colonial powers of Portugal, Spain, Netherlands and France, the might of the British Empire, with its domestic and overseas subjects, was central to the sophisticated network complicit in the atrocity. The shores of Great Britain itself were certainly not free from the taint of slavery. An astounding 40% of the world's slave trade may have been enacted through Liverpool (*Transatlantic Slavery: An Introduction*, 2010), therein bringing people to the country in captivity and forcing them to work either in the UK or abroad for pitiful or no pay on pain of punishment. The development and success of the great industrial metropolis of Liverpool – at one time considered the Empire's 'second city' – is indelibly linked to the TST (Beech, 2001); vessels arrived in its docks fresh from plundering the human population of Africa for people – with their history, ancestors, customs, family, friends, life, freedom – to be sold to local and national businesses as chattel. That atrocity, and its legacies, forms the basis of the International Slavery Museum, Liverpool.

Situated in a former bonded warehouse within the famous and iconic Albert Dock, the International Slavery Museum ISM is a nationally-funded institution which is housed within the Merseyside Maritime Museum. The stated aim of the ISM is to:

'increase public understanding of the history of transatlantic slavery, of its many legacies, and of the wider issues of freedom and injustice'.

(Transatlantic Slavery: An Introduction, 2010 p. 88)

The aim is addressed primarily by focussing on the human element of freedom and slavery, rather than the mechanics of the TST. The precursor to the ISM, the Transatlantic Slavery Gallery (*Transatlantic Slavery: An Introduction* 2010; Seaton, 2001), opened in the basement of the Maritime Museum in 1994. That incarnation was a ground-breaking institution in its own right, but was revitalised and updated in 2007 when it moved to the third floor of the Maritime Museum and expanded in size in a move which coincided with the bicentenary of the UK's abolition of the slave trade. The museum is currently nationally-funded and run by National Museums Liverpool (NML), forming part of the substantial portfolio of museums in the area. The ISM itself is split into four distinct areas; three are permanent installations (as discussed in detail in 7.2), whilst the fourth is exhibition space for use with a changing programme of exhibitions relating to slavery. The museum employs a variety of curatorial devices, as will be described, in order to document, explain, underpin and critique our understanding of slavery both in the context of the TST, and also its current existence, alongside issues of race, injustice and the cultures of the African Diaspora. Although, as noted herein, the history and legacy of slavery in the UK was previously less prominent that its American counterparts, the ISM forms distinct yet complementary discourses to the prior understanding whilst attempting to debunk misconceptions. These include 'white saviour' discourses, impotence of enslaved people in the eventual criminalisation of the TST, and the notion that slavery is a historic crime non-existent in today's society. By examining the history and legacy of slavery in the UK, the museum attempts to mediate current relationships with the concept of race and freedom in society, doing so by providing an unconventional perspective within a conventional commodified environment of a touristic museum. The two are linked; as will be shown herein, the commodification shapes the visitor experience in a manner of ways. With a more precise explanation of its content regarding dark history and dark tourism, this chapter will now examine the themes present at the ISM regarding its conception as a site of dark tourism.

7.2: Dark History at the ISM

Slavery is without doubt an atrocity (Gbadamosi, 2011). It is an affront to human

dignity, a violation of human rights, and, in the context of the TST, an overtly racist practice designed to dehumanise African people and their descendants. Though different in nature to overtly murderous atrocities such as the Holocaust or terrorist attacks in that it was conducted primarily for the financial profit of its perpetrators, rather than the physical destruction of certain groups, it is equally upsetting to contemplate the reality that the human condition is capable of wreaking such pain, suffering and subjugation on fellow man, and that millions of people did and still do experience those things. Indeed, whilst the intention was not primarily murderous, to say that the destruction of certain groups did also not occur (whether intended or not) is clearly wrong because of the plundering and displacement of cultures and people from Africa to elsewhere. Evidently, the distinct strands of activity combining to create the atrocity fall, both in isolation and as a whole, into the remit of dark tourism. Liverpool itself is also arguably the centrepiece of slavery heritage in the UK (Beech, 2001; Seaton, 2001), and so as a facet of that wider industry (such as the Liverpool Slavery Heritage Tour, wider Maritime history regarding Liverpool, and the many architectural sights funded by slavers) the ISM can be classified as a site of dark tourism. Figure 52 summarises the main points relevant to that classification (however, the exact nature of each area is explained in 7.3).

Area of the ISM	Dark Tourism Concepts
Life in West Africa	Culture damaged by slavery
Enslavement and the Middle Passage	Slavery
	Slave trade
	Suffering
	Corporal punishment
	Death
	Execution
	Racism
	Dehumanisation
Legacy	Racism
	Murderous, racist vigilantism (the Ku Klux Klan)
	Racist police discrimination/ brutality

Figure 52: Dark tourism concepts at the ISM

Whilst these themes pervade the entirety of the museum, they are not addressed in isolation. Rather, each is synthesised into a variety of perspectives on the long history and multi-faceted nature of the TST, the environment in which it existed, and the legacies which it has left behind. This chapter will now examine some of these perspectives in order to further explore the nature of dark tourism at the ISM.

7.2.1: Creating New Discourse on Slavery

Though the museum deals with the concepts as discussed in Figure 52, the ISM as an institution attempts to confound previously dominant and unhelpful discourses by presenting a social history perspective centred on enslaved people and their descendants, rather than on slavers, white abolitionists or the mechanics of the TST (Wilson, 2011). Indeed, key issues of slavery and the TST have been ignored at former plantations in the USA (Butler, 2001b), as has a general 'state of denial' (Seaton, 2001, p. 88) concomitant with the prior UK perspective on its role in the TST. This section will briefly consider some of these attempts to forge new or previously unrepresented discourses at the ISM. That 'state of denial' (Seaton, 2001, p. 88) which has afflicted the role of Britain in the TST is an ideal starting point. It is key to note when considering the history of modern slavery that the UK was home to enslaved people, that a wide range of businesses and investors dealt either financially or commercially with slave trading businesses, and that it was a significant, licit and established part of the UK economy. Whilst it can be described as 'uncomfortable truth' (Naidoo, 2011, p. 45), it is true nonetheless, and so the ISM seeks to explore it. In doing so, the institution plays a very neat trump card by virtue of its location; imperial Liverpool, with its long tradition of maritime commerce best exemplified by the now-renowned Albert Dock – where the ISM resides – was greatly expedited towards success through the subjugation of enslaved people. By standing in the museum, the visitor is standing in a location that, as explained in the gallery, was funded by the TST. To suggest that the UK was a minor or unwilling part of that mechanism is hence shown to be untrue. Therefore, because some may seek to deny Britain's role in the TST, the ISM suggests that such discourses must be removed from conventional historic narratives. In order to fully explore Britain's complicity in the TST, the museum examines the lives of enslaved people in Liverpool, and the lives of their descendants, illustrating how new culture came to Britain and had an effect on the community of Liverpool. In doing so, it shows that as well as being exploited for financial gain, enslaved people and their descendants went on to have real cultural impact on the UK. This furthermore

subverts racist discourses of forced repatriation, or that whiteness is a key indicator of Britishness.

Secondly, whilst slavery as an atrocity is deeply upsetting and horrifying, it nonetheless represents a specific epoch in social history, primarily for the descendants of enslaved people but also for members of multicultural society (Smith & Fouseki, 2011). As such, it can be used to frame notions of, for example, race, racism, identity and belonging (Smith & Fouseki, 2011), cultural heritage (Naidoo, 2011) or political activism. The ISM takes this approach variously throughout the gallery space; for example, on entrance to the museum, one can observe photographs of individuals that are captioned with their own experience of racism. This, by virtue of its inclusion at the ISM, forms a clear link between racism and slavery through the use of a direct 'voice'. Whereas previously slavery could be denounced as a relic of history, its contribution to the modern concept of racism shows that it is still relevant to today's society. Similarly, by including insight into life in West Africa pre-TST, and linking it to modern-day Igbo traditions, the ISM shows that the stain of slavery is but one, albeit cataclysmic, strand of social history for West Africans, a history which has a rich vein of practices, folklore, artefacts and dress beyond the TST.

Plate 9: 'Continuing the Journey' installation at the ISM

That notion of black social history in African, American and European contexts also links to a further discourse – the concept that enslaved people were responsible for the abolition of slavery, and it was not merely due to the white abolitionists such as William Wilberforce. Indeed, Waterton (2011) notes the white-centric discourses which have proliferated in the collective British memory of abolition, such as the statue of Wilberforce at Westminster Abbey and the notion of formerly enslaved black people as grateful and keen to deify their 'white saviour' (Siblon, 2009). Indeed, Gbadamosi (2011) renders an excoriating rebuke to the concept of white largesse in the abolition of slavery that he perceived during the 2007 bicentenary:

'*Throughout it all, it felt as if it was a way for Britain to say* 'We set you free, we brought about the end of a trade that held you captive. Collectively we acted in a moral fashion that went a long way to establish a relative position with regards to you".

(p. 223; see also Agbetu, 2011)

Gbadamosi therein describes the pervasion of a white perspective on discourses of slavery, a discourse which the ISM seeks to overlay with more focus on other factors in the issue of abolition. In particular, the notion of freedom is used as leverage in this argument: is freedom a privilege that man can bestow upon another man, or conversely is it a basic right of every human? Whilst rhetorical in nature, that question relates not only to the mechanisms of chattel slavery, but more latterly to the organised attempts of enslaved people to attain freedom, the precarious life of formerly enslaved people pre- and post-abolition, and the long civil rights campaign which still endures (and still faces suppression) with the Black Lives Matter movement (*Black Lives Matter*, 2016) amongst others. Indeed, the grotesque Ku Klux Klan uniform on display on a mannequin in the gallery provides a particularly stark reminder of power structures that still exist in order to prevent those freedoms – a link which further shows that the TST still has consequences in today's society. By also focussing on the civil rights movement, the ISM attempts to show that freedom, not the act or politics of abolition (Waterton, 2011), is the real concept of ending slavery. Indeed, the slave trade could only be abolished because it existed in the first place (Waterton, 2011).

Whilst not exhaustive, this section has aimed to outline the nature of several discourses presented at the ISM. Although the development of the ISM did not necessarily provide the germination of these perspectives, it has arguably acted as a milestone of

development in a process of national understanding which accelerated in the early 1990s through the first decade of the 21st century and is sure to continue (Waterton, 2011; *Transatlantic Slavery: An Introduction*, 2010; Naidoo, 2001; Seaton, 2001). Indeed, it provides an amalgamation of diverse sources of information and presents them in the context of a touristic product which is commodified for the market; whilst it may still be subject to inherent biases of a Western perspective (Agbetu, 2011), those biases are beyond the scope of this thesis. As such, now that the aims and nature of the institution itself have been discussed within the context of the supply-side, the nature of the visitor experience will now be explored.

7.3: 'People First': Visitor Experience at the International Slavery Museum

The ISM is situated on the third floor of the Merseyside Maritime Museum building at Albert Dock. Visitors can access the museum either directly from the ground floor via the lift, or by exploring the other floors first and then alighting at the top floor. However, at present, all areas share a common entrance foyer; this is a large glass-panelled area that leads to the access routes to the galleries, but also houses, amid views of Albert Dock, a spacious café and a small gift shop for discretionary use by all visitors to the site. They are at opposite ends of the foyer to each other, but neither forms an access route to any part of the gallery space and so visitors are not compelled to enter either the café or the shop. Within the shop, a plethora of gift items are available, mostly branded with Liverpool or UK emblems such as the Union flag, the Liver bird, The Beatles, and other such iconography of mass appeal. The ISM has one small dedicated shelving unit containing educational literature on subjects relating to slavery. The café serves a conventional menu of hot drinks, sandwiches and cakes; more substantial food is offered at the fourth-floor restaurant directly above the ISM.

However, it is key to note that that the ISM is a permanent entity distinct from the other galleries and exhibits on the floors below, and its contents do not directly relate to them; as such, there is no imperative to consume the rest of the building before or after visiting the ISM. Indeed, upon entering the gallery space it is clear that one has entered the ISM. Large visual installations abound within the entrance area, with explanations of the ISM's mission alongside artworks, audio and visual real-life testimonies, and various pieces of preliminary and background information on the main content of the museum. These exist as interesting and insightful sources, and act as an introduction to the three distinct areas within the ISM: 'Life in West Africa', 'Enslavement and the Middle Passage', and 'Legacy'. The suggested route takes the visitor sequentially in that order,

though this is discretionary; geographically, though 'Legacy' must be accessed through 'Enslavement and the Middle Passage', 'Life in West Africa' is adjacent to those two, and so can be visited in isolation. This section will now explore each area in the intended order

7.3.1: Life in West Africa

Key to the portrayal of enslaved people within the ISM is the depiction of their rich and distinct lives prior to capture. They were not ahistorical individuals from a nondescript culture; indeed, the people of West Africa at the onset of the TST were members of a wide spectrum of families, tribes (some of which are still in existence today) and nations with jobs, status, possessions, traditions and freedom. Those concepts are displayed and explained within Life in West Africa in a multimedia approach; there are historic artefacts such as tools, masks and clothing, alongside video footage and photographs of modern-day traditions that can be traced back to the time period around roughly the 16th Century.

The main area within this section is a mock-up of traditional architectural aspects of life in parts of West Africa, such as a home and a workplace, denoted with certain relevant items. Importantly, this area draws attention to the diversity of culture within West Africa. Although the mocked-up architecture shows one specific culture, one key point of this section is to draw attention to the many diverse cultures in areas of West Africa such as the modern-day countries of Burkina Faso, Niger, Ghana and others. In doing so, it lays a foundation for the rest of the ISM. Primarily, it initiates a social perspective by focussing on the lives of specific communities and the reality of life in West Africa. As a consequence, it attempts to remove racist Western discourses which portray Africans as culturally homogeneous, ahistorical or indeed primitive, which was a key racist rationale for slave owners.

Plate 10: Life in West Africa area

7.3.2: Enslavement and the Middle Passage

Shackled together in the bowels of a vast ship, in deeply unsanitary conditions and probably with little idea of the further horrors awaiting them at their destination, hundreds of men, women and children are transported across the Atlantic Ocean to locations such as Brazil, the UK, Caribbean colonies, and European countries. This section of the ISM is broad in its scope; the reality of enslaved life is discussed and explained, but so too is the treacherous sea journey known as the Middle Passage (Seaton, 2001). It is at this point that the role of the UK, and specifically Liverpool, enters the narrative; various exhibits note the processes by which local firms captured, bought and enslaved African people for profit. As shown previously in Figure 52, this section can be shown to be the 'darkest' of the three permanent areas at the ISM. A particularly vivid video re-enactment of enslaved people aboard a ship luridly demonstrates the horror and atrocity of that journey, which showcases the multimedia approach at the ISM, alongside a variety of interactive display points, historical documents and artefacts, dioramas, testimonies and artwork. Furthermore, the role of slave rebellions in the abolition of slavery is discussed in line with the aforementioned discourse on 'whitewashing' of abolition, as are other aspects of the abolition movement.
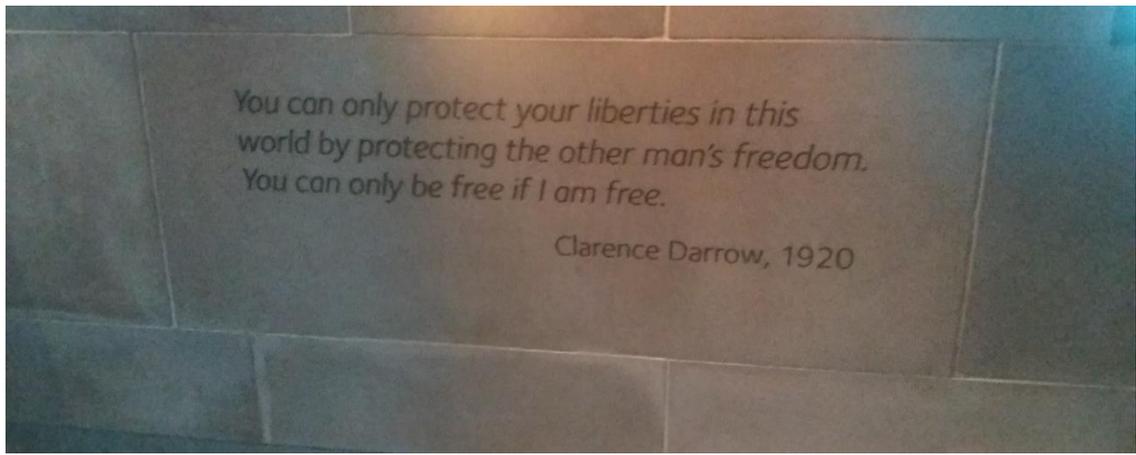
Plate 11: Engraved Clarence Darrow quotation at the ISM

However, one key aspect of this part of the ISM – indeed part of the museum's overall ethos – is the indelible link between the slave trade and the success of Liverpool as an economic and commercial powerhouse. The visitor is given clear evidence about that relationship, clearly noting that the UK was a central part of the TST and that Liverpool was its hub. This forms part of a broader social history discourse in which enslaved people are the focus so that the true atrocity of the TST can be appreciated from a human perspective. The layout is relatively open-ended in a spacious environment, with no specific route or chronology. Rather, this section attempts to immerse the visitor in the horror of slavery by focussing on its ongoing reality, rather than devotion to time-lines.

7.3.3: Legacy

The final section of the museum mostly leaves the TST behind, and progresses to examine the time period in which major countries began to abolish slavery up until the present day. Acting as a means to examine the legacy of the TST, it includes exploration of themes such as civil rights, freedom, racism and identity. The section is a non-linear environment in which to consume the resources, offering insight into the legacy of slavery; for example, one large installation is a time-line tracking significant milestones in the abolition of slavery and key events in its aftermath.

The multimedia approach of the preceding sections continues, with a variety of audio excerpts, captioned photographs, artefacts, photo portraits and video footage available to engage the visitor. Another particularly striking inclusion is a large 'photo-tapestry' featuring dozens of prominent members of the African Diaspora, from politicians and civil rights leaders to sportspeople, musicians, artists, and other names of

renown. This is ostensibly included to highlight their achievements in the face of the negative legacies which the TST left. Indeed, the picture is not entirely positive, as many past and current civil rights issues post-abolition are noted. Essentially, this section attempts to mediate our understanding of freedom from the starting point of institutionalised and legal slavery in the major world economies. By linking current issues to the TST, the museum shows that those issues form a lineage back to the slave trade. However, there is also the suggestion, by virtue of the preceding sections of the museum, that the far more positive and important lineage is that of real people with real lives, real cultures, real achievements and the hope of positive change.

Plate 12: Tiled wall display in 'Legacy'

7.3.4: Education at the ISM

In conjunction with the gallery space, the ISM also offers an education programme for all school age groups. By tailoring the materials to each age group, the programme attempts to develop distinct messages in a more educational environment, rather than the

touristic environment of the museum itself. By incorporating the ISM into school curricula, there is also an intention to give the issues an integral role within the education of children. The ISM has educational facilities, such as the Anthony Walker suite, named after a Liverpool teenager murdered in a racially motivated attack, which acknowledges the vital role of education regarding the legacy of the TST. The educational programme is managerially distinct to the curatorial approach of the gallery, though they run in tandem in order to convey an identical discourse with complementary characteristics. These include sessions on everyday life in West Africa, engagement through African music and art for lower Key Stages, before progressing to concepts of slavery, freedom, history and legacy (*International Slavery Museum*, 2016).

7.4: International Slavery Museum Findings: Identifying Themes

Case Study Two was analysed in the same manner as Case Study One. The outcome of those analyses was a set of five distinct themes, which shall be explained in turn within this section towards addressing the research question and objectives, also drawing upon the findings of the literature review in order to produce a set of outcomes. Figure 53 summaries the emergent themes to be explored in sequence within this section; Figure 54 details interviewee information.

	Research Question	Theme Number	Theme Title
Case Study Two: International Slavery Museum	1	1	Novelty of Place
	2	2	Framing
	2	3	Separation of Elements
	2	4	Expansion of Experience
	3	5	Authenticity Through Commodification

Figure 53: Emergent Themes for Lancaster Castle

Interview	Name	Position	Code
C	Stephen Carl-Lokko	Curator	SCL
D	Julia Bryan	Education Manager, NML	JB

Figure 54: Case Study Two interview respondents

7.4.1: Theme A: Novelty of Place

Dark tourism has been widely noted to draw back the curtain imposed by the sequestration of death which pushes the contemplation of death or atrocity further from our day-to-day thoughts. Indeed, the literature review contains discussion of how this can operate in relation to the desire of tourists to engage in novelty-seeking behaviour, a desire which can also be observed in visitors to the ISM. As a site of dark tourism, but also one which sits within the wider Maritime Museum, it is unlike other sites of dark tourism which stand alone. As this theme shows, the desequestration of death acts as a stimulant of demand, and also dictates the approach to the visitor experience from both supply and demand perspectives. In essence, it bestows the ISM with a novel quality: the novelty of place, valorising the ISM as a heterotopia in which themes such as atrocity and suffering can be discussed.

Sub-theme A1: Desequestration of death as novelty

There exists a clear demand to encounter the dark themes of the ISM, showing that the notion of atrocity is interesting to visitors, a demand which is spread across a majority of individual motivations as described by respondents to the questionnaire (Q1). All but one of those motivations had a majority of respondents stating that the subject matter of the ISM made them '*more interested*' in visiting the ISM (as shown below in Figure 55).
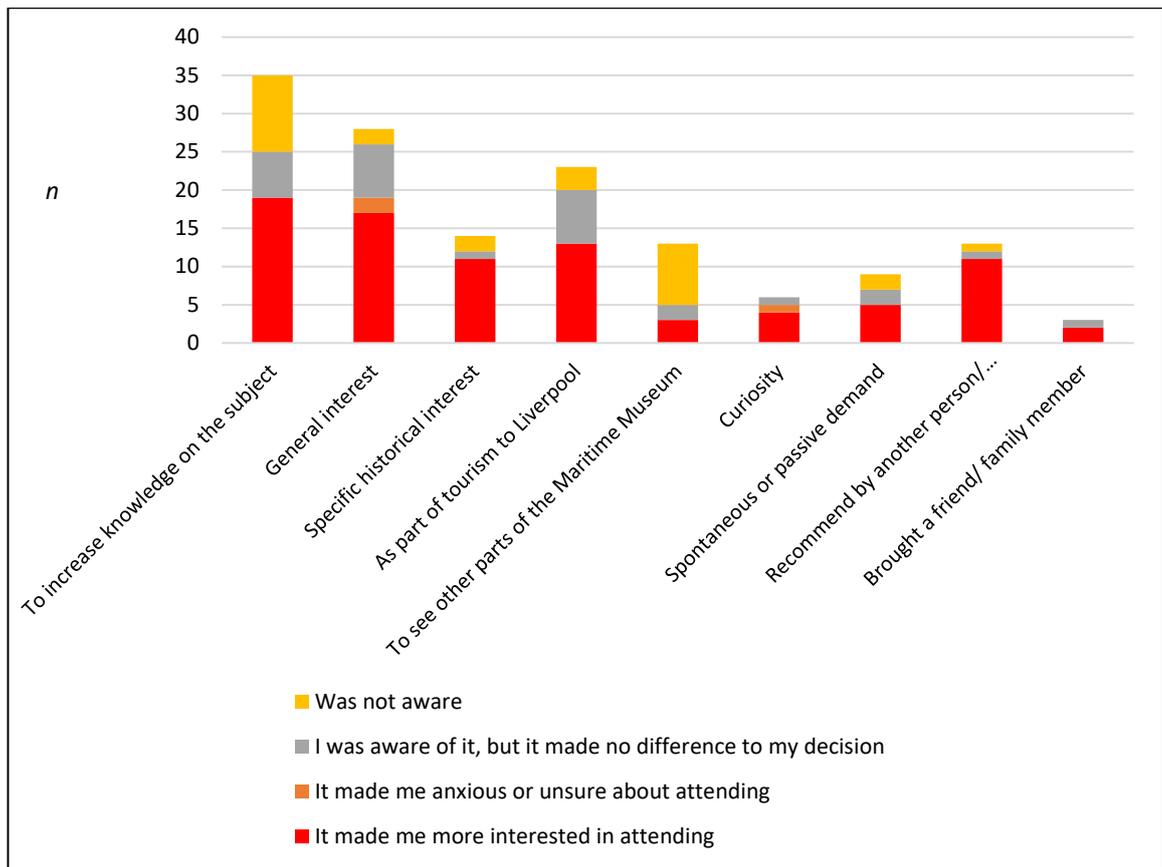
Figure 55: Bivariate analysis: Correlation of the effect of the subject matter on the decision to visit the ISM (n) (Q2) and the main reason for visiting the ISM (Q1)

Indeed, 50% of respondents selected either 4 or 5 on the Likert scale denoting how much they thought about mortality compared to normal life (Q5). However, whilst that desequestration of death is in itself novel compared to thoughts in normal life, only 2 respondents described it specifically as '*novel*'. This suggests that visitors to the ISM do not generally see that engagement with death as novel, but, as stated, by virtue of the increased thoughts of mortality compared to the prevalence of the sequestration of death, that encounter may nonetheless be labelled as novel. However, though novel, a clearer way to affirm that novelty is by noting the reactions to thoughts of mortality. Interestingly, a comparable number of respondents – 57 to 55 – described them respectively as '*beneficial*' and '*upsetting*' (Q5a), two seemingly opposite feelings. This suggests that, in line with the novelty provided by the desequestration of death, visitors respond to those stimuli in different ways. This is reflective of themes covered in the literature review in the context of dark tourism, such as sensitivity (Seaton, 2009), concepts of taste (Sturken, 2007) and, more generally, the wide variety of motivations and reactions to the concepts of death (Raine, 2013; Stone, 2006; Lennon & Foley, 2000).

215

The commodification of the ISM engenders the aforementioned responses by facilitating the desequestration of death, as can be shown in the supply-side interviews. JB notes that visitor behaviour in ISM-run education sessions can vary widely in response to artefacts or other stimuli (interview D, Q4). Indeed, JB delineates that divergence by preferring the term 'engagement' to the term 'appeal' used in the interview question. Her terminology suggests a more profound means of participation in and access to the ISM because of the polarising effect that the encounters with mortality and atrocity can have. Therefore, the commodification process – the medium through which the information is presented to visitors – can be seen to reflect that sense of engagement rather than appeal by for example, offering a programme of events which, as noted by SCL (interview C, from line 280), offer a point of access for visitors in a constantly updating environment. This reflects the example of the Arlington facility as discussed in the literature review; just as the visitor is explicitly guided through that site by semiotics and explicit rules, the visitor to the ISM, via commodification, is given a set of means with which to engage with the themes.

Consider, to that end, the highest responses to Q3 regarding the appeal of learning about atrocity at the ISM. As shown below in Figure 56, all of the responses to Q3 had a majority, in bivariate analysis, of a response of 4 or 5 on the Likert scale in Q4 on the likelihood of telling other about their visit.
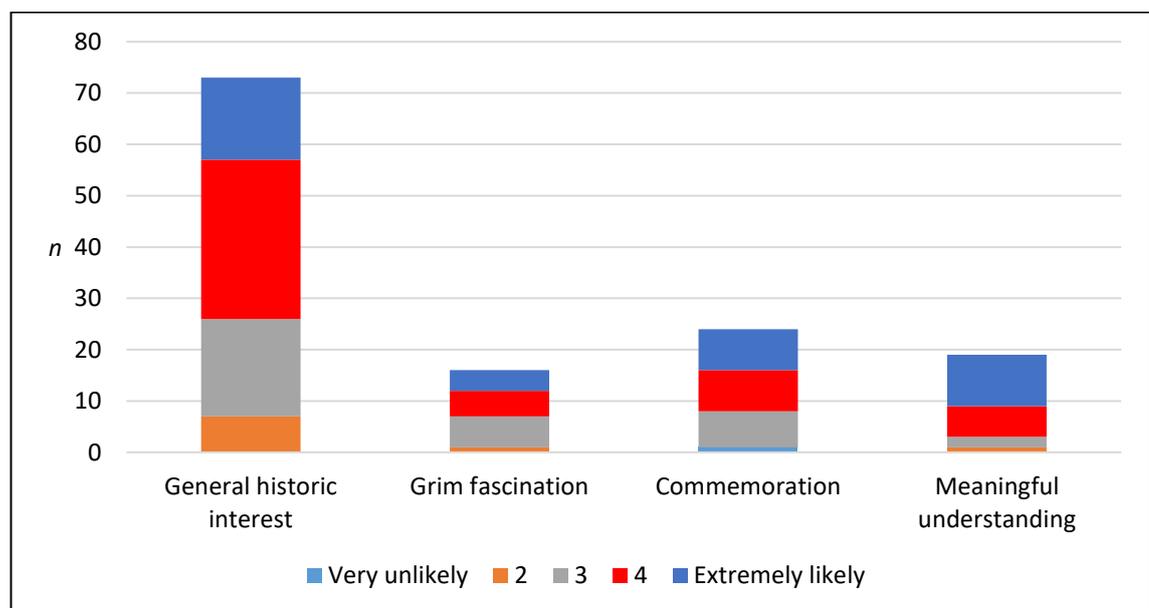
Figure 56: Bivariate analysis: Correlation of likelihood of telling others about the visit (*n*) (Q4) and the suggested appeal of learning about atrocity (Q3)

This suggests that, regardless of what the respondent believes the appeal of dark tourism to be, they are likely to have considerably more thoughts regarding mortality than in normal life, thus experiencing the desequestration of death, which is itself novel. Indeed, 48.7% of respondents believe that the main reason for engagement in dark tourism is for '*general historic interest*', a response consistent across all personal motivations in Q1. As the questionnaire was completed after the visitors had experienced the museum, this correlation points towards the way in which the experience is commodified and thus alters visitor understanding; despite the novelty of the desequestration of death, the experience is presented (and, as shown, generally perceived) as an historic social document, rather than an overtly novel experience. That approach is noted by SCL:

'*...there was previously a Transatlantic Slavery Gallery on this site from 1994… so the concept of what we're doing here isn't new, it's building on that history, those strides that the TSG made… one thing that's really carried on from there in terms of the approach is that it's a social history museum, so it's about people, the focus is peopl*e',

[Interview C, from line 29]

By presenting the desequestration of death – a novel process – in that more dispassionate or prescribed environment, the supply-side appear to engender the presence of heterotopia, which we may term the novelty of place as discussed in the literature (Stone, 2013; Hetherington, 1997; Foucault, 1967).

Consider the relationship between the appeal of the subject matter and the reaction of visitors to the desequestration of death. 42.7% of those who were motivated by a proactive interest in the subject matter (Q2) described the thoughts of mortality as '*beneficial*' (higher than average, as shown below in Figure 57), suggesting that the visitors may have sought out the ISM in order to engage in those thoughts in a socially-sanctioned or safe space. Indeed, that response suggests that the 'compartmentalisation' of ontological insecurity (Giddens, 1991) within the heterotopia is engendered by the commodification of space at the ISM. As such, the visitor experience is altered by heterotopic consumption within a novel place, towards the notion of personal 'reconciliation' or 'compensation' (see Chapter Three) which may not be forthcoming in an ontologically insecure environment.
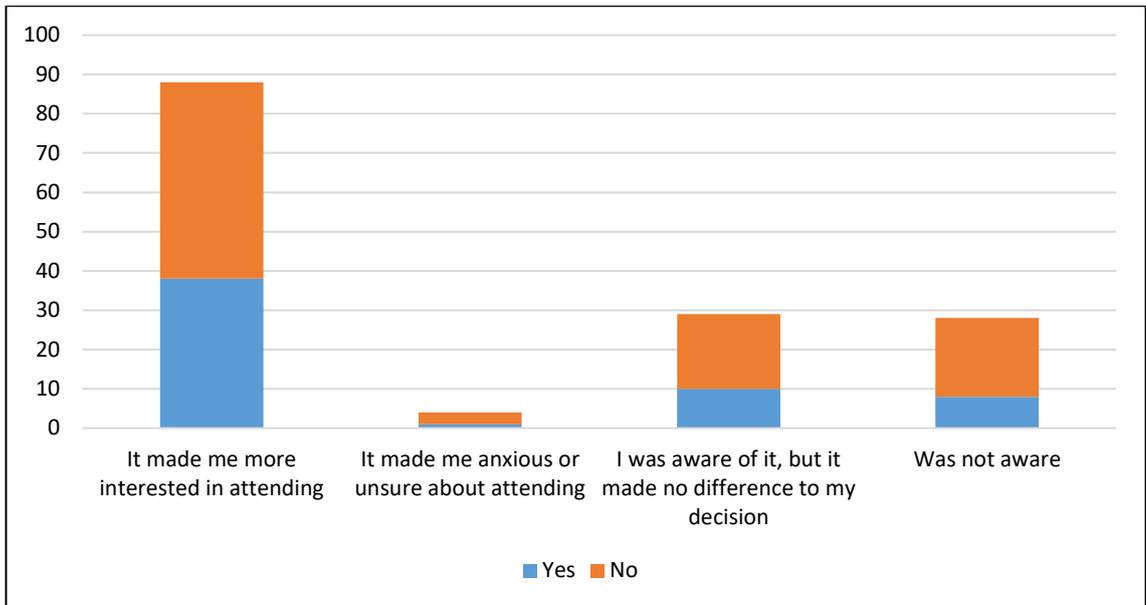
Figure 57: Bivariate analysis: Correlation between '[if you thought] *about your own mortality more than you would usually during your day-to-day life… did you find it to be beneficial?'* **(***n***) (Q5) and '***Did the subject matter of the ISM affect your decision to visit the museum?'* (Q2)**

Indeed, those who see the main reason for engagement as '*meaningful understanding*' or to '*learn from the past*' were also more likely to select '*beneficial*' as a description of the thoughts of mortality, as shown in Figure 58.
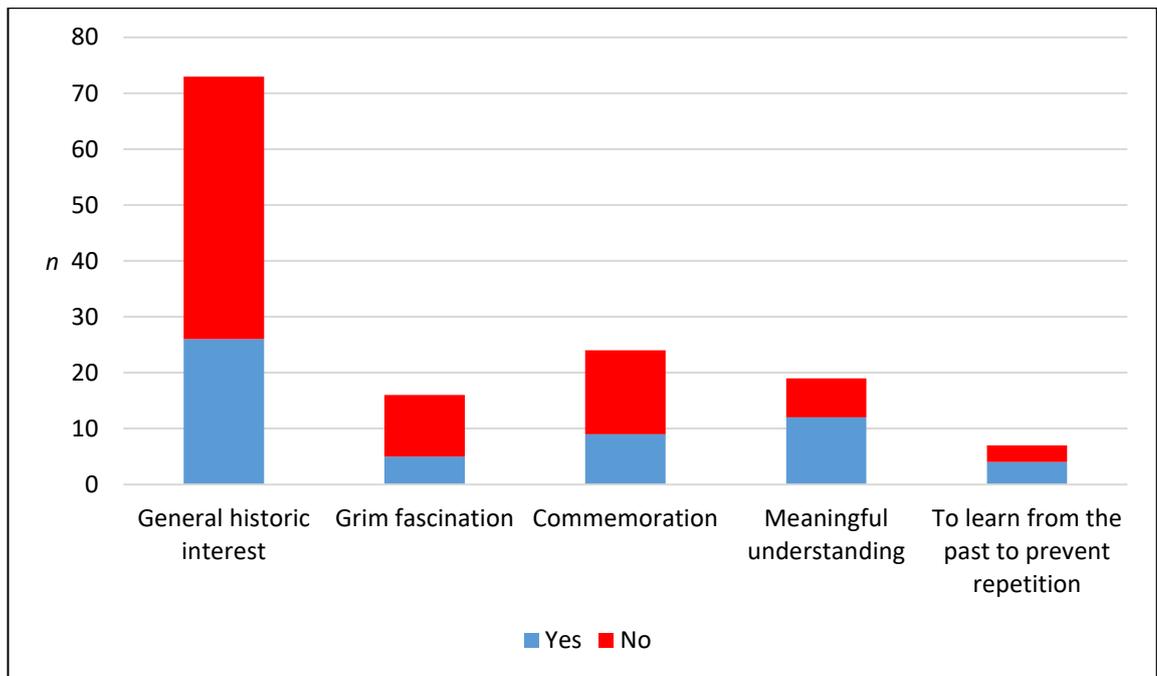
Figure 58: Bivariate analysis: Correlation between '[if you thought] *about your own mortality more than you would usually during your day-to-day life… did you find it to be beneficial?'* **(*n*) (Q5) and '***What do you think is the appeal of learning about the atrocity of slavery?'* **(Q3)**

That heterotopic nature is also identified by SCL. He notes that the ISM offers visitors a safe environment in which to contemplate issues such as oppression, slavery and death by '*engaging people without trying to make people feel guilty*' (interview C, line 448). Furthermore, JB suggests that the ISM may offer a more appropriate and beneficial approach than other media, from which, she states, children may become desensitised to violence or suffering, or see slavery as an unreal concept (interview D, Q5). By offering a constructive, sensitive, but also authoritative environment, in which those concepts may be explored, the ISM engenders a 'heterotopia of crisis and deviation' (Stone, 2013) in which a complex convergence of issues may be contemplated outside of normal societal norms (i.e. the norm of the sequestration of death). This not only serves to address the organisational goals towards the representation of slavery, but also addresses the desires of visitors who responded positively to the heterotopic environment to engage with dark concepts. Indeed, the relatively high response of '4' or '5' on thoughts of mortality (Q5) consistently across all motivations in Q1 is indicative of the way in which the spectrum of visitors engages with the ISM. This engagement is enabled, as stated, by the supply-side through the commodification of space, and thus it affects the

experience by providing a novelty of place in which otherwise sequestered issues can be constructively approached in an ontologically secure manner. However, as discussed in the literature review, the exact nature of the ISM as a heterotopia may be difficult to identify due to the variety of users; indeed, there is evidence to suggest that some visitors view the atrocity of slavery as voyeurism.

Sub-theme A2: Voyeurism

Although the previous sub-theme points towards an environment that facilitates meaningful engagement with mortality, the novelty of place can also facilitate a voyeuristic approach. Indeed, SCL and JB both concede that, whist the ISM is designed as an educational service, certain visitors are drawn to observe the dark concepts in a shallower manner (interview C, line 19; interview D, Q2). JB seeks to differentiate the ISM from sites which actively solicit that voyeurism (interview D, Q1 & Q2), and states that the museum attempts to generally avoid sensationalism. However, the survey data shows that there is a notable level of voyeuristic consumption. 10.7% of respondents state that that the appeal of dark tourism lies in a '*grim fascination*' (Q3), a point which suggests that the themes of atrocity and suffering are a spectacle evoking a furtive or forbidden interest rather than the meaningful desire to engage (also interview C, line 11; interview D, Q1). As noted in the literature review, the sequestration of death may lead to unsatisfactory media representations of death (Stone, 2009a; Willmott, 2000), such as lurid sensationalism towards Significant Other Death (Kyllonen, 2010; North & Sheridan, 2010). As such, therefore, individuals who consume such media may be more disposed towards a less meaningful engagement with the concepts of atrocity, and view them voyeuristically which, despite the intention of the supply-side, is nonetheless facilitated by commodification through the novelty of place. Indeed, those who stated '*curiosity*' as the appeal of dark tourism (Q3) were less likely to tell others about their experience – only 16.7% answered '4' or '5' on the Likert scale (Q4), compared to a mean of 75.15% across all other responses, as shown below in Figure 59. Therefore, that approach is arguably less worthy of esteem than other motivations; to that end, conspicuous compassion can be seen as a way of expressing voyeuristic engagement.
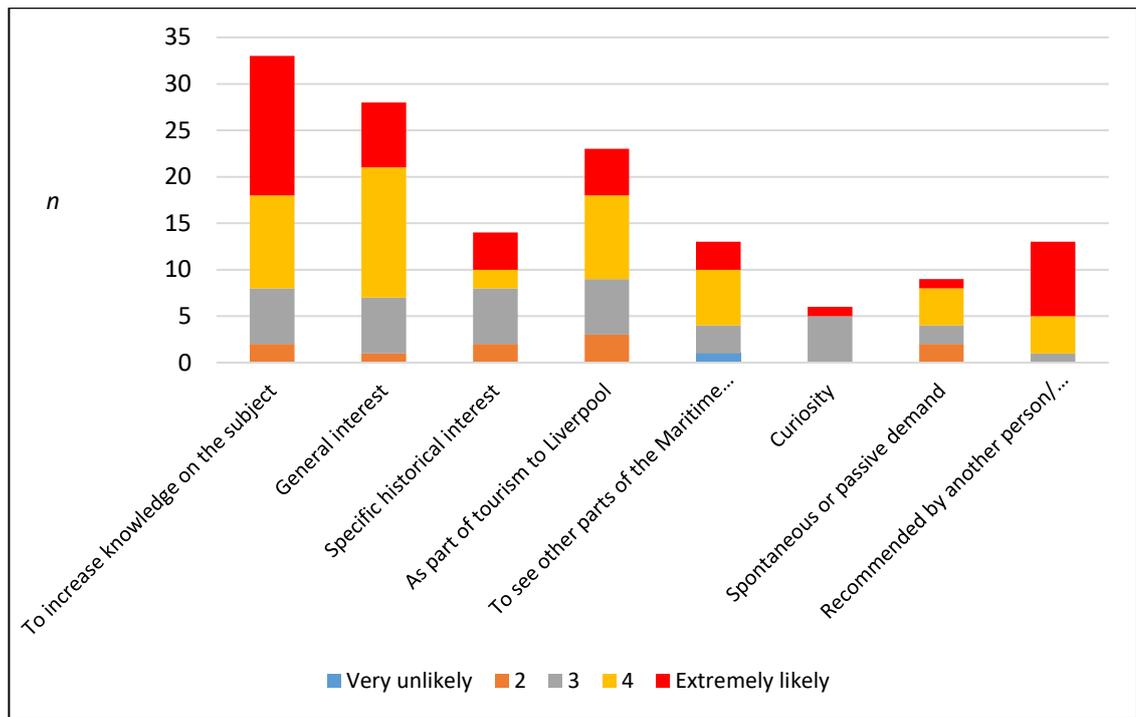
Figure 59: Bivariate analysis: Correlation of the likelihood of telling others about the experience (*n*) (Q4) and the main reason for visiting the ISM (Q1)

Sub-theme A3: Conspicuous Compassion

Novelty can be harnessed in order to garner esteem from others through conspicuous compassion as noted in the literature review (West, 2004). Though the supply-side managers did not alight on that potential, visitor data shows that it may indeed act as a facet of experience at the ISM either as a real motivator or as a welcome by-product of the experience. This can be observed in the likelihood of visitors to tell others about their experience; 66.7% of respondents selected '4' or '5' on the Likert scale denoting the likelihood of telling friends and family about their experience (Q4), a trend which remains constant across all but two of the 10 individual motivations. Those for whom the subject matter increased interest in visiting the ISM were most likely to select '5' on the scale, which suggests that the eagerness to engage with the themes of atrocity provided a high likelihood of esteem from others (shown below in Figure 60). This also further suggests that those who were either ambivalent or anxious about attending were less pre-occupied with telling others as they did not consider it as necessarily esteem-worthy themselves before visiting. Indeed, as stated previously, those who attended out of curiosity were less likely to tell others about their visit, which suggests that curiosity is in itself an unsatisfactory approach to atrocity not in keeping with the way in which the

221

ISM is presented, and so those visitors motivated in that way may not therefore seek esteem.
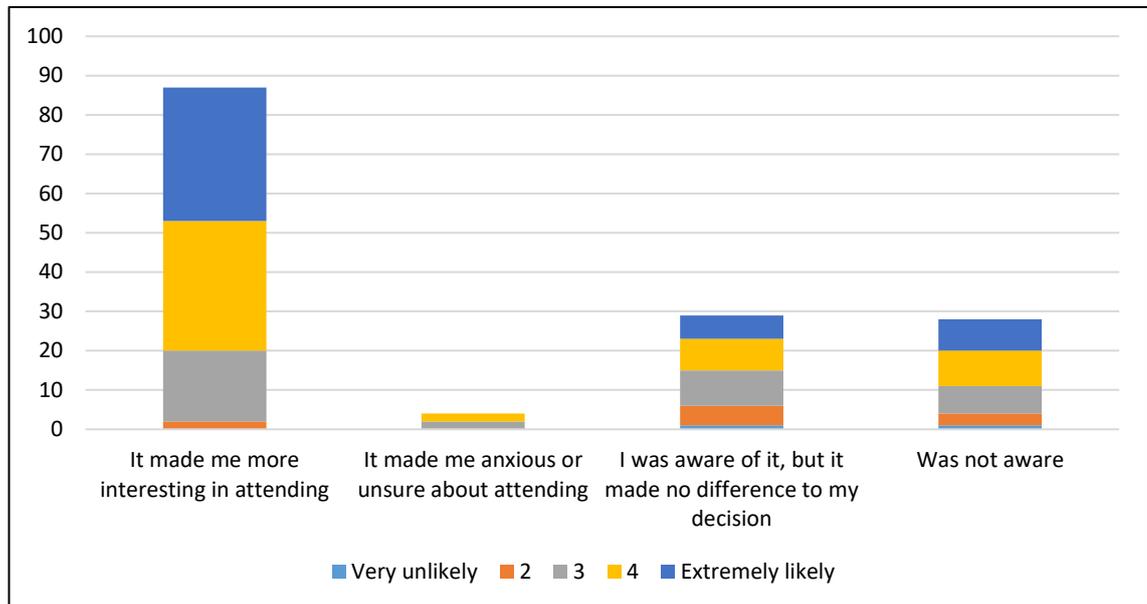
Figure 60: Bivariate analysis: Correlation of the likelihood of telling others about the experience (*n*) (Q4) and the effect of the subject matter on the decision to visit the ISM (Q2)

It was suggested in the literature review that public encounters with death are inherently commodified and so the confines in which one does so are tightly set. Indeed, when one considers the organisational mission of the ISM, the potential for public profile through 'word-of-mouth' recommendation is vital to its ongoing role as a centre of social history and education. As such, by commodifying the experience within the specific heterotopic environment, the ISM allows meaningful encounters with atrocity which may lead visitors to tell others about their experience. Thus, whilst the relationship between '*curiosity*' (a potentially shallower form of engagement) and telling others about one's experience is not shown in the data, there is a positive correlation between thoughts of mortality and the likelihood of telling others about the experience (as shown below in Figure 61). This suggests that, because the desequestration of death is novel to the visitor, it will be seen as such by others which leads to the potential for esteem more than a shallow or perhaps underdeveloped sense of voyeurism. If so, it can therefore be seen as an outcome of the novelty of place, because the ISM, as a heterotopia, has facilitated that engagement with atrocity, suffering and death. This can also be seen as related to curatorial strategy; SCL notes that the ISM's social history perspective is different to

previous UK discourses on slavery (interview C, from line 66), and JB states that the museum's approach to atrocity is different to more lurid sites of 'vile history' (interview D, Q1). These assertions suggest that visiting the ISM is more likely to garner esteem as the focus is on human history in a social and up-to-date context. This is only made possible, however, by a desequestered death within the novelty of place.
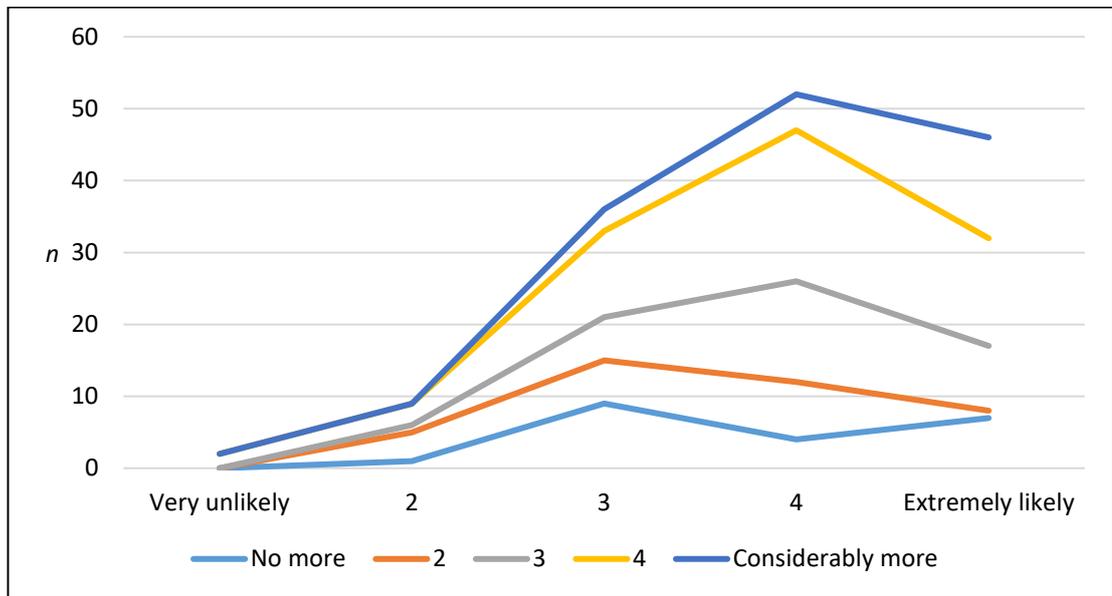
Figure 61: Bivariate analysis: Correlation of level of thoughts about mortality at the ISM compared to day-to-day life (n) (Q5) and the likelihood of telling others about the experience (Q4)

Mapping Theme A: Novelty of Place

As discussed within this sub-theme, the desequestration of death, and thus the heterotopic nature of the site, form a central part of the ISM visitor experience and supply, and contribute directly to the 'novelty of place'. However, within that, the two potential visitor motivations as identified in this section form part of the conceptualisation of the novelty of place, though both are based on individual motivation and thus are not applicable to all visitors. As such, they may or may not contribute to the novelty of the place, as denoted in Figure 62, depending on the visitor in line with the data presented in this section.
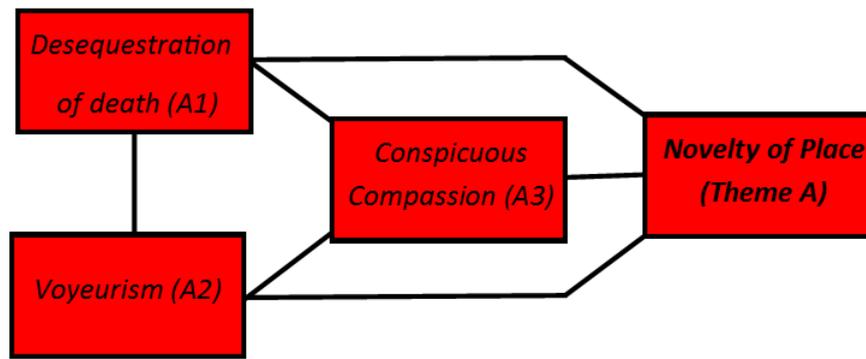
Figure 62: Mapping Theme A, International Slavery Museum

7.4.2: Theme B: Framing

As shown in the literature review, commodification is a well-established part of tourism (Boorstin, 1987). Accepting that, this thesis is concerned with its effect within the context of dark tourism. The findings suggest, essentially, that rather than changing the nature of the experience, the effect of commodification is the provision of a set of semiotic cues in which the tourist consumes the given experience. As will be shown within this theme, these cues can be said to therefore 'frame' the experience; perhaps this is due to the established touristic practices (as noted previously) which are seen as common facets of experience and thus are only of circumstantial relation to the core experience – the exploration of morality and mortality which is dark tourism. Firstly, the effect of curatorial strategy will be discussed.

Sub-theme B1: Commodification frames experience within organisational aims

Commodification is a process necessarily enacted by the supply-side as providers of the visitor experience. With that in mind, the research points towards commodification as a tool by which experience is framed within the aims of the organisation. Firstly, consider the curatorial perspective of the gallery, which self-evidently will affect the presentation and interpretation of the otherwise inert historical data. SCL states that the ISM specifically takes a '*social history*' perspective (interview C, line 33) of that history in an attempt to allow the visitor to hear the '*voices of the enslaved*' (interview C, line 49) and oppose previous discourses, which immediately frames the experience within that arena. As the visitor may still discern an alternative perspective based on personal bias or prior knowledge, the supply-side perspective can be described as a frame rather than an enforced or mandatory ontology for consuming the history. Indeed, 59.3% of visitors stated that the ISM altered their understanding of slavery and its legacy (Q19), with only

15 respondents of 60 answering 'no' stating that the *'perspective is the same as other museums/ media'*. This shows that, whilst a majority remain within the prescribed frame enacted by commodification, a small minority (10% of the overall sample) saw it as a discretionary perspective from which they diverged. Thus, it can be seen as a frame – a semiotic construct rather than a fundamental reality which changes the experience at heart. Further to that notion, JB notes the use of behavioural cues within the education programme which frame the experience as serious or meaningful (interview D, Q3), which can of course be ignored by the visitor. This reflects the concept of sensitivity as explored in the literature review; the complex nature of dark tourism (Rátz, 2006) can lead to misunderstanding of certain cues within the frame, just as the *Selfies at Serious Places* (2013) show ignorance, disdain or contempt towards the sites in question. As such, that notion of sensitivity, though incorporated into the frame, is by nature subject to individual interpretation.

Indeed, JB also notes the preference of NML to describe the museum's strategy as a 'mission', which provides real use and value to society, presumably not only due to the content of the museum but also by virtue of its nationally-funded status. This in itself points towards a frame of social value alongside its nature as a document of social history, a point echoed by SCL, who notes the continued effects of slavery on modern society (interview C, line 161). This sense of social value as a frame is reflected to some degree in visitor perceptions of the role of free admission in the consumption of the ISM; 27.3% of respondents stated that the free admission attaches more significance to the experience (Q8), which suggests that the way in which the supply-side presents the site does indeed provide a frame through which to consume the content – in this instance that of a significant and valuable public asset. Though the role of free admission is debated (Cortell Vandersypen, 2012; Cash, 2008; Le Gall-Ely *et al.*, 2008), it can be noted that it alters visitor perception in line with the concept of the social value of knowledge (Le Gall-Ely *et al.,*2008). That frame of social value clearly permeates into visitor responses and suggests that the managerial 'mission' manifests with the commodification of the ISM, thereby leading visitors to view the museum in a certain manner.

The use of the occasional event programme at the ISM also denotes a particular semiotic frame. Both interviewees noted the use of events not only as a means of attracting visitors, but also for the intangible qualities that frame the museum in a number of ways. For example, SCL stated that marking International Human Rights Day at the ISM bestows the institution with importance and value by '*enriching that experience*' (interview C, line 280), suggesting that by virtue of such events the ISM is seen as more

important and valuable than it would otherwise. Indeed, JB states that there is a level of external expectation that certain dates will be marked with events at the ISM (interview D, Q12). That response gives a glimpse of the relationship which perpetuates the frame of social value, and SCL further notes that those events offer a real draw to the museum:

'…I think it would make us stale and we wouldn't be able to attract or continually attract those main audiences that do come to the museum on a regular basis, whether that's families and children, whether it be school groups…'

[Interview C, line 299].

As such, both responses suggest that the frame itself is one which is seen as an appropriate and useful context in which to contemplate the themes of atrocity. This links to the well-accepted role of anniversaries within dark tourism (Dann & Seaton, 2001; Lennon & Foley, 2000), with an expectation from society that institutions will mark certain milestones. Indeed, by marking and thereby legitimising certain events, the ISM perpetuates – arguably, as an authoritative institution, dictates – a frame in which the concept of slavery is approached and marked appropriately.

Sub-theme B2: Appropriate Frames for Atrocity

As noted throughout this thesis, dark tourism is subject to a range of ethical considerations unlike other forms of tourism. Sensitivity, or an awareness of what is appropriate, is a key consideration for the supply-side, a consideration which, using the logic of the previous sub-theme, is reflected in how the experience is commodified. JB emphasises the importance of sensitivity as a regulator of balance to avoid sensationalism on one hand and 'sanitising' the reality of slavery on the other (interview D, Q1), an approach which she feels differs from many other sites of dark tourism across Europe (interview D, Q2). SCL further notes that the ISM seeks to avoid facilitating feelings of guilt (interview C, line 359) as that is deemed as inappropriate and not an approach which is likely to engage visitors. That issue of sensitivity, then, is a clear managerial strategy, and so it can be seen as a frame in which the experience is presented. This can be further demonstrated when one considers the role of semiotics as discussed in the literature review; whilst Stone (2010) notes the positive effects which managerial semiotics can have on visitor perceptions, Tang (2014) suggests that prior knowledge is key to a successful engagement with the intricacies of a sensitive subject. Therefore, by attempting to develop new discourses, the ISM creates a frame in which prior common knowledge –

for example, the macro-mechanics of the slave trade, the injustice of racism – can be developed into a deeper understanding by way of the context of social history, an approach which is facilitated by commodification. The role of semiotics is also reflected in the survey data regarding free admission and overall perceptions of appropriateness.
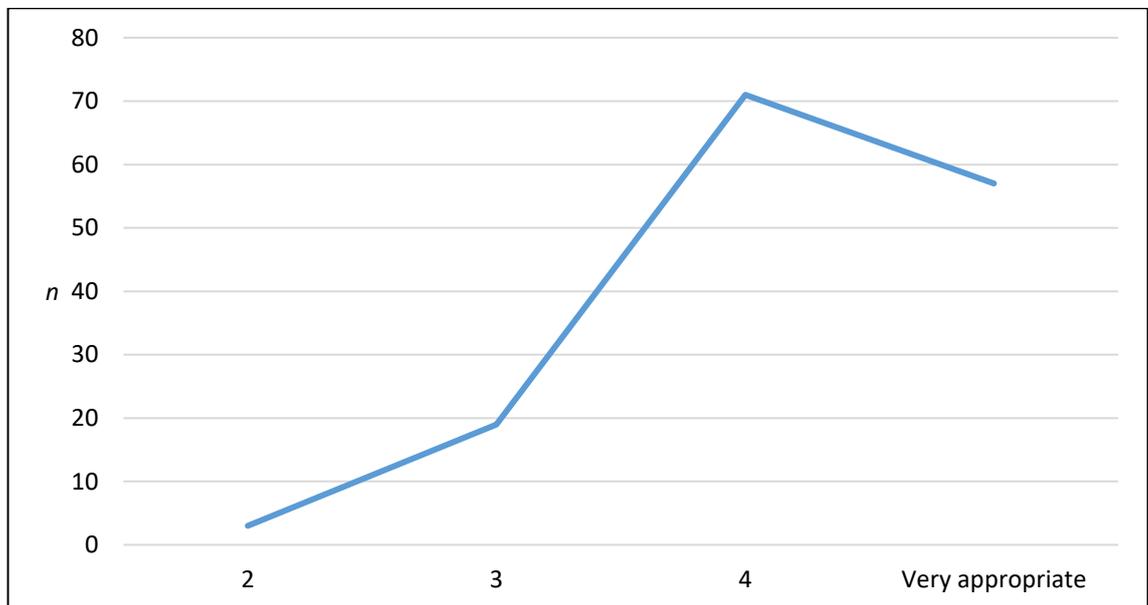
Figure 63: Q13: 'From 1-5, how would you describe the ISM's approach to the subject of slavery?'

38% of respondents described the ISM's approach as the maximum 'very appropriate' value of 5 on the Likert scale (Q13), with a mode of 4 at 47.3% (as shown above in Figure 63). This shows that the vast majority of respondents – 128 of 150 – believe it is at the higher end of the scale. Indeed, with such a large majority there is no noticeable variation across other bivariate analyses. Clearly, the way in which the information is framed (i.e. that of a social history and within Britain's involvement) is seen as appropriate by most respondents (zero respondents selected '1' on the scale). Crucial to note, however, is the question's focus on the ISM's *approach to slavery* rather than the overall experience. Though the majority describe the commodification of information as appropriate, further aspects of experience can be examined in order to paint a richer picture of the existence of this frame.

Admission to the site is free of charge. Indeed, SCL stated that an admission charge at the ISM would introduce '*a barrier to certain types of people*' (interview C, line 203), as noted in the literature review (Cash, 2008; Le Gall-Ely *et al.*, 2008). To that end,

an overwhelming majority of 92% respondents stated that free admission to the ISM is appropriate (Q7), with the most common reason for that view being to increase visitor numbers (48%), with a notable one-sixth (16.7%) basing that view on the nature of the subject matter, as shown below in Figure 64. Furthermore, 7.3% believe it to be appropriate because of the ISM's educational value, which relates to the social role as explored in B1.
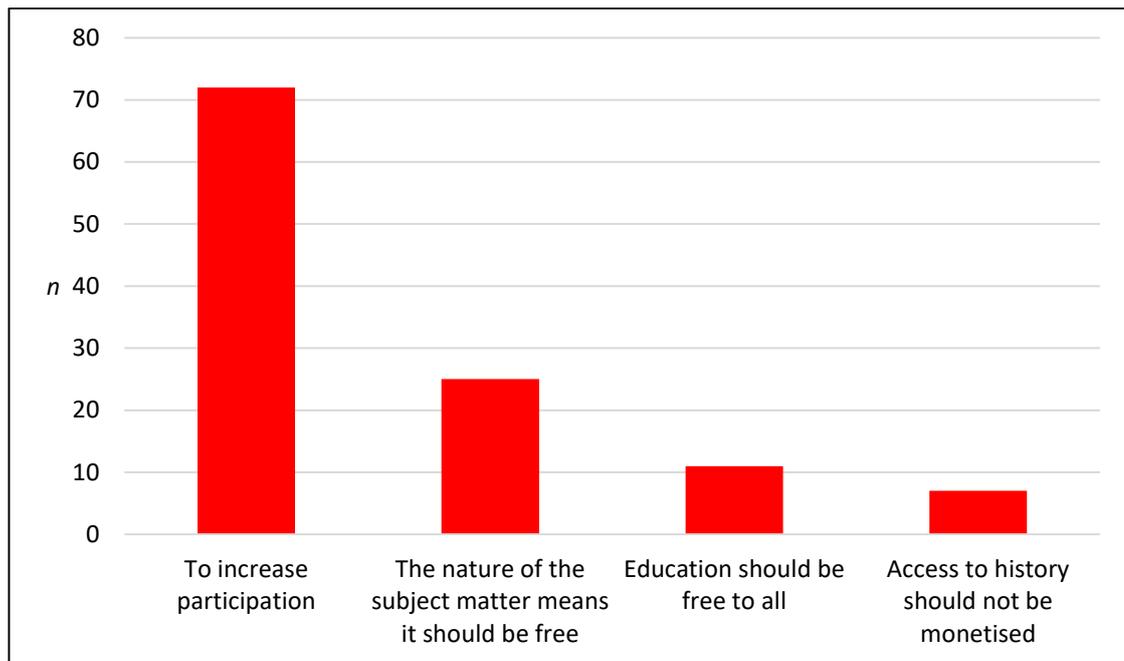
Figure 64: Q7a: 'Why [do you think it is appropriate that admission to ISM is free]?'

However, the views on free admission do not fundamentally change the experience; indeed, 61.3% of respondents stated that free admission had *'no effect'* on their experience. Whilst 27.3% stated that it adds *'more significance'*, it can be said that 'significance' is a subjective view that does not change the content of the museum but, as such, the fee acts to frame the experience. The free admission has led the visitor towards that view of significance, providing a frame through which the visitor perceives (or does not perceive) intangible qualities. Indeed, that notion of being led by semiotics has been explored in the literature review; variously, MacCannell's (1976) layers of visible or invisible 'back' and 'front' areas, the overt 'commercialization of culture' (Getz, 1998), and the bias of tourists towards 'pseudo-events' (Boorstin, 1987) show that there is already precedent for describing tourists as being led by semiotics and, as shown herein, this is arguably the case in dark tourism. Such focussing of the visitor mind is further demonstrated by the other symptoms of commodification within the ISM.

228

<u>Sub-theme B3: Symptoms of Commodification as a Frame</u>

The previous sub-theme showed evidence that free admission and ethical sensitivity frame the experience in line with the supply-side aims. However, the areas away from the main gallery also provide findings to show that commodification frames the experience. Rather than fundamentally changing the nature of the experience, it can be seen that the café and shop merely provide semiotic cues signifying the modern tourism experience – the 'lens' of commodification (Sather-Wagstaff, 2011) via which its symptoms are expected and accepted. JB notes that, whilst from a supply-side perspective they provide income to sustain the museum, their role in the visitor experience is that they denote a context – i.e. a frame – which is accessible (interview D, Q11 & Q13) and, by extension, welcoming and familiar to visitors. This is also stated by SCL, describing their 'general' use such as facilitating interest from potential visitors (interview C, from line 313). These comments suggest a commodified framework in which the café and shop provide a conventional and appropriate touristic context. The servicescape, it must be borne in mind, is a communal area for the Maritime Museum; indeed, as Theme C shows, that separation is key to its commodification. However, for now consider that the design of the servicescape has been shown to be a key facet of how the visitor engages in an experience (Cooper & Hall, 2013; Dong & Siu, 2013; Kim & Moon, 2009; Bitner, 1992) because, as discussed in the literature review, the service that the tourist receives is core to their interpretation of the site (Frochot, 2001; Swarbrooke, 1995). Thus, the ISM is presented within an accessible service environment, which therefore frames the museum as offering a positive and engaging experience with good content and service (Wanhill, 2003a). Furthermore, the effect of the interactive elements within the gallery can be seen to be mostly beneficial, as shown below in Figure 65.
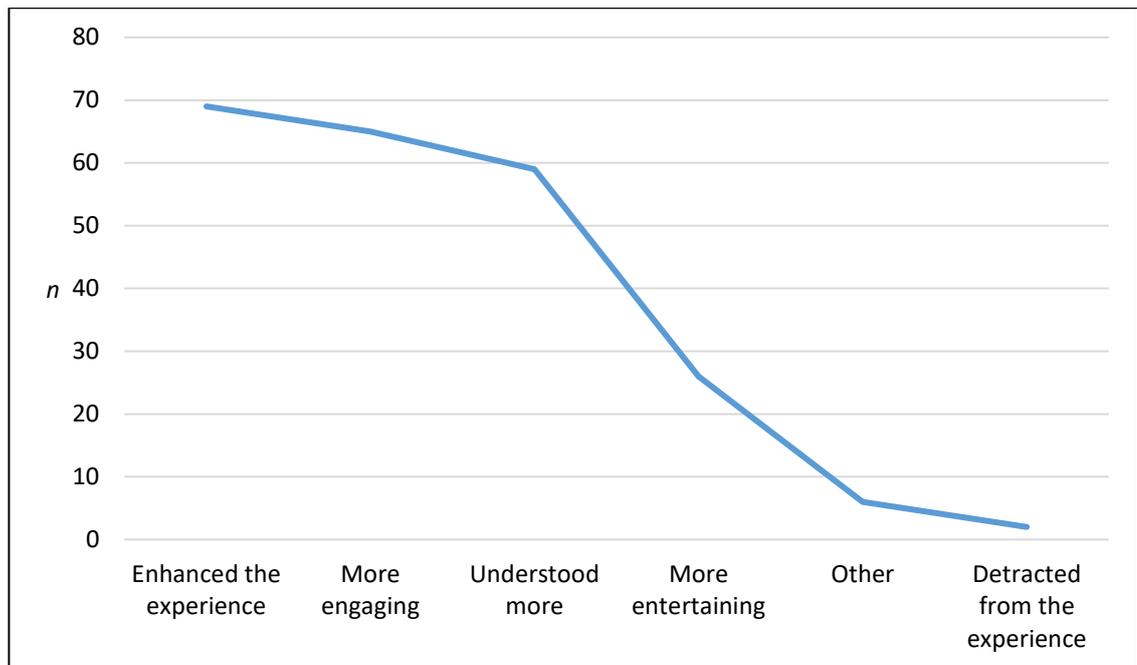
Figure 65: Q12: 'What effect did the interactive elements in the museum, such as the re-enacted footage and display screens, have on your experience today?

It is possible to note the presence of a variety of frames provided by commodification within that servicescape. As Figure 66 shows, visitors who used the shop (and so view the experience through that commodified frame) were more likely to find the interactive elements of presentation in the galley useful to their understanding, compared to those who didn't use the shop who were less likely to see those elements as beneficial.
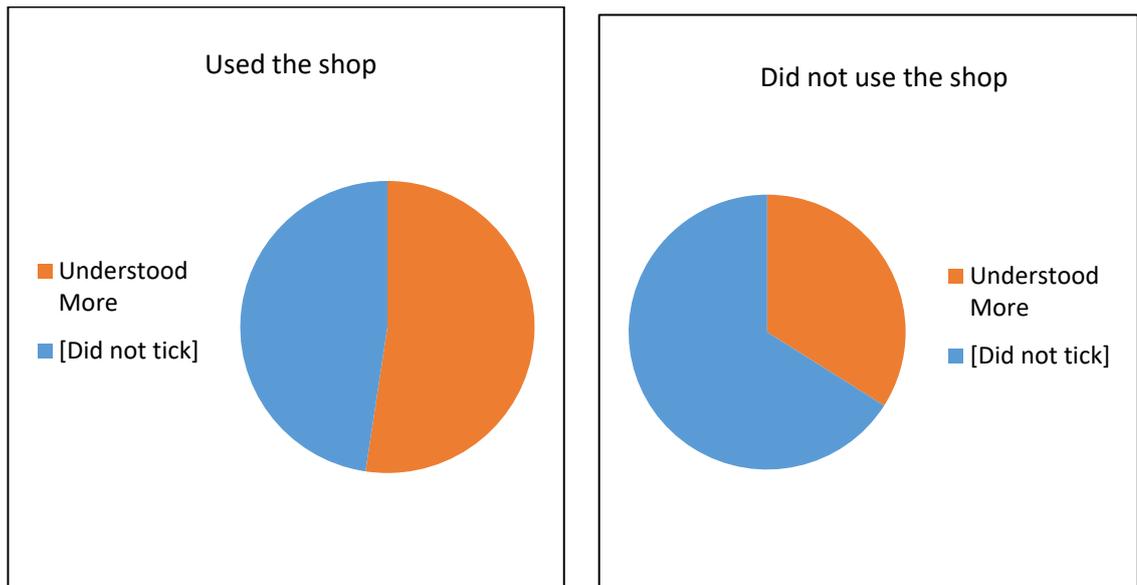
Figure 66: Bivariate analysis: Proportions of effect of 'I understood more' through the interactive elements (Q12) across use/ non-use of the shop (Q9)

This shows a relationship between the view one takes of the shop and the view one takes of the gallery content within the bounds of commodification. Another example is that those who use the shop (Q9) are more likely to see it as *'important and linked'* (Q11), whilst those who use either/ both of the café and shop are more likely to see the shop as 'linked' (either important or unimportant, Q11) to the main gallery. In this sense, the commodification process can be described as providing an ontological frame as well as a semiotic frame because, through the presence of commodified aspects, one's thoughts on the use of those aspects relates to the frame through which one views the overall experience. Indeed, this can be linked generally to the differing ways in which visitors engage with dark tourism (Raine, 2013), and also the typological variety of sites (Stone, 2006). To that end, by amalgamating that disparity of visitor approach within one servicescape, it can be argued that the various aspects of commodification as discussed in this theme present a semiotic and ontological frame which facilitates the 'anthropological gaze' (Urry, 2005), thus building upon the 'lens' of commodification (Sather-Wagstaff, 2011) through which one simultaneously contemplates atrocity but also receives experience within a conventional touristic environment. Therefore, it can be said that commodification facilitates that experience by providing the ideal physical and mental environment in which that may be mediated.

231

Mapping Theme B: Framing

Theme B has demonstrated the way in which the visitor experience is 'framed' by the commodification process. By noting that organisational aims 'set the scene' for how commodification is implemented, it is shown that commodification is an inherent part of that process in line with the discussion in the literature review. The implications of this relate to how symptoms of commodification are implemented in terms of supply-side attitude, and also how they are interpreted by the visitor. Equally, the concept of taste and appropriateness in the mediation of atrocity is seen herein to be linked together with the organisational aims and commodification towards the concept of framing. There is also an apparent potential link between sub-themes B2 and B3 in terms of how the symptoms of commodification are interpreted by the visitor and whether they are deemed appropriate though, as shown in the data, the sample of respondents in this study did not deem any tested aspect as inappropriate and so this remains relatively unexplored and thus beyond the scope of this thesis in further detail. However, whether they are linked or not, both in isolation, and in conjunction with sub-theme B1, they point towards the various ways, as discussed herein, in which the visitor experience is framed, rather than changed, by commodification. This is depicted in Figure 67.
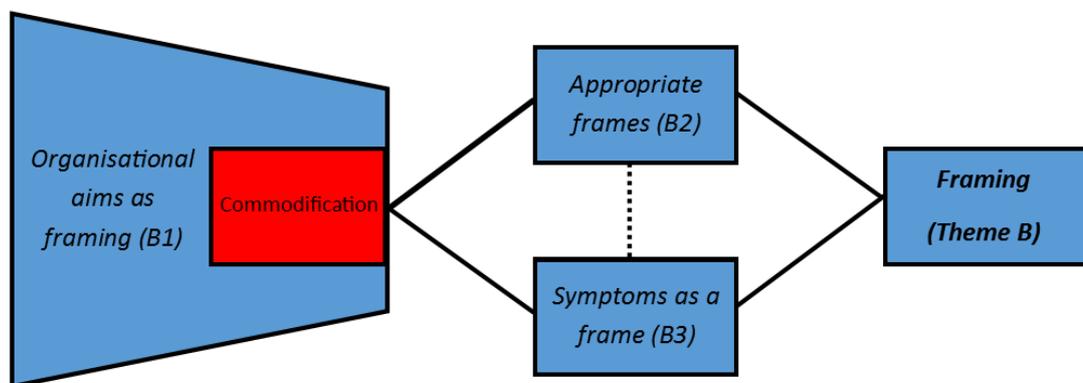
Figure 67: Mapping Theme B, International Slavery Museum

7.4.3: C: Separation of Elements

A recurring motif within the findings suggests that the experience at the ISM is not one discrete entity *per se*, but is in fact made up of several separate facets – some discretionary, some fundamental – which build towards an overall journey as facilitated (and expanded, as shown in theme D) by the commodification process. Clearly, visiting

the ISM gallery is fundamental to the experience; from a geographic perspective, so is entering the building through the shared entrance foyer. However, others – for example visiting the shop, café, or the other institutions within the Maritime Museum – are discretionary; the visitor can ignore those completely and still experience the ISM. Certain types of discretionary facets of experience at other sites of tourism have variously been identified as detrimental, derisory, or inauthentic (Boorstin, 1987), and as such are said to transfer those qualities onto the overall experience. However, as this theme will show, this may not always be the case. Indeed, what emerges herein is that visitors and managers are able to separate certain aspects of experience from others, particularly those which are discretionary, and within that, particularly those which are seen as 'facilities'. Therefore, this section will demonstrate how the separation of elements affects the visitor experience as a consequence of the commodification process.

Sub-theme C1: Café and shop as separate

Certain aspects of commodification can be and are seen as 'facilities' which exist chiefly as commercial concessions and as a means of facilitating access for visitors. Indeed, the survey data shows that 60.7% and 66.1% of participants, respectively, see the shop and the café as separate, unimportant, or both. This shows that a majority of visitors observe a detachment of those two aspect in relation to the main gallery. Indeed, the response of one of those variables among those who describe free admission as having 'no effect' on the experience rises to 73.9% for the café (as shown in Figure 68).

Role of café (admission fee has '*no effect*')

Legend:
- Important and linked
- Important and separate
- Unimportant and linked
- Unimportant and separate
- Inapporpriate

Role of café (all responses to admission fee)

Legend:
- Important and linked
- Important and separate
- Unimportant and linked
- Unimportant and separate
- Inapporpriate
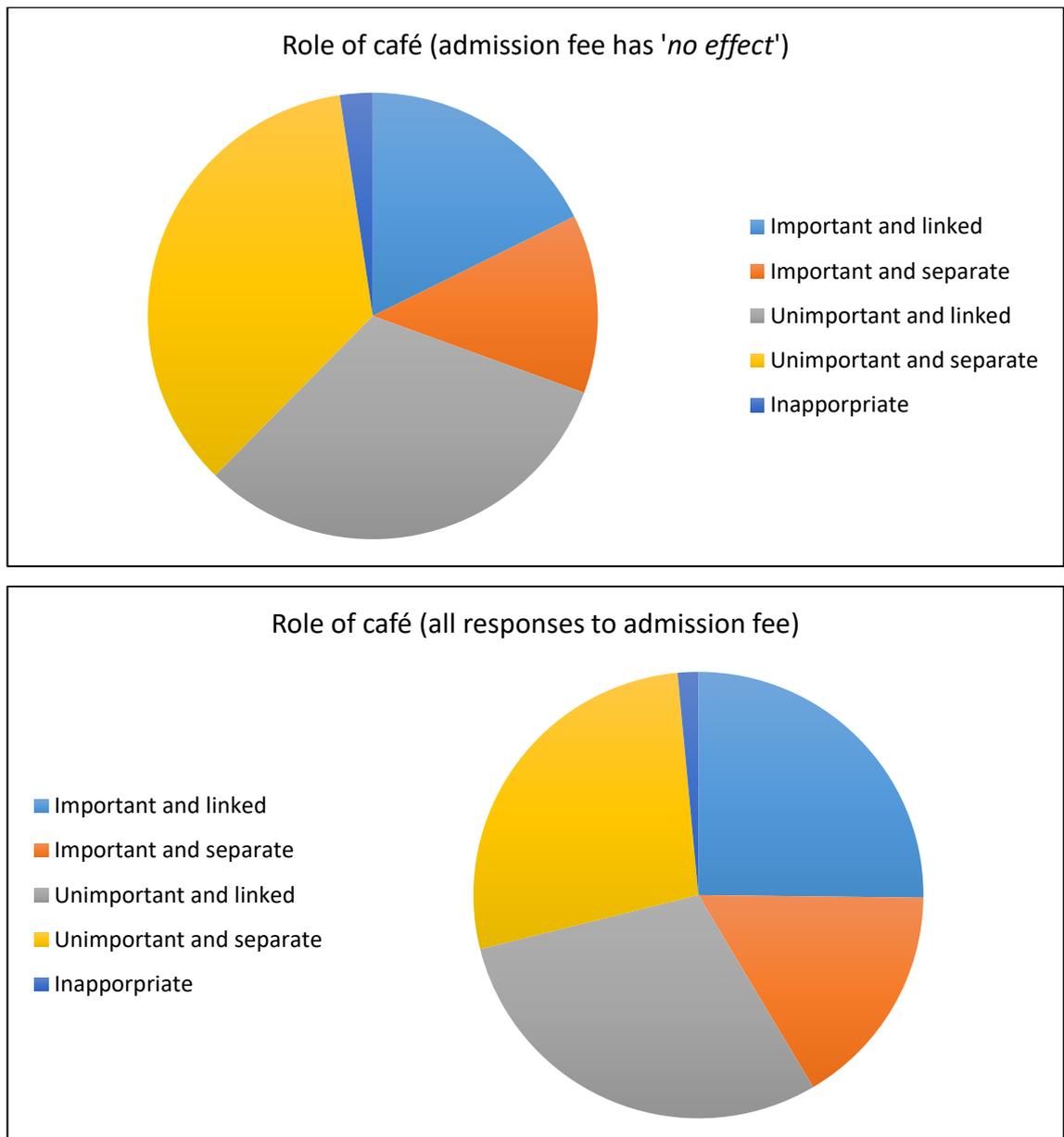
Figure 68: Bivariate analysis: Proportion of responses on the role of the café (Q11) within responses on the effect of the admission fee (Q8)

As only 28% and 38.7% of respondents for the shop and café, respectively, see those aspects as *'important and linked'*, they are arguably discretionary within the experience and thus are separated from the gallery space by the visitor. Indeed, the theories discussed in the literature review point towards this discretionary nature; whilst the shop is generally viewed as ubiquitous (Mars & Mars, 2000), its role in dark tourism is essentially seen as discretionary due to the fraught balance of sensitivity (Brown, 2013a; Stone, 2009c). Indeed, it was also identified in Chapter Four that visitors may find kitsch items disturbing in the wrong environment (Emmer, 2014; Sturken, 2007; Lugg, 1999). Therefore, the

separation of elements may be a mechanism by which both supply and demand seek to diminish the potential conflict of sensitivity.

SCL and JB both suggest that there is only a nominal connection in terms of content between the gallery on one hand and the café and shop on the other. The ISM, according to SCL, has a relatively small '*footprint*' in the shop (interview C, line 238), because the majority of goods within the outlet relate to the other Maritime Museum institutions or are generic Liverpool and UK merchandise. JB furthermore believes that there is little relationship between the ISM and the shop, and that the shop is primarily there to serve the broader aims of NML rather than as a direct branch of experience at the ISM (interview D, Q10). As such, it is evident that the supply-side see the shop as a separate and discretionary facet of experience when compared with the main gallery, and so the shop has little bearing on the gallery.

The sentiment is similar regarding the café, though the subtle differences (which were not evident in the survey data) not only suggest that the café is separate to the gallery like the shop, but also that the shop and café are separate from each other within the experience. As can be shown, this suggests that symptoms of commodification are individually discretionary and separate. To that end, SCL believes that the café is an extremely minor branch of the experience (interview C, line 270) but also notes the possibility of serving specific cultural food which might elevate its overall significance. However, JB stated that the café, as a facility, has practical importance by allowing visitors to rest and consume refreshments (interview D, Q11). Clearly, whilst the two interviewees disagree slightly on the exact use of the café, they both note that they have practical use which is by nature purely discretionary. As such, they clearly delineate a separation of those elements from the fundamental parts of the experience, as do the visitors as shown previously. This relates to the implementation of a sensitive and appropriate servicescape (Cooper & Hall, 2013); whilst visitors desire facilities such as the shop and café, they also expect, in the context of a site such as the ISM (Stone, 2006), that the presentation of upsetting concepts will be sensitively conveyed (Sharpley, 2009; Lennon & Foley, 2000). As such, by separating the ISM from the multi-use lobby area, the dissonance is reduced (Sharpley, 2009) both physically and metaphorically due to the delineation of space which enacts the separation of elements. If, therefore, the shop and café are separate from the gallery, their effect on the overall experience can be expected to be different than if they were central parts. As such, the next sub-theme examines their effects as discretionary aspects of experience.

It is self-evident that by separating two entities, the effect they enact on each other will be different than if they were not separate. Indeed, this is shown in the survey data by comparing the responses on the current reality with those considering an alternate reality in which certain aspects of experience are absent. As shown below in Figure 69, a large majority of respondents stated that an absence of the shop or café would have '*no effect*' on the attractiveness of the site, the appropriateness of the presentation, their own personal enjoyment, or the overall experience.
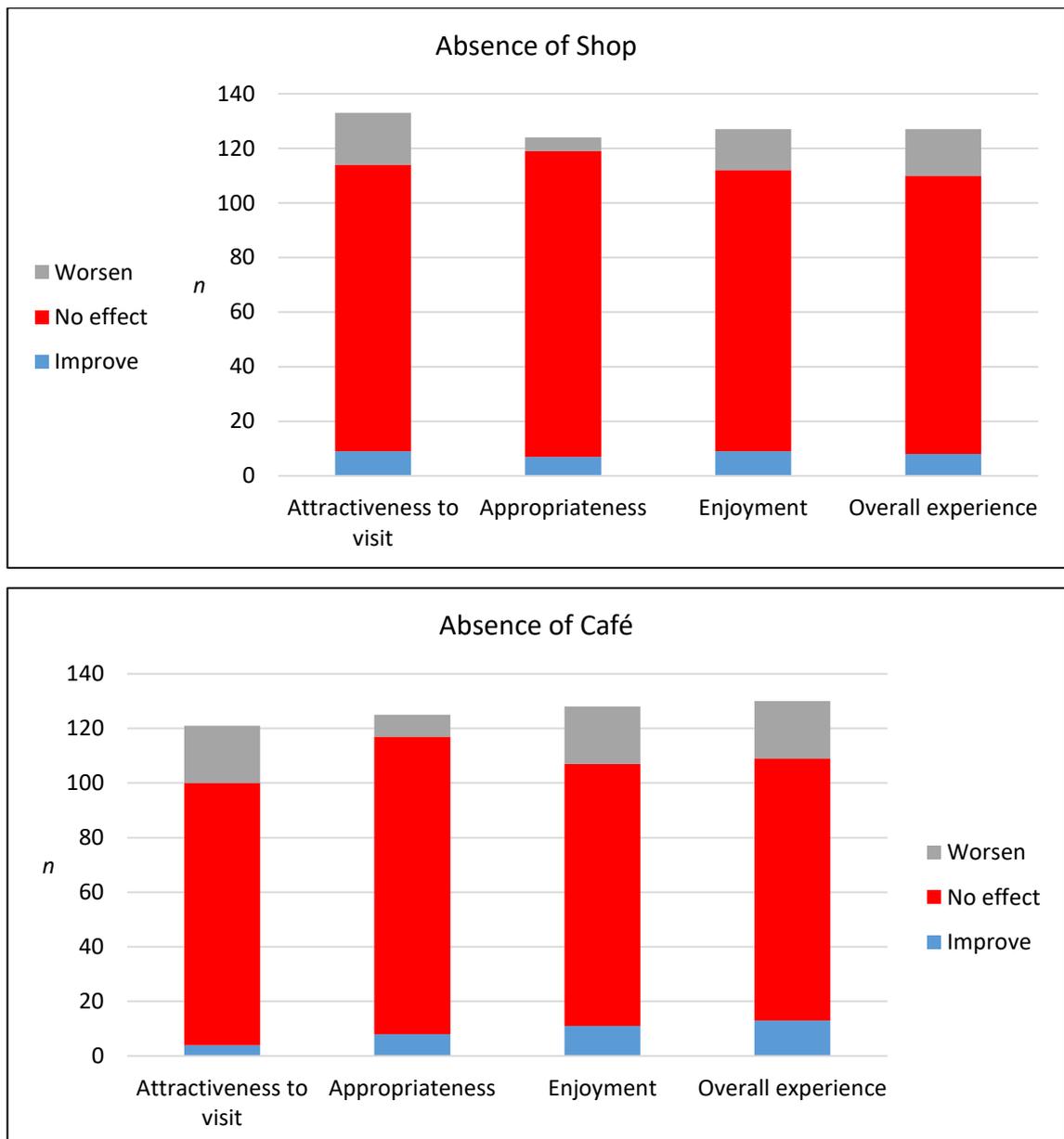
Figure 69: Q15: 'Please state how you think the *absence* of a shop/ café within the building would affect your perception of the following things'

Interestingly, furthermore, for both café and shop, the lowest response was '*improve*' (that the absence of either symptom would improve the experience, Q15), which suggests that the inclusion of those facets of experience is appropriate at present. Indeed, just as the dissonance can be reduced by the physical and metaphorical separation as noted in sub-theme C1, the separation of effects can fulfil MacCannell's (2011) imperative noting the uniqueness of the subject matter; the reduction of effects engendered by the separation of elements means that the ISM operates within a metaphorical (and partially physical) sphere of its own, away from the servicescape of the café and shop. That delineation of space, in line with the ISM's heterotopic nature as discussed previously, therefore allows the ISM to be valorised as unique (Elkington, 2015; Prideaux, 2003) by the supply-side, whilst the visitor is treated sensitively and is able to experience the museum with access to facilities which are, as shown in the data, unobtrusive to the ISM gallery itself.

The separation of elements, and thus a negation of certain effects, is confirmed by the supply-side managers. SCL suggested that the absence of shop and café would have a 'general' rather than a 'specific' effect:

'*I don't think it would have an effect specifically on the ISM, but it may have an effect on generally the visitor numbers that come through because people obviously in a basic form want to be fed and watered, so if there's no facilities on-site, then it's going to prevent or put people off from coming and staying for as long as they do*'.

[Interview C, line 315]

As such, and as also noted by JB (interview D, Q13) footfall to the museum would be likely to decrease. Despite that assertion, as noted previously regarding the survey response to '*attractiveness to visit*' in the absence of a shop or café (Figure 69), it is arguably because the impacts would be institutional and affect the museum and NML rather than changing the visitor experience; lower revenue and visitor numbers would have resulting organisational implications, but would not affect the visitor experience if the gallery itself stayed the same, highlighting the differing approach to commodification from supply and demand (Farmaki, 2013). As such, whilst visitors have a choice to embrace or disregard discretionary aspects of commodification (Brown, 2013a), the supply-side, as shown herein, have certain organisational responsibilities regarding the ongoing operation of the ISM and so whilst the separation in terms of the visitor experience is clear, the supply-side can be seen to separate them only metaphorically

because they are intrinsically linked within the management of the institution due to financial imperatives (Cortell Vandersypen, 2012; Luksetich & Partridge, 1997). Therefore, whilst it can be said that the separation of elements engenders a separation of the effects of commodification within the visitor experience, that separation does not in fact permeate into the management of the site.

Sub-theme C3: Variation of Separation

Though a majority of visitors (and both supply-side managers) separate the shop and the café as discretionary facilities from the gallery space, there is also evidence to suggest some variation of how visitors view the relationship between each aspect of the overall experience. For example, those visitors who used the shop and/ or used the café were more likely to see that same symptom as linked to other parts of the experience (from 28.7% to 50% for the shop, and 38.7% – 61.8% for the café), a trend also noticeable when cross-comparing the role of the shop with that of the café (Q11), as shown below in Figure 70. As such, there is a variety of ways in which individual visitors view aspects of commodification.
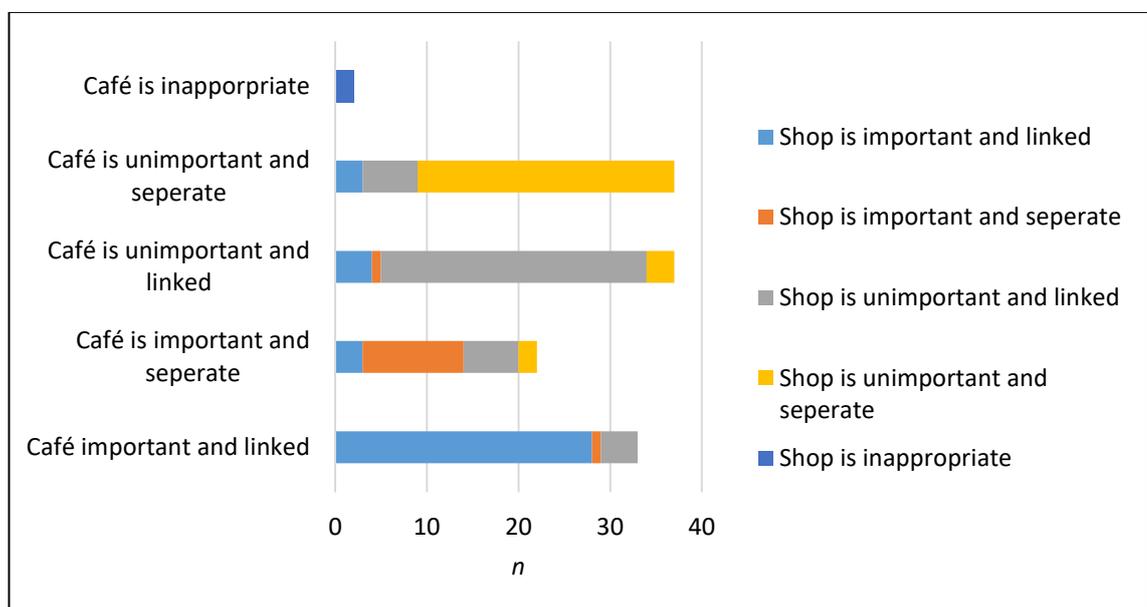
Figure 70: Bivariate analysis: Correlation of the role of the shop and the role of the café (both Q11)

Clearly, the framing qualities of commodification, as explored in Theme B, also relate to the separation of elements. The frame affects how one separates the elements; if one sees

the shop as a useful or important aspect of experience, then one is more likely to use it, whilst, equally, one may completely separate it if it is deemed irrelevant to one's reaction to the semiotics of the experience (as discussed in Theme B).

Furthermore, consider the correlation between the perceived roles of each symptom. Those who described the café as '*important and linked*' (Q11) were around three times more likely to describe the shop as important and linked (from 26.7% to 82.4%). Similarly, whilst 22% of respondents described the shop as '*unimportant and separate*', the incidence of describing both the café and shop as '*unimportant and separate*' was the much greater 75.7%. This confirms the discretionary influence that each symptom has, and suggests that certain aspects may indeed be linked in the minds of the visitor, but equally it confirms the separation of elements because it shows that a significant group of visitors do indeed see those symptoms as unimportant and/ or separate. As those symptoms are designed to be separate – as confirmed by the supply-side responses – visitors encounter them in an environment which designates them as such not only geographically, but also in terms of their limited ISM 'footprint' (interview C, line 238), though by virtue of their discretionary nature, the café and shop may nonetheless be viewed as linked by some visitors. Indeed, though the servicescape can be seen to greatly affect the visitor's engagement with a site (Cooper & Hall, 2013; Bitner, 1992), it can also be seen throughout the data presented herein to be composed of discretionary elements which, though linked geographically, are generally noted as separate to each other and so have a varying effect on the visitor experience. Thus, the servicescape at the ISM allows the visitor to engage as they choose with most aspects of commodification, and does not generally affect the gallery space (conceptualised below in Figure 71). This is noted in the literature review (Seaton, 2009; McLean, 1997) and therefore shows that the servicescape at the ISM separates elements of commodification in order to reduce the negative effects on the visitor experience.
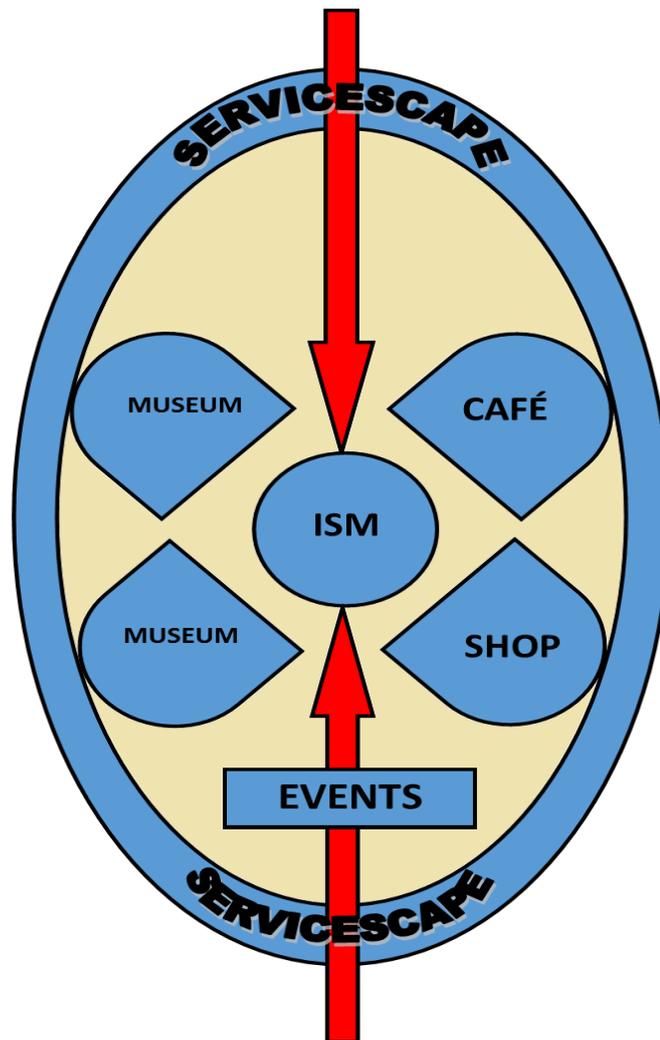
Figure 71: Separation of Elements of the ISM

Mapping Theme C: Separation of Elements

The separation of elements can be observed by linking the sub-themes examined herein and noting their cumulative effects. It has been established that visitors and the supply-side both separate the individual facets of experience, and, furthermore, that there is variation in how, when and by whom they are separated. Thus, the experience is split into several 'aspects of experience'; the discretionary elements (i.e. the shop and café), engender a separation of effects in that they tend to have little effect on the central experience of the ISM gallery. Therefore, the separation can be observed in terms of how each aspect affects the overall experience; those such as the events and the gallery which have an effect (as described herein), but also those with no effect. As such, the separation of elements provides numerous physical and implicit cues relating to how the experience is supplied and how it is consumed by the visitor. This process is depicted in Figure 72.
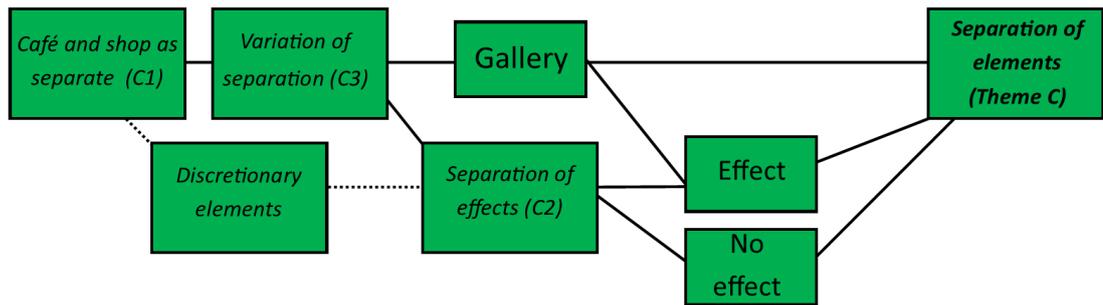
Figure 72: Mapping Theme C, International Slavery Museum

7.4.4: D: Expansion of Experience

As shown in Theme C, aspects of commodification can be separated from the main subject matter of the gallery space; this, perhaps as a by-product of its role as a frame, suggests that these aspects of commodification occupy a separate and discrete space (both physical and metaphorical) away from the central subject of slavery. As such, that extra space may be accessed, again physically or metaphorically, and thus the experience is expanded rather than actually changed. This process, as will be shown, serves to add extra layers to the experience without necessarily changing its nature, which challenges the notion that commodification is a *transformative* force generally seen as deleterious (Elkington, 2015; Boorstin, 1987). This theme serves to demonstrate further how commodification can be used more as a *supplementary* process within the tourist experience. Firstly, this section will consider how this expansion is implemented by the ISM.

Sub-theme D1: Commodification as a tool of engagement

The way in which the subject matter is presented through the education programme and the interpretative materials in the main gallery space is the manifestation of how the information in question is commodified. As such, it can be commodified in a way which allows an expanded engagement from visitors without altering the chosen discourse. Indeed, consumer demand plays a role in that commodification at the ISM; JB notes the variety of ways in which individuals learn and the necessity for the museum to provide appropriate stimuli (interview D, Q3), whilst SCL (interview C, Q4) notes the use of modern media in line with current and future developments in museum management, which is expected by visitors (interview C, from line 174). That expectation

241

of stimulating activity for tourists is well-documented (Rojek, 1993; Boorstin, 1987), but its connection to dark tourism is less clear. The concept of sensitivity, as discussed in the literature review, dictates much of the presentation of dark history (Lennon & Foley, 2000), but for the ISM such commodification appears to be of benefit to the visitor experience. 43% of respondents described the interactive elements of the gallery as making it '*more engaging*', 39% said that as a result of them they '*understood more*', whilst only 2 respondents described the interactive elements as detracting from their experience (all Q12, as shown previously in Figure 65). As such, the commodification of information can be seen to expand the way in which visitors engage with the history. However, as also shown previously in Figure 65, 46% of respondents stated that the interactive elements '*enhanced the experience*' (Q12); though this may suggest an alteration of the experience, the fundamental facts and history remain the same, so it can be said that it is the visitor's enjoyment, or understanding which is enhanced. The use of props, media and visual aids for this reason is discussed in the literature review (White, 2013; Willard, Lade & Frost, 2013; Taheri & Jafari, 2012) and as such are well-accepted in touristic activity, but the presence of dark concepts presents some ethical questions regarding sensitivity. Indeed, as there is a clear political element to the subject at the ISM (Sharpley, 2009b), those elements risk causing a dissonance which is generally deemed inappropriate (MacCannell, 2011; Seaton, 2009; Sharpley, 2009b). However, in this case, the lack of data stating that it is inappropriate or insensitive suggests that the interactive elements serve to expand rather than alter the visitor experience.

Furthermore, the concept of geographic space may also play its part in the expansion of experience. It is self-evident that the experience at the ISM is expanded by virtue of the other museums in the building; however, at present there are plans to alter the ISM so that it has its own separate entrance. This would transform it into a singularly distinct site, thus altering its commodification from one aspect of the Maritime Museum into a museum completely free of other institutions. However, there appears to be some disparity herein between the attitudes of supply and demand. Both interviewees noted the benefits of a more distinct ISM product; JB suggested that the experience would be improved if the ISM had its own singular location, despite also noting a consequential reduction in 'crossover' visits which currently take place (interview D, Q14), whilst SCL suggested that the ISM's offering would become more substantial as compared to the current gallery (interview C, line 336).

That notion of substance is interesting to consider in the context of commodification as an expansionary tool. Arguably, the ISM in a separate building would

be *less* commodified by losing the extra aspects of experience. However, the survey data presents evidence to show that an expanded experience is preferable for visitors; as noted previously, 58% of respondents stated that the presence of other museums enhances the importance of the ISM, suggesting that those other institutions have an expansionary quality. Indeed, JB (interview D, Q6) notes that a key strategy for NML is to engage lower-income families in museum activity, which is arguably more straightforward if promoting an expanded or diverse product. By positioning the ISM as such – an expansive product with access to other institutions as well as a shop and café – the commodification process is used, by way of the expansion of experience, to engage both potential and realised visitors. The next sub-theme will now further explore that concept of diversification as a supply-side tool.

Sub-theme D2: Diversification

The notion of a diversified product appears throughout the supply-side responses, suggesting that it is a key consideration within the commodification of the ISM. The shop and café, as noted in D1, can be described as 'facilities', an assertion which is supported in the responses of the supply-side interviewees. In interview C, SCL notes the minor role which they both play in the overall experience, suggesting that their primary function is as a commercial outlet not only as a source of income for the museum, but also because visitors actively seek to purchase souvenirs (as also noted by JB in interview D, Q10) and refreshments. This is widely noted across tourism at large, as discussed in the literature review (Laws, 2013; Aitchison, MacLeod & Shaw, 2000), and the term 'facility' can therefore be used to describe entities which improve access (Walsh & Giulianotti, 2007) and thus satisfy the demand for experiences which involve extra facets such as the ability to purchase items (Sturken, 2007; Tilman, 2006; Morgan & Pritchard, 2005). However, it is not limited purely to permanent objects; indeed, JB specifically notes that the café in particular serves to expand the visitor experience by allowing space for reflection on the themes presented in the ISM (interview D, Q11). Whilst that type of expansionary opportunity is central to the expansion of experience, it must be demonstrated that it is indeed expansionary rather than transformative. In that respect, the questionnaire data provides some evidence to that end.

Q11, regarding the role of the shop and café in the experience, can be used to demonstrate the expansionary nature of those symptoms. 60.7% and 66.1%, respectively, stated that the shop and café are '*separate*' and/ or '*unimportant*'. Indeed, considering that the potential absence of those two symptoms was mostly seen to have '*no effect*' on

the experience (Q15; 68% and 64% respectively), it can be said that they serve a commercial purpose and have little other noticeable effect on the experience. It can also be noted that, across all participants, a majority did not note the other Maritime Museum institutions as either enhancing or detracting from the experience at the ISM (Q16). This suggests that they have no effect, and further suggests an expansion of experience through diverse facets which do not necessarily affect one another. That notion can be further demonstrated by bivariate analysis of the role of the shop and the effect of the other Maritime Museum institutions. As shown below in Figure 73, those who saw the shop as being '*linked*' were more likely to see the Maritime Museum institutions as enhancing the importance of the ISM, whilst those who saw it as '*separate*' were much less likely to see them as beneficial to the overall importance of the ISM. This suggests that those who value extra aspects of commodification are likely to value an expanded experience and acknowledge how that expanded experience can improve the individual aspects of experience.
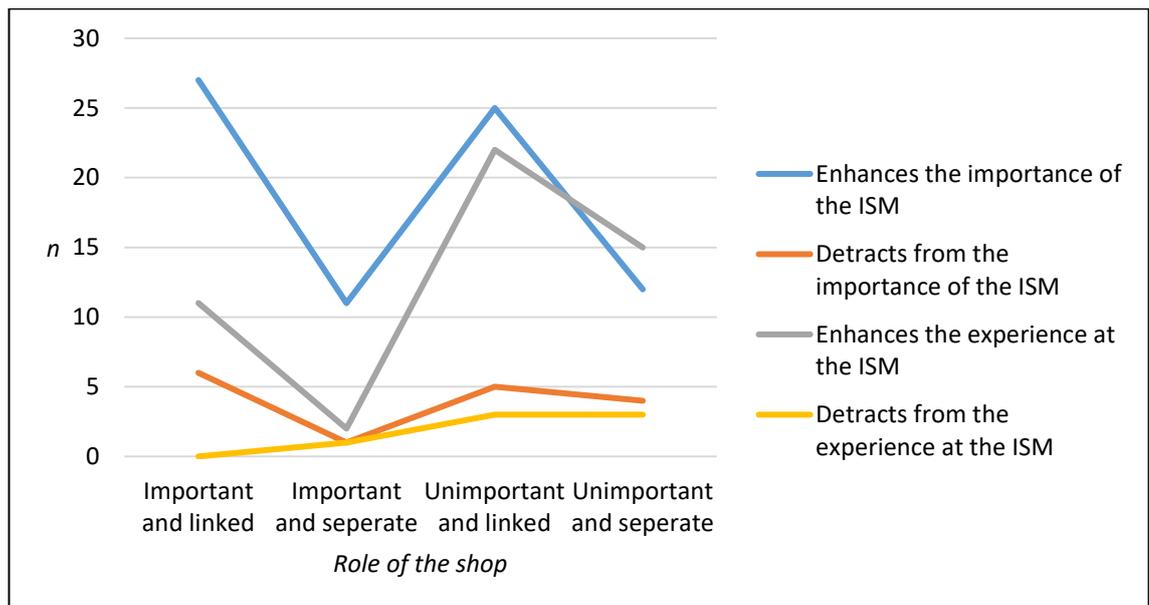
Figure 73: Bivariate analysis: Correlation of the role of the shop (*n*) and the effect of the other institutions within the Maritime Museum building (Q16)

Furthermore, it can be noted that, across visitors who either used the shop and/ or café or did not, a majority of respondents did not note the other Maritime Museum institutions as either enhancing or detracting from the experience, as shown below in Figure 74.
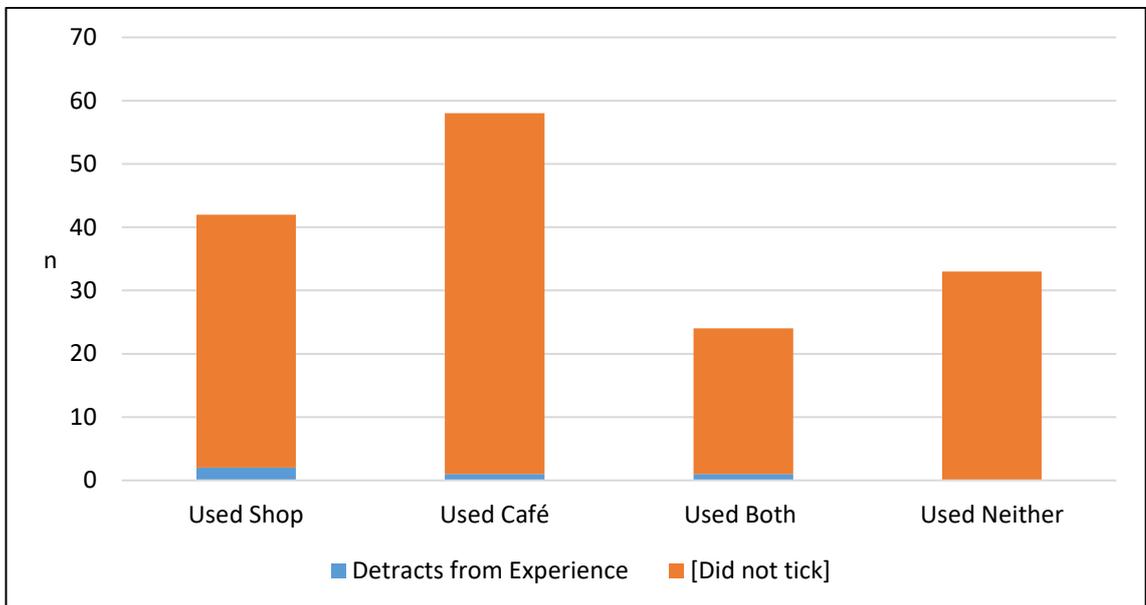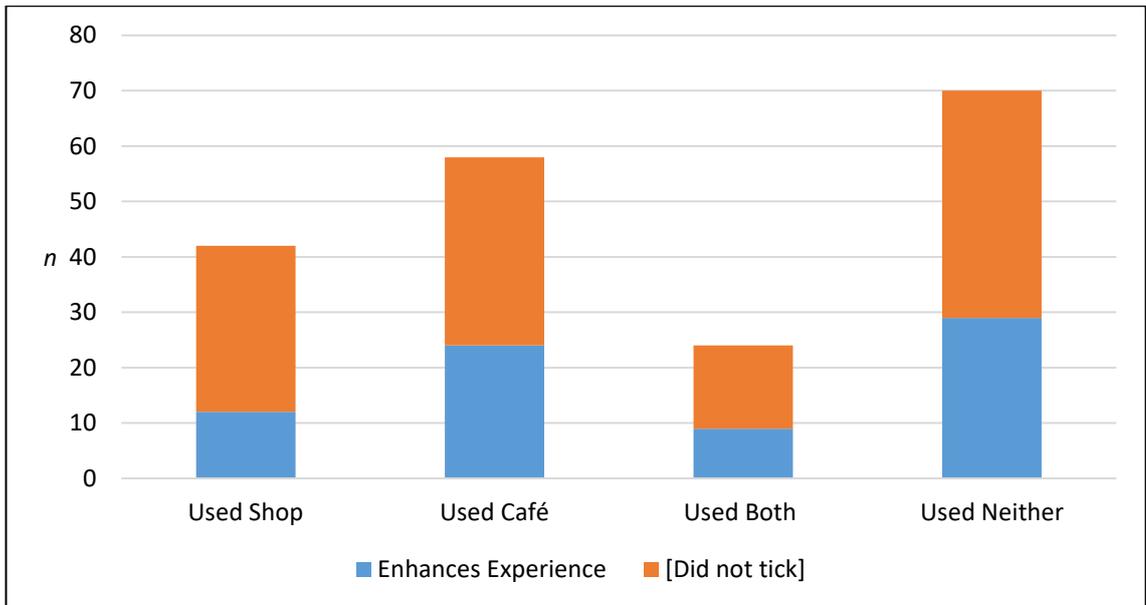
Figure 74: Bivariate analysis: Correlation between the effect of the other institutions within the Maritime Museum (*n*) (Q16) and the use/ non-use of the shop (Q9) and café (Q10)

This suggests that they have no effect, and thus point towards an expanded experience of diverse yet only tangentially linked aspects within the Maritime Museum building. Crucially, however, that correlation was not reflected in the overall *experience* (compared to the *importance* of the ISM, both of which were surveyed in Q16) to the same extent as only a minority of respondents stated that the other institutions '*enhance the experience*' at the ISM (38.7%, Q16). This, along with the facilitatory role of the café and shop as noted previously, points towards a diversified experience which is expanded in a way

which does not impact upon the central experience. Indeed, JB notes in interview D (Q11) that facilities play a role in the physical accessibility of the site, and that their absence would have practical impacts on the experience rather essentially altering the content, just as SCL (interview C, line 319) notes that it would have a general effect, rather than a specific effect on the ISM. These points suggest that the experience at the ISM, in line with the separation noted in Theme C, is a diverse offering in which one's experience can be expanded in a discretionary manner.

To that end, consider the key role in which the programme of occasional events plays in the expansion of experience by diversifying the product offer. Though the shop, café and events are all symptoms of commodification, there is clearly a difference in supply-side attitude towards their implementation; arguably, this shows that they exist independently as discrete means by which the experience is expanded. They stimulate extra time spent at the site, and serve certain organisational purposes as stated previously. Indeed, the events can be seen as stimulating interest in the site itself for potential visitors; SCL (interview C, line 286) notes that the events provide greater outreach to potential visitors compared to the everyday activity of the museum, whilst JB (interview D, Q12 & Q13) notes the potential for product development in shaping the future discourse of the museum. This can be seen as a way in which the supply-side orientate the servicescape (as the servicescape may also have a non-physical element – Dong & Siu, 2013) in order to combine the organisational mission with visitor expectations and experience. Indeed, as noted in the literature review, servicescapes may be used to dictate visitor behaviour on-site (Prideaux, 2003; Wanhill, 2003a) and may reflect the political perspective of the institution (Walsh, 1992). As such, the servicescape – and the facets within it which constitute the visitor experience – can be said to enable the expansion of experience through the facilitation of a diverse touristic product which are politically sympathetic to the central subject matter (that being the museum gallery at the ISM). In this respect, the experience is therefore expanded by commodification in an appropriate manner which does not materially alter the content of the museum gallery, and in doing so shapes the visitor experience by providing a diversified and facilitatory framework in which to consume the ISM. This process is depicted in Figure 75.
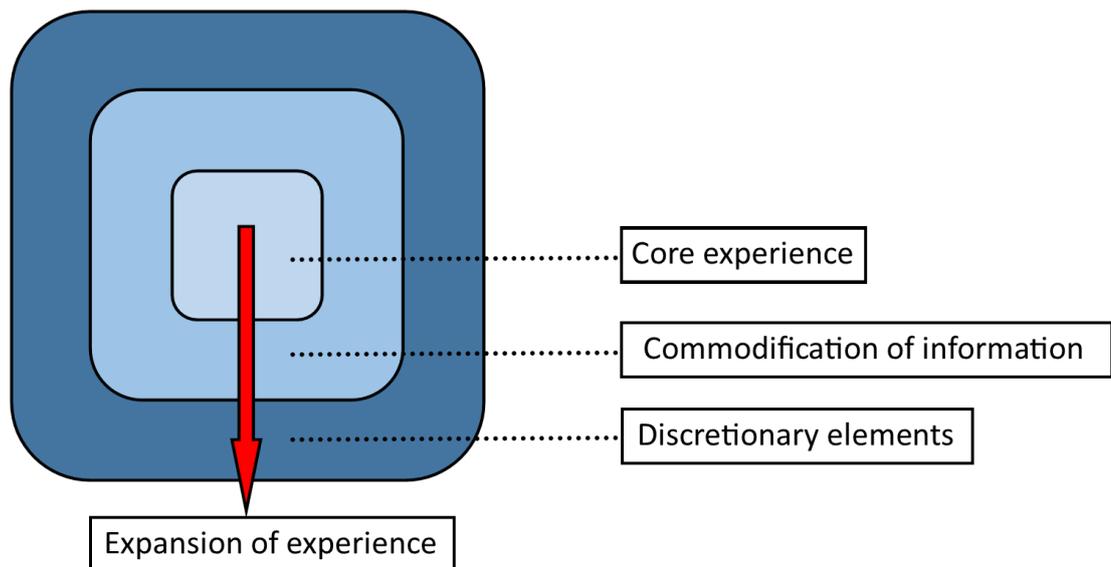
Figure 75: Expansion of experience at the ISM

Mapping Theme D: Expansion of Experience

Building on the separation of elements and framing as identifiable effects of commodification, the expansion of experience can be seen to manifest primarily as a supply-side creation, but one which is also perceptible to the visitor. It arguably necessitates the development of further experience beyond the core message (Cortell Vandersypen, 2012; Swanson, 2004; Babbidge, 2000; Love & Sheldon, 1998), and thus the diversification of product can be observed. Within this, the theme identifies two streams. Firstly, there are those directly part of the ISM's core message and which can utilise commodification as a means of engagement. The second stream – the café and shop – which are commercial by nature and thus overtly commodified aspects of experience, serve primarily to expand the experience by adding extra discretionary aspects of experience which the visitor may choose to engage with. In doing so, the visitor adds extra facets to their experience and increase their temporal engagement on-site at the ISM in line with organisational aims. This is depicted in Figure 76.
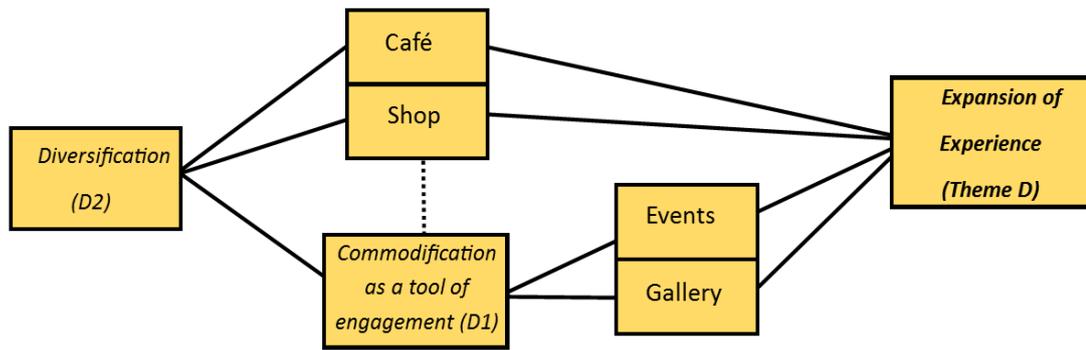
Figure 76: Mapping Theme D, International Slavery Museum

7.4.5: E: Authenticity Through Commodification

As discussed in the literature review, authenticity is a concept well noted as part of the tourist experience. Whilst some consider it to be a key facet of tourism (MacCannell, 2011), others note that it is variously subjective (Wang, 1999) or even of only trivial concern for both supply-side and visitors (Boorstin, 1987). Indeed, the concept of 'staged authenticity' (MacCannell, 1974), alongside the notable symptoms of commodification within sites of dark tourism which lead to experiences of questionable taste (Seaton, 2009; Stone, 2009b), show that authenticity is a notion which the supply-side attempt to sell by way of the commodification process. Based on this research, however, the ISM appears to be less concerned with the commodification of authenticity. Rather, and as will be shown within this theme, the key supply-side focus is on the veracity of facts and an exploration of legacy within the context of the TST, and authenticity is essentially a personal construct (Wang, 1999) for which the supply-side are only partially responsible. However, of course, the role of the visitor is crucial; if the experience was perceived as inauthentic, then perhaps the nature of the ISM might be changed to counteract that. As this theme will show, there are many individual facets of experience which contribute to the perception of authenticity at the ISM, and so this section will explore the concept that authenticity is not prescribed by the commodification process.

E1: Difference of Effects

It is noted in the literature review that symptoms of commodification are generally seen as negative to authentic experiences. However, it can be shown that this generalisation is inaccurate because different symptoms have different effects. The shop

and café were both rated by the majority of respondents (84.7% & 85.3% respectively, Q18) as having '*no effect*' on the authenticity of the ISM. Indeed, both interviewees identified no means by which those two symptoms could or do affect the authenticity of the museum (interview C, from line 378; interview D, Q16). Rather than degrading the authenticity of the ISM, SCL suggested that the café could be used to enhance the experience if it was to serve certain types of food (interview C, line 268), although that notion is currently unexplored at the museum.

The absence of a shop or café would not have an effect on the authenticity of the ISM. Bivariate analysis of Q17 and Q15 show no correlation between ratings of current authenticity and the effect of the absence of the shop or café on the overall experience. If the café and shop did have a deleterious effect on the authenticity, one would expect to observe a higher incidence of '*improve*' amongst those who rated the current authenticity as low, and vice versa. However, the major response across all responses is '*no effect*', and so there is no observable link. Indeed, respondents who rated the experience low on the Likert scale of authenticity (Q17) did not note the café and shop as having a detrimental effect on the overall authenticity (Q18, as shown below in Figure 77). This can be attributed to the notion of 'consumer culture' (Brown, 2013a; Sturken, 2007) which is notable within modern tourism because within that framework the visitor expects to encounter a conventional servicescape as a normal facet of experience. As the presence of such entities is so ingrained within the visitor conception of sites of tourism, they are therefore unremarkable and can be ignored; indeed, despite much suggestion that commodified aspects of experience are likely to negatively affect visitor perceptions of authenticity (Elkington, 2015; Craig, 2009; MacCannell, 1976), this evidence demonstrates that, arguably because those aspects are both unremarkable and discretionary, they do not factor in the conception of authenticity at the ISM.
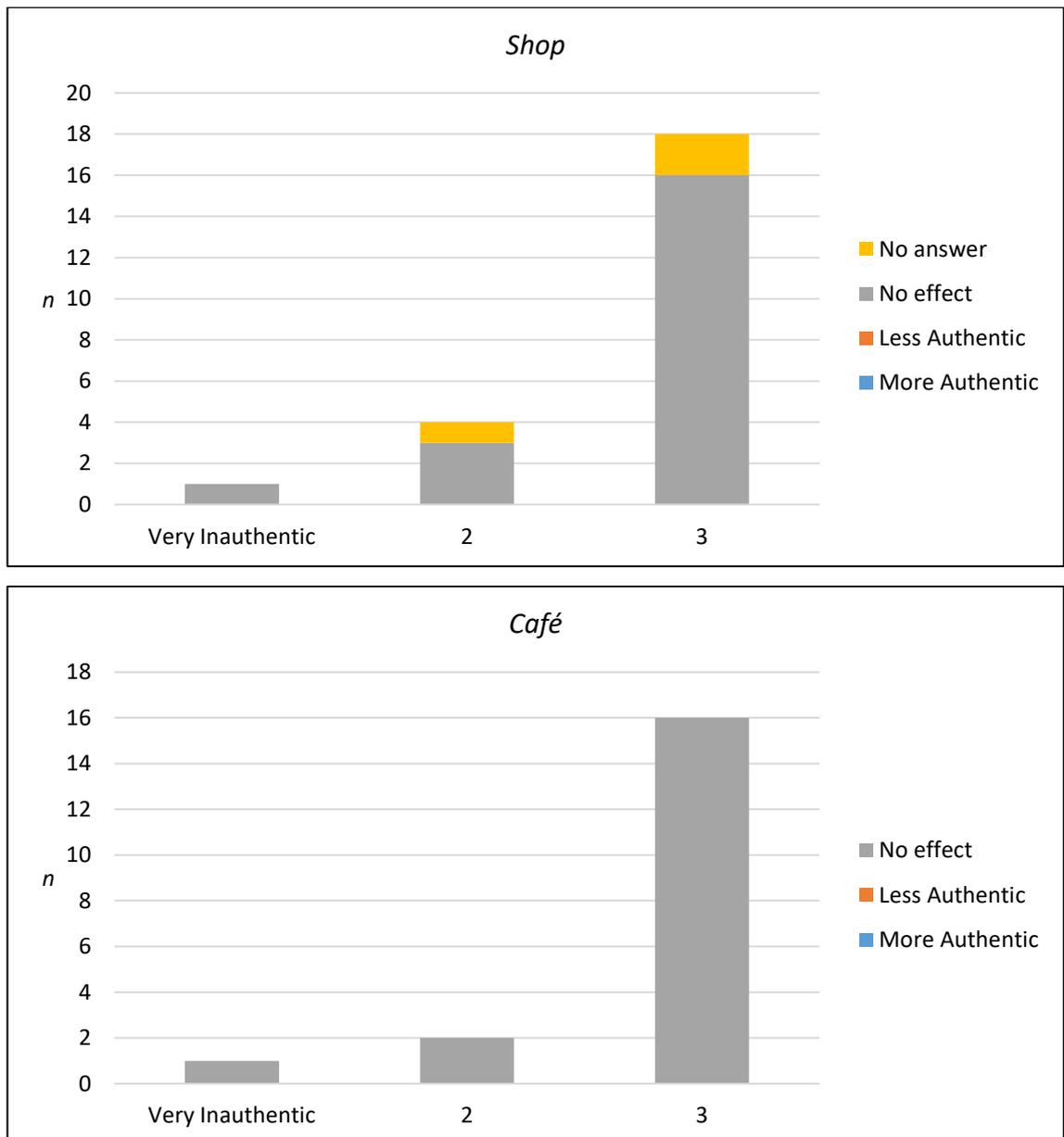
Figure 77: Bivariate analysis: Correlation of the effect of the shop/ café on authenticity (*n*) (Q18) and the overall authenticity of the ISM (lower ratings) (Q17)

If authenticity is not dictated (whether wholly or in part) by those aforementioned symptoms of commodification, then it must have another source. The programme of occasional events – as pre-organised products designed to celebrate/ mark milestones as well as attract visitors to the ISM (interview C, line 300; interview D, Q12) – can be shown to be a supply-side tool used to engender authentic representations and engagement. They bestow extra value to the museum, and as such SCL notes their worth by stating:

'having partnerships with other organisations, having an education team can provide a way of enriching that experience because we're highlighting or marking particular events or dates in the calendar'.

[Interview C, line 279]

This sentiment is echoed by JB, who noted that the events add an additional layer of experience to visitors (interview D, Q12). Indeed, this overt use of events as a tool in the creation of experience allows event attendees to imbue the ISM with authenticity; JB states that they are used to 'harness the support' of various groups and communities (interview D, Q13), which shows that it is not only a distinct commercial tool, but that, as a symptom of commodification, events are also used to engender authentic engagement, unlike the shop and café which can be seen as facilities superfluous to the authenticity of the experience as shown. This agrees with Seaton's (2009) consideration of the benefits of the commodification of dark tourism; by ensuring that the intended communities may receive positive outcomes, the authenticity of the ISM is enhanced. Therefore, it can be seen that the symptoms of commodification have differing effects on authenticity, and, as such, commodification can be split into aspects which have either no, some, or more profound effects on authenticity, rather than commodification acting as one discrete entity which has a homogeneous effect on the experience.

E2: Authentic Representations

Whilst the events are shown to be a supply-side tool to develop authentic experiences, they are occasional by nature and so do not form an ever-present facet of the day-to-day experience at the ISM. Therefore, the gallery space, as the primary experience of the museum, can be seen as the major source of information from which visitors can perceive authenticity; as such, by comparing respondents' rating of authenticity against their perception of the nature of the museum content, trends relating to authenticity may be observed. For example, respondents who described the content as '*historically accurate*' were more likely to give a higher rating of authenticity. Similarly, those who did not rate the experience as commemorative were less likely to rate the ISM as highly authentic; furthermore, there was a higher frequency of the highest rating of authenticity and a response of '*gives a voice to enslaved people*'. All three of these analyses are displayed below in Figure 78.
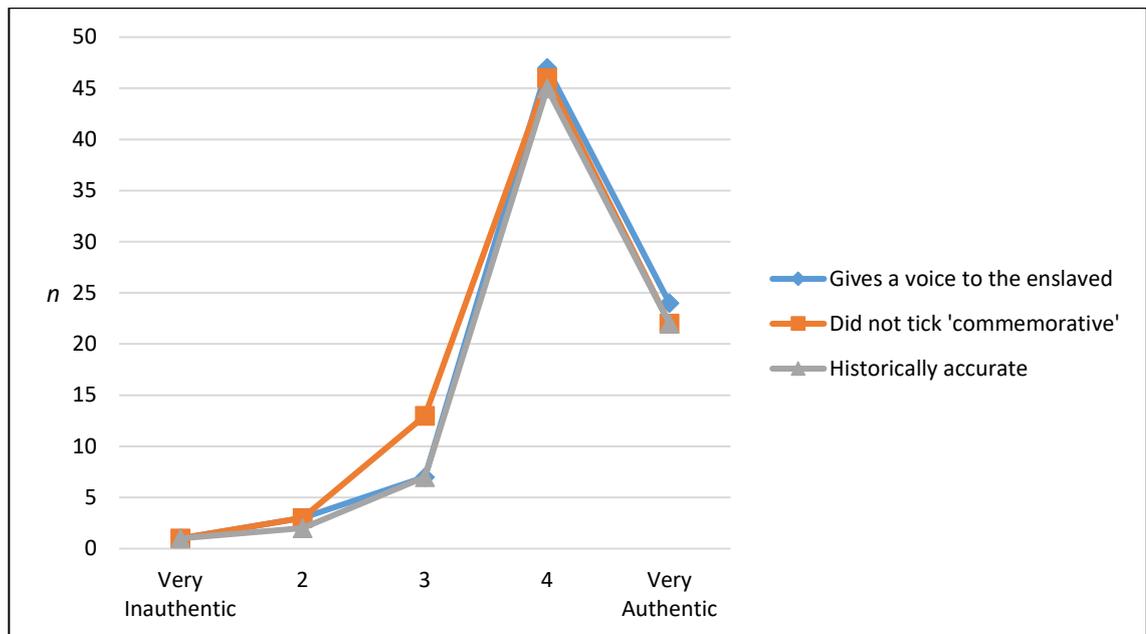
Figure 78: Bivariate analysis: Correlation of the description of the approach taken at the ISM (n) (Q6) and the overall authenticity of the ISM (Q18)

That correlation shows that attributes associated with modern dark tourism management considerations – such as factual accuracy, sensitivity and social reality (Seaton, 2009; Stone, 2006; Lennon & Foley, 2000) – lead visitors to perceive the ISM as authentic. Indeed, the supply-side interviewees support these concepts as a means towards authentic representation; JB (interview D, Q4) notes that the education programme focusses on the historic value of artefacts (such as shackles) in order to engender respect for them, and thus reveal them to be authentic. As such, it can be seen that representations in an accurate and sensitive manner are key to the supply-side design of authentic experience as discussed in the literature review (Seaton, 2009). Indeed, SCL also notes that the literature available in the shop allows visitors to continue their research and thus further authenticate the representations at the ISM. However, as noted previously, it must be remembered that authenticity in this instance is necessarily perceived by the individual (Wang, 1999); therefore, the supply-side cannot bestow authenticity *per se*, but can attempt to allow the experience at the ISM to be understood as such. By presenting the source material in an accurate, sensitive manner within a social reality framework, they therefore make those attempts, which are arguably successful based on the data on visitor perceptions.

Indeed, the role of semiotics can be seen as key to the interpretation of authenticity (Urry, 1990); as such, the ISM attempts to signify the role of the voice of enslaved people

within the museum's discourse and engender authentic encounters in that manner. However, this necessarily relies on the 'interpretant' (Pinto Santos & Soares Marques, 2011) – the visitor – viewing the sign in the manner intended by the supply-side. For example, an individual visitor may expect a museum to take a more dispassionate approach to the presentation of facts, and thus see the human perspective as insubstantial or even inauthentic regarding the interpretation of facts. Furthermore, Timothy and Boyd (2003) note that tourists may find 'true' authenticity to be overwhelming; in the context of dark tourism, this can be observed in the preservation of ontological security. Whilst visitors expect factual accuracy, they may also expect facts to be treated sensitively (Lennon & Foley, 2000). As such, the supply-side attempt maintain a balance between those two expectations; whilst both interviewees note that factual accuracy is paramount, they also both noted the potential for sensationalism, an admission which suggests that such a balance is currently enacted at the ISM, and that authenticity may indeed be a by-product of that process as a means for visitors to discern constructivist authenticity (Wang, 1999). Perhaps, then, as will be discussed in the final sub-theme, authenticity at the ISM can be described as a by-product of experience, rather than a central commodified aspect.

Sub-theme E3: Authenticity as a by-product of commodification

Based on the previous two sub-themes, it could be said that the way in which information is commodified at the ISM allows visitors to perceive authenticity however they choose to interpret it. However, this is not borne out in the data; whilst the presence of other museums in the Maritime Museum building can be seen to enhance the importance of the ISM (58%, Q15), there is no clear link to the perception of authenticity and so the ISM cannot be said to be authenticated by the other museums. Rather, the supply-side harnesses the historic discourse and enables authenticity – as a subjective construct – to be perceived individually by the visitor. To that end, the other Maritime Museum institutions, despite existing within the same servicescape as the ISM, do not affect the authenticity of the ISM and as such their semiotic role is reduced. As previously established, the café and shop have no identifiable link to the authenticity of ISM, and so therefore the ISM gallery itself appears to be the sole source of authenticity for the experience. Perhaps, then, the way in which the information is commodified – returning to the concept of balance as noted in the literature review as well as E2 – can be said to produce authentic encounters as a by-product of its presentation.

For example, whilst SCL notes that the '*brutal aspects*' of slavers are not the focus of the ISM (interview C, line 430), by describing them the museum depicts the reality of

life for enslaved people. Visitors may then decide whether it is authentic based on the veracity of the sources, the gravitas of the institution, their own prior knowledge, or other such factors (Willard, Lade & Frost, 2013). The substantiated evidence, according to SCL (interview C, from line 352) gives balance which should give visitors an authentic insight into the TST. Similarly, JB notes the importance of factual accuracy as the foundation of authenticity (interview D, Q15), just as community engagement and education programmes at the site seek to bolster the profile, substance and the reputation of the ISM which will, from the supply-side's perspective, allow visitors to have an authentic experience. Indeed, in bivariate analysis of Q14 – how the approach should differ to consider one's own personal preference – with Q17's Likert scale of authenticity, those who answered '4' or '5 (more detailed)' were less likely than average to select '4' or '5' on the scale of authenticity, as shown below in Figure 79.

Answered 'More Detailed' to (Q14):
'In your opinion, how would you describe your experience today at the ISM?'
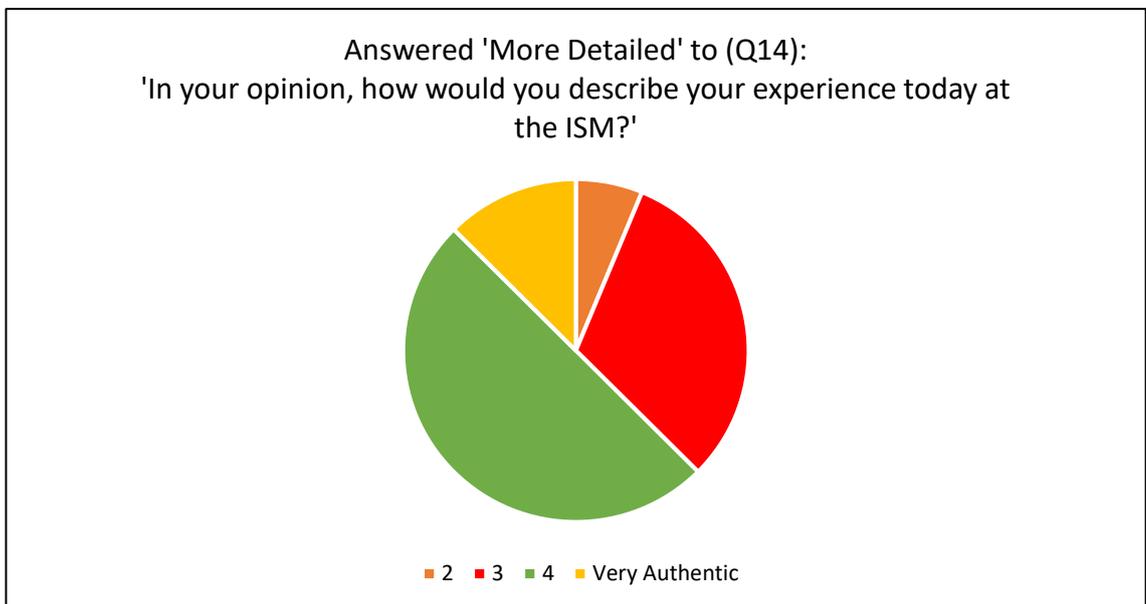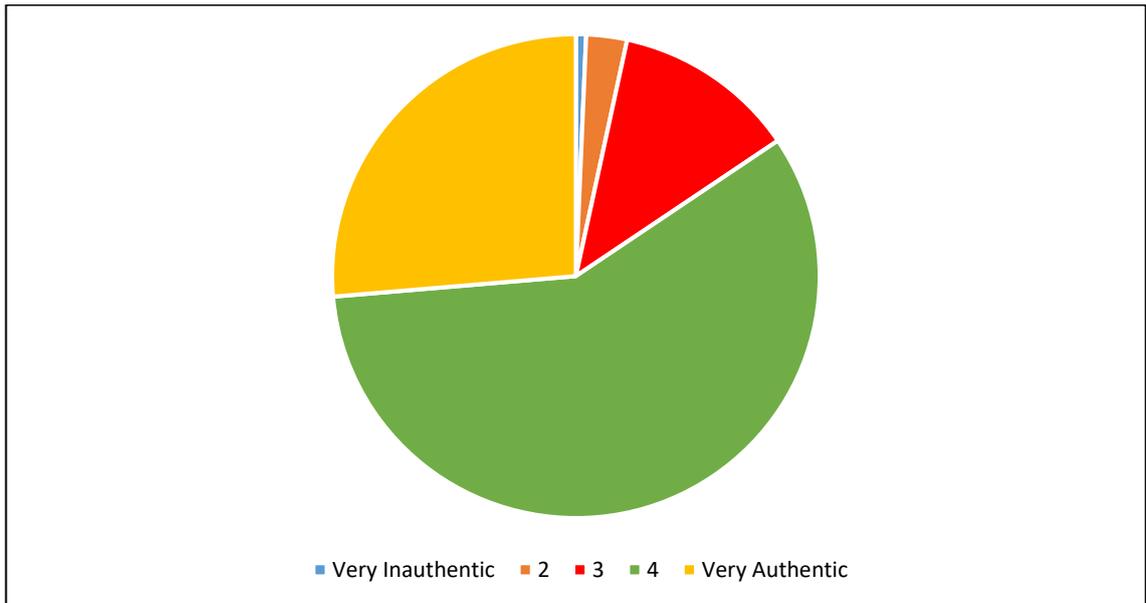
Figure 79: Univariate analysis of Q17: '*In your opinion, how would you describe your experience today at the ISM?*'/ Bivariate analysis: Proportion of the overall authenticity of the ISM (Q17) amongst respondents who stated the subject of slavery could have been '*more detailed*' (Q14)

That relationship suggests that a (perceived) lack of information makes one less able to distinguish authenticity; indeed, those who answered '*no differently*' to Q14 answered Q17 largely as average. As such, it can be inferred that authenticity is engendered as a by-product, rather than an inherent feature, of the commodification of information within the museum. Site authenticity is a subjective measure (Wang, 1999), and the supply side

present cues for how the visitor should behave or react but, just as with any semiotic cue, the commodified aspect of experience may be misinterpreted or overlooked by the visitor if indeed we accept that tourists are likely to seek out their own biases (Boorstin, 1987). As such, authenticity is not a discrete entity which can be commodified *per se*; it is arguably the other aspects of experience which are commodified in order to engender an authentic representation as a by-product. Thus, the commodification process directs the visitor's experience towards that authentic experience as intended by the supply side.

<u>Mapping Theme E: Authenticity Through Commodification</u>

As shown within this theme, authenticity and commodification have some link which is dependent on each individual aspect of experience, though, in the context of this thesis, it is noted that the entire visitor experience is enacted through commodification. Thus, the commodification may have no effect, or it may have an effect as discussed herein. Those aspects which have an effect, such as the interpretative materials in the ISM gallery, can therefore be seen to convey authentic representations of the discourses presented at the museum, though it is further suggested that authenticity, as a construct, is encountered as a by-product of commodification, which thus links authenticity and commodification within a process as noted in Figure 80. As such, the presence of authenticity and commodification within the same process is identified – that, essentially, commodification allows the visitor to perceive authenticity (whether it is interpreted as such by the visitor or not) and thus affects the visitor experience by providing a framework in which the aims of the institution are conveyed.
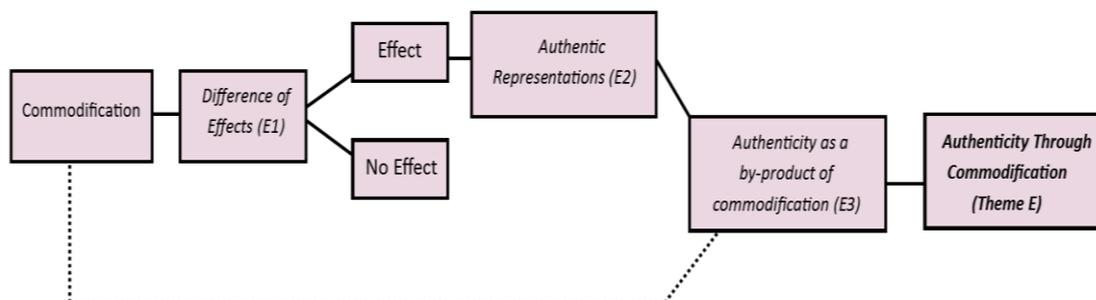
Figure 80: Mapping Theme E, International Slavery Museum

7.5: Mapping New Knowledge

In the same manner as Chapter Six, the cognitive processes which constitute the analysis of findings is 'mapped' using a schematic diagram, and are provided in order to give an overall picture of the analysis. Each theme is mapped in full within each respective section. Figure 81 denotes the way in which the various sub-themes link together in order to create larger themes and broader outcomes – the 'semiotic framework' – towards discussion in Chapter Eight.

Figure 81: Knowledge Map, Case Study Two: International Slavery Museum

7.5.1: Demographic Information

Figure 82 states the spread of respondents across the demographic areas surveyed in the questionnaire: age group, gender, and place of permanent residence.

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	62	41.3
Female	74	49.3
No response	14	9.3
Age Group	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
18-24	24	16
25-34	24	16
35-44	14	9.3
45-54	39	26
55-64	28	18.7
65+	20	13.3
No response	1	0.7
Place of Residence	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
The local area	23	15.3
Rest of the UK	90	60
Overseas	19	12.7
No response	18	12

Figure 82: Case Study One visitor questionnaire demographic information

7.6: Chapter Summary

This chapter has demonstrated the outcome of the empirical research into the International Slavery Museum case study. By synthesising the findings from both research methods, distinct themes have been provided in order to address the research question and objectives in conjunction with the concepts covered within the literature

review. In a similar vein to Lancaster Castle, the findings suggest that commodification is a tool which provides a semiotic framework in which the visitor consumes the touristic experience in a particular way broadly in line with organisational aims. Although the emergent themes are broadly the same, it is the sub-themes which demonstrate the key differences within the case studies. Those differences are provided as an illumination of critical issues in the commodification of dark tourism across the typological Spectrum (Stone, 2006), and, as noted in Chapter Five, not for the reason of direct comparative critique against one another. The final step within this thesis, however, is to combine the two in order to provide a definitive response to the question and objectives based on the entirety of the analysis through this research. As such, Chapter Eight serves to summarise and conclude this research on the commodification of dark tourism by providing a conceptual schematic of knowledge, a summation of key themes, a clear thesis, and a further discussion of the 'semiotic framework'.

Chapter Eight

Conclusion

8.0: Chapter Introduction

This thesis has critically appraised the effects of commodification on the visitor experience within UK dark tourism. The findings discussed in Chapters Six and Seven have contributed to the field of dark tourism research and, in doing so, have offered a fresh perspective on the relationship between supply and demand in the modern tourism industry. The two chosen sites in question, as individual (and non-comparative) case studies, have yielded findings that have contributed to an original 'semiotic framework' model, as outlined later in this chapter. Therefore, this chapter will present a concluding discussion on the research outcomes, synthesising all parts of this research into one final discussion.

The chapter begins with a summary of the study contents. Subsequently, an original blueprint-model for the study is offered – termed here the 'Semiotic Framework of Dark Tourism Experience'. Finally, there is a direct response to the research question, a presentation of the thesis, and a consideration of the limitations to this research before a conclusion to the study.

8.1: The Commodification of Dark Tourism: Conceptualising the Visitor Experience

This thesis has offered original research into the nature of the visitor experience of dark tourism within the commodification process which, it has been argued, is inherent within modern tourism. After a background and explanation of the parameters in Chapter One, Chapter Two began the literature review by grounding the tourist experience within a search for meaning which is addressed by two over-arching motivations: the inwardly-satisfying search for novelty and the outwardly-satisfying search for esteem. This examined the question of *why* one becomes a tourist by focussing on demand. Focus was then turned to the supply of tourism experiences to explore how that demand is addressed by the supply-side. This involved identifying certain 'symptoms' of commodification such as admission fees, shops and servicescapes as a framework in which tourists may consume what are necessarily commodified products in today's industry, and the resulting semiotic cues which may also affect visitor behaviour and experience.

Chapter Three focussed specifically on dark tourism, first contemplating *why* one may engage in dark tourism experiences. This raised the notion of the 'novelty of place', in which the heterotopic nature of sites of dark tourism was outlined as a key point within this thesis. Furthermore, the chapter noted how conspicuous consumption – and conspicuous compassion (West, 2004) – can form a key part of the visitor experience as a way of gaining the esteem of others. Throughout that chapter, the implementation of commodification from a supply-side perspective was also considered due to its inherent relationship with visitor experience; thus, again, the symptoms such as gift shops and admission fees were considered in relation to taste and the perception of authenticity. Chapter Four provided an examination of commodification in how its implementation may create simplistic or cheap kitsch representations of complex and emotional phenomena such as death and atrocity. By firstly noting current theory on the philosophical role of commodification, the chapter went on to consider how it manifests in practice from a supply-side perspective in the form of kitsch. Through discussion of 'pseudo-events' (Boorstin, 1987), 'staged authenticity' (MacCannell, 1976) and other symptoms of commodification, a conception of the way in which supply-side presentation affects visitor experience was revealed, thus identifying how such commodification impacts upon the visitor experience.

Chapter Five provided a methodological framework for the empirical research within this thesis, outlining the research philosophy, design and methods whilst also

noting how the research findings were to be interpreted and analysed towards forming meaning and conclusions. Chapters Six and Seven, respectively, examined Lancaster Castle and the International Slavery Museum as individual case studies. By combining the prior secondary research with original empirical findings and synthesising them through critical analysis, a discrete set of themes emerged which were linked to the themes of the literature review in order to provide a critique of the commodification of dark tourism and its effect on the visitor experience. The findings have contributed to the conception of a 'semiotic framework' which posits that the commodification of dark tourism affects the visitor experience by providing an environment in which to comprehend issues of death, mortality and atrocity. In this sense, it is argued that the commodification process affects the visitor experience in this manner, as will now be explained.

8.2: The Semiotic Framework of Dark Tourism Experience

Modern tourism is necessarily enacted through the lens of commodification (Sather-Wagstaff, 2011) – the process by which intangible experience is developed, packaged and sold to the market (Seaton, 2009; Walsh & Giulianotti, 2007). As such, the way in which dark tourism is commodified affects the way in which it is consumed and experienced by the visitor and, as the empirical research within this research has shown, it does so in a number of ways. Five specific and distinct facets of influence intermingle with one another within a model, which has been termed the Semiotic Framework of Dark Tourism Experience. The central concept of the semiotic framework model is the intrinsic role of commodification within the provision of visitor experience (Sather-Wagstaff, 2011; Seaton, 2009; Boorstin, 1987; MacCannell, 1976). However, rather than changing or *transforming* the fundamental nature of encounters with death and mortality, this model argues that commodification provides a *facilitatory* framework of semiotic cues relating to behavioural, experiential and touristic norms. As such, the cues – in the form of the 'symptoms' of commodification as discussed throughout this research – present stimuli which transact and mediate the supply and consumption of dark tourism and regulate concepts discussed in this research such as taste, the desequestration of death, authenticity and conspicuous compassion.

However, whilst visitor experience operates within the context of commodification and the semiotic framework, it is also key to note that, as has been observed through primary research, each individual aspect of experience presents its own set of semiotic stimuli, and thus its effect on the overall experience is distinct from all

others. Therefore, it may not simply be said that commodification *enhances* or *cheapens*; rather, the conception of the dark tourism visitor experience must take into account the effect of each individual symptom. Indeed, whilst, for example, a tour guide provides an in-depth commentary of a site and thus was seen by visitors to enhance the experience at Lancaster Castle as such, a gift shop may equally have no effect on the dark tourism experience. Within this consideration, the notion of a semiotic framework provides a number of stimuli (detailed in Figure 83) which combine to sculpt the visitor experience within the commodification of dark tourism in which those variables can be enacted on a 'sliding scale' (Chapter One, Figure 2) depending on the typology and nature of the experience in question.

Novelty of Place
Framing
Separation of Elements
Expansion of Experience
Authentication of Experience

Figure 83: Components of the Semiotic Framework of Dark Tourism Experience

Indeed, the effect of commodification is also dependent on the manner in which the visitor chooses to consume death and atrocity on-site. Whilst it can be assumed to chiefly concern meaningful encounters, empirical research has often noted the potential for voyeurism as a motivating factor to consume what could be termed unpleasant experiences when compared to the hedonistic nature of much tourism (Turner & Ash, 1975). However, whilst visitor motivations may vary, and thus affect the way in which aspects are interpreted accordingly, the supply-side provides prescribed experiences within which visitors have some agency to engage with certain discretionary aspects of experience, but are generally guided through a set of semiotic stimuli that make up the experience. Through the provision of a novel environment, the experience in dark tourism is facilitated by engendering the desequestration of death; extra elements are added to expand the experience, and authentic representations may be presented in order to fulfil the organisational aims of the site. As such, the commodification process affects the visitor experience by facilitating what are essentially a finite number of reactions or outcomes, and this research has identified five attributes (shown in Figure 83) of the commodification of dark tourism that affect the visitor experience, combining to present

an environment in which experience may be consumed in a socially sanctioned manner. Each component of the Semiotic Framework of Dark Tourism Experience shall now be summarised based on all research presented in this thesis.

8.2.1: Novelty of Place

Death is sequestered from the majority of modern life (Hohenhaus, 2013; Stanley & Wise, 2011; Mellor & Shilling, 1993; Giddens, 1991), and so in order for individuals to encounter and come to terms with mortality, sites of dark tourism offer spatial environments to constructively approach the associated concepts. This gives them an inherently novel quality as arenas of the desequestration of death and thus the novelty-seeking behaviour of tourists can be addressed within these heterotopic environments (Stone, 2013). Dark tourism is inherently commodified (Sather-Wagstaff, 2011; Seaton, 2009), and so that heterotopia – the novelty of place – is thus shaped by touristic frameworks as have been discussed in this thesis. Suppliers of dark tourism address the demand for meaningful encounters with mortality by providing a sculpted environment in which the shrouds of removal normally enacted upon death are peeled back, and in doing so set the framework for the visitor experience of dark tourism. Furthermore, by addressing visitor demand for novel (i.e. heterotopic) environments, suppliers also allow consumers to conspicuously consume dark tourism in a socially-sanctioned manner set out by the conventions of modern tourism in a way which may garner esteem from others. Indeed, this has been termed 'conspicuous compassion' (West, 2004) due to the nature of experience within dark tourism at sites such as the International Slavery Museum which deal with atrocity and its implications on human life. As such, the novelty of place satisfies inward and outward visitor motivations (novelty seeking and esteem seeking) in a location that can reflect the nature of dark tourism supply by examining issues of death and atrocity.

Within the Semiotic Framework, the novelty of place manifests as semiotic cues rather than explicit explanation. The case studies in this research do not explicitly describe themselves as arenas of the desequestration of death; rather, the supply-side uses symptoms of commodification which allow visitors to understand that concepts encountered on-site are in fact sequestered from normal life (whether before or during the visit). As such, the novelty of place is an implicit facet of experience that forms part of the overall Semiotic Framework. This 'novelty of place' further supplements the current conception of heterotopias (Stone, 2013; Toussaint & Decrop, 2013; Foucault, 1967) by situating it within the dichotomy of supply and demand. Within dark tourism supply, the

novelty of place is necessarily commodified and presented within a touristic servicescape in line with managerial practice of the modern industry, and so as a commodified entity the notion of place forms part of the supply of experience by, for example, enacting the desequestration of death. However, it can also be seen to form part of an existing demand for encounters with mortality; as has been shown throughout this research via primary and secondary sources, there exists demonstrable desire within society for meaningful (and voyeuristic) encounters which temporarily reverse the sequestration of death in an ontologically secure environment. As such, sites of dark tourism are thus endowed with a novel quality that can be seen to address wider tourist novelty-seeking behaviour.

8.2.2: Framing

The novelty of place provides a foundation on which dark tourism may be consumed, and it is within that context that visitors encounter the physical or implicit symptoms of commodification. Each one has a semiotic role; as the empirical research suggested, certain symptoms of commodification play a specific role in directing visitor thought processes and behaviour. As demonstrated, certain symptoms may have no effect, whilst some may enhance the experience. Crucially, this research has found that these symptoms do not transform the experience but, within the Semiotic Framework of Dark Tourism Experience, facilitate the experience and provide behavioural and experiential cues. Based on those findings, three types have been observed, as will now be explained.

Curatorial Frame

At the ISM, the discourse is framed through a 'social history' perspective, and so the visitor experience is necessarily enacted through that frame (though it is nonetheless open to further interpretation as noted in Chapter Seven). Similarly, the dark history at Lancaster Castle is presented (and thus consumed) in the context of law and order so that execution and unethical penal conduct is seen as socially sanctioned at the time at which it occurred. This can be termed a *curatorial frame*.

Commercial Frame

Other symptoms of commodification have been shown to provide frames which can dictate visitor attitudes and reactions, and thus the overall experience. The presence of a shop or café, as noted in both case studies, frames a site as a conventional touristic entity within which, despite the themes of dark tourism, visitors can engage in commercial activity which is an accepted aspect of modern tourism (Brown, 2013a; Sturken, 2007;

Mars & Mars, 2000). Indeed, such symptoms of commodification can also be seen as framing the site as ontologically secure in conjunction with the novelty of place. This can be termed a *commercial frame*.

Thanatological Frame

The concept of framing is grounded in the role of semiotics (Urry, 1990). As such, despite the tangible aspects of framing in dark tourism (such as the physical commercial outlets as discussed), the intangible elements of experience – such as taste, sensitivity, curatorial direction and delineation of space (explored further in 8.2.3) – form a major part of framing in the context of this research. Such implicit frames arguably reflect the many unwritten ethical 'rules' and considerations which apply generally in the supply and consumption of dark tourism as noted throughout this thesis, and as such can be seen to permeate the experience through subjective frames provided by the commodification process but which are informed by those unwritten rules based on our societal conception of death. Therefore, it is argued that these frames represent the approach of the supply-side and typological considerations, but also visitor expectations based on cultural mores. This can be termed a *thanatological frame*. The three frames are summarised in Figure 84.

Framing Dark Tourism: A Typology		
Name	*Description*	*Example*
Curatorial Frame	Explicit/ implicit, supply-led. The effect of the commodification of information.	Social history discourse at the ISM.
Commercial Frame	Explicit, supply/ demand led. The effect of commercial philosophy and its symptoms.	Café and shop at Lancaster Castle.
Thanatological Frame	Implicit, supply/ demand-led. The effect of societal attitudes to the (de)sequestration and consumption of death and atrocity.	Variation in tone across different areas of Lancaster Castle.

Figure 84: Framing Dark Tourism: A Typology

8.2.3: Separation of Elements

The commodification of dark tourism provides many facets with semiotic value; whilst they are linked within the overall semiotic framework, those individual facets can be physically and psychologically separated from one another and away from core encounters with mortality by incorporating a discretionary nature into the servicescape. Thus, for example, a commercial concession such as a gift shop can operate within the bounds of itself and have no effect on how issues of mortality are consumed; this appears to be the case in both case studies, and so the separation of elements can be seen to be in effect. Furthermore, visitors generally note the admission fee at Lancaster Castle as an accepted facet of tourist sites, which has no effect on their consumption of the experience. As such, though it forms part of the experience, its primary purpose is to facilitate access to the site without affecting the core experience. Similarly, the free admission at the ISM, whilst beneficial in facilitating access, is overall a minor visitor consideration.

A key concept within the separation of elements is physical separation. By designing the servicescape to physically separate symptoms of commodification, the supply-side overtly denote, as shown in both case studies, that the shop and café are distinct from the core experience despite forming part of the overall experience through linkage to, for example, educational materials or souvenirs. As such, we may observe various strata within the experience in terms of how aspects are separated from each other, shown below in Figure 85.

Type	Description	Examples
Core Elements	Central to the experience	Museum gallery
Discretionary Elements	Some thematic link to the core elements – optional within the servicescape	Gift shop, events
Facilitatory Elements	No thematic link to the core elements – optional/ mandatory	Café, admission fee

Figure 85: Separation of Elements

This separation, as shown in the discussion herein, is arguably also a supply-side attempt to psychologically separate discretionary and facilitatory elements from the core elements in order to maintain taste, sensitivity and/ or authenticity whilst also providing

aspects of experience expected in modern tourism. Indeed, it is concluded that such separation provides frames (as discussed in 8.2.2) through which mortality is mediated and thus affects the sense of ontological (in)security which visitors may feel (Giddens, 1991). By approaching concepts of death and atrocity through the desequestration of death, that insecurity is at risk of increasing; therefore, the psychological separation, whilst preserving notions of taste, nonetheless provides a veneer of familiarity via commercial outlets to reduce feelings of insecurity. However, whilst the physical separation is overt in its implementation, the psychological separation is self-evidently subjective in the mind of the visitor, and so may figure in varying levels from visitor to visitor. Indeed, as shown through primary data, the exact role of each symptom differs in terms of its link and separation, thus showing that despite supply-side intentions, the Semiotic Framework acts as a subjective construct which attempts to elicit, rather than assure, certain responses. This can be accepted because experience is necessarily unique and, despite the control implemented through the Semiotic Framework, does not objectively ensure, for example, the ontological security of visitors.

8.2.4: Expansion of Experience

The nature of tourism in the 21st century can be seen to necessitate a diverse product with multiple points of access for consumer groups. As such, the sites examined in this research have an imperative to expand the experience in order to satisfy that requirement. Whilst they are at core sites of dark tourism, which provide a medium in which the sequestration of death is peeled back, they are also sites of leisure within the industry of tourism, and so balancing those two attributes is important so that one does not detract from the other. Indeed, this balance is noted in both case studies whereby symptoms of commodification are provided to expand the experience and add extra facets to the visitor experience. However, in the context of this research, it is crucial to note that the effect of that commodification is not always *transformative* towards the central subjects of death and atrocity, but is more often seen by both the supply-side and visitors as *supplementary* in that it has little demonstrable impact upon the core experience of those subjects. As such, they can be interpreted as semiotic cues that direct the visitor to, for example, extend their time on-site. Indeed, the expansion of experience can be seen to occur in three forms as will now be shown.

Firstly, the expansion of *temporal experience* through which the amount of time spent on-site by visitors is increased, such as the presence of a shop or café. Secondly, commodification can expand the *potential experience*, whereby visitors may, for

example, purchase souvenirs that can engender meaning-making for future recall of the experience and associated concepts later (Paraskevaidis & Andriotis, 2015; Morgan & Pritchard, 2005; Love & Sheldon, 1998). Furthermore, as the data and discussion presented herein has also shown, certain symptoms of commodification, such as a café, can be described as *facilitation of experience* in that they provide services enabling the further consumption of dark tourism experiences, again providing a distinct aspect of experience that does not fundamentally change the core encounters with death and atrocity. Arguably, it is this three-fold potential for expansion in which the visitor experience is diversified into a commodified touristic product; thus, the visitor experience is affected by allowing extra aspects of experience to supplement the consumption of dark tourism. The expansion of experience is conceptualised in Figure 86; the premise of this model is that three vertices of the triangle represent the extent to which the experience is expanded in that direction. For example, due to the relatively low amount of souvenirs available at the ISM, that vertex would extended less than that of Lancaster Castle which has many more retail lines available.
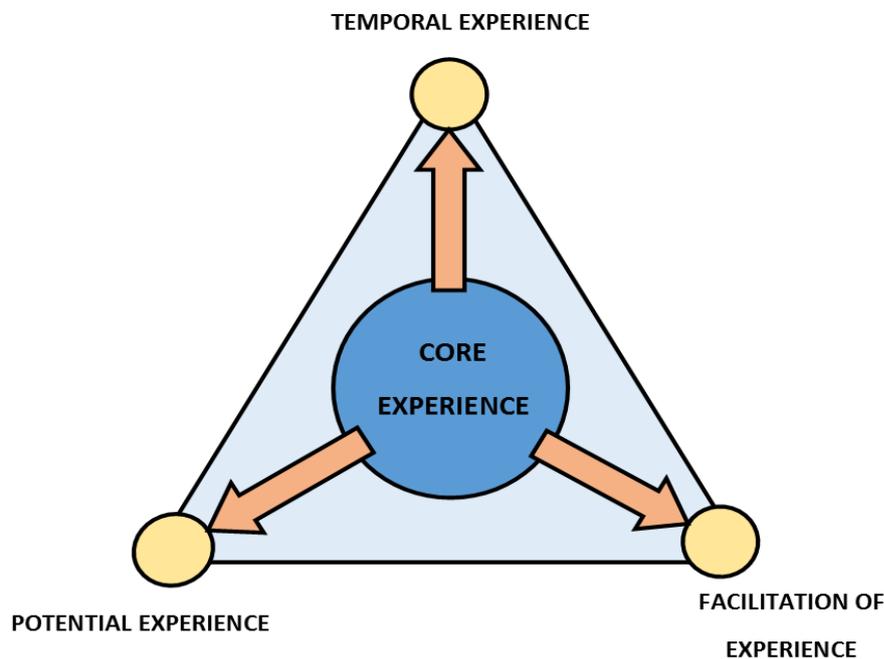
Figure 86: Expansion of dark tourism experience

8.2.5: Authentication of Experience

Whilst the concept of authenticity may be seen to be entirely subjective (Wang, 1999), by using the frames of commodification and the expansion of experience, suppliers of dark tourism can demonstrate authenticity through the commodification of information or knowledge. As such, rather than providing authentic experiences *per se*, the commodification of dark tourism provides a context in which experiences may be authenticated by the visitor through the Semiotic Framework. For example, at Lancaster Castle, the use of a tour guide allows visitors to receive insightful expert information about the site and its history in an attempt to avoid misconceptions and provide a rich education to visitors. As such, visitors are arguably more able to discern the veracity and authenticity of the Castle within their experience than if the experience was self-guided. Whilst it is difficult to objectively label a site as authentic due to its subjective nature (Sharpley, 1999; Fees, 1996), the visitor is nonetheless guided by the supply-side towards the prescribed attributes of the Castle that can be evaluated by the visitor towards a perception of authenticity. As authenticity is not a liminal or finite entity, it therefore forms a subjective and intangible part of the visitor experience and is greatly amplified in terms of its perception by the semiotic cues presented through the commodification process.

Indeed, as noted at the ISM, authenticity may thus be described as a by-product of commodification, rather than as a quality inherent to the experience because it requires (within the current conception of tourism) commodification in order for it to be perceived by visitors. Therefore, rather than viewing commodification as deleterious to the authenticity of a site or experience, or unethical or tasteless within the bounds of dark tourism, it can be argued that commodification and authenticity are indelibly linked. In that case, though, there is clearly a balance to maintain which may erode the authenticity of a site; the two case studies within this research display that positive balance in that the aspects of commodification either enhanced understanding, importance and experience or had no effect on visitor perceptions of authenticity. As such, the ability for commodification to positively enhance the perception of authenticity within the visitor experience can be observed, and thus authenticity can be included as an outcome of the semiotic framework because it is engendered by those cues.

8.2.6: Conceptualising the Semiotic Framework

This thesis has revealed multiple ways in which commodification affects the visitor experience, though it concludes that, in the context of the two case studies and also secondary research, these effects are primarily of a semiotic nature and do not fundamentally alter the contemplation of the issues of death which are offered in dark tourism. The lens of commodification provides signs that direct the visitor to engage with the experience in several ways, and thus does not fundamentally change the experience but in fact acts as a facilitatory framework in which to consume dark tourism. Whilst there is variation between the two case studies, this is to be expected due to the fine balance of differentiation across sites (Stone, 2006); indeed, how exactly that framework manifests can be seen, as discussed, to be subject to the managerial considerations such as sensitivity, commercial philosophy, and the desequestration of death. Therefore, the framework itself is fluid regarding the magnitude of the role of each variable, but it nonetheless offers a theoretical account of how the commodification process affects the visitor experience. This research has also considered how and why one may engage in dark tourism; the processes involved in the supply-side commodification of experience, the critical role of the supply-demand dichotomy in the commodification process, and the role and perception of authenticity through the lens of commodification.

Within the dark tourism experience, the concepts of mortality are located in the novel environment that is itself situated within a commodified servicescape. This therefore frames the experience of mortality; from there, the experience can be expanded and authenticated through that novel environment and, discretionally, through separated aspects of experience such as a shop or café. This process – the Semiotic Framework of Dark Tourism Experience – is depicted in Figure 87.
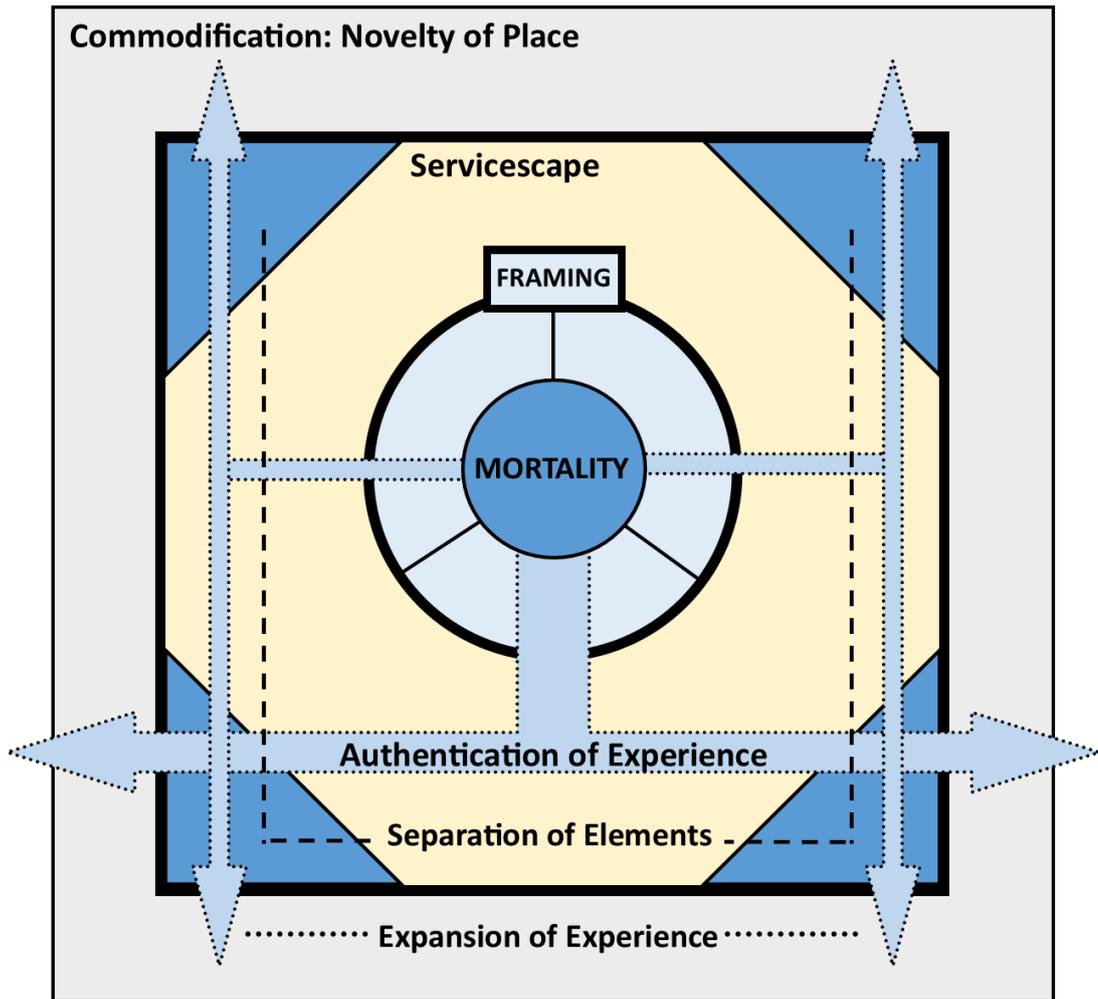
Figure 87: A Semiotic Framework of Dark Tourism Experience

8.3: Research Conclusions, Contribution and Achievement

The edifices of death across the globe provide a myriad of perspectives into our conception of death through time. The Great Pyramid, Roman catacombs, the Tower of London, the Taj Mahal, slaver forts, concentration camps; all of them represent a specific epoch and a specific approach to death whether in magisterial splendour, ethereal mystery, practical functionality, or perverse and murderous ideology. Indeed, such is their ability to denote those thoughts and emotions that they all now form part of the tourism industry and, arguably, are sites of what can be termed dark tourism (Stone, 2006; Lennon & Foley, 2000). That industry, which is necessarily commodified so that it may be sold (Sather-Wagstaff, 2011; Sturken, 2007), is an established facet of the global network of tourism providers and enjoys substantial interest (Lennon & Foley, 2000). However, whilst the seeking of lurid or upsetting experiences regarding death and suffering may seem at odds with the notion of tourism as a tool of relaxation or straightforward enjoyment, it reflects

274

the real human need to engage with the singularly uniting aspect of human life, our mortality (Giddens, 1991), through different means whether visiting sites such as those above or through art. Just as J. G. Ballard's controversial 1970 work 'The Atrocity Exhibition' is his attempt to come to terms with the horrors implicit (and occasionally visible) in modern life (Tew, 2012), so too the Joy Division song of the same name (*sans* 'the') released a decade later (Morley, 2007) depicts a form of spectacle which we now may term 'dark tourism':

'You'll see the horrors of a faraway place,
meet the architects of law face to face.
See mass murder on a scale you've never seen,
and all the ones who try hard to succeed.
This is the way, step inside.
This is the way, step inside...'

(Curtis, 1980)

Of course, the desire of humans to engage in exploration of mortality has formed only part of the scope of this research. Rather, it is how those desires are met and shaped by the supply-side through the commodification of dark tourism. Through a series of individual research objectives, this research has served to address one over-arching research question: '*how does the commodification process affect the visitor experience in UK dark tourism*?'. In doing so, it has broadened academic conception of the unique relationship between supply and demand within the realm of dark tourism by exploring the relationship which the two have, as played out through the lens of commodification (Sather-Wagstaff, 2011). It has done so by offering a grounding in existing literature, exploring key concepts which have emerged as the body of research into dark tourism has burgeoned. Tourist motivation – demand – for experiences which provide novel value and the scope for societal esteem yet within ontologically secure environments (Stone, 2013) have been melded with supply-side considerations such as commodification (Walsh & Giulianotti, 2007), organisational aims, sensitivity, kitsch representations (Sturken, 2007) and the role which they play in the mediation of the sequestration of death. Those aforementioned considerations serve to variously preserve and (temporarily) reverse that sequestration which is prevalent in modern life, and in doing so sculpt the visitor experience.

'How does the commodification process affect visitor experiences within UK dark tourism?' was stated in Chapter One as the central question of this research. By following the research objectives (as summarized in Figure 88), the literature review and empirical research have served to address that question and have produced outcomes which offer a theoretical response and a thesis.

Research Objective	Outcomes and Contribution
• Critically appraise visitors' engagement with dark tourism sites, attractions or exhibitions.	Visitor motivations Heterotopia – the 'novelty of place' Conspicuous consumption & compassion 'Separation of elements'
• Critically examine fundamental interrelationships between producer and consumer within dark tourism.	Effects of symptoms of commodification Semiotic Framework of Dark Tourism Experience Supply/ consumption of kitsch Discretionary aspects of experience
• Critically evaluate the extent of how and why commodification affects notions of authenticity at specific dark tourism sites.	Authentication via framing – 'curatorial frame' Sensitivity Interpretation of symptoms of commodification 'Thanatological frame'

Figure 88: Research Objectives and abridged outcomes

Therefore, this thesis states that the commodification process offers a framework termed the 'Semiotic Framework of Dark Tourism Experience'. It affects the visitor experience through semiotic stimuli, which combine to *facilitate, separate, and authenticate* aspects of experience, rather than fundamentally altering the dark tourism experience.

Based on that thesis, this research concludes that commodification, whilst nonetheless having significant agency in shaping the visitor experience, is not transformative by nature, but is in fact a supplementary and relatively modular process.

However, it forms an imperative part of the visitor experience – which could not exist within the modern tourism industry without commodification – and its reach and effects vary across the servicescape. In achieving a conception of the Semiotic Framework of Dark Tourism Experience, it can be shown that commodification and dark tourism, far from being uncomfortable or destructive bedfellows, are arguably intrinsically linked and part of one reality, which can scarcely be separated. Indeed, that notion of separation forms one specific facet of commodification as noted in 8.2.3; it is that separation of elements which also shows that certain aspects of commodification are discretionary, and that the visitor has some agency within the confines of commodification to alter the interpretation of experience. For example, individuals who view a gift shop as unimportant or even inappropriate may simply disregard it in terms of not only its use but also its place within the overall experience. As the data analysis has shown, shop entities do not, simply by virtue of their existence, dictate a specific outcome on the visitor experience; rather, it is the choice of the consumer to interpret its semiology as meaningful or not. Whilst there is quite clearly scope for that semiotic meaning to be taken to extremes (Brown, 2013a; Sturken, 2007), that did not emerge from this research and so provides evidence that such visitor discretion can indeed influence the role of commodified aspects of experience. Perhaps the conception of commodification as deleterious or inherently separate to experience is a perspective which is rooted in a tourism of yesteryear. Of course, such a bold statement must be substantiated with further research; it is suggested that this research offers materials from which further theoretical understanding may emerge of the relationship of commodification and the visitor experience.

This research has contributed a distinct and original conception of commodification. It simultaneously complements some existing theory whilst providing further exploration of the visitor experience at sites of dark tourism which has to date been broadly overlooked in favour of the supply-side implementation of the tourist experience (as noted in Chapter One). Furthermore, the Semiotic Framework model characterises the visitor experience as a set of separate aspects, some of which may be discretionary, linked together within one servicescape which is interpreted by the visitor based on aspects of experience or 'symptoms of commodification'. By utilising the phenomenological tradition, experience of dark tourism has been characterised as a process in which the visitor has agency to accept or counteract the supply-side based on prior beliefs and experience; in so doing, the research has achieved new insight into how they are sold and consumed in the UK dark tourism industry.

The structure and outcomes of this research are summarised in Figure 89.
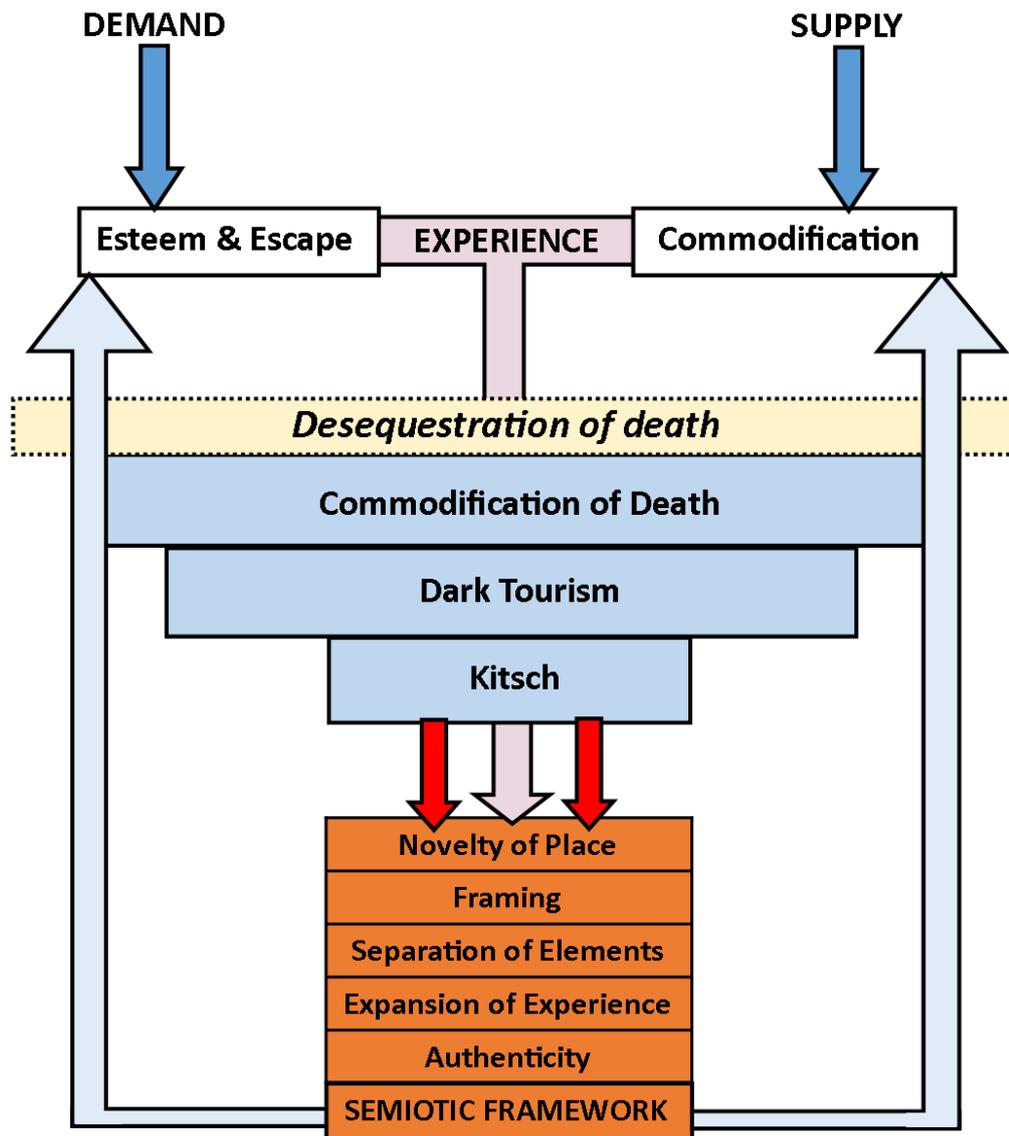
Figure 89: The Commodification of Dark Tourism: Conceptualising the Visitor Experience – a summary

Just as the approach to death within society differs widely from one individual to the next, so too will dark tourism remain a medium through which a diverse spectrum of emotions will be channelled, not just in terms of the potentially upsetting or disturbing content, but also in terms of how it is packaged and sold to the visitor. Indeed, it is realistic to expect that this current conception of commodification will become obsolete and be replaced by a contemporaneous understanding reflecting further evolution of dark tourism and attitudes to mortality. As such, this research represents the manifestation of

commodified dark tourism at time of writing, but is nonetheless intended to be positioned within the current *milieu* of contemporary tourism research, and specifically within the study of dark tourism. Indeed, to that end, some limitations of this research shall now be considered towards a fuller evaluation of its import.

8.4: Research Limitations

Despite the authority associated with academic research, it is prudent to acknowledge some specific limitations to the primary research in conjunction with those of a methodological nature as outlined in Chapter Five. This is not intended to be entirely exhaustive, but is an attempt to address the major points that limit the impact and import of this thesis. By noting these limitations, it is shown that this research has been subject to thorough reflective analysis with due consideration given to its implications.

Firstly, it is important to note the cultural context. Whilst the research question clearly states that the sphere of investigation is necessarily the UK dark tourism industry, there may be temptations to expand the generalisations made herein to include other Western countries because the globalisation of the experience economy may allow it. Whilst it may be of use as a comparative or advisory framework in addressing dark tourism in other countries, the outcome of this research is nonetheless firmly rooted in the UK, with the majority of respondents being UK residents. Therefore, the findings lack significance compared to research expanded beyond the strictures of the UK.

Secondly, the demographic information supplied for the visitor survey is intended to act as a demonstration of the diversity of the sample, rather than to act as a variable in the analysis of this research; incidence of certain responses were not, for example, tested against a certain age group in order to observe any correlation. Throughout this research, the concept of evolving taste has been noted; as such, it may be that older demographics are more inclined towards older mores, whereas younger individuals may be observed to move towards newer understanding of mortality. Whilst this exploration of personal perspective in relation to age was not intended a point of enquiry within this research, it nonetheless represents a limitation that the findings are not delineated thus.

Thirdly, the level of subjectivity involved in participant research must be taken into account. The potential for interviewer effects was noted in Chapter Five, but, in that vein, also consider the position of supply-side managers. Their role as employees compels them to provide a certain positive perspective on the site in question. This may indeed be the true opinion of the individual and the organisation, but it may not be the true reality of the site's operation. As such, interviewee responses can be said to display a specific

perspective rather than a necessarily factual reality. Furthermore, questionnaire respondents were asked to answer questions with subjective observations; tools such as, for example, a Likert scale can be widely interpreted in terms of the significance of each numerical increment, and so one respondent's '3' may be different to another respondent and, indeed, the researcher. Therefore, this research represents a subjective 'snapshot' of dark tourism experience and its commodification, and provides a lens through which future research may focus in order to form a broader picture of the commodification of dark tourism. Furthermore, in conjunction with the methodological limitations as outlined in Chapter Five, the use of a case study design reduces the level of generalisation which may ensue from this research and its findings. The aforementioned subjectivity, alongside the notion of an 'exemplifying case' (Bryman, 2008, p. 56) further suggests that this research offers one specific phenomenological snapshot as opposed to any form of objective reality.

A further limitation concerns the unique effect and inherent bias of the researcher upon the data collection and analysis. Whilst this is to be expected in non-positivist research, it must nonetheless be noted herein that I as researcher have approached this research with a specific perspective based on my own understanding and perceptions of those concepts both contained within this thesis and those which have been omitted. I have undertaken this research as a White British liberal atheist male of the generation born in the latter part of the 20th century with specific pre-existing knowledge of history, heritage, tourism and management, alongside associated preconceptions and expectations of how doctoral research in the area should ensue. Whilst it is impossible to clearly denote exactly how those (and other) attributes have affected me and my work during this time (if indeed at all), it is safe to assume that someone with differing attributes may approach this research question in an alternative manner and arrive at other conclusions. For example, my research into the International Slavery Museum might have taken a different perspective if I was Black British, or if indeed I was African-American or White American. Nonetheless, by utilising my own unique consciousness, consisting of prior experience and knowledge, I have come to view the completion of this research as a journey in itself, which has led me to amass further experience and knowledge *en route* to the conclusions in this chapter. The outcomes of this research are therefore the result of analysis that may differ if undertaken by another researcher, which may be seen as a limitation more generally of the phenomenological tradition. However, by acknowledging this as a potential limitation, it is also noted that it is the uniqueness of the human mind that allows new knowledge to be inferred from inert data, and so I have enacted my own

knowledge, experience and due diligence in the undertaking of this research thesis in an appropriate and replicable manner.

8.5: Closure

Though its reality is often sequestered, death is central to our lives because it endows our existence with temporal constraint that might even be termed uniqueness. Just as it is reflected in art from time immemorial, from pre-historic cave daubing and through Classical philosophy to Dante, Berlioz, Poe, Blake, Ballard, Curtis and Morrissey on towards Hirst and Banksy, so too it manifests in tourism by way of dark tourism and the mediation of mortality in public life. Nevertheless, whereas art, profane or profound as it may be, exists essentially for its own sake, the engagement with mortality as provided by dark tourism, as discussed in this thesis, provides a distinct framework in which individuals may interact with the dead and their legacy. The role of the capitalist dichotomy of supply and demand, as shown throughout this research, controls exactly how that interaction is facilitated. To that end, it may be concluded that dark tourism, much like today's art, is inextricably linked to commerce – its monetary worth, whether for profit or not. It exists within our capitalist society and thus perpetuates that system, for better or worse.

Indeed, in the song 'Paint a Vulgar Picture', taken from their 1987 album *Strangeways, Here We Come* (named after the notorious and iconic Manchester prison), The Smiths offer a treatise on the exploitative nature of the music industry which offers a link to the potential for tasteless kitsch elements of commodification sometimes witnessed within dark tourism. Conspicuous compassion, commerce, the lack of agency which we as humans are subjected to regarding our inevitable demise; whilst they may appear as organic developments within our ever-burgeoning understanding of dark tourism, perhaps they are in fact simply tools of commodification which, like the essence of consumer capitalism, exhort the consumer to conform. The Semiotic Framework of Dark Tourism Experience affects the visitor experience by providing semiotic cues in that vein, and so the cycle is perpetuated. As Morrissey sings in that song:

"At the record company party,

on their hands a dead star.

The sycophantic slags all say

'I knew him first, and I knew him well'.

...

…

...

Re-issue, re-package, re-package!

Re-evaluate the songs!

Double-pack with a photograph!

Extra track and a tacky badge!

…

…

…

… sadly, this was your life.

But you could have said no

if you'd wanted to.

You could have walked away, couldn't you?"

(Morrissey, 1987)

Of course, the dead may not walk away – and it is we, the living, who paint their picture.

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Interview A: Dr. Colin Penny, Museum Manager, Lancaster Castle

Alex Grebenar: *A significant part of the product offered by Lancaster Castle*

5 *is its dark history – a history of death and suffering which have happened*

here at the castle and in the surrounding area across the centuries. Indeed,

many marketing materials focus on that. What exactly do you think is the

appeal of engaging with dark history as opposed to other parts of history?

10 **Dr. Colin Penny:** People are fascinated by dark subjects in general – that's

why horror movies are so popular; they wouldn't make them if nobody

wanted to see them. It's the same with a whole host of cultural or arts

offerings that are out there – people like to be scared but within a safe

environment. So going to the movies, you know nothing's going to happen,

15 but you'll have your wits scared out of you and it's the same here on a

different level in a different context but nevertheless people do like hearing

stories about witches. They like the appeal of the forbidden or the usual; there

is a certain amount of [pause] voyeurism, I think, involved. If you go back

2,000 years people were going to see gladiators. Very few people wanted to

20 be the gladiators, but nevertheless they were going to see people die. That's

on a much more basic and ruthless scale of what we do, but nevertheless it

appeals in a way to the same instinct, you know, that people are fascinated

by... hangmen. That's why hangmen wrote autobiographies because the publishers knew there was a market for them, and if you read a hangman's autobiography from the 19th century, 90% of it is about the people they hanged, it's not actually about them. You have no idea who they were, you have no idea the kind of person they were, very little about their life, very little about them, maybe they wrote that but it never got in the book because the publishers knew what the public wanted and the public wanted to know about the people they hanged and how they behaved on the gallows, what they'd done and how they got there and what their last words were, whatever. Yeah, they wanted to know about the hangman, but always in relation to the job so how can you do that? I do talks about hangmen, and I go out and that's the first thing I ask. Imagine... William Calcraft [famous hangman] is here. What would you ask him? It's all 'how can you do that?', 'who was the worst person you hanged?', 'can you sleep at night?'. Nobody asks 'where do you go on holiday' or 'have you got kids?' and if you've got kids what do they think about what you do. Very few, maybe 1 in 100 ask about the actual person – it's about what they do and so it appeals, for good or bad, to a certain aspect of human psychology that is fascinated by [pause] the dark, the forbidden, the scary... the juicy.

[04:20] **AG:** *Following on from that, we've said [dark history] is a significant part of what [Lancaster Castle offers]. I've been on the tour many*

times now, and at times, [dark history] is dealt with in different ways.

Sometime there's a humorous element to it, almost light-hearted in a blackly-

comic way. Other times, it is dealt with very dispassionately in a more

historically accurate way and stating fact. How do you as manager of the

site and as someone who conducts tours, how do you decide on how to

approach the subject of death and suffering?

CP: Well it has to be done sensitively and, obviously, yes, I think it's

absolutely essential to introduce humour at some point, otherwise you're just

really going to go down a path of just depressing people and it's not to be

actually... again, it's the same with the movies, there's has to be a certain

amount of entertainment. I you just show one person's head being lopped off

one after another with no engagement, with no story it's just... brutal, that is

a different matter. But in terms of the kind of business that we're involved

with – culture, arts – then yeah, I think there has to be humour in there. But,

I don't dictate how [tour] guides do it – it's down to them. There are certain

stories that have to be in the tour, like the witches – you shouldn't really do

Lancaster Castle without mentioning them, but how a person relates the story

is really up to them. Not only up to them inasmuch as they do it the same

way every time, but in relation to the kind of group that they've got. So if

you've got a group of young school children then of course you're going to

lighten it up and you're not going to go into the really graphic stuff. You've

got to tell the story, you can't erase the fact that, for example, we were the asylum or we hanged people. You can't get rid of it, but you treat it in relation firstly to the audience you've got and also how people react. So, a guide is

70 feeding off the audience all the time – or they should be – so they will be looking to see what gets a reaction, and who reacted and then if somebody didn't react to a particular [story] well what are you interested in? And you kind of play around with the subject [matter] because you've a lot to go at here. The idea is ultimately engage with everybody at some point or another.

75 So as a manger, there's no script, the guides go around with other guides on a kind of training period; they learn the stories and then the longer they're here, the more stories they learn and ultimately you can kind of pick and choose from a whole bank of stuff that you've got, and depending on the audience you can either go down the darker side of things, or not, because

80 there's plenty to go at that's not dark here. Again, there are topics like hanging that have to be in, but you don't have to dwell on them, you can talk about the medieval period, you can talk about... royalty if that's the kind of audience you've got, so really it depends on who they are, who you're talking to.

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[08:12] AG: *To what extend does consumer demand, then, dictate the content of the tour? Would say, as you said there, it's vitally important, but obviously you as a professional and someone who is well up to speed with the story of*

Lancaster Castle and its history, how do you balance those two [consumer

90   demand at historical accuracy]*?*

[08:33] CP: We tell the story of the castle without, if you like, playing to the

gallery. That's not based on consumer demand, that's based on the audience

you've got at the time. The castle is the castle, its story is the story, however,

95   in terms of consumer demand for dark subjects, then that will, if you like,

influence what we do in the evenings. So... once a month, we do a dark

history tour, where we don't talk about the building at all, we do the rogues,

villains, scoundrels, ghost stories in costumes and we take people round.

Tomorrow night's Hallowe'en so we've got children's tours and adults only

100 tours. We do theatre, we'll sometimes put a piece of theatre on, we're doing

[Robert Louis Stephenson novel] Jekyll and Hyde next year which fits in

with the whole Gothic look of the building, but also fits in with that consumer

demand, that 'I want to be a bit scared when I come to the theatre here', and

it [dark history] lends itself to that. So, in terms of the daytime stuff no, but

105 in terms of the evening, maybe, to a degree. We still do others, we do

Shakespeare, we do opera, again it's influenced by demand if you like,

because we know Shakespeare sells. If we do a five-week run it will sell out.

Similarly with the opera because we have a good reputation for music here.

So, yeah, to a degree [consumer demand dictates the site presentation], but

110 not always [due to a demand for] dark [history].

[10:15] AG: *Do you think that the element of chronology of events, and when certain events happened, would influence how you approach the darker subjects? So compare something from, say 500 years ago to something more relatively recently.*

[10:41] CP: We don't many conclusions with the modern period. We're not here to judge what happened at a particular point in history, that's not what we do, we are impartial. So for example, the Pendle Witches were of course hanged. They were condemned, by law, in a court at that time. Now OK you can say it was a farce, it was a sham trial, whatever, but the point is they were tried and condemned in court, they weren't lynched. So, you have to take yourself out of that. You tell the story as it was, but you don't draw comparisons with the modern world and say 'of course that wouldn't happen today!'. You can say, for example, if something happened within a trial that would be inadmissible today, that's perfectly OK - you can draw those kind of comparisons, but you don't moralise if that's kind of what we mean, no. We tell the story objectively and, to be honest, it can get you in a lot of trouble if you do [moralise]. So for example the most obvious case for us is the trial of the Birmingham Six. Now, the Birmingham Six were found guilty here in 1975 and, of course, quite rightly, they were found not guilty at their appeal because the evidence against them was fundamentally flawed. So they are

innocent, and if you even suggest that they're not you're looking at a whopping great fine, so you tell the story as it is and today it is still a trial

135   that will generate comments from the audience and you can't react, you just have to say, if you react at all, 'that's your opinion, I'm not going to comment on that, they are innocent', and as a couple of newspapers found out to their very great cost to suggest otherwise is illegal because they are innocent. So you can't bring your own judgements into anything, you can't moralise,

140   things happened as they happened and we tell the story.

[14:08] AG: *Do you think the portrayal of death and suffering within the media – you mentioned horror films earlier but I'm thinking more newspapers etcetera – informs that approach, the concept of telling the story*

145   *rather than [another approach]?*

[14:31] CP: This is a difficult one for me to answer because I don't watch the news or get newspapers but obviously I have a general idea of how it's portrayed and... do I think it influences?

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[14:47] AG: *Yes, [does it influence] the decisions you make...*

[14:49] CP: Absolutely not because I don't... [watch the news or get newspaper].

[14:55] AG: *Moving away from that appeal of dark history and how you approach it, I'd now like to look at the castle experience as a whole, of which dark history is of course a part. So, I'd like you to explain the considerations which are made when you are creating the experience offered here at*

Lancaster Castle.

[15:20] CP: Well the first thing is customer satisfaction. They have to come and feel that they have got something out of it in terms of information – that they've gone away learning something new that they didn't know, and had a

good time. The two are inextricably linked – if you just give people an informative experience, they won't have enjoyed it as much because they've not, you know, had the entertainment part of it. Similarly, if you just tell jokes all the time, then there are going to be people who wanted a more in-depth experience. People need to have value for money, especially now given the

present economic climate so people don't have as much money to spend and they're picking and choosing where they go, so customer experience is right at the top. So I monitor TripAdvisor, the visitor book, e-mails, whatever, to make sure that we're hitting the mark, and we take that feedback and evaluation very seriously. So that would be the most important thing. We

also, obviously, have the castle to look after, and the objects within it, so we have to be aware of where we can allow people to go. We also need to be

aware that we are a Crown Court as well, so we have to strike a balance

between what we can show people and what we can tell people, and the other

uses that the building is put to because ultimately the courts have first call

180 on the rooms so we sometimes think we're having one thing when we arrive

in the morning and find out it's completely changed by half-past nine and

we've got to adapt. But yeah, customer experience, value for money, just

making sure people have an enjoyable, informative experience.

185 **[18:00] AG:** *How do you convey value at the Castle?*

[18:10] CP: In the sense of money or in the sense of ...?

[18:13] AG: *Sorry – both in terms of its monetary value but also its other*

190 *inherent value.*

[18:23] CP: Well, the monetary value, obviously we monitor what other sites

of a similar nature charge and we are quite reasonable compared with other

sites. We're a County Council site anyway, so we can't just put the price up,

195 that has to go to council and we're part of the Lancashire County Council

Museum Service and fees and charges are not something that individual sites

are allowed to just change. In terms of conveying it, [pause] I don't think we

do in the sense that what we do is we provide a service – again we're back to

service – that we believe is excellent value for money for what people get.

200 You can pay eight pounds [the admission charge at time of interviewing] and just be left to wander around a place with just a few board up, but here you get a guided tour. That, of course, mitigates against – and some people prefer to look around, but we do say to people 'look that's not us, that's the court, we're not allowed to just let you wander around' and as soon as people know

205 that, on one level they understand, and on the other level they think 'oh you're a court!', so they like the idea of coming into somewhere that's still working and you can be taken down a corridor and there's a barrister in a wig and its' not actually a re-enactment, it's real, there are barristers talking to clients; just the other side of that door, there's a trial going on. It's real. OK they're

210 not experiencing that, if you want to call it dark element, that dark element of crime and punishment, but it is right there. They're within it, they're amongst it, which I think is quite an important experience for the visitor, and adds to the value of the place in a monetary sense if you want to call it that because yeah, it's 'reality tourism'. In terms of the other value, the intrinsic

215 value, well, we obviously push that it is one of the most important historic sites certainly in the North of England; there is obviously the connection to royalty, the Queen owns it, that has value in itself even though it's not a residence, that fact that it's owned by the Duke of Lancaster who is the Queen has a pull factor to it. There's again the fact that it's still a working building

220 has its own intrinsic value, that's why there's a roof on it, buildings that aren't

used become ruins and it's one of the few castles, one of the few Medieval castles that is still intact and you've got the Gillow furniture, that's another valuable asset that we have. Yeah, it's survived in remarkably good condition, and that is another value that it has.

225 **[22:10] AG:** *I'm now going to ask you a few questions which don't directly relate to the tour, I'm now going to focus on some other elements of the experience and see how they all fit together. So firstly I'd like to look at the gift shop. How does that as an entity relate to the tour itself.*

230 **[22:42] CP:** Obviously we stock gifts which... On one level we have the branded goods – Lancaster Castle and the logo – so that people can take away a souvenir that reminds them that they've been here and I think that is important because people like souvenirs and this goes back a long, long, long time, hundreds and hundreds of years. In terms of the subject area then yes,

235 we will choose souvenirs which have a connection with [historical] events [at Lancaster Castle] so we have lots of books about witches, we have souvenirs to do with crime and punishment, so we sell... toy handcuffs, police truncheons, police helmets, whatever, in the same way that we sell Medieval swords and Viking helmets because people are interested, and kids in

240 particular get interested and get hooked by a certain period. So some really like the Vikings, others prefer the Victorians and we have been here through all those periods and so what we do is we focus on... we have a kind of

chronology if you like so that we can appeal to... anybody who likes the Georgians can buy a book about the Georgians or we have souvenirs with a Georgian theme. So that's the way we approach it, we do the branded goods and we do the... chronological stuff. We also do, obviously, a few items which are royal, so we have elements of the royal collection here, and we have kids things like yo-yos because, you know, when you have a school party, they have a pound [each], they're limited now, they tend to just to just say bring a pound or two pounds and you've got to have something for them because they want to spend their money, they'd actually go away upset if there was nothing for them to spend their pound on because they have to. So yeah, we do a whole range of stuff, but we do connect the tour with the shop

[25:14] AG: *And also, secondly, the café element in the visitor centre, how does that fit in with the rest of the experience?*

[25:21] CP: That's not mine and I don't manage that but, in terms of generally, I think it's important that people have somewhere... If you look at surveys of visitors to museums in particular, what are the most important things? Right up there, one and two, are café and toilets. Later, you get to the collections, but the most important thing is as soon as they arrive they need the loo, and either when they arrive, or after they've looked round a bit they want a coffee and a cake, or lunch, or whatever, so yeah it's very, very

337

265   important that we do have facilities for people to... relax. And here, of course,

you can come through through the gatehouse for free, into the courtyard area,

the café and the shop, so, in a way, we're kind of a town centre café as well,

because a lot of heritage sites are out-of-town, they're in the 'sticks', or

whatever, but here we're right in the centre of town and, yeah, we do get

270   people who just come to the café so.. yeah, it's important.

[26:43] AG: *And finally, the various events which are held at the castle, you*

did touch on that earlier, how do they, in terms of the more external events,

for example next week it'll be used for the Light Up Lancaster event, and

275   *there's other things like that, unlike the tours which you hold in the event like*

you said, I'm talking about the 'secondary events' which don't directly relate

to the content of the castle itself. How does that relate to the visitor

experience here in terms of what you create?

280   **[27:23] CP:** Well, in terms of Light Up Lancaster and the [Lancaster] Music

Festival, I don't manage those as they take place in the former prison, they're

run by somebody else. I think, yeah, again they're important because they get

people in the place, particularly the ones that happen during the day. So for

example the music festival, or sometimes they have re-enacters in the

285   courtyard – the more people [visitors] who come in, the more people who

might be inspired to take a tour, or, if not on that day, another day, so they

might come to the music festival and say 'oh we really must come here another day'. It's the same with the outreach that we do; I go out and talk to a lot of WIs [Women's Institutes], historic societies, fellowship meetings,

290 Probus Clubs, whatever – and what we find is that either elements of that group will come on their own later, or they'll organise a group visit and come because, I don't take slides, it's just me talking so they haven't seen it [the castle], so what you will find quite often is that they'll organise groups visits six months down the line, they'll ring and say 'oh you did a talk for us', so

295 yeah it's an important element of getting people in, getting people engaged, and getting them – inspiring them to visit, or re-visit if they've been. What you find is that locals don't visit much. I think this is true of museums, whatever, nationally – what you get is the tourists, and the schools, but in terms of the locals they tend to come in proportionally fewer numbers

300 because you always just 'I'll do it one day', and we get people quite often who'll come on a tour and say 'I've lived in Lancaster thirty-five years and this is the first time I've been to the castle' because you do things when you go away, so you go on holiday then you do the museums and historic sites, but you come home and go to work, or weekends are taken up going

305 somewhere else! So, it's a good way of getting local people in, if you put on an event, who might then be inspired to come on a visit as well.

[30:05] AG: *Overall, to sum that up, how would the experience differ if none*

of those things happened, so there were no events, there was no café and no

310 *shop and all you had was the castle tour, how do you think the visitor experience would differ?*

[30:25] **CP:** Well, until 2013 that's all we had, because the former prison –
what's now the former prison – was a prison. People used to come in at the
315 back entrance to the castle and, we had a shop, but we had no café and the
tour was, not exactly the same because we do different elements now, we can
go in the former prison but, to a large degree the content of the tour in the
rooms that we do now that we also did then is very similar. Again, with the
caveat that you respond the the audience, so it's never the same, we're not
320 tape recorders, it's never the same tour but, I don't think it has affected the
content of the tour all that much, and not having those things [café, shop and
events], I don't think it would. It would be what it is because that's the history
of the place and that's what it's [the castle] done.

325 [31:40] **AG:** *Just to compare, what you understand the visitor experience
today compared to before you had the shop and the café and everything else.
How do they differ not in terms of the content of the tour, but how the visitor
may...*

330 [31:55] **CP:** Experience? There's more 'dwell time'. So previously, there was

nowhere to go – you came in through the door, you were booked on the next tour, you did the tour, the tour ended, you maybe 'mooched' [looked] around the shop for ten minutes or fifteen minutes, bought something and left. There was nowhere else to go. Having said that, they used to go to the [Lancaster] Priory church, opposite, because straight out the door opposite is the Priory church, where they did have a café, and we used to direct, anybody who wanted, you know, 'do you have a café?', 'no, but they do', now the Priory doesn't have a café, because everybody comes in through the [front] door, goes to our café and theirs [the Priory's café] just died. So in terms of the castle, yeah people have the opportunity to spend more time here. They can wander around the courtyard as long as they like, they can sit and have lunch for an hour, they can look around the shop. You can spend now, if you take the tour that's an hour-and-a-quarter, an hour-and-a-half, ten-fifteen minutes looking around the shop, half an hour maybe on average to have something to eat or drink so you're already up to, what, two hours, aren't you, ish? Whereas previously it was an hour. So that's the main difference I would have thought.

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[33:43] *When I came and did my pilot study, one of the questions I asked the visitors was 'would they like the opportunity to tour, on their own, the interior of the castle?'. Obviously as we know that's not possible, but if there were some areas that could be set aside for visitors to explore on their own, with*

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interpretative materials, maybe some exhibits etc.,so they wouldn't

necessarily have to come on the tour. How do you think the visitor experience

355 *would differ if they could, say, just explore on their own?*

[34:26] CP: I think the information content that they went away with would

be... I think they would go away with less of an experience, what is it, you

remember 10% of what you read, 30% of what you hear and 90% of what

360 you do, allegedly. So if you take those [statistics] as read, if you're reading a

panel you'll remember 10 [%], if you go on a tour you'll remember 30 [%],

and people do, you know they come back, what we find is people who did

the tour say thirty years ago as a school trip, then bring their kids, they

remember. They remember stuff that they, because it was always a tour then,

365 it's been a tour since the Victorian period, so they are remembering aspects

of their experience when they come back and I wonder how many people

would do the same if they'd just wandered around. They might remember

aspects of what something looked like, but in terms of the stories, you get

people interrupting [the tour guide] you know, 'oh yeah, I remember that!'

370 and they remember the story that they were told. You even get people arguing

with you, you know 'last time I was here the guide said *this'* and it's different

interpretations on something but the fact that they remembered it, and

actually piped up and said, you know, 'hang on a minute' proves that they

are... remembering it. I'm not sure that would be the same [without the tour]

375 – certainly the entertainment value would go down because, again, the tour

is an interactive experience, it's not a lecture and there is humour in there to

a large degree and a lot of people [tour guides] put humour in it and it's

difficult to get that same level of humour from a panel that you're reading.

Most people don't read the panels anyway. They look at the objects, they

380 might read the label, but very few people, comparatively if you look at

museums, bother to read the panel and to a degree that's [reading the panel]

not important. In the museum world now, if you go back fifty or sixty years,

curators used to dictate what people should know. That's not the case any

more, it's up to the individual who comes in to decide the level at which they

385 want top engage and that's why museum text is blocked in chunks, so you

can take in that bit without feeling you've failed. So you don't have one huge

block of text that you're supposed to read from start to finish and you give

up half way through and you walk away thinking 'oh I've failed', you know,

in a way. Now, you can read a chunk, just a paragraph, and stop. But if you

390 want to [continue] there's another paragraph, but it's separated, you can kind

of break off at any point and not feel like you gave up. Going around self-

guided, yes, it suits some people, some people read every panel and they read

every word and they look at every object, but they're in a minority, and I

think the tour offers people a more engaging experience than they would get

395 wandering around.

[38:22] AG: *I'd now like to consider the issue of authenticity. Obviously, the concept of authenticity is subjective, so I don't really want to debate the meaning of the word itself, obviously you yourself will have your own conception of what it is or isn't. So based on that, how does the issue of providing an authentic experience feature in how you present Lancaster Castle as the manager?*

[38:57] CP: I think this one is perhaps more relevant to sites that go down the re-enactment route. In terms of authenticity in that sense we don't do that so much. When we do a costumed tour, it's tongue-in-cheek, there's no suggestion that it's an authentic experience, we're having as much of a laugh as they are. That's not to say that the factual content isn't there, I'm talking about whether we're in character or whatever. But, in terms of authenticity as far as the stories go, as far as the content of the tour goes then yes, it has to be as authentic as possible, it has to be factually correct and you can do that quite easily in a light, well-humoured way – in fact I think it's more memorable if you do. We don't dress the place up – so the Shire Hall is a courtroom. The Drop Room is how it was – OK it's now the jury deliberation room so there's a big table in the middle of the room, but other than that, the thing about our site is that it didn't have bells and whistles. It was two court rooms, a drop room, a grand jury room – they are as they because to a large degree they're still used so it is authentic because when a court isn't sitting,

you go into a Crown Court that's still a Crown Court, we haven't dressed it
420   up, it's authentic, and we're back to a kind of reality tourism again. It's an

accident, if you like, that we've ended up like this, because it is unusual for

a castle still to be used in the way that it is, so we don't have to worry about

authenticity because it's authentic without us doing anything.

425   **[41:17] AG:** *What effect do you think the tour has on the perception of*

authenticity that a visitor would have – as opposed to looking around

themselves if that were possible?

[41:55] CP: I think it adds more, because, for example one of the most

430   common comments that we get – you're familiar with Hadrian's Tower [one

part of the Lancaster Castle tour] with the chains round the walls? [**AG nods**]

– those were used to imprison people, to shackle them in some way, and we

have the [punishment tool] Scold's Bridle and we have the birch and the cat

o'nine-tails, and people will walk in that room and, probably half the tours

435   easily, maybe even more than half, someone will say 'oh, the torture

chamber!', because they're reacting to what they're initially seeing. It's their

first impression, they've got this image of people [prisoners] perhaps hanging

from the walls because we've got the chains going around the walls and, you

know, the Scold's Bridle looks like it might be something to do with torturing

440   people. So had we just left it as it is, that's what people would go away

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thinking, that people were tortured in that room when they weren't. The chains going around the room were used simply to link people together when they were being transported. The Scold's Bridle is a form of punishment, it's not torture, torture is completely different, that's how you get peoples to talk or whatever, similarly with the birch and the cat o'nine-tails. Now, today, yeah if you did that to somebody it would probably be classed as torture because it's not something we do now in the UK, we don't whip people. So if you whipped somebody, you're actually torturing them because it's not a legal thing to do, whereas previously [in time] it was a valid form of punishment, it wasn't classed as torture. In fact, torture was used quite rarely, Magna Carta prohibits it. Not to say they didn't use it [torture], but they got around Magna Carta in certain. So in terms of the tour and authenticity, I would say that it [tour] enhances it [authenticity of Lancaster Castle]. So, again, people will go into the Shire Hall and go 'oh, the council chamber!'. Council chambers do look like court rooms, they're very similar, but it's not, it's the civil court room. So people would leave, I think, quite a lot of people would leave with the wrong idea of what certain rooms were for and how they operated. So, the Drop Room – it sound like people were hanged in there. So if you had no other information in that room except a label on the door saying 'The Drop Room', people would go in there, they'd see the noose in the cabinet, they'd see the things and say 'this is the room they hanged people [in]'. It actually wasn't, it was where they prepared them before going

out to Hanging Corner. Without any interpretation at all, I think people would go away with less of an idea of how the place operated than with the tour.

[45:46] AG: *What effect do you think the elements have – the café, the shop and the events as discussed earlier – what effect do you think those things have on the perception of authenticity of Lancaster Castle?*

470 **[46:03] CP:** Back to the old joke of 'Sire, the gift shop's been taken!' I don't think it does detract from the authenticity.

[46:18] AG: *Just to step in there, you mentioned 'detracting' there straight away, I just want to make clear that I'm suggesting that it could also be* 475 *positively enhanced, so just bear that in mind for your answer.*

[46:30] CP: OK. I think people are smart enough to separate the two. I think in much the same way that the guide is dressed in the same way than if they weren't at work – smart casual, whatever, we don't go around in costume, I 480 don't think you need to – I think the fact that the gist shop is, to a large degree, and this is the same in many historic sites, separate from the 'main event' [the tour] if you like. You go in the gift shop, you go in the café, you buy your ticket, whatever, then you leave that place and you enter the experience, and that's the same in theatres, it's the same in... so yeah, I think it can build, in

485 terms of the shop, I think it can build a sense of expectation, so in a positive way I think it can do that. I'm not sure about enhancing the authenticity because [pause]... certainly not here, I don't think we could argue that we do, but I don't think it detracts either, I think the two [the tour and other aspects] are entirely separate.

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[48:06] AG: *It's an interesting point that you made there about building expectations – visitors might look in the shop and see things and they'll think 'we're going to learn about these things'.*

495 [48:16] CP: Yeah, if you didn't know the place was associated with, for example, with witchcraft trials, you'd see the books and wonder why they were there, and it would probably make you think 'oh, there's something to do with witches here – I don't know what it is but I'm going to find out!'. What we also find is that people sometimes sign the visitor book before
500 they've done the tour. Its unusual, but some people do, and what you find in the comments section is something like – under 'What did you think of your experience?' [visitors would write] 'haven't done the tour yet, but can't wait for it to start', or something like that, so there is an expectation building.

505 [49:02] AG: *You've just said that you don't think those elements detract from the experience. Is there anything in particular that you would avoid, or*

actively avoid incorporating because you feel that it would adversely affect the authenticity?

510 **[49:28] CP:** In terms of where we go [inside the castle] no, because the building has evolved in the way it's evolved, there are no areas that would be out of keeping. Even the modern ones [areas], it was a modern prison, so it all has this evolutionary flow to it, if and when we get people going in those areas [which are currently not part of the tour]. But I would say I would avoid

515 going down the... character route, like having Old Demdike [one of the Pendle Witches] take you round, or whoever, because then I think you're into Disneyfication and I don't think that adds anything, and takes it [authenticity] away. So I think a 'straight' performance, if you like, with humour... yeah. That's the only thing I would avoid.

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[50:51] AG: *As an overall summation of what we've discussed today, how do you balance that concept of historical accuracy and authenticity whilst still offering an engaging visitor experience?*

525 **[51:14] CP:** Here I think it's easy, because, as I've said a few times, we are walking around an authentic experience without making it up. So there's no friction between the two. You can present a story accurately and entertainingly. You don't need to make things up. There are stories that

evolved when the prison was in operation among the prisoners and the prison

530   officers, I don't know where they came from but they were fantastical in

nature, that [for example] they threw Jacobites off the keep – they're great

stories, and we could put it in the tour, but it's wrong [not proven] so why

would we? We [staff] used to do fact-finding tours where the officers would

take us round the prison so that if the public asked what it was like, we could

535   tell them, we'd be able to say 'that bit of the building is used for this', and I

used to do education stuff with the prisoners and the prisoner officers used

to tell the prisoners really wacky stuff [about the castle] which had a certain

nugget of truth in it but had just, over Chinese Whispers or whatever, had got

blown completely out of proportion and was completely wrong – but it was

540   a great story. So we don't go down that road. You can tell the story as it was

and still give people a very informative and enjoyable experience. In fact,

the reality is more interesting than the fiction, to a large degree, and that's

what people want to know, actually. They don't want some... made up

account, they want to know what happened to these people, particularly,

545   because of the nature of the building, we get a lot of people coming who's

ancestors were tried here, or were transported top Australia [from Lancaster

castle], and they make the journey from Australia to here, we have graffiti in

the cells we can identify was made by a particular person, and their ancestors

will come – because this stuff is one the internet – to see it and touch it, and

550   that kind of closes the circle. Why wouldn't you make anything up? That in

itself is powerful stuff, and it's far more interesting than anything I could make up, so authenticity and a factually accurate story is very compatible with an enjoyable visitor experience – in fact it's essential, I think. People, you know, if they're in the Drop Room, they want to know how people were

555 hanged, they don't want it 'blown up' to something ridiculously gory. OK, you could point to the odd story where things went wrong [with a hanging] and all that, but that's not the reality.

End of interview

Appendix ii

Interview B: Rachael Jackson, Assistant Museum Manager, Lancaster Castle

5   **Alex Grebenar:** *A significant part of the product offered by Lancaster Castle focusses on its dark history – a history of death, suffering and crime and punishment across the centuries. That's sold as part of the experience within many marketing materials. What exactly do you think is the appeal of that dark history?*

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[00:38] Rachael Jackson: Good question! I think that, for us [Lancaster Castle] anyway, we have been a centre of law and order for eight hundred years and what you physically see at the castle now is the prison, is the courts, it's the physical evidence of what's gone on here at the castle, and we still
15 have medieval elements, but what's really obvious is that side [dark history], so it's obviously what we have to present. In terms of the appeal, I think for us today, we don't witness death, and we don't see as much of it as we would have done in the past, so I think people are really interested and drawn to that, they're fascinated by the things that went on in the past that would have
20 been everyday occurrences, so to be able to kind of visit somewhere and hear about that kind of history, I think people get really engaged by it. Particularly, even if they're not kind of 'history boffins' or really interested in history, for

some reason it's that kind of [book and television series] 'Horrible Histories' effect on the kids as well, that really seems to kind of draw people in and be

25 something they can relate to somehow.

[02:19] AG: *The dark subject matter surfaces from time to time during the tour – it's not the complete focus, but focussing on the subject of death and punishment and suffering, at times it's dealt with quite dispassionately, it's a*

30 *matter of fact relaying the story of what happened, whereas at other times there's quite a humorous element to some particular stories within the tour guide explanations. How do you decide to approach the subject of death and suffering?*

35 [02:54] RJ: I think we're quite lucky in a way in that because of the nature of the building, we have to do a guided tour as opposed to in being a walk-around site, so we have the chance to engage with the group from the beginning, and it's [about] using your inter-personal skills to start to decipher they're [the audience] are wanting to hear about, how sensitive they are to

40 these things, and be able to tailor the tour according the group. So I could take a group round and I would them out to Hanging Corner, and I could see from their body language that this is something they're not necessarily comfortable [with]. So in that respect I would keep it short and I'd keep it... obviously we always keep it factual, but I would perhaps hold back on some

45 of the things that perhaps a group that were less sensitive and more eager to

hear of the kind of darker, more gory aspects of the Hanging Corner content.

So I think it's quite good that we have that chance in our interpretation to be

able to gauge it on, not on an individual basis, but with the group personally

to be able to know how far to go and how far to take it. Obviously everything

50 we say is factual and it's based on primary sources and information that we've

gathered... it's a case of being able to gauge the group as a tour guide and

that's something that we very much suggest to all our staff as we're

developing tours, that we get these skills that we can 'chop and change' and

decide on the content dependent on the individual group that we've got.

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[04:50] AG: *Do you think the way in which you approach those subjects*

would differ to other sites of dark tourism? As a history expert you might be

able to appreciate other dark events which are not part of Lancaster Castle's

story. Do you think the way you handle them here would differ to other sites?

60 *Do you think your approach is tailored to Lancaster Castle specifically?*

[05:18] RJ: It's certainly tailored to each individual group as I said. It's quite

difficult to say because there's not many place where the interpretation is

fully by guided tour, so you can go to other sites and you'll have panels and

65 exhibition spaces, and people can dip in and out of them as they choose so

they can access the stuff they want to or step away from it if they feel

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uncomfortable with it, so we have to do that on a personal level really, by gauging how much the group want to hear about that side of things. So I don't know if it's necessarily different for our site, I think we're very unique in having only that guided tour experience. I'd find it hard to say whether that would differ from a different site, or if it would be approached differently. I feel at Lancaster Castle we are a museum, and we have guided tours, we don't need to kind of add any additional facts or 'sex it up' a bit if you like because the history is already so fascinating. I'm aware of other sites you can go to that aren't necessarily historic spots like we are, obviously an ancient monument, you can go to other sites and tourist destinations across the country where you go and have an 'experience' and obviously they very much push the kind of – more specifically the Merlin [Entertainment] sites, the dungeon tours and that kind of thing – I've never been but somebody told me at Blackpool they have the 'Pendle Witch Experience' and that kind of thing, and that's the complete other end of the scale [to Lancaster Castle] where they pile so much of that on and it becomes very much a commodified thing whereas we're very much always grounded in the historical, factual side of things.

[07:30] AG: *Finally on this area, do you think that the media portrayal of death and suffering in Britain today informs your choice on how you approach dark subjects – whether directly or indirectly?*

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90 **[07:50] RJ:** I find that really hard [to answer], I don't know if I pay a huge

amount of interest in how the media portrays it.

[08:02] AG: *I'm thinking news media rather than film and fiction.*

95 **[08:05] RJ:** News media, OK. I don't know how to answer that really.

[08:14] AG: *That's fine, that suggests there's not a clear link. The history of the castle is dealt with in a factual manner as you say, but bearing in mind the appeal of dark history that we mentioned earlier, to what extent do you*

100 *think that consumer demand for experiencing dark history dictates the content of the tour?*

[08:55] RJ: I'm not sure that it does. I think people are always drawn here to Lancaster Castle because we are an iconic building, we're a castle, and sometimes people come with expectations that they're going to see kind of

105 stately rooms and tapestries and that kind of thing, and then they see the prison side, and so people don't necessarily know what they're coming into when they arrive, so we get quite a mix of visitors coming up. I think because we've been doing these tours for fifty years or so, these are really long-standing tours, and because the site itself has it [dark history] so intrinsically

110 woven into it in terms of the court sessions and what's gone on here, up until

very recently and even now obviously there's a trial taking place [at the time of the interview], I think that's always been very much a dominant part of the tour, so it's always just been very much embedded in what we do because that is the bulk of the history throughout the centuries that has been here –
115 eight hundred years of being a prison. So it's very much dominated the site, so naturally the tour goes along those lines. I can't see that the demand for it changes what we do really because it's always been what we've done, in my head anyway.

120 **[11:04] AG:** *Moving away now from that appeal of dark history, I'd now like to look at the castle as a whole in terms of the visitor experience and what they do when they come here. Could you explain the considerations that are made from a managerial point of view, and possibly from a tour guide point of view as well, the considerations that are made when you are creating the*
125 *experience for the visitors?*

[11:55] RJ: Obviously there's the expectations that the visitors come with, so it's constantly trying to meet them, obviously in terms of points of access and other kind of facilities side of things, and what a heritage site would
130 have, so a shop and a café and that kind of thing. We want everyone to go away happy, so we have to meet their expectations as much as possible. Then of course another consideration is that we present history and we present

facts, so everything that we should say on our tours is based on sound research and historical sources, so that's always something that we're very

135 much... when a guide comes in and they're developing their own tour and style at the beginning, that's always something that's put into high consideration. Then again, from that, it's done on a kind of individual basis as I said [earlier], you don't know what you're going to get when you start a tour, you could have a school group, for example, so that would of course

140 inform how you would carry out the tour. We always have a discussion before as to what they're [school children] interested in and what they're learning about, what they're wanting to hear about at the castle, and then the same when you have a public tour, you can have it on a Sunday and have loads of kids, so again that's something you would take into consideration. In the

145 evenings we do dark history tours, which is a special tour, one took place last night, very much advertising the idea of dark history, and that would be focussing very much on the much more heavier end of it, so much more detail in terms of the executions and the murderers, and that kind of thing, and that would be advertised as such, so the content of the dark history tours

150 is always overs 16s, so it's not something that we'd deliver in a family tour, we'd always be taking into consideration the visitor expectations, and then tailoring the content each time to the group that you've physically got in front of you.

155 **[16:27] AG:** *You mention expectations there which was interesting. Obviously if you line up a group of people, they're all going to have slightly different expectations. What would you say are the main expectations that people would have coming to Lancaster Castle? Do you think they could be easily grouped or are they quite disparate?*

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[16:50] RJ: I think they're pretty disparate, probably. There's expectations in terms of the physical side and the facilities, they're probably pretty standard...

[17:00] AG: *Before you carry on, could you just explain what they might be?*

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[17:04] RJ: Yeah, in terms of parking facilities, toilets, cafe, shop, leaflets, information, that kind of things, so they're what I'd class as the facilities and the add-ons, if you like, and when you go and visit a heritage site, these are things that you kind of expect. Obviously we're a bit of a work-in-progress

170 at the moment as well with the prison closing four years ago and the development that's hopefully going to happen in the future, we're constantly trying to meet those expectations in terms of toilet facilities etcetera, that's obviously something that we'll hopefully improve in the future, so that's what I'd see as the facilities side. Then in terms of the content itself, we do get a

175 lot of people who come to the castle and would like to be able to just look around and dip in and out of it as they wish and experience it themselves, but

then again we've got the restriction of being a courthouse, which sadly means that we can't do that, we've got to do a guided tour so that's another expectation that we've got to manage and explain why we are as we are at this present point in time. And then the expectation on the tours themselves, some people come to see state rooms and whatnot, and obviously, our recent past, and much further back as well, is very much about the crime and punishment, so again it's introducing those things at the start of the tour, so managing those expectations, [explaining to visitors] that we have been a centre for law and order for over eight hundred years and that's very much dominated the site, and it's what you'll hear most about today. There is of course the other aspects of the castle, the medieval side which obviously is spoken about to different degrees within the tours as well.

[19:05] AG: *Following on from those considerations and the expectations that we've looked at there, how do you use those in order to convey the value both in terms of monetary value – obviously you have to pay to go on the tour – and also its inherent value as a site? How do you convey that sense of value?*

[19:34] RJ: In terms of the historical value, that's something that comes out naturally, we're seen as one of the most historically valuable buildings in the North of England, so that's something that we very much [value], and also

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that we were the centre for law and order as well, for a huge space, I think

200 that's something that's very much emphasised in the tour, and the idea that

it's been [behind] closed doors for many years as well, particularly the access

to the prison side only being open since 2012 I think we opened now, visitors

seem to be very much excited by the idea of kind of a 'closed-door', behind-

the-scenes kind of thing, this is new and, particularly to local people, it's

205 always been somewhere that's been really closed-off, so again that's

something that's very much, as a tour guide, we would always try and

emphasise and include or weave into the tour content. In terms of monetary

value, I don't think it's something that we would talk about full stop, or

encourage people to talk about really. We mention about the ownership of

210 the castle and the historic reasons why the Duke of Lancaster owns the castle

etcetera, but I don't think we would ever, it's always about, if we talk about

value and wealth, it would always be the cultural and historical wealth that

we would talk about as opposed to any kind of financial value.

215 **[22:06] AG:** *So would you say that that historical value that you mentioned,*

do you think that, in itself, could actually convey the monetary value, so you'd

say 'you have access to this historic site', do you think that itself conveys the

monetary value?

220 **[22:23] RJ:** That's a good question. Probably, it's priceless isn't it? It's not

something that you can always put a figure on, it's not tangible in that sense so, perhaps in a way, there's the whole thing, you know, particular rooms in the castle, we talk about Gillow, that kind of thing and you're not allowed to sit on the chairs because they're extremely precious, that would probably

225 infer that there's financial value within them. Then again, it's not something that we would ever talk about or be explicit about

[23:11] **AG:** *What about in terms of the admission fee?*

230 [23:14] **RJ:** I think we always try and relate it to what other organisations are doing and what we would see as good value. So yeah, I think our pricing when it was just on this side of castle was lower, but obviously there's a few stakeholders involved so obviously the price point is negotiated between the various organisations such as the Duchy of Lancaster, Lancashire County

235 Council, and it's very much based on a 'what are other sites doing, what's a reasonable admission price?' and of course what people will pay and feel is good value and a good experience for the money.

[24:14] **AG:** I'd now like to move on slightly and look at some of the other

240 aspects of the castle experience away from the tour itself - and I have a list of three so we'll approach them in turn. Firstly I'd like to look at the gift shop. How does that relate to the tour itself?

[24:37] RJ: Again, this is another idea about meeting expectations, that people come to a site expect to be able to have a route around a gift shop and get a little souvenir, a memento, a reminder of their visit. I suppose in terms of the tour itself, the obvious one is the literature, the books that we have on offer, we tend to buy historical books, both fiction and non-fiction in fact, that relate to the castle so you'll see lots of books there about the Pendle and Lancashire witches, various kings and queens that have had a connection to the castle, so there's always the option there to have some extra information, so you know if someone has paid particular interest to the Lancashire witches, then we would perhaps, say, recommend some books that are in our bookshop. So that's the area that it's very tied into – the content of the tour. And then the other things, like I said, the mementos, the fridge magnets, the keychains, all those kind of bit and bobs that people like to take as mementos – leather bookmarks are always a big favourite as well that people like to collect, they smell nice and they're quite old-school aren't they? And then on top of that you've the market of the school kids coming in and families, you'll see bouncy balls and that kind of thing, which are low price-point items which I think, let's face it there's a commercial element to it and they sell well, people buy them so they're there. They may not necessarily have an immediate link to the content.

[26:31] AG: *Secondly, I am aware it is run by a contractor but the café –*

265 *how does that relate to the tour?*

[26:38] RJ: The café, yeah, that's NICE who run that. They, early on when
we first opened were involved a little bit in the events-side of the castle, so
they themselves had a few events linked to the castle and they would link it
270 to the history of the castle, so they had medieval banquets and that kind of
thing, but I think that has tailed off, I don't think it was very popular, don't
quote me on that I'm not sure but they now tend to be more of a catering
facility so people can get a drink and a cake. I think initially, they were
involved in events but not anymore.

275

[27:27] AG: *How do you think it [the café] fits in with the general experience
of the castle, do you think it adds to it at all?*

[27:36] RJ: Yeah, again it's about that expectation that once you've done the
280 tour there's somewhere to get refreshments, a cup of tea etcetera. So that's
always something before we had the prison side opened up a few years back,
we never had that [a café] on site and it was something that customers would
always ask about, particularly if they've had a walk up the castle, they had a
nice tour round, they want to have a sit down and a rest and a cup of tea, and
285 again that's part of an expectation of a site like this, that's to be able to do
that. People also use it for the café itself [without taking a tour], they have

meetings here, pop in and out, just to be in nice surroundings but, you know, different surroundings, certainly, somewhere different to go and meet, so they might not be actually accessing the kind of tourist side of it in terms of

290 the tour, the historic side of it.

[28:24] AG: *The third and final point is the various events that are held at the castle. I'm not talking about the extra tours that you do, I'm more talking about the outside events which come in, so for example this weekend it's*

295 *Light Up Lancaster, and throughout the year there's a few more that happen here, sometimes on a weekend afternoon. How do they relate to the overall experience at Lancaster Castle?*

[28:50] RJ: I think they add a great deal. Obviously the castle is iconic, it's

300 in the centre of town, high ground, it's something that everyone knows about, they know where it is, and the idea that it could be a kind of cultural hub for the city itself, so a point where various different things can take place, different meetings, lots of different events going on, the idea that it's quite a busy cultural area, so I think it adds quite a great deal to the castle really.

305 There's different access points for people with different interests, so there might be people who are not that interested in history but they can come and see concerts here, or Lancaster Music Festival, and again you see different crowds coming up, and it's great to see the building being used and enjoyed

by different people.

310

[29:56] AG: *As a side point, you said it could be used as a cultural hub. Do you think from an ethical point of view there's any, kind of, almost discord there as it was a former prison and site of execution?*

315 [30:16] RJ: Hmm [pauses]. Yeah [drawn out], it's hard to say really, because obviously times change, things move on, if you look at [Lancaster's] Ashton Memorial and Williamson Park, people get married up there now, it's a beautiful park, but that was [previously] Golgotha, that was around the area where people were executed before 1800, so it's difficult to say whether you

320 stay stuck as a monument to the past looking completely backwards, or whether you move on with it into the future. We've obviously always been a mixed site, there's been residence here early on, courts, there's been a prison here, judges stayed here, that's another link to the courts. I don't know if it's a disrespectful thing as such because I think most people who come will be

325 aware of what it was used for, and obviously there's certain areas of the castle that are more hallowed if you like, the Well Tower potentially is a place where they held the Lancashire witches, there's Hanging Corner, the Chapel Yard potentially as well, and then obviously the idea that there's quite a lot of those executed were buried on the castle grounds, whereas you would see

330 much of the cultural activity happening, at the moment anyway they've been

held in the main courtyard. So whether there's a physical separation on that, [that's what] I would perhaps argue, but it's difficult.

[32:14] AG: *You started to mention there about things moving on, and* you've talked about the chronology of events, and when things happen recently they have more of a personal engagement for people whereas things that happened a long time ago we would approach in a different way, not necessarily in an inferior way, but as you can appreciate, a different way. Do you think the chronology of events would affect how you approach a particular subject within your tour?

[33:51] RJ: In terms of the idea of something being further away in the past being more approach…[able?]? **[AG agrees]** When it's in living memory, I don't know whether there is so much more potential, but it feels like there's more potential to offend. So for example, in the 1970s we had a high-profile case of the Birmingham Six, and that's in living memory. We get visitors from Birmingham, we get visitors from Northern Ireland etcetera, so it's always very much we would approach that as a matter of fact, and we would never put any political sway on it or anything like that, so it would always be a factual… so's everything of course, but it's certainly something which you know would be sensitive and you would not… it's suggesting that there's something in the past that you would [do the opposite towards]… I'm

367

trying to compare it something, for example the execution of Jane Scott which was in the 1820s I think, where her skeleton was mounted up and sold,

355 and it's one of those stories that the kids chuckle to, people chuckle to. As it's outside of living memory, I suppose there's a slight separation I think in terms of making people feel comfortable and not offending anyone. But of course, that's got the potential to offend as well, the Jane Scott story, but on the whole, I think you've got to stand back and look at it – what's the

360 likelihood of offending someone. It's quite a tricky balancing act really.

[34:57] AG: *I've gone off on a bit of a tangent there, so I'd just like us to return now – we looked at the gift shop, the café and the events. How do you think the visitor experience would differ if there was no gift shop, café or events here? So you just had the tour in its current form, how would the*

365 *visitor experience differ?*

[35:29] RJ: It's quite hard to say, really. Perhaps it would feel more intense, I would imagine? I'm trying to think how I'd feel myself if I was going through to kind of come to this building without much signage and the idea

370 of being channelled through and just doing the tour. I think it would be more intense and perhaps you'd go in with less of a… I don't know, it's a really hard question to answer.

[36:05] AG: *To pick up on what you said about the intensity, by that do you*

375 *mean that it would be, or could be, obviously this is subjective, darker? As*

in the subject matter.

[36:21] **RJ:** Potentially. I think [pause] when you go to a site and you see the

gift shop etcetera, the café, it's the familiar… [pause] it kind of puts you at

380 ease. I suppose people might have fewer expectations as they're going in,

and because of that it might have a bit more of a shock factor or feel a bit

more intense, but again it's really hard to say. You're speculating and trying

imagine going through and not having those around you. Obviously on this

side [before the prison was opened to visitors in 2012], we never had the

385 café, but we did have a small shop and people were funnelled round the back

if you like, so it did have a bit more of that side of it, that perhaps people

maybe had… their expectations were a bit more unknown, really. But

perhaps, yeah.

390 [37:52] **AG:** *I'm now going to move onto the issue of authenticity. Obviously*

that is a very subjective term, but I'll let you decide how you want to conceive

that, and I'm sure it's going to be rather similar to what I understand it to

be. How does the issue of providing an authentic experience feature in how

you conduct the tour and how you present the site?

395

[38:19] **RJ:** Authentic experience. When I think of authenticity, I think of

the kind of information that we're giving, the things that people are seeing are true. So I already mentioned the idea that everything we say would be based on primary source material and information which we know to be fact, so it's always something that's intrinsically in on our content and in the building. We're not trying to recreate anything, we're not changing anything to try and create an experience, we have the building as it is, it's our biggest object that we have to show and then the information is all from archival material, so I think authenticity is really important to us.

[39:16] AG: *Obviously it is a subjective idea, and one person may say it's authentic in a certain way, others may think it's less so. Do you try and convey that in any other way other than what you've just said? Would you draw light to a particular sense of authenticity, or do you think it speaks for itself?*

[39:47] RJ: I think it does [speak for itself]. [pause] I can't see any way that we would need to push for any sense of authenticity because, for me as a guide and working, it's something I feel is already very much embedded in what we do and that building around us and the information that we give, so it's not something I ever feel the need to push or state, but that's me personally.

[40:31] AG: *Do you think others might?*

420

[40:35] RJ: I wouldn't think so. I would think they might feel the same as me.

[40:46] AG: *What effect do you think the tour has on the perception of*
425 *authenticity as compared to if the visitors were able to go around on their own? What do you think is the effect of having a tour on the perception of authenticity?*

[41:11] RJ: That's a good question really, because you're always aware that
430 you're a person and that you're giving your interpretation of the building and the content of the tour itself. I think it allows people to dig more, because they can have follow-on questions. If you've touched upon something that they're interested in, they can dig a bit deeper and you can give them more information, and you've built up the knowledge to be able to give that, I think
435 that adds to the authenticity, the fact that we'd always say 'we know this because of that' or we've through these records etcetera, so we are usually able to give that extra information where people require it or people request it, so I think that would add to the authenticity. I don't know whether that would be different in terms of [visitors] walking around the site itself
440 [unguided], it's always that thing within museums, the idea that this

interpretation is authentic and you expect it to be correct so I think that's

something that… because we also have this museum kind of background in

terms of the fact we have a collection, we're part of Lancashire County

Council, I think there's a certain amount of trust [from visitors] within that

445   as well, that what you're accessing is the authentic.

[43:16] AG: *Yeah, I'd certainly agree with that, I think that word trust is*

really key. What effect do you think the other elements of the experience –

that's the three we mentioned before, the shop, the café and the events. What

450   *effect do you think they have on the perception of authenticity?*

[43:40] RJ: I tend to see them as quite separate entities in my head, the idea

of them being more of a facility on-site rather than being woven into… but

of course they are part of the visitor experience, but I suppose in my head I

455   see it as there's a café there for people to have food and to have a drink and

there's somewhere to buy souvenirs, various different events going on, the

idea of it being a kind of cultural hub, a place to come. So I see that as slightly

separate, and I would like to think it doesn't affect how we're seen in terms

of the castle's authenticity, but I don't know.

460

[44:35] AG: *I get the feeling that you approach that – and correct me if I'm*

wrong – with the idea that those elements might erode the authenticity or

might be detrimental…

465 **[44:46] RJ:** Yeah, that's what I'm trying to think of whether it would because it… [pauses]

[44:49] AG: *… but could they equally improve the authenticity, so it could have an effect either way.*

470

[44:58] RJ: Again it's going back to the whole expectations of what people see at a heritage site, so, you know, nine out of ten that you would go to would have a certain standard of facilities, gift shop, café, events going on, so it's something that's expected. Perhaps it's not something that would…

475 because I see it as separate, I can't see it as ever eroding away the authenticity. I can't see the link, personally.

[45:34] AG: *On that note, is there anything in particular which you would avoid incorporating into the experience because you would see it as*

480 *potentially detrimental to authenticity?*

[45:53] RJ: In terms of the extra three we're looking at, or extra facilities, or in terms of the tour, or anything?

485 **[46:00] AG:** *Anything, perhaps something which you consciously could have introduced in the past but decided not to for whatever reason, or something which you think may come up in the future which you are not interested in?*

[46:12] RJ: For me on a personal note, the likes, as I mentioned earlier,
490 Merlin – so you've got the York Dungeons, the London Dungeons, there's one in Blackpool as well, the idea of the Lancashire Pendle Witch Experience. Not necessarily that I'm opposing to the acting kind of thing, that's absolutely great, but it's got to be based on fact, I think at the end of the day.

495

[46:45] AG: *Can I just clarify – by 'it' do you mean the experience here at Lancaster Castle?*

[46:51] RJ: Yeah, I think has always got to be based on facts, and as soon as
500 you start moving away from that and trying to 'beef it up' or 'sex it up' or whatever, it doesn't need to be because it's already absolutely fascinating and people really engage with it, but as soon as you start to move away from that and start to get a little bit artistic with it if you like, then that's moving away from the authenticity and I think that's a different kind of experience.
505 Don't get me wrong, I know these places are really popular, but in terms of being a historian myself and the background I'm from, what I would like to

see at a site like this, it's not something is for me personally.

[47:49] AG: *How do you balance between the concept of historical accuracy and authenticity with the offering of an engaging experience that meets the expectations that we talked about, how do you balance those?*

[48:08] RJ: I think it's great to be able to have different offers to meet different audience needs, so [for example] the dark history tours where we would very much more focus on the dark history, go into a bit more detail, have it [for ages] over-sixteen, I think that taps into a certain kind of visitor, a certain audience. And then obviously lots of family-friendly things as well, so we would have re-enactors come on site for example, so there's lots of different things going on, lots of access points and ways of using the building, lots of different types tours, different types of interpretation, but still always based on fact, basically, I think that nails it for me. We do the Hallowe'en tours, which is always where we get our most adventurous if you like, we all dress up and then we talk about castle ghosts, so that's always an interesting one because obviously that's something that's very subjective, so we've had various 'sightings' and whatnot, and then you've got the people and the guide would say 'oh this is ludicrous, I've not seen anything', so when we start getting requests for paranormal activity and the ghost side of things, you can't base that on fact, can you? That's the balancing act really,

375

but I think people who do visit at any time if people ask about the ghost
530 stories we can say 'well this person saw that, said this happened' but of
course it depends if you're open to these kinds of things. That's how I would
always approach it. So that's always a bit of a balancing act. You'll always
get a split public on that in terms of people who believe and people who
don't, and it's about balancing between the two. And again, as a tour guide,
535 it's great, it's a nice position to be in because you're with that group and
you're able to gauge that as you're working, it's quite a good thing to be able
to do.

[50:32] **AG:** *That's my last question, is there anything perhaps we've*
540 *mentioned today that you'd like to add to, or anything you've thought of as*
we've gone along? Anything to sum up, perhaps?

[50:50] **RJ:** One of the things as well that maybe it's worth mentioning is,
I've obviously mentioned the Lancashire witches quite a bit, but there's
545 obviously a wider kind of, we're part of a wider network if you like of the
Lancashire Witch Trail and Pendle Heritage Centre, so we do get quite a lot
of visitors coming through who are specifically interested in the Lancashire
or Pendle witches, so that's a history that we always try and include on the
tour. Again, when you're recounting the history of the Pendle witches, and
550 what happened here, that's one of those moments where you know that what

we do is quite special – you're going over it and it's one of those histories that the crowd always just fall deadly silent on, it's something that people are really interested in, they really engage with, really kind of in awe, the fact that they're on the site where the Pendle witches were tried so, again, 555 that adds to the authenticity of the building, that this is where it happened, and that's something that can never be taken away.

Appendix iii

Visitor Questionnaire, Lancaster Castle

<u>Lancaster Castle Visitor Survey</u>

Thank you indeed for agreeing to participate in this research study. This survey aims to understand how visitors experience sites of 'dark history' in several ways as detailed within the survey. 'Dark history' deals with issues such as death, suffering, crime and punishment, so if you are uncomfortable at all in discussing such issues then please do not complete this survey. By completing this survey you give your consent for the anonymous data collected to be used for the purposes outlined above. If you would like further explanation of the study or any of the questions, then please ask Alex.

<u>1. What was the main reason for your visit to Lancaster Castle today?</u> *(please state below)*

_____

_____

_____

<u>2. Did the history of death, punishment and witchcraft affect your decision to visit Lancaster Castle?</u> *(please select one)*

☐ It was the main factor in choosing to visit

☐ It was one of the main factors

☐ It was one of several reasons

☐ I was aware of it, but it did not factor in my decision

☐ I was unaware of the castle's dark history before visiting

3. What do you think is the appeal of learning about death, punishment and witchcraft at Lancaster Castle? *(please select one)*

☐ A general interest in history

☐ A 'grim fascination' with dark or scary stories

☐ To commemorate the victims

☐ To gain a meaningful or spiritual understanding of death

☐ Other *(please state)* _____

_____

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4. From 1-5, how likely are you to tell friends and family about your experience of the (dark) history of Lancaster Castle? *(please circle)*

1   2   3   4   5

(Very Unlikely)   (Extremely Likely)

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5. From 1-5, at Lancaster Castle today, did you think about your own mortality more than you would usually during your day-to-day life? *(please circle a number)*

1   2   3   4   5

(No more)   (Considerably more)

5a. If so, did you find it to be *(select as many as apply)*:

☐ Spiritual/ religious   ☐ Beneficial

☐ Upsetting   ☐ Novel   ☐ N/A

☐ Other (please state) _____

6. In your opinion, how would you describe the tour guide's approach to the tales about death and punishment which you heard during your tour today? *(select as many as apply)*

☐ In bad taste   ☐ Matter-of-fact   ☐ Entertaining/ novel

☐ Commemorative towards the victims

☐ Other (please state) _____

_____

7. Do you think it is appropriate to charge an admission fee for the tour of Lancaster Castle? *(please select one)*

☐ Yes   ☐ No

7a. Why? Please detail the reason(s) for your answer to question 8.

_____

_____

8. Does the admission fee affect your experience of the dark history of Lancaster Castle? *(please select one)*

☐ Yes – it attaches more significance

☐ Yes – it devalues the victims

☐ No – it has no effect

☐ Yes (other, please state) _____

_____

9. Have/ will you use the on-site café and shop today? *(please select one per item)*

	Yes	No
Shop	☐	☐
Café	☐	☐

10. How would you describe the role which the shop and café play in your overall experience at Lancaster Castle? *(select one per item)*

Shop

☐ An important part which links to the castle tour

☐ An important part which is separate from the castle tour

☐ Unimportant, but linked to the tour

☐ Unimportant, and separate from the tour

☐ It's inappropriate to have a shop at Lancaster Castle

Café

☐ An important part which links to the castle tour

☐ An important part which is separate from the castle tour

☐ Unimportant, but linked to the tour

☐ Unimportant, and separate from the tour

☐ It's inappropriate to have a café at Lancaster Castle

11. What effect did the tour guide have on your experience? (*please tick all that apply*)

☐ It was more entertaining   ☐ It was more engaging

☐ I understood more   ☐ It was more of an experience

☐ It was less of an experience

☐ It was better value for money

☐ Other (*please state*)

_____

_____

12. How would you describe the tour guide's approach to the subject of dark history? (*please circle a number*)

1	2	3	4	5

(Very <u>In</u>appropriate)   (Very Appropriate)

13. In your opinion, could the subject of dark history have been approached differently in order to suit your own personal preference? (*please circle a number*)

1	2	3	4	5

(<u>Less</u> detailed)   (<u>No</u> differently)   (<u>More</u> detailed)

14. Please state how you think the absence of a tour guide, shop and café would affect your perception of the following things.

(please select one option for each area)

Tour Guide	Improve	No effect	Worsen
Attractiveness to visit	☐	☐	☐
Appropriateness	☐	☐	☐
Enjoyment	☐	☐	☐
Overall experience	☐	☐	☐

Shop	Improve	No effect	Worsen
Attractiveness to visit	☐	☐	☐
Appropriateness	☐	☐	☐
Enjoyment	☐	☐	☐
Overall experience	☐	☐	☐

Cafe	Improve	No effect	Worsen
Attractiveness to visit	☐	☐	☐
Appropriateness	☐	☐	☐
Enjoyment	☐	☐	☐
Overall experience	☐	☐	☐

15. In your opinion, how would you describe your experience today at Lancaster Castle? *(please circle a number)*

1	2	3	4	5

(Very Inauthentic)   (Very Authentic)

---

16. Does the presence of a shop, café and tour guide affect the authenticity of Lancaster Castle? *(please select one for each area)*

Shop

☐ Yes – it makes it more authentic

☐ Yes – it makes it less authentic

☐ No – there is no effect

Café

☐ Yes – it makes it more authentic

☐ Yes – it makes it less authentic

☐ No – there is no effect

Tour Guide

☐ Yes – it makes it more authentic

☐ Yes – it makes it less authentic

☐ No – there is no effect

17. Please state how you think a more entertainment-focussed tour, including things such as actors in character, costume and ghosts, would change your experience at Lancaster Castle.

(please select one option for each area)

	Improve	No effect	Worsen
Entertainment value	☐	☐	☐
Provision of facts	☐	☐	☐
Appropriateness	☐	☐	☐
Overall authenticity	☐	☐	☐
Value for money	☐	☐	☐

---

18. Finally, please complete the following information:

Your gender _____

Your age   ☐ 18-24   ☐ 45-54

           ☐ 25-34   ☐ 55-64

           ☐ 35-44   ☐ 65+

Thank you for completing the survey. All data will remain completely anonymous. If you would you like further information about this study or have questions at a later date, Alex can be contacted via email: agrebenar@uclan.ac.uk

Interview C: Stephen Carlo-Lokko, Curator, International Slavery Museum

5   **Alex Grebenar**: *The experience here is based substantially on the atrocity of slavery both in the historic context of the international slave trade, but also its modern-day legacies, much of which deals with deeply upsetting and unsettling concepts. What do you think is the appeal for visitors to engage with what could be termed 'dark history' – both here at the ISM*

10 [International Slavery Museum] *but also at other sites across the world?*

[00:47] Stephen Carl-Lokko: I think it's really difficult to say because, whether it's here [at the ISM] or others sites in the world – places like Auschwitz or somewhere like the Kigali Centre in Rwanda, I think people

15 bring their own histories with them. So some people come because they want to learn about the history, it's a way to develop their knowledge and understanding and educate themselves, and it can sometimes come from a very personal place. If you're from somewhere like the West Indies or America even, in terms of the Transatlantic Slave Trade [TST], that was the

20 largest forced migration in human history and so it's the process by which a lot of the descendants of enslaved people who live in the Americas now, as I said America and the Caribbean, how they came to be there, so it's an

issue of identity for them. Then on the flip-side, you have people who are

here on a family day out, and it's to entertain the kids, to get out of the rain,

25 and there is unfortunately an element of voyeurism as well in these types of

sites that motivates people. I think it's difficult, and I don't think you can

say there's one aspect, I think there's lots of different reasons why people

come and visitors want to engage in these sites, but hopefully the majority

of people are coming to develop their knowledge and understanding of the

30 history of what these sites are about.

[02:54] AG: *Those upsetting, unpleasant concepts which run throughout*

the [ISM] museum – how do you decide on how to approach the subject of

death, suffering and atrocity?

35

[03:13] SC-L: Difficult again! How do we approach it? For this particular

museum - it's difficult to comment for others – I think the approach, and it's

also important to understand, I don't know if you're aware, but there was

previously a Transatlantic Slavery Gallery [TSG] on this site from 1994

40 **[AG agrees]**, great, so the concept of what we're doing here isn't new, it's

building on that history, those strides that the TSG made, and so a lot of

those difficulties were brought out and met during the TSG project's

development. One things that's really carried on from there in terms of the

approach is that it's a social history museum, so it's about people, the focus

45 is people. It's not about trade, it's not about ships or the mechanics of

slavery; of course those are elements of it and important especially when it

comes to Liverpool because of the involvement of Liverpool merchants and

Liverpool becoming the leading port, and that obviously has to be told, but

to engage people and to tell the history, we think of it in a holistic way, to

50 approach it very much from the perspective of the people who have been

enslaved, so it's that which runs through the museum I think, when we're

trying to construct the museum. I think that's our approach, it's not about

the mechanics, it's a human story about human survival and human spirit.

55 **[05:30] AG:** *The gallery itself is split into several different sections, but if*

we focus on the Middle Passage [section devoted to the TST], *obviously*

that has graphic descriptions of slaves were treated both when they were

transported and when they reached their destination. Is there an element of

sensitivity which you might try to employ within a particular approach, or

60 *do you take it on a more case-by-case basis?*

[06:22] SC-L: I think, again, the main approach is from a human

perspective, and to not favour the... statistical information. An important

feature is that you can hear the voices of the enslaved, and so although we

65 use archival material, documents from the period, a lot of the desktop

interactives that we've got are brought to life through actors, and what

we're trying to do is tell the brutality of the histories and not to shy away

from the huge number of people who were enslaved, and the whole process

of dehumanization, in the museum. I think what we try and do, and

70 hopefully we do, is to strike a balance, so we don't necessarily focus on or

give priority to the brutal processes. There's two displays in the gallery

which look at the brutal punishments and how people were enslaved

through 'seasoning', and the use of shackles and chains and what-have-you,

and the brutal way in which they were transported and dehumanised, but

75 that's balanced with the personal stories, we have a story in the museum

which is a 'Day in the Life of a Slave Woman', and it's re-enacted by an

actress, so you definitely are able to see that human side. It's about getting a

balance, and as I said, putting at the heart of the museum the voices of the

enslaved and their descendants as well. It's just remembering that's at the

80 heart of the story.

[09:18] AG: *To build on that slightly more, is the approach that you've just*

described based on how the kinds of subjects are handled at other sites, or

would you say it's quite unique to this one itself?

85

[09:37] SC-L: I think it is a bit unique. When the TSG opened in 1994, it

was the only gallery of its type in the world, and so they were cutting

through uncharted territory in that sense in how you could portray or talk

about the history portrayed in the museum context. Again, as I said, we're

90 really drawing on the pioneering work which was done during the

development of the TSG and the community consultation that was done

around then. With the development of ISM a lot of things have changed in

that academic knowledge and understanding, and the terminology around

the histories have changed, so we had a fresh round of community

95 consultation and various community groups were really involved in its

development. But in terms of other museums, I would say it was sparse in

that sense. What we were drawing on was the technical ways in which we

could engage people, so it was about going to museums and looking at their

use of interactives, their use of AVs, their education programmes and that

100 type of thing, to inform how we would engage visitors with the story - not

necessarily specifically about how to engage the story of Transatlantic

Slavery.

[11:42] **AG**: *You said there that you're more concerned with how to engage*

105 *the visitors rather than how to portray the story itself. Does the media*

portrayal of death, suffering, or even slavery itself, have any impact on how

you present them here? Perhaps in terms of how British society views those

things.

110 [12:12] **SC-L:** Previously the history of Transatlantic Slavery has been

very much talking about Britain's involvement in the abolition, and not

necessarily the hundreds of years prior to that when they were engaged in

making lots of money out of that. So there is that perception sometimes that

we're trying to enforce blame or guilt, or that we're trying to underplay the

115 role of the abolitionist movement in the history. That initial way in which it

was perceived, in terms of Britain's involvement in the trade, has been the

forces of abolition and the emancipators, and we challenge that. The role of

abolitionists is important, but it's put in the wider context of enslaved

Africans, and the main story we portray is their fight freedom. We show

120 that it didn't just start with the abolitionists in the 18th and 19th century, it

start from the very beginning at the point of capture – enslaved Africans

tried to fight against their capture and their state. So I think that what the

museum does challenge in terms of portrayal in the media is Britain's role.

What we're not just talking about is Britain's role in emancipation, [that's]

125 actually very little of what we're doing. It's talking about Britain's role in

the history of the TST and how the country was enriched from that trade,

and particularly places like Liverpool. I think we do challenge what has

been the dominating narrative; we had a film not so long ago about

'Amazing Grace', that was the way in which the country wanted to mark the

130 country's involvement in transatlantic slavery, very much again about

promoting the role of abolitionists. I think we do challenge that general

perception of Britain's role, and particularly Liverpool's role in that history,

yes it's important what the abolitionists did, but we can't forget how
Liverpool enriched itself in the hundreds of years before abolition.

135

[16:50] **AG:** *The museum obviously details the history of the TST and as
such deals in facts, real events which happened, and, as you mentioned, the
human element is present. Bearing in mind the appeal of dark history as
noted previously, and also taking into account what you described as a*

140 *pioneering approach to the history of slavery in this country, to what extent
does consumer demand affect the content and the tone of the museum, if at
all?*

[17:34] **SC-L**: I think, again, it goes back to access. The way in which

145 people consume content has changed a lot, especially with the advent of
social media, so the traditional way of doing it just through objects and text
panels, a dry academic discourse and tone with technical jargon just doesn't
work, doesn't engage. So again, it goes back to having a lot of different
ways to engage, obviously the objects and information is important, but

150 also the way in which it's delivered important. So it is objects and text, but
it's also AV interactives, it's re-enactments and using performers and other
various ways to engage people – and education programmes as well. I think
its is informed [by consumer demand] but it's acknowledging that theway
in which people learn has changed and it's a lot more diverse. Also, I

155 suppose, the target audience has changed, museums aren't simply trying to

attract middle-class educated people, we're trying to attract people from all

socio-economic backgrounds, and so it's about making it accessible to the

widest audience. So, as I said, it's using those diverse ways of engaging

people, making it as jargon/ academic-free as possible in terms of the way

160 which we produce and interpret and put together our displays. So it's

definitely changed, I would say, and it's definitely influenced how

museums present the history, absolutely. There is definitely an influence

there in. The various ways to engage people has changed, has adapted.... it's

difficult to say. Maybe the tone and content, in its broadest technical sense,

165 but still I think that each [museum] site is trying to tell its own story and

history, so from our perspective it is very much about Britain's

involvement, but specifically about Liverpool's role in the history of

Transatlantic slavery, and I think that, for people visiting the museum, that's

what they're coming to see, they're coming to hear about Liverpool's role in

170 the TST, and how the city became rich throughout that. That's something

that's unique to the museum in how it presents and talks about that history,

and it influences the content of what people will come and see. Although

we are the *International* Slavery Museum, we are very much, in terms of

perspective, about the history of Liverpool's involvement in the TST. So I

175 don't think it's influenced the content in that aspect, but we, like every other

museum, have changed the way we engage people, who we engage and

how we engage, and that's definitely influenced by the media, social media and what-have-you in the way people digest information about the world.

180 **[23:22] AG:** *I'd like to now consider the museum experience as a whole, rather than just what we've discussed so far, which is the* [gallery] *content of which that's obviously part. So I'd like to consider the concept of visitor experience from when they come in through the door to when they leave. What are the main considerations which you would make in order to create* 185 *and maintain the experience which is offered here at the ISM? Maybe if you could pick on two or three at most.*

[24:10] SC-L: I think it's broadly about educating people about the TST and, as I said, about humanising that experience and trying to maybe... in a 190 way counteract that aspect of dark tourism by making it a human story that people can engage with and hopefully try and counteract that aspect of people who may be coming, in a voyeuristic sense, to look at what's there and hopefully we're not perpetuating that. But I suppose in the way it's constructed, we've approached the museum, in terms of challenging 195 misconceptions, the way it's laid out is that there are three main galleries: Life in West Africa, Enslavement in the Middle Passage, and the Legacies. So in it's broadest sense, what we've done or tried to do is challenge the misconceptions of what the history of the TST is, and its links to Africa and

people of African descent. Africa is viewed as sort of ahistorical, and that

200 the history of Africa starts with the history of transatlantic slavery, so what

we've done is by deliberately engaging people in the first gallery with Life

in West Africa we're trying to challenge those misconceptions of what life

was in Africa in that period, that they weren't simply people without history

or culture and ripe for enslavement, they were in fact individuals, people

205 from diverse ethnic backgrounds, a whole array of different communities

and economic partnerships, and histories that were going on in Africa at

that time. So you see people as people first; they came from live in which

they were mothers, fathers, farmers, blacksmiths, so you see them as people

first, then you go on to the middle gallery which is about the whole

210 dehumanisation process and the effects that had, and then you move on to

the legacies where you look at issues that effect people today, but find their

roots in transatlantic slavery, issues around identity and racism and the

African diaspora, so in its broadest sense, the gallery I think does that. It's

about challenging the misconceptions around transatlantic slavery and also

215 the perception of Africa people who were enslaved and people of African

descent and by doing that we're trying to show that there was a start, a

middle and an end, and hopefully that's what people will come away with,

that the history of Africa didn't start with transatlantic slavery, and didn't

end with it, but it was a part. Hopefully one of the main things you'll come

220 away is seeing that. Because the approach we take is very much from the

perspectives of the enslaved, you'll come away with an understanding of the strength of the human spirit in trying to overcome adversity. Hopefully they're some of the big messages that people will come away with.

225 **[28:35] AG:** *So what you're saying with those things you've just discussed, that idea of providing a chronology and a background as well as a legacy to the TST, not just focussing on the slave trade itself, that is the main consideration that you have as curator?* **[SC-L agrees]** *OK. So how do you use those considerations in order to convey the value of the site? Now*
230 *obviously there's no admission fee, so there's no value in terms of cost to the visitor, but perhaps its inherent value as a documentation of a historical process or chronology?*

[29:30] SC-L: I suppose the value is that we're the only permanent
235 museum that looks at the history of transatlantic slavery from the perspectives as I mentioned before. So there are other galleries, there's the Sugar and Slavery gallery in London Docklands, and you've got the Wilberforce House in Hull, but we are the only permanent gallery to look at transatlantic slavery. We do provide not just the galleries themselves but
240 also education programmes, they're also free. I think there's a big draw for schools as well, and by learning about the history of transatlantic slavery, you also feed into a wider discussion about human rights, citizenship, and

the world in general, so I think it's a unique offering in that sense, and I think that's the draw. Obviously, we are a free museum as well, and I think

245 that's important because, as I said, it give access to people from all socio-economic backgrounds so I think that's vitally important as well. I think we are a unique museum, and there's not many museums in the UK, in the world even, that provide access to this history, so I think that in itself, our uniqueness, is what our value is.

250

[31:39] AG: *Does that absence of an admission fee affect, you talked about access there and it makes it more accessible, is there any other effect that you think it has perhaps on the demonstration of value, or do you think that's* [accessibility] *mostly what its effect is?*

255

[32:00] SC-L: I think, I hope mostly that's what its effect is, but it's really difficult to say.

[32:13] AG: *Perhaps then you could consider if there was a fee, how you*

260 *think it [the visitor experience] might differ, other than making it more restricted in terms of access. Do you think there would be any other effects?*

[32:29] SC-L: I don't know if there would be any other effects. I think, as I said, it just immediately puts up a barrier to certain types of people, that's

265 the only initial effect I can think of. It's the social effects for me, I think ,

that would have on the museum's visitors.

[33:04] AG: *OK. I'd now like to consider other aspects of the museum*

building, obviously you share it with the Maritime Museum as well, but

270 *there's other aspects of the building which visitors will use, and I'd like to*

consider how they relate to the ISM itself. I realise these are not directly

supervised or managed by you, in fact you may no input over some of them,

but I'd like to see how you feel they relate [to the ISM]. *Firstly, the shop.*

What is the relationship there?

275

[33:46] SC-L: The relation to the shop is very limited. We don't have any

direct control over the running of the shop, as you know we're part of a

bigger organisation and the shop itself is servicing not just the ISM, but it's

also servicing the Maritime Museum and UK Border Force [exhibition]

280 which, to be honest, is the biggest section in the shop itself, I think we only

have three shelves spread across two rows, so we've only got a very limited

amount of space in the shop. In terms of what goes in the shop, the stock

does change slightly, and it is linked slightly to what we do on-gallery,

because if we do have a new exhibition then that's reflected in what they'll

285 stock, so they'll stock books in there related to the exhibition. For instance,

we have an exhibition at the moment about modern slavery in India, and its

effect on the Dalit community, so there's books in there, academic texts, on

slavery in modern India about the Hindu caste system and things like that,

so there's a change in stock that will be reflected in whatever exhibition

290 we're doing at that time. But beyond that, because the shop itself serves

other departments within the venue, it's difficult to control exactly what

goes in, or how much we can directly influence what goes on and what's

sold in the shop.

295 **[33:56] AG**: *So how about from a visitor's perspective? How would that*

relate in terms of their experience in coming to the ISM and also having

access to that shop?

[34:10] SC-L: I suppose it is limiting in that the museum is talking about a

300 history spans over four hundred years. There is a limit to what we can put

on display and make it coherent and make any sense out of it. As I said, our

main focus is looking at the history of Liverpool's role, so how that history

links directly with the history of transatlantic slavery in other parts like,

you know, the rest of the Americas, we won't have the space to tackle all

305 those different histories in the museum, so the museum is very much a

jump-off point for that history to people to go and explore a bit more.

Obviously, we're limited in how we can do that directly especially in terms

of the shop because, as I said, our footprint within the shop is quite small.

So I think, some visitor comments we've had is that there isn't enough

310 material in the shop basically, and they can't find certain aspects ,

particularly if you people who have some sort of personal connection or

background, they may go in the shop and say 'there's no books on

enslavement in Barbados', or in Jamaica or in Brazil [for example], so it's

not having enough space in there to provide that information that people

315 can then go and take away, so we're sort of limited in that way. Hopefully,

with the next stages of development for the ISM, which include a large

capital project development, where we'll take over the adjacent building to

the Maritime building where the gallery is, that'll provide us with a bit

more control, and then the ability to offer a broader and more

320 comprehensive experience of history and access to the history for visitors,

so I think that element of it [the shop] at the moment isn't, in terms of how

the retail part of their experience complements what they find in the gallery

is quite restricted and isn't as good as we would like that accompanying

experience to be,

325

[39:27] AG: *So you're saying that despite the relative lack of size, the shop*

provides an opportunity for visitors to essentially build on what they've

seen here and maybe spark an interest, whether as you said it's a family

connection to a particular country or maybe if there's no personal

330 *connection beforehand, but there's something which has stimulated their*

interest, that gives them the opportunity to extend that and take it home,

essentially? **[SC-L agrees]** *OK. The second thing I'd like to examine is the*

café. How do you think that relates to the visitor experience at the ISM?

335 **[40:15] SC-L:** It doesn't really relate in any practical way, to be honest.

The café doesn't, you know, provide any sort of related experience to what

we're doing on the gallery in terms of the history and culture of the African

diaspora. There's no cultural food available, so unfortunately I can't...

340 **[41:01] AG:** *Do you think it adds anything to experience, or takes away, do*

you think it serves a purpose even?

[41:10] SC-L: I don't think it adds or takes away really. I think people just

generally are coming to the museums and want somewhere to get

345 refreshments and drinks. Possibly what it does impact on is on our wider

programme, particularly around annual events like Slavery Remembrance

Day, which we put on every year. We don't provide that culturally specific

food, which I think would enhance the visitor experience, particularly on

those types of days. But generally speaking, no, I don't think it does impact

350 and I don't think it's something we need to overly concern ourselves with.

[42:05] AG: *Finally within this question, and you just touched on it there,*

the various events which are held either here on-site or are hosted by the

museum perhaps at other sites such as Slavery Remembrance Day, and

355 *obviously today you've got the Human Rights Day. How do those events*

relate to the visitor experience at the ISM?

[42:33] SC-L: Well, obviously we're limited in space and also resources so

unfortunately we have the sort of level of changing exhibition programmes

360 that we would maybe like, because as I said we are restricted by budgets,

so having partnerships with other organisations, having an education team

can provide a way of enriching that experience because we're highlighting

or marking particular events or dates in the calendar. As you said, Slavery

Remembrance Day is something we do, we mark it to draw attention to the

365 issue that although transatlantic slavery has ended, unfortunately slavery

hasn't and it's more prevalent than ever before. So we can do that [mark the

date] by having special exhibitions on contemporary slavery, but also

raising awareness as and when we can of particular dates and having those

events, so it does try and help us to continually raise it [the issue of slavery]

370 in the media and raise public awareness and attention to what's happening

in the world today.

[44:21] AG: *I'd now like to consider how you think the visitor experience*

would differ if there was no shop, there was no café and there were no

375 *events, so the only thing you could do in this building was visit the*

museums.

[44:45] **SC-L:** I think, particularly in terms of events, it would make our

offer quite stale, particularly for schools groups and community group.

380 Maybe not so much the wider visitors, international visitors because

obviously the people who come changes, but people from the local

communities, local region, I think it would make our offer, as I said,

stagnant and stale quite quickly, and not able to respond to changes and we

wouldn't be able to reflect those changes or those current issue through our

385 main exhibitions because the resources just wouldn't be there. I think in

terms of if wee didn't have an education programme and an events

programme, I think it would make us stale and we wouldn't be able to

attract or continually attract those main audiences that do come to the

museum on a regular basis, whether that's families and children, whether it

390 be school groups, I think that would have an impact on visitors and the

types of visitors and the number of visitors that we attract each year.

Having that continual offer which we change and will bring people into the

museum time and time again is really crucial.

395 [44:48] **AG:** *And what about the shop and the café, do you think the*

absence of those would really affect the visitor experience?

[46:52] SC-L: In terms of the shop and the café, I don't think it would have

that... As I said before, I think ISM is unique in that it is the only permanent

400 museum [of its kind] in country, so we do have that in our favour, unlike

the Merseyside Maritime Museum, you've got Greenwich, museums down

in London and what-have-you. I think there's less opportunities to engage

with this history than maybe with other histories in other museum, and I

think that's still something that attracts people to the museum, but the lack

405 of activities [in the shop and café] wouldn't make us stale to those returning

groups in terms of the retail shop and the café. I don't think it would have

an effect specifically on the ISM, but it may have an effect on generally the

visitor numbers that come through because people obviously in a basic

form want to be fed and watered, so if there's no facilities on-site, then it's

410 going to prevent or put people off from coming and staying for as long as

they do. It would have a general effect but not a specific effect on our offer.

[48:47] AG: *Leading on from that, do you think the experience would differ*

if the ISM stood alone within its own building, so there were no other

415 *museums here, so you would come in and it's just the ISM itself?*

[49:10] SC-L: I think it would have, in its broadest sense, an effect on the

museum's perception, because although we are on paper a museum, in its

physical sense it's a gallery within a museum, and so I think there is still the

420 general perception the the ISM is a gallery rather than a museum in itself.

So I think in terms of the hopeful capital project that we're going to have,

that will provide a physical front entrance for the museum that would be

visible. I think it would have an effect in terms of the general perceptions.

A lot of visitor feedback that we do get is that people perceive it as an

425 exhibition rather than a museum, that's a common feedback we've had, not

just in terms of inside the museum but outside with people being able to

locate it. Most people are fine, there is signage outside and there are

banners outside pointing people to the museum, but unfortunately some

people still do say they struggle to find the museum and that can sometimes

430 work against you because they're already feeling a little bit put-out and that

might affect their view when they come into the museum and what they

see. So I think in its broadest sense it's the perceptions. It would help if we

had an actual physical external presence, and that would establish, I think

more strongly in people's minds, that we are a permanent museum and not

435 just possibly short-term or long-term exhibition display.

[51:38] AG: *That's an interesting point where you mentioned the*

psychological impact that that might have. I'd like to now consider the

concept of authenticity. That's obviously not a perfect term depending on

440 *how you interpret that, but just base it on your understanding of what*

authenticity is, not necessarily how you might consider other people to see
it. How does the issue of providing an authentic experience figure in how
you present the ISM?

445 **[52:17] SC-L:** I think what we've tried to do is hopefully, although we are

trying to appeal to a broad and wide audience, and some people might see

that as watering-down, our approach is putting enslaved Africans at the

heart of the story, so not necessarily about the brutalities, and some people

perceive that as sanitising the experience or trying to hide the history which

450 is certainly not what we're trying to do though I know some people might

see it as that. Hopefully in terms of authenticity, we are basing everything

that it is in the content in the museum on strong factual evidence, so for

instance when you come in you see that we're mentioning about the

numbers of enslaved Africans, around 12 million, and we've been

455 challenged on that and told that the number is greater, and that we're not

taking into account people that died from the point of capture and travelled

from central Africa to the coast to be transported, or the numbers of people

who then died while on plantations in the Americas as well. That might be

true, but the figure that we're taking is from actual hard archival

460 documented information, so although it can be disputed, the information

that we're using allows us that level of accuracy. Although the picture that

we build up from that can be seen as an emotive approach, it's one that's not

based on, I don't think, guilt, or trying to make people feel guilty when they come through into the museum. The information and displays we

465 provide is emotive, and we do talk about the role of Europe and specifically obviously Liverpool's role in the trade, but we don't portray Europe and America as inhuman, just their activities as inhuman, in contrast to the strength of the human spirit of the people were enslaved, so I'm hoping that we do strike that balance, and that is where our authentic interpretation

470 comes from, it's based on hard concrete evidence, but delivered from a social history perspective, from the perspective of individuals and people, rather than the mechanics of transatlantic slavery. So I think it's about presenting a balance and, probably, we haven't got it right in every aspect, and there are areas we do need to improve but, overall, hopefully people

475 will come away [and] will see the way in which the museum has engaged visitors and told the story is one which is balanced. Hopefully it's that balance which gives the museum its authenticity.

[57:31] AG: *So what effect do you think that the other elements of the*

480 *experience which we identified earlier – the shop, the café, the events and also, based on what you mentioned earlier about the shared occupation of the building – what effect do you think those things have on the authenticity of the ISM itself?*

407

485 **[58:03] SC-L:** I'm not sure of its effects. I don't think it would have or has

a great effect on the authenticity of the gallery. I think that it is able [to],

and does, stand alone from the rest of the offer. I think the other things

would, if we were able to have more input, would complement it [the ISM],

but I don't think it necessarily detracts or takes away from the authenticity

490 of what's on display and what you see on gallery, for the general visitor

anyway.

[58:56] AG: *So you think that physical separation give it almost a*

complete distance? So you come in, those things are downstairs...

495

[59:10] SC-L: Oh yeah, I see what you mean. I think so, yeah. It's probably

the physical distance because obviously we're on the third floor as opposed

to the ground floor. Maybe if we were on the ground floor, people would

question more the offer or the lack of offer we've got, I don't know it's

500 difficult to say. Maybe by chance that we are on the third floor, and that

there is that distance there, does have an effect on people's mind. I'm not

too sure.

[01:00:02] AG: *Slight tangent here you might think, I'm just wondering if*

505 *there's anything you would avoid incorporating into the experience because*

we think it might affect the authenticity or might just negatively affect the

experience itself?

[01:00:22] SC-L: Broadly speaking, I don't think there are, but there are
510   some things, as I said although the shop is pretty much autonomous, there

are some things that we've thought, given the museum's approach, aren't

really suitable for shop. For instance, at one time they were selling, and it

was just part of the general offer, so you could find coasters, for instance,

of ships and the UK Border Force, and at one point the shop had some

515   coasters in which had a graphic of enslaved Africans from an archival print

the the abolitionists used to use which showed enslaved Africans and how

they were packed below decks of cargo. That image was printed onto the

coasters, and these coasters were being sold in the shop. We immediately

said, given the context of what the museum is, for us that isn't appropriate

520   and we asked the shop to take them off display, given what the museum

was about, in our approach it wasn't appropriate. So there are certain types

of merchandise, which that was an example of, where if we thought it

wasn't appropriate, given the sensitivities around the history and the

approach we've taken that we'd say to the shop 'please don't stock that', and

525   they'd take that on board and stop selling that particular item. So there are

instances where the general merchandise which you can buy in these types

of shop isn't suitable for the subject matter that we cover, so we do have to

draw the line there. Unfortunately the breakdown is, as we're part of a

larger organisation, and that's a standard type of merchandise that they

530 would sell, it was unfortunate that the shop started selling it before it came

to our attention. Sometimes it's acting retroactively, but unfortunately this

sometimes happens in large organisation.

[01:03:25] AG: *What about within the galleries themselves? Is there there*

535 *anything which you would avoid, a particular approach you'd avoid?*

Obviously you've already talked about challenging the preconceptions and

the approach that UK history has often had for its role in the slave trade –

that focus on the abolitionists, almost a sort of side-lining of it and seeing it

as an American issue or an issue for other countries. But in terms of

540 *perhaps the presentation or tone, is there anything which you would avoid*

that you may encounter in other museums, perhaps?

[01:04:15] SC-L: Again, I don't think there's anything we necessarily

545 would avoid, except to say that we would try to maybe avoid presenting or

falling into the trap of focussing too much on the brutalities of the trade.

For me personally, obviously it's important within the history of

transatlantic slavery to have some understanding of that, but I don't think

educationally it brings anything to the table in terms of educating our

550 visitors, particularly if we're trying to show enslaved Africans as people

first and as enslaved people second. I don't think it'd help in trying to challenge the misconception if we had too many displays which focussed on the brutal aspects of transatlantic slavery, so I'm quite pleased that we don't do that in the museum, and I would hope that it's something we

555 wouldn't do. So in terms of things we wouldn't do, we would always try to come at this, or in any display we do, we try to come at it from a human perspective and put at the centre of that story, whether we're looking at transatlantic slavery or looking at contemporary forms of slavery, is putting the voices of enslaved people at the centre, and try and use that as the

560 guiding principle and the focal point for anything that we do in terms of displays and exhibitions in the museum.

[01:06:40] AG: *Finally, and I think you possibly have answered this piecemeal throughout the rest of the interview, but perhaps you could just*

565 *sum up, perhaps in a sentence or two, exactly how you would balance the historical accuracy and authenticity of your content with the offer of an engaging visitor experience?*

[01:07:12] SC-L: Sorry, I might be repeating myself again! As I said,

570 difficult one in terms of trying to get that balance, trying to be factual but also portray it from a human perspective and be emotive, because we're trying to engage people, and I don't think there's anything for us to

apologise in taking that approach, but I don't think there's anything useful

in simply trying to engineer feelings of guilt in people, I don't think it's a

575 helpful or useful emotion in trying to challenge the misconceptions behind

the history and trying to educate people, so it's about engaging people

without trying to make people feel guilty. But also, we do, I hope, when we

try and talk about it in historical and factual terms, we are using accurate

information to do that, so it's a combination of accurate information,

580 accessibility, as well as a variety of diverse tools to try and engage people

with the history and what we're trying to do and what we're trying to say.

It's a balancing act, I think, and it's getting those elements right and

hopefully, generally speaking, hopefully the museum does do that in the

offer which it has and gives to its visitors.

Appendix v

Interview D: Julia Bryan, Education Manager, National Museums Liverpool (NML)

5   **Alex Grebenar Q1:** *The experience at the ISM is based substantially on the atrocity of slavery both in the historic context of the International Slave Trade, and its modern-day legacies – much of which deals with deeply unpleasant and upsetting concepts. What exactly do you think is the appeal of engaging with what could be termed a 'dark history' here at ISM but also*
10   *at other sites across the world which deal with other atrocities and death and suffering?*

  Julia Bryan *(paraphrased from notes)*: In the case of the ISM, I think 'appeal' is the wrong word; 'engagement' is a more appropriate term. There
15   is a high level of interest and engagement with the history of slavery and its modern-day legacies, and an appreciation for its exposure to avoid denial discourses. The issue must be approached with sensitivity to avoid not only sensationalism but also sanitising the reality of the slave trade.

20   **AG Q2:** *Do you think the approach at the ISM differs from that at other sites?*

  JB *(p)*: Yes. Across Europe there are many museums such as torture museums, who sell a 'vile history' which is sensationalistic in nature, and
25   there's a certain level of voyeurism involved.

AG Q3: *Those deeply unpleasant and upsetting concepts run throughout the museum. How do you decide on how to approach the subject of death and suffering within the education programme?*

JB (p): We maintain a close link with the exhibitions on gallery, and have clearly defined learning outcomes for each session. We also pay attention to how visitors learn; some learn from seeing, others from hearing, and others learn on a more experiential level. The approach also depends on visitor behaviour, and so clear guidance on behaviour is given before each session both in terms of respecting others but also the objects and issues in question to avoid upset. Furthermore we tend to prefer school groups rather than public 'drop-in' session as these rules are harder to enforce.

AG Q4: *Previously you mentioned the concept of sensitivity – could you explain exactly what this means with regard to the ISM?*

JB (p): For example, we may use shackles or racist signage from the 1940s or 50s and so they need to be treated with the requisite level of respect. This can be hard as some children may not necessarily understand the implications, such as with the Robinson's Gollys. However, it's not just about outlining rules on how to behave – respect also needs to be stimulated towards what the objects symbolise, not just a respect for rules.

AG Q5: *Does media portrayal of death and suffering inform your choices*

within the education programme?

55

JB *(p)*: Not directly, but, for example, many children can be desensitised to atrocity or violence due to a bombardment of images from news or video games. The events of the distant past can also seem unreal, so we have to counteract that by showing that slavery was and is real, that its legacy is

60   real.

AG Q6: *The museum details the history of the international slave trade and as such deals with facts. Bearing in mind the appeal of dark history as noted previously, to what extent does consumer demand dictate the content*

65   *and tone of the museum?*

JB *(p)*: Only insofar as we address curricular demands which schools have – we're there to support them in fulfilling those. We also try to develop our audience by targeting families on lower incomes who are perhaps not

70   regular visitors to museums by showing the benefits of what's on offer. We have a clear idea on what we need to provide and the level of engagement from visitors is there.

AG Q7: *Now I'd like to approach the museum experience as a whole, of*

75   *which the dark history is part. Please explain the main considerations made in order to create the experience offered at the ISM.*

JB *(p)*: We would like visitors to understand the impact of slavery, to acknowledge the legacy that the international slave trade has had on Africa

80 and other places. Also to understand the reality of life in Africa before slavery, and the effect that slavery had on civilizations which in effect set them back hundreds of years.

AG Q8: *How about in terms of the overall experience that visitors have?*

85

JB *(p)*: We attempt to give a relatively simple message based on those key points and hope that visitors take it away and are enriched by it.

AG Q9: *How do you use these considerations in order to convey the*
90 *inherent value of the experience?*

JB *(p)*: We do this in the way which we promote the ISM. By showing the visitor what to expect their expectations are then relatively easy to understand. We see it as having a 'mission', rather than being a commercial
95 attraction which is of real use to society, and the value lies in that use. We hope that by visiting the ISM, visitors take away intangible benefits; for example, children will have an increased concept of morality by understanding the concepts shown at ISM.

100 **AG Q10:** *How do the other aspects of the museum experience within the Maritime Museum building relate to the ISM itself? Firstly, the gift shop.*

JB *(p)*: There's not really a relationship. It's useful in that visitors can gain more information from the books which are on sale. Primarily, the shop
105 serves a commercial purpose; all profits are re-invested into the museum,

so it's an extremely useful source of income in that respect. There is also a demand for souvenirs, people tend to like buying something to take away, particularly international visitors. It can also be used as promotion; visitors might buy a particular branded product which gets the museum name out

110 there more.

AG Q11: *Secondly, the café.*

JB *(p)*: Again, there's the issue of income which is useful. However, the

115 café greatly improves the accessibility of the museum – the reality is that many people do find it tiring to visit a museum, and so having somewhere to sit down and have refreshments is important. This can also extend the amount of time that visitors spend in the museum, so the hope is that by doing that they'll learn more than if they didn't stop for a rest or

120 refreshment. We're currently looking into the idea of selling more ethical goods, though the café are currently quite good at that.

AG Q12: *Finally, the various events which are held at the museum such as those on Slavery Remembrance Day and at other times of the year.*

125

JB *(p)*: These are very important to the ISM, and they're not in the same category of the shop and café. We have a number of 'key dates' in the calendar which we always mark, and there is a certain level of external expectations that we mark those dates and support the causes. These are

130 arranged with a number of partner groups to ensure that they reflect the essence of the anniversary or event. It also increases the profile of the

museum and puts us 'on the map', which then allows us to attract new audiences. It's interesting that many people who come to the events have never been to the ISM before, and so it offers them a way in. Furthermore,
135 it give and additional layer of understanding to the experience to both new visitors and existing users.

AG Q13: *How would the visitor experience differ if there was no shop, café or events?*

140

JB *(p)*: With the shop and café, we'd probably have lower overall visitors numbers as it'd be less accessible, and those who did visit would have shorter stays. As for the events, it would be a big loss as we get a high response to them and it'd be harder to 'harness the support' of the various
145 partner groups. If we were to stop running them, we'd also not be fulfilling those external expectations.

AG Q14: *How would the visitor experience differ if the ISM stood alone within its own building?*

150

JB *(p)*: It would be a better experience, and that's what will hopefully happen as and when the Martin Luther King Building (a new, single-use venue for the ISM) opens. However there would be less crossover unlike now whereby visitors to the Maritime Museum may then also look in the
155 ISM. Visitors will have to go out of their way to an extent to visit, but they may do that anyway based on the relevance to them personally

AG Q15: *I'd now like to approach the issue of authenticity. How does the issue of providing an authentic experience feature in how you present the*
160 *education programme at the ISM?*

JB *(p)*: It's very important to the experience, as we're dealing with facts and so in line with the exhibitions we need to provide authentic interpretation of the issues around slavery.

165

AG Q16: *What effect do you think the other elements of the experience as identified earlier– the café, shop and events – have on the perception of the authenticity of the ISM?*

170 **JB *(p)*:** The shop and café would have not effect, but the events provide a very important link. They're not really distinct events, as they form part of our ongoing programme of educational activities. They're consulted over, there's a clear rationale and message, as well as planned learning outcomes. Due to that consultation we can create an authentic experience which
175 factors in the aforementioned main considerations in terms of the visitor experience.

Appendix vi

Visitor Questionnaire, International Slavery Museum

International Slavery Museum (ISM) Visitor Survey

Thank you indeed for agreeing to participate in this PhD research study. This survey aims to understand how visitors experience sites of 'dark history' in several ways as detailed within the survey. 'Dark history' deals with issues such as death, suffering and slavery, so if you are uncomfortable at all in discussing such issues then please do not complete this survey. By completing this survey you give your consent for the anonymous data collected to be used for the purposes outlined above. If you would like further explanation of the study or any of the questions, then please ask Alex.

1. What was the main reason for your visit to the International Slavery Museum (ISM) today? *(please state below)*

_____

_____

_____

2. Did the subject matter of the ISM affect your decision to visit the museum? *(please select one)*

- [ ] It made me more interested in attending
- [ ] It made me anxious or unsure about visiting
- [ ] I was aware of it, but it made no difference to my decision
- [ ] I didn't know anything about the content before I visited

3. What do you think is the appeal of learning about the atrocity of slavery? *(please select one)*

- [ ] A general interest in history
- [ ] A 'grim fascination' with dark events from the past
- [ ] To commemorate enslaved people
- [ ] To gain a meaningful/ spiritual understanding of life
- [ ] Other *(please state)* _____

_____

4. From 1-5, how likely are you to tell friends and family about your experience of slavery within the ISM? (*please circle*)

1   2   3   4   5

(Very <u>Un</u>likely)   (Extremely Likely)

5. From 1-5, at the ISM today, did you think about your own mortality more than you would usually during your day-to-day life? *(please circle a number)*

1   2   3   4   5

(No more)   (Considerably more)

5a. If so, did you find it to be *(select as many as apply)*:

- [ ] Spiritual/ religious
- [ ] Beneficial
- [ ] Upsetting
- [ ] Novel
- [ ] N/A
- [ ] Other (please state) _____

414

6. In your opinion, how would you describe the approach taken overall within the ISM? *(select as many as apply)*

☐ Historically accurate   ☐ Entertaining/ novel

☐ Commemorative towards enslaved people

☐ It gives a voice to enslaved people

☐ Other (please state) _____

_____

---

7. Do you think it is appropriate that admission to ISM is free? *(please select one)*

☐ Yes   ☐ No

7a. Why? Please detail the reason(s) for your answer to question 7.

_____

_____

---

8. Does the free admission affect your experience at the ISM? *(please select one)*

☐ It attaches more significance

☐ It devalues enslaved people

☐ It has no effect

☐ Other (please state) _____

_____

9. Have/ will you use the on-site shop today?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

10. Have/ will you use the on-site café today?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

11. How would you describe the role which the shop and café play in your overall experience at the ISM? (*select one per item*)

Shop

☐ An important part which links to the museum

☐ An important part which is separate from the museum

☐ Unimportant, but linked to the museum

☐ Unimportant, and separate from the museum

☐ It's inappropriate to have a shop for the use of ISM visitors

Café

☐ An important part which links to the museum

☐ An important part which is separate from the museum

☐ Unimportant, but linked to the museum

☐ Unimportant, and separate from the museum

☐ It's inappropriate to have a café for the use of ISM visitors

12. What effect did the interactive elements in the museum, such as the re-enacted footage and display screens, have on your experience today? (*please tick all that apply*)

[ ] It was more entertaining   [ ] It was more engaging

[ ] I understood more   [ ] It enhanced the experience

[ ] It detracted from the experience

[ ] Other (*please state*)

_____

_____

13. From 1-5, how would you describe the ISM's approach to the subject of slavery? (*please circle a number*)

1   2   3   4   5

(Very Inappropriate)   (Very Appropriate)

14. From 1-5, in your opinion, could the subject of slavery have been approached differently in order to suit your own personal preference? (*please circle a number*)

1   2   3   4   5

(Less detailed)   (No differently)   (More detailed)

15. Please state how you think the *absence* of shop and café within the building would affect your perception of the following things.

(please select one option for each area)

Shop	Improve	No effect	Worsen
Attractiveness to visit	☐	☐	☐
Appropriateness	☐	☐	☐
Enjoyment	☐	☐	☐
Overall experience	☐	☐	☐

Cafe	Improve	No effect	Worsen
Attractiveness to visit	☐	☐	☐
Appropriateness	☐	☐	☐
Enjoyment	☐	☐	☐
Overall experience	☐	☐	☐

16. The ISM is housed within the Maritime Museum building, alongside other museums. Does this: *(tick all that apply)*

☐ Enhance the importance of the ISM

☐ Detract from the importance of the ISM

☐ Enhance your experience at the ISM

☐ Detract from your experience at the ISM

17. In your opinion, how would you describe your experience today at the ISM? *(please circle a number)*

1	2	3	4	5

(Very Inauthentic)   (Very Authentic)

---

18. Does the presence of a shop and café within the Maritime Museum Building (*home to the ISM and other museums*) affect the authenticity of the International Slavery Museum? *(please select one for each area)*

Shop

☐ It makes it more authentic

☐ It makes it less authentic

☐ There is no effect

Café

☐ It makes it more authentic

☐ It makes it less authentic

☐ There is no effect

19. Did the ISM alter your understanding of slavery and its legacy compared to other sources of information? *(please select one)*

[ ] Yes *(please answer 19a)*   [ ] No *(please answer 19b)*

19a. If *yes*, how much from 1-5 was your understanding altered?

1	2	3	4	5

(To a lesser degree)   (To a greater degree)

19b. If no, please choose why you think this is. *(please select one)*

[ ] I already had a very strong knowledge of the matter

[ ] The perspective is the same as other museums/ media

[ ] Other *(please state)* _____

---

20. Finally, please complete the following information:

Your gender   _____

Your age   [ ] 18-24   [ ] 25-34   [ ] 35-44

           [ ] 45-54   [ ] 55-64   [ ] 65+

Have you visited the ISM before today?   [ ] Yes   [ ] No

Your home: [ ] The local area   [ ] Rest of the UK   [ ] Overseas

Did you visit as part of a pre-booked group visit?:   [ ] Yes   [ ] No

Thank you for your time and help with this study. Please email agrebenar@uclan.ac.uk if you'd like more information about the research.

420

Appendix vii

Summary of Preliminary Research

This appendix briefly details preliminary exploratory research undertaken at both sites in the run-up to conducting the empirical research as explained chiefly in Chapter Five.

Exploratory study, Lancaster Castle

This exploration of Lancaster Castle as a site of tourism was undertaken in order to provide the researcher with a base of knowledge on the nature of experience at Lancaster Castle. This incorporates the physical presentation of the site, the provision of aspects of commodification, the type of language used by the tour guides as well as visitors, and any further observations deemed to be of note or interest by the researcher.

This study encompassed two methods:

- Observation of castle tours
- Brief semi-structured interviews/ discussion with adult visitors (aged 18 or over)

These methods were chosen for three primary reasons. Firstly, as the study was exploratory in nature, it did not have specific research outcomes other than a rather open 'base of knowledge'. As such, more structured methods may have reduced the breadth of that base, and so the two research methods, chosen with maximum flexibility in mind, allowed the research to react to the nature of the experience, rather than the researcher trying to predict beforehand how the experience may develop. Secondly, formal semi-structured interviews with supply-side individuals were not deemed appropriate for this stage of the research, as this would have required in-depth pre-existing knowledge of the site – indeed, that method eventually became part of the main empirical research. Observation of tour guides was deemed adequate to understanding the role of the supplier in the visitor experience within the context and aim of the exploratory study. Furthermore, due to time and financial constraints, the study was limited to one day as three tours was deemed sufficient to address the aims of the exploratory study and thus provide an adequate base of knowledge to proceed.

The findings of this study – undertaken on 4th August, 2015 - are now summarised in turn.

Observation of castle tours

The study encompassed a total of three tour sessions, each lasting approximately 90 minutes. The tours were led by one tour guide; a total of two different guides led the three tours on which the researcher was present (referred to as Tour Guide A or B). Each tour guide brings their own personal style to the tour and, as such, each individual tour is different. However, though the exact content differs from tour to tour, the locations remain generally the same. One particular exception is the Crown Court room; if in use for Court business then the tours do not visit it. A full description of the nature of Lancaster Castle and the tour is provided in Chapter Six, whilst tour content is summarised in Chapter Six, Figure 22.

Observations

The tour guides take a personal and inclusive approach to the subject matter and seek to engage visitors by illuminating upon the 'dark history' of Lancaster Castle alongside the historic chronicling of the castle. The phrase 'dark history' is often used as a means to relate to criminality, torture, and executions. Furthermore, tour guides often transfer a historic retelling onto the consciousness of the visitors – for example, when describing the process of hanging, 'you' is used, rather than 'the prisoner' or other such term, i.e. '… once *you* were hanged, *your* body would be removed to an antechamber'. Visitors are able to view and sometimes handle torture weapons and execution tools such as a noose actually used in executions. Names of criminals and their victims are often used to convey a level of personality on historic individuals.

The dark history is generally referred to very dispassionately in a matter-of-fact manner, with shades of black humour included at the discretion of the tour guide (as also noted by visitors – see below). The chronology of events (as noted in Chapter Three) clearly plays a part in this; the events happened centuries ago and so have little ability to truly shock or offend having taken place in a fundamentally different society and age. It is interesting to note, therefore, that during this study the commentary given in the Modern Prison had none of the black humour employed in the historic areas. The issue of the Pendle Witches is also approached in this dispassionate manner, though some details, such as the family dynamic of the 'witches' themselves, introduces a personal element into the otherwise dispassionate, historic account. Furthermore, the visitor is left to their own thoughts as to the issues of witchcraft approached as a crime (or indeed the

supernatural as a plausible phenomenon). The concept of contrasting historic punishment with that of today is left to the visitor to approach, as the consequences or responsibility of certain sentences and punishments are not explained, merely implied by the matter-of-fact explanations.

The sometimes theatrical approach also affects the context of the subject matter. Again, this is applied in various measures depending on the subject in hand; the subject of the Shire Hall, the Civil Court room, is dealt with in a grand manner in keeping with the grand decoration of the room. However, the Crown Court differs. Some tours focus on medieval trials which often ended in a sentence of corporal or capital punishment, and this is done in a relatively outraged or theatrical tone. However, the tale of the Birmingham Six trial was recounted in a matter-of-fact manner with no theatrical or humorous additions during all three tours.

Key Discrete Outcomes of Observations

Over the course of three tours, many observations can be noted; indeed, due to the phenomenological approach of this research (as discussed in Chapter Five), it is assumed that many observations will have been absorbed subconsciously by the researcher, but which would later emerge to affect the research (though this is discussed variously in the limitations of this research). However, a clear set of discrete observations can also be provided, as detailed below.

- All tours as different, though there are many common elements
- Tour guides mostly recount historic accounts in a dispassionate manner
- Certain types of language are nonetheless used to engage the visitor where deemed appropriate by the guide
- The tone and language varies from area to area of the castle
- The tone, language and content is tailored based on the audience. One tour included a majority of children, and so the tour guide often used extra 'asides' directed specifically at the children in order to engage them without excluding adults
- The overwhelming nature of the tour is that of a historic account, but with certain added points of human interest
- Beyond the tour guide there is very little interpretation through interpretative materials available to visitors.

Visitor Interviews

A total of six participants were interviewed; one from Tour One, two from Tour Two and three from Tour Three, though one respondent only partially completed the interview. The participants were asked the following questions:

1. What attracted you to visit Lancaster Castle?
2. How do you feel about the way the subject of criminal behaviour and death was handled?
3. How do you feel about the admission fee?
4. Are you interested in souvenirs?
   (If yes) What type? [Furthermore] Why?

5. Would you describe the experience as authentic?
   Why/ not?

6. What effect did the tour guide have on your experience compared to if you had explored on your own?

The questions were intentionally open-ended; rather than trying to gain specific answers, the intention was to understand overall concepts and language associated with the visitor experience. In that respect, respondents were also given the chance to add any further comments and digress from the original question.

Participant responses are summarised (taken from the researcher's shorthand notes) in turn below.

Tour One - Respondent One

1. The profile of the castle as a prominent landmark.

2. It was handled in an interesting manner – the punishment methods were shown to be well out of date, and [the respondent] felt that torture wouldn't happen in today's society.

3. It had no effect on the decision to visit – it adds a level of exclusivity and ensures that the exhibits etc. are given a level of importance.

4. Not particularly interested as they are the same as at other sites. However, [the respondent] recognises that souvenirs serve a commercial purpose for the site.

5. Authentic and entertaining yet selective in its history.

6. It added value to the experience with a level of drama and interpretation which might not have been gained otherwise.

7. If allowed to explore alone, much more time would be needed to cover everything the tour guide did.

Tour Two – Respondent One

1. The profile of the castle, its [perceived] history, and to investigate it [the respondent lives in the area and passes it frequently without visiting].

2. Sensitively to the age group (as there were children in the group). Would have expected more information if no children present.

3. Happy to pay as it adds value to the experience.

4. Yes, historic literature or items would appeal. Well aware that it is a 'money making' venture.

5. Yes – it could be made to look like 'Disneyland' but it has remained true to the history and architecture.

6. The tour guide enhanced the experience by imparting a unique perspective, though [the respondent] would also like the opportunity to explore alone.

7. More interpretative objects or information board would enhance understanding – would have liked some visual/ aural resources.

Tour Two – Respondent Two

1. Came to see a specific part of the castle – had a specific interest in the history of Lancaster Castle itself.
2. Humour employed by the tour guides lessened the effect or gravity of the matter. Could have been more stark, but also noted that it was appropriate to the children present.

3. Paying is fine – the price was relative to Lancaster prices but would probably cost more in other locations.

4. The availability of generic souvenirs adds nothing to the experience. However, Lancaster-specific items are interesting.

5. Yes – the tour guide 'brought it alive'.

6. Human element aided understanding, and made it more memorable.

7. Would like to explore alone, and would like to see more artefacts (such as the torture instruments).

Tour Three – Respondent One

1. The profile of the castle in the local area.

2. Appropriate, though would have expected a different approach without children present.

3. No effect – it is an accepted part of tourism.

4. Books only – and those unique to Lancaster/ local area history.

5. Yes – there was little extra added to the castle building.

6. It was a helpful inclusion – adds to the experience and understanding.

Tour Three – Respondent Two

1. Local profile, also because of the 'multi-faceted experience' – could use the café beforehand.

2. Appropriate – seemed very 'matter of fact' and described what happened rather than exploring the question of 'right or wrong'.

3. Reasonable – had no effect. Should be free for children/ schools [not currently so].

4. There is a place for souvenirs, but the 'standardised' or generic items are inappropriate. Items on sale should be directly relevant to the experience of being at the castle.

5. Yes – the presentation was matter-of-fact and did not attempt to alter the history. Good link of historic and present use, and appropriate presentation to visitors.

6. Human element is 'essential' – guide's interpretation is important as nuances can't always be conveyed in full via boards or other interpretative items.

Tour Three – Respondent Three

1. Extensive, specific and academic interest in site and dark history.

2. Straightforwardly addressed and realistic portrayal. Allows reflection on current issues of torture, death penalty and prisons.
3. Described the 'Disney' effect – should be free, but the admission fee adds value.
4. Symbolic tokens – add little to the experience.

[respondent was unable to complete the remaining questions]

Key Discrete Outcomes of Visitor Interviews

- Dark history is only one aspect of Lancaster Castle's appeal – several respondents were unaware of its dark history

- The tour guides' individual approaches were generally seen as matter-of-fact in their discussion of the subject matter, allowing the visitor to interpret accordingly. The tour guide format also allowed flexibility in approach depending on the nature of the group.

- There was a relatively varied view of the admission fee – some noted it adds value and exclusivity, whilst some noted no effect. As such this could have implications on how the experience is framed.

- Souvenirs appeared to be an accepted part of the experience due to commercial reasons, but few expressed specific interest in buying them or a specific effect on the experience.

- Lancaster Castle was seen as an authentic site, an authenticity which was facilitated (at least in part) by the tour guide – no other aspects of experience were linked with authenticity.

- The tour guides were seen as central to the experience as they added an expert voice, entertainment, and a 'human' element. However, some expressed a desire to explore further alone.

- More generally, respondents appeared to view Lancaster Castle as a conventional site of tourism with expected and accepted symptoms of commodification.

Summary

Due to a demonstrable set of outcomes, this exploratory study was deemed to have been successful in its aim of providing a base of knowledge for the researcher, but also in its indirect contribution towards the research question and objectives of this thesis. By utilising the findings, the main stages of the research could be better constructed. That process is explained throughout Chapter Five. Though there are limitations to this

approach, these are broadly discussed in the overall research and methodological limitations.

Compared to Lancaster Castle, there was much less exploratory research involved with the ISM. The exploratory research consisted of a meeting with Dr. Richard Benjamin, Head of the International Slavery Museum, which took place on-site at the Maritime Museum, followed by an in-depth visit by the researcher to the ISM itself. This differed from the approach at Lancaster Castle because the ISM does not offer tours as standard and so the observation approach was not possible in that sense and covert observations could be invasive. Therefore, by meeting with Dr. Benjamin, the researcher was able to gain valuable insight into the nature of the ISM, including certain overall approaches from a strategic and curatorial perspective, which shed light on the experience delivered from the supplier. The contents of the meeting are confidential; however, it served to provide to again provide a base of knowledge for the researcher which could be built upon, under the phenomenological approach, towards addressing the research objectives through empirical research. The nature of the visitor experience, as observed during the researcher's in-depth visit, is detailed in full in Chapter Seven.