chapter two

global memories & tourism
Today, with the increase and ease in travel, and with the rise in tourism, many Euro-Western travellers are seeing the world, and as has been stated earlier, experiencing nations in the aftermath of genocide, and as such are seeing, experiencing, and interpreting genocide memorials created within these nations. “Modern tourism proves that the experience of different places, is a major human interest” (Norberg Schulz, 1980, p. 18). The chapter that follows will focus on the key research theme of global memories and tourism, setting the context for which case study research will be discussed and analysed. Initially introducing the issue and definition of ‘genocide’, this chapter will specifically look at issues of globalisation and tourism in relation to memory and memorialisation. Beginning with a discussion on the paper crane – the international symbol of peace, and its global understanding - this chapter will then illustrate the effects of globalisation, specifically mass media, global communications and international travel in relation to memorialisation, illustrating the Christchurch Firefighters Reserve as a local exemplar for the process and practice of contemporary memorialisation, as it relates to globalisation. Finally this chapter will discuss the concept of heritage tourism, and will particularly explore the phenomenon commonly described as ‘dark tourism’.
2.2 GENOCIDE & THE TRAGEDY OF MAN

The act or process of genocide, that is core to the context in which this research was undertaken, is today defined by the United Nations Office for the High Commissioner of Human Rights, as an act committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group (Office for the High Commissioner of Human Rights, 1948). Sixty years on, since the United Nations ‘Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide’ was adopted in 1948 however, violent acts of genocide, resulting in mass death have proceeded virtually unabated, with a grim record of international response (Power, 2002, p. 85). Discussion over the definition and use of the word genocide is a complex and highly debatable topic in itself. Within this study I use the word ‘genocide’ as outlined below, specified by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and relate it within this study specifically to the crimes committed in Cambodia, under Khmer Rouge reign during 1975-79, in Rwanda, during April – July 1994, and in Nazi Europe during 1936 to 1945, with specific reference to the Jewish Holocaust. This research will show that genocide is a human problem that persists in the modern day as part of our ‘civilised’ world unbounded by time, culture, race or religion. Today, with the increase in global media and ease of world-wide travel, many Euro-Western travellers are seeing the world – are seeing nations in the aftermath of genocide - and are experiencing memorials to international tragedy.

2.2.1 GENOCIDE – HISTORICAL ORIGIN & DISCUSSION ON DEFINITION

The word ‘genocide’ was first coined by Raphael Lemkin, a Pole, who lost forty-nine members of his family during the Holocaust. He believed that “in the aftermath of the Turkish “race murder” of the Armenians and of Hitler’s extermination campaign against the Jews, the world’s “civilized” powers needed to band together to outlaw crimes that were said to “shock the conscience.”” (Power, 2002, p. 85) Prior to Lemkin coining the term ‘genocide’, “the systematic targeting of national, ethnic, or religious groups was known as “barbarity,”” (Power, 2002, p. 85) a word that Lemkin believed failed to convey the true horror of genocide. In 1948, largely on Lemkin’s insistence, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously passed the Genocide Convention - one of the first major achievements of the United Nations. Genocide, as stated by the United Nations Office for the High Commissioner of Human Rights, is defined by Article II of the ‘Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide’, as any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, as such:

(a) Killing members of the group;
(b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
(c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
(d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
(e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group. - (OHCHR, 1948)

Since the Convention was adopted however, genocide has proceeded virtually unhindered (Power, 2002, p. 85).

2.2.2 A WORLD & CENTURY OF HUMAN INFLECTED TRAGEDY

The world today could be described as a violent and frightening place, with the human-inflicted tragedies of war, genocide, and terror attacks continuing to plague the lives of many. Genocide is a highly contentious issue, and to this day, disagreement about form and function continues around the highly debateable topic. Extended debate on definitions is beyond the scope of this research, but in order to provide an informed and meaningful definition for the case study sites of Cambodia and Rwanda, the following discussion outlines human inflicted atrocities that have, over the past century presented themselves as human tragedies on the world stage.

In 1915, Turkey set about to fix the ‘Armenian problem’, and as a result over one million people died. The Nazi crimes which followed twenty years later, left six million Jews and five million other ‘undesirables’ dead. In 1969, the Nigerian government are believed to have starved and murdered the Ibo people of Biafra. Two years later Pakistan responded to a Bengali autonomy movement in East Pakistan by sending in its army and as a result over one million people died. In 1972, some one hundred thousand Hutu died under the Tutsi led government in Rwanda. The period of 1975-1979 saw 1.7 million Cambodians killed by execution, starvation, disease or forced labour. In 1987-1988, Saddam Hussein aimed to wipe out Iraq’s Kurdish population, and in 1992 Bosnian Serbs began systematically eliminating Muslims and Croats in Bosnia. Some 200,000 people were killed in the three-and-a-half-year war. Two years later the Rwandan genocide began and saw 800,000 Tutsi and moderate Hutu killed in just 100 days.

Genocide is indeed a human problem – not just an African or a Cambodian problem, but a problem that persists in the modern day, as part of our civilised world unbounded by time, culture, race or religion. As Astrid Schmeing states “The Holocaust is not simply a historical detail that can be left behind as an enduring possibility that must to [sic] be avoided, however. It is a matter of the human condition, rather than a national, German issue” (Schmeing, 2000, p. 61).

Section 2.3 below will look at the creation of ‘global memories’ that today inform our ‘pre-understanding’ of the world as Euro-Western citizens. Exploring the creation and spread of memory surrounding the Japanese origami paper crane as an international symbol of peace, the discussion on how global memory, and the proliferation of that memory, manifests itself in terms of international memorialisation is considered. Section 2.4 will then discuss the issue of globalisation and tourism.
2.3 GLOBAL MEMORIES

‘Global memories’ is a term used within this study to denote memories of world events that through time stand as ‘markers’ within contemporary society. In terms of global memories in relation to world tragedies, the 1945 atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki has defined, for post-war generations, a moment in history that will stand forever as a human tragedy in which more than 200,000 people were killed, and continue to die from radiation-related illness. From that tragedy however came a renewed dedication for world peace and today the traditional Japanese origami paper crane is folded by children all over the world as a symbol of world peace.

When I visited Hiroshima, the [Memorial] park was blanketed with colorful paper cranes, which were heaped by the thousands on park benches and on the sides of buildings and draped on and across sculptures . . . Against the hard, grey-and-white block buildings of the memorial, the brightly coloured cranes bore the imprint of children’s hands and spoke to a hope for a peaceful world emerging from the ashes of atomic ruin. As I walked around the site, I came across a pile of cranes sent by middle school kids from Littleton, Colorado, the site of the Columbine High School massacre only a few weeks before (Blake, 2002).

2.3.1 GLOBAL MEMORY & A THOUSAND PAPER CRANES

In Japan, legend says that a person who folds a thousand origami cranes will live a long life. The crane, a sacred bird, lives for a thousand years and if a sick person folds a thousand cranes, that person will get well. The legend however took on new meaning in 1955, when Sadako Sasaki, a twelve-year-old girl who was exposed to radiation during the bombing of Hiroshima on August 6 1945, contracted the ‘A-bomb’ disease - leukaemia. Just two years old when she, and half a million other people experienced the catastrophic event of the world’s first atomic bomb, today, sixty-four years on over 200,000 names appear on the memorial cenotaph that is situated at the centre of the Hiroshima Memorial Peace Park. While in the hospital, Sadako attempted to fold 1,000 cranes in hope of getting better and as a sign of her want for world peace. On 25 October 1955, after folding 644 paper cranes Sadako lost her battle with leukaemia, but today her legacy lives on through the form of the simple origami crane – an international symbol of peace.

In late September and early October of 2001, I joined other mourners in visits to the makeshift memorials to the WTC [World Trade Centre] attack victims erected in New York's Union Square . . . Flags and patriotic songs, antiwar and antiracist banners, signs demanding vengeance and signs imploring forgiveness, prayer cards, poems and letters written to loved ones and strangers alike, handmade models for monuments,
heartbreaking “missing” posters, the intense perfume of scented candles, incense and mounds of flowers, rhythmic drumming by Buddhist monks, performances by Juilliard cellists and the sounds of quiet weeping briefly claimed the park as a site for collective grief and reflection . . . There, amid the xeroxed photos of loved ones, burning incense, poems and prayers, were Sadako’s cranes, hundreds and maybe thousands of them -- a peace garland laced lovingly across tree branches and through the chain-link fences of the park (Blake, 2002).

Coming, for the first time across the crane consciously on September 11, 2004, a single paper crane lay silent at the Christchurch Firefighters Reserve in New Zealand, on part of the sculpture by Graham Bennett, made from remnants of the World Trade Centre (photo 2.1). Three years later, on June 28th 2007 I again came across the paper crane, this time hanging inside the memorial stupa at the Choeung Ek Genocidal Centre in Cambodia (photo 2.2), and again, on August 25th 2007 hanging on one of the furnaces at Sachsenhausen Memorial and Museum, a former German Concentration Camp (photo 2.3). The story of Sadako and the message of peace symbolised by the paper crane has today become a ‘global memory’. 
Photo 2.2

Paper cranes, hang in the memorial stupa at the Choeung Ek Genocidal Centre
Choeung Ek Genocidal Centre
Photo by Author, June 28, 2007

Photo 2.3

Paper cranes hang in the furnace chambers at Sachsenhausen Memorial and Museum
Oranienburg, Germany
Photo by Author, August 25, 2007
Today, we are part of a world where genocide occurs, and we are also part of a world, where, with the increase in global communications ordinary people are adequately aware of events happening throughout the world. With advanced information technologies and the increased ease in disseminating instantaneous information worldwide, we all hold, as Martin states, responsibility for state action, “It is only in the modern world, with the increase in communication and popular knowledge, that ordinary people have become sufficiently aware of events in the larger context to assume personal responsibility for history. As participants in mass production, we have become involved in and, indeed – as the violence of conflict has shifted inexorably towards civilian populations – responsible for, actions of state” (Martin, 2000, pp. 30-31). The paper crane today stands as an international symbol of peace. Folded by children all over the world, thousands of paper cranes are sent around the globe every year, to governments, to individual members of parliament, to international organisations, churches, schools, to sites of recent or historic tragedy, and to memorial sites - as a symbolic wish for peace.

**2.3.2 GLOBAL MEMORIES & MEMORIALISATION**

Nations within the West have become loaded with symbolic sites, dates, and events that provide a kind of social continuity that contribute to the collective memory, and establish spatial and temporal reference points within societal groups (Osborne, 2001, p. 3). In recent years however, the critical view of memorialisation has become increasingly complex as a result of globalisation. The memory of the Jewish Holocaust has spread, with Jewish refugees and survivors, with films, books, and school history lessons, to every corner of the world. Often less constrained than Holocaust memory projects in Europe and Israel, less restrained from political, aesthetic and religious structures, memory projects in the USA for example abound in style, content and interpretive approach. As James E. Young discusses, “In America, the motives for memory of the Holocaust are as mixed as the population at large, the reasons variously lofty and cynical, practical and aesthetic” (Young, 1993, p. 284). Just as, over the last 60 years, the memory of the Jewish Holocaust has spread the world over, the years since September 11, 2001, has seen the phenomenal spread of international memory relating to the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York City.

**2.3.2.1 GLOBALISATION & THE EVENT OF 9/11**

The attacks of September 11, 2001 stunned the world, and it has been said that the USA, and indeed much of the world, is now standing at a juncture of history; that, on that date, the world changed forever (Sturken, n.d.). On the second anniversary of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre, Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary-General spoke at a commemorative ceremony, "Today we come together as a world community because we were attacked as a world community" (UPI, 2003).
The events of September 11, 2001, re-defined and intensified a variety of political, social and cultural themes within the global arena (Simpson, 2003, p. 237), that have significantly influenced and affected the scope and mode of its memorialisation. They revealed that globalisation is a two edged sword, where the same technologies that so-call ‘empower’ our lives, can indeed turn into lethal weapons in the wrong hands. There are bitter arguments in various arenas as to whether or not globalisation has in balance improved the lives of people around the world. Many believe that globalisation is an environmental, cultural, political and religious disaster, with ‘terrorism’ a direct result. “Terrorism is no longer widely viewed as only a local mode of political violence. It has become an organizing theme for action in the global arena” (Simpson, 2003, p. 237). In his article ‘Baudrillard, Globalization and Terrorism’, Douglas Kellner suggests that there is no question that terrorism, like trade, extends beyond national borders. “The [terrorist] attacks evoked a global specter of terror that the very system of globalization and Western capitalism and culture were under assault by “the spirit of terrorism” and potential terrorist attacks anytime and anywhere” (Kellner, 2005). Since the events of 9/11 and the subsequent ‘war on terrorism’, French cultural theorist and philosopher Jean Baudrillard, has written a series of reflections on the contemporary moment, evoking both excitement and controversy within the theoretical world of globalisation, culture, and memorialisation. “In Baudrillard’s view, the 9/11 attacks represented “the clash of triumphant globalization at war with itself” and unfolded a “fourth world war”: “the first put an end to European supremacy and to the era of colonialism; the second put an end to Nazism; and the third to Communism. Each one brought us progressively closer to the single world order of today” (Baudrillard: cited in Kellner, 2005). As a result of the attack on the World Trade Centre all that remained of the world’s two tallest buildings, and nearly 3000 lives, was a mountain of deformed steel and concrete. “Like the bones of the saints, the remains of the buildings are imbued with charisma” (Simpson, 2003, p. 237). Once a symbol of great Western culture and tradition impelled by globalisation and capitalism, the World Trade Centre remains were at this moment an entangled conglomerate of physical and emotional tragedy, a visible reminder of the fragile and delicate nature of humanity.

One of the most remarkable things about the events of September 11 has been the extent and degree of their memorialisation. Immediately after September 11, thousands of people in New York and around the world set out to capture the meaning of that day through artistic and creative expression (Haupt, 2002; cited in Simpson, 2003, p. 236). “In the intervening months, thousands more have joined the effort, resulting in what may turn out to be the largest creative response in history to a single day’s event” (Haupt, 2002; cited in Simpson, 2003, p. 236). Poetry, prose, dance, architecture, landscape architecture, photography, soundscapes, TV, popular music, theatre, comic books, film, painting and sculpture. People from all corners of the world have grappled with the attacks and their aftermath, and in the process have begun asking many questions about the process of memorialisation within the globalised world today.
Christchurch, New Zealand, a city situated over 15,000 kilometres from New York, is home to a sculpture constructed from remnants of the World Trade Centre. Graham Bennett’s 2002 ‘memorial sculpture’ sits on the central city riverbank – the focus of the city’s ‘Firefighters Reserve’ (photos 2.4 & 2.5).

Nearly 2,800 lives were lost at ‘Ground Zero’, 343 of which were New York firefighters. The world watched as live television footage showed entire city brigades entering the smoke-filled stairwells of the towers against the immense tide of people desperate to leave. In the graphic scenes of that day beamed by satellite to countries all over the world, the understanding of what firefighters do for a living was more than ever before understood by millions of people. The number of New York firefighters killed was more than twice that of the entire Christchurch Fire Brigade (Shiels, 2003, p. 8). While the events of September 11 were still bitterly fresh in people’s minds, it was announced that Christchurch would host the 7th World Firefighters Games in 2002 – to be renamed the Memorial Games in honour of those firefighters lost at Ground Zero in New York. As part of the hosting tender, Christchurch Mayor Garry Moore proposed that a reserve be created in honour of the fallen firefighters of September 11, and for all firefighters from around the world who had died in the line of duty, to be dedicated during the opening of the Firefighters Games (Shiels, 2003, 12). A piece of vacant greenspace adjacent to the Central City Fire Station was selected as the location for the Reserve, and included in the land was a small piece of river-bank that formed the apex of the triangle site - where the Madras and Kilmore Street bridges meet - a site to locate a memorial sculpture. Several pieces of steel from the mountain of rubble salvaged at Ground Zero were gifted to Christchurch from Mayor Bloomberg for the commemorative sculpture (Sheils, 2003).

Wayne Rimmer, landscape architect, was employed to create the Firefighters Reserve, and Graham Bennett, a local sculptor and artist, was commissioned to create the memorial sculpture. (Shiels, 2003) “This sculpture won’t be beautiful. It can’t be beautiful if it is to succeed. Everyone will bring a different experience to it, and it’s these different perspectives, this interaction, which make any work valid. The events which lie behind this work transcend any attempts to label it” (Bennett, 2002; cited in Shiels, 2003, p. 34). Within the design proposal, Rimmer and Bennett successfully acknowledged that an important consideration to address when creating the international commemorative space and memorial sculpture within the New Zealand context was its relationship to the traditional custom of indigenous culture in New Zealand, and the people of Christchurch. Reverend Manawaroa Maurice Gray, kaumatua and representative of Te Runaka ki Otautahi o Kai Tahu, presented the concerns of Ngai Tahu people regarding the use of such steel from a site of death near an important historic, and culturally specific site, central to which was the cultural paradigm of the Maori world which holds that you “cannot reconstruct life from something that has died” (Gray, 2002; cited in
Shiels, 2003, p. 28). Gray suggested that any use of such materials must undergo thorough rituals to acknowledge the land and all who had settled it previously; specifying that certain procedures must be followed, specifically ordering a ceremony embodying traditional and Christian elements be conducted to acknowledge the arrival of steel in the container that all associated with the project were to attend. Also, the site was to be spiritually cleansed and dedicated, with a korus design placed at the foot of the steel and three ti-kouka (cabbage) trees to be placed nearby (Shiels, 2003, p. 28). Other requirements were to bury any filings left over from working of the steel, landscaping with native vegetation, and placing two halves of a piece of pounamu (greenstone) in the water adjacent to the site – one half representing Mauri or physical life-force, and the other named Te Mauri-a-Roko representing the Life-force of Peace. Finally, Gray suggested the planting of a native tree to be called Te Hohou Roko or the Ultimate Peace (Shiels, 2003, p. 28).
Now physically linked to what some would call the defining world event of this generation, the city of Christchurch is intrinsically united with Ground Zero in New York. Rather than a mediated connection solely through international media, Christchurch is now the guardian of a remnant of that single tragedy which has now escalated into the international phenomena of ‘global terrorism’, and the reciprocal, ‘war on terrorism’.

Two thousand and four, and the third anniversary of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre saw the completion of the Christchurch Firefighters Reserve. The site today has provoked much discussion and debate in both local and global conversations with respect to politics, religion, economics, globalisation, remembrance and commemoration. As discussed by Paul Williams, memorials are an important aspect in the processes that follow human inflicted tragedy, for more than just their built form. "Debate over the form and meaning of new [and old] memorials can be an important way to broach complex and difficult subjects. In the new Jewish Museum in Berlin, for instance, when Daniel Libeskind designed an intentionally inhospitable building in order to interrogate, for the first time in postwar Germany, the history of the Jews in Germany and the repercussions of the Holocaust, an intense debate erupted over questions of guilt, culpability, and forgiveness” (Williams, 2004b, pp. 248-249). Intensely political, the events of September 11 are now fundamentally represented within the New Zealand landscape. Graham Bennett’s memorial sculpture and the surrounding reserve provoke a range of emotions, inviting both individual and collective responses of interpretation. Seen by some as a commemorative space to think about those firefighters who have died in the line of duty, others have drawn from the space a sense of protest and opposition, connecting international political issues such as anti-American and anti-war sentiments with the reserve and sculpture. On January 27, 2003 for example, the memorial...
sculpture and reserve were vandalised by anti-war protesters. As anger over the United States-led strike on Iraq intensified, slogans such as ‘You Get What You Deserve’, ‘You Reap What You Sow’, and ‘USA + UK = Axis of Evil’ were spray-painted on and around the memorial, as well as throughout the reserve – a use for the site that the Christchurch City Council had never envisaged (Booker, 2003, p. 28). This act of vandalism, although damned by many, indicates that residents have taken notice of their landscape, and in doing so have themselves become critically aware of the international context represented by this memorial.

Graham Bennett’s memorial sculpture and Wayne Rimmer’s Firefighters Reserve stand within the cultural and physical landscape of New Zealand as markers of our modern time. Together an expression of the international processes of globalisation, terrorism, and human tragedy, the Christchurch Firefighters Reserve is now a site for collective remembrance and individual contemplation; a commemorative space which is sure to evoke self questioning and critical contemplation which will resonate through future generations as the uncertainties of the world gain momentum. Although officially dedicated to those firefighters from throughout the world who have died in the name of their profession, it is impossible to separate the events of September 11 from the commemorative site. Focused on the memorial sculpture made from World Trade Centre steel, the space is both psychologically and physically orientated to that defining event. In finding reference to Ground Zero, many visitors to the Christchurch Firefighters Reserve may question its relevance in the New Zealand context. As has been outlined throughout this study so far, the international phenomena of globalisation no longer allows for such tangible boundaries to be drawn with reference to memorialisation.

Photo 2.6
A USA flag is tied to the memorial sculpture at the Christchurch Firefighters Reserve on Sept 11, 2008
New Zealand
Photo by Author, Sept 11, 2008
Historically, individual nations have held sets of meanings and interpretations about particular people, places and events which were often developed into memorials and commemorative spaces to reinforce peoples’ identification with specific social values, and in doing so, creating a collective national identity (Osborne, 2001). ‘Globalisation’ however, is a term that came into popular usage in the 1980s to describe the increased movement of people, knowledge, and ideas, as well as goods and money across national borders – and has led to an increased interconnectedness among the world’s populations: environmentally, economically, politically, socially and culturally. As William Wishard suggests, globalisation is far more than non-Western nations adopting free markets and democratic political systems. “At its core, [globalisation] means that the full scope of western ideas and modes of living are gradually seeping into the fabric of the world” (Wishard, 2002). In essence, globalisation is about identity. It goes to the very psychological foundations of a people (Wishard, 2002). One of the biggest effects of the process of globalisation has been to make us more aware that the world itself is a locality, a singular place (Featherstone, 1995). Apparent not only in the images of the world as an isolated entity in space, or by the dominance of mass media, Earth in the 21st century is understood also in the sense of humanity’s fragility, openness to destruction and universal unrest. Tourism today allows for and supports this permeable world, a world that is fully accessible to those who have the will and means to explore it.

Wealth and freedom, and the perceived educational opportunities offered by travel are all facets that have seen the process of tourism develop through time. Lennon and Foley (2000) state that defining elements of ‘modern’ tourism have included “ideas of universalism, classification and the liberal democratic state” (Lennon & Foley, 2000, p. 7). They go on to discuss that the growth of tourism to Europe and the USA has arisen simultaneously with a growth in global communications (Lennon & Foley, 2000, p. 7). An entire and multi-disciplinary area of study itself, tourism, is discussed by Colin Hall, in his book titled ‘Introduction To Tourism: Dimensions, and Issues (2003), as having many definitions. Collating a list of common elements, Hall defines some common characteristics as

- Tourism is the temporary, short-term travel of non-residents along transit routes to and from a destination;
- It can have a wide variety of impacts on the destination, the transit route and the source point of tourists;
- It can influence the character of the tourists; and
- It is primarily for leisure or recreation, although business is also important.

(Hall, 2003, p. 8)

It has become clear that tourist interest in recent tragedies is a growing phenomenon in the twenty-first century (Lennon & Foley, 2000, p. 3). Within the scope of this research, international travel to sites of tragedy by Euro-Western tourists is considered with reference to
the case study sites in Cambodia and Rwanda. “Visiting sites which could be said to be connected in some way to death (e.g. murder sites, death sites, battlefields, cemeteries, mausoleums, churchyards, the former homes of now-dead celebrities) is a significant part of tourist experiences in many societies” (Lennon & Foley, 2000, p. 4). The specific tourism study of ‘dark tourism’, ‘black tourism’, or ‘grief tourism’ as it is sometimes known, describes the practice by which tourists visit international sites of tragedy. Using the recent tragedy of 9/11 as an exemplar, the concept of ‘dark tourism’ is expressed through the subsequent visitation of thousands of tourists to Ground Zero every year, from the world over. A complex and debatable topic in itself, a introductory discussion on the heritage and dark tourism industries is useful to set the broader context of the evolving nature of tourism in relation to memorials.

2.4.1 HERITAGE & DARK TOURISM

Not seeking to enter a philosophical debate over the use of the term ‘dark tourism’, a complex study that is investigated in detail by other scholars, I refer here to the significant features of dark tourism as outlined by Lennon and Foley. The first major feature of dark tourism is that the recent rise in global technologies has played a major part in creating an initial interest in many sites of tragedy throughout the world (Lennon & Foley, 2000, p. 11). As has been discussed earlier, our ease of access to media has made many sites around the world dedicated to memorialising tragedy, a ‘real’ experience for many. The 2004 movie, for example, ‘Hotel Rwanda’, introduced to many people around the world the 1994 genocide that had occurred 10 years previously. A second feature of dark tourist sites is that they themselves appear to introduce anxiety and doubt about modernity (Lennon & Foley, 2000, p. 11). It is this concept, the very fact that the advancements and growth we have made as a civilisation are directly related to the cause of many modern tragedies including genocide, that the idea of dark tourism has grown as a tourist ‘type’. In essence, this feature of dark tourism is about the disillusionment of modernity, in other words, modernity, the very process that has seen us develop as a species, has also provided the means for genocide and other human inflicted tragedies to occur. The last major feature of dark tourism is that educative elements of dark sites are often accompanied by elements of comodification and a commercial ethic which accepts that visitation (whether purposive or incidental) is an opportunity to develop a tourism product (Lennon & Foley, 2000, p. 11).

Ashworth and Hartmann (2005) note that this rise in visitation to sites of tragedy has also resulted as a rise in the steady growth of the broad category of what has been called ‘special interest tourism’, where tourists on vacation pursue personal interests that they also have at home (Ashworth & Hartmann, 2005, p. 4). They note that personal interest in history has fuelled an enormous growth in heritage consumption, and as part of this has seen a dramatic rise in visitation to sites of historical interest during ‘leisure’ time (Ashworth & Hartmann, 2005, p. 4). A second cause described by Ashworth and Hartmann for the dramatic rise in dark tourism, is due to the trend called ‘place-specific tourism’: a site of tragedy can “transform an otherwise unprepossessing “anywhere” into a very notable “somewhere”” (Ashworth &
Hartmann, 2005, p. 5). This attempt to explain the concept of dark tourism, and the rise thereof in recent years, can be aligned with the heritage industry as a whole – at its core is a personal need for self-understanding and identity, which provokes curiosity (Ashworth & Hartmann, 2005, p. 5). “If the tourist is posing the question “what extraordinary feeling can I experience at this site or facility?” then sites of atrocity would seem particularly apposite because of their strong emotional associations” (Ashworth & Hartmann, 2005, p. 5).

2.4.1.1
THE INTERPRETATION OF TRAGEDY & TIME

An important dilemma for tourism, and one which is considered within this study in relation to memorialisation after genocide, is the extent to which a chronological distance can be effected between the event for which the memorial site may be celebrated and the present. Sensitivities abound, and although these may differ across cultures, there appears to be a certain ‘global’ format which accommodates mass tourism from the ‘West’. “It appears to be acceptable to visit death sites immediately following the events themselves to ‘show respect’ for the dead and to mourn” (Lennon & Foley, 2000, p. 10). For example, the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Centre saw millions of spontaneous memorials emerge in the immediate aftermath at Ground Zero, around New York, throughout the USA, and indeed around the globe, as images and information were beamed to every corner of the world. Lennon and Foley go on to describe the idea, that for some time after that immediate outpouring of grief, bewilderment and spontaneous memorialisation, it seems “unseemly to offer any kind of attempt to interpret events at the site itself – particularly if this involves what can be construed as ‘exploitation’” (Lennon & Foley, 2000, p. 10). Over time, formal memorials are likely to be erected and visited by those on a dedicated pilgrimage, by those who are passing through, or by those who are merely curious. What takes longer however, as Lennon and Foley state “is any form of interpretation of the events” (Lennon & Foley, 2000, p. 10). Core to the investigation undertaken within the aims of this research, that is to explore the role of design in shaping Euro-Western experience and interpretation of international genocide sites, this issue of interpretation after tragedy will be discussed in detail in the chapters that follow specifically relating to the interpretation of memorial design – form, function, and meaning.
This chapter has focused on the key research theme of global memories and tourism that, along with Chapter three, will set up the detailed context from which the case study research is analysed. As this chapter shows, the phenomenon and process of globalisation has far-reaching and complex ramifications for the issue of Euro-Western experience and interpretation of international genocide sites. As has been outlined above, and will be discussed in more detail relating specifically to the case study sites throughout this study, globalisation and the extensive proliferation of knowledge and communications through mass media, when considered in relation to human tragedy, and specifically genocide, today informs much of our ‘pre-understanding’, ultimately shaping the way we interpret the world as a whole. The study that follows specifically looks at Euro-Western pre-understanding of the tragedy of genocide through the global memory of Nazi crimes in Europe from 1936-1945, particularly through the expression and proliferation of global memory of the Jewish Holocaust, exploring its influence in shaping Euro-Western experience and interpretation of international genocide memorial sites in Cambodia and Rwanda. The term ‘pre-understanding is used here to mean a person or group’s ‘historicality of background’ and is discussed in further detail within Chapter five.