chapter four

cambodia & rwanda
a review of context & site
4.1 INTRODUCTION

Outside Cambodia and Rwanda, and Asia and Africa in general, “the phenomenon of genocide memorials has received significant attention, particularly as part of the vast discourse on the historical memory of the Jewish Holocaust” (Williams, 2004b, p. 235). It is arguable that more than other genocides, the Cambodian and Rwandan cases have remained in the shadow of the Jewish Holocaust, both in the Western historical consciousness, and also in more critical discourses (Williams, 2004b, p. 235). “That the study of memorials. . . has been focused on those related to the Holocaust reflects, of course, their number, variety, and importance in Western nations” (Williams, 2004b, p. 235). This study however is focused on the post genocide memoriescapes of Cambodia and Rwanda. Through the intensive analysis and critique of the case study sites, my research has gained extensive insights regarding the effects of global memories and tourism on memorial design within post genocide nations, and how that design then shapes Euro-Western experience and interpretation of the genocide sites. This chapter will illustrate the complex contexts in which the case study sites are located, setting up the circumstance from which analysis will occur in the chapters that follow. Introducing the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum and the Choeung Ek Genocidal Centre in Cambodia, and the Kigali Memorial Centre in Rwanda, this chapter specifically introduces the relationship between history and memory, and memorialisation.

While, in the past, much analysis has sought to understand the scope and character of the Cambodian and Rwandan genocides, “any comparative analysis of the form and function of their memorialisation has been notably absent” (Williams, 2004b, p. 235). This chapter provides the context for the research conducted at each case study site, by first presenting a summary of the most commonly agreed perspectives on the sequence of events around the history and genocidal period of each case, and secondly, I situate this history within the unfolding connections to that time, in the less tangible dimension of memory, stressing the contingent and vulnerable nature of the post genocide memoriescape.
Cambodia, bordered by Thailand to the west, Laos to the north and Vietnam to the east, is located in South-East Asia and has a population of 14 million people. Forming the once powerful Khmer Empire that ruled much of the Indochinese Peninsula during the 11th to 14th century and responsible for building the Angkor Temples (photos 4.1), Cambodia today suffers extensively from poverty and disease.

Cambodia has a long and complex history that is captured by authors such as David Chandler and Ben Kiernan. In his 1985 book titled ‘How Pol Pot came to Power’, Ben Kiernan, professor of International and Area Studies at Yale University, outlines a passage written by a French missionary in 1751: “The Cambodians have massacred all the Cochinchinese
[Vietnamese] that they could find in the country. The Khmer king, the missionary reported, ‘gave orders or permission to massacre all the Cochinines who could be found, and this order was executed very precisely and very cruelly; this massacre lasted a month and a half; only about twenty women and children were spared; no one knows the number of deaths, and it would be very difficult to find out, for the massacre was general from Cahon to Ha-tien, with the exception of a few who were able to escape through the forest or fled by sea to Ha-tien. Of the ‘numerous’ Vietnamese in Cambodia before 1751, no survivors could be found” (Kiernan, 2004, pp. ix-x). Hostilities between Cambodians themselves, and also between Cambodians and their Lao, Thai, and Vietnamese neighbours, have occurred consistently throughout history.

A complex and telling history, Cambodia dominated Southeast Asian affairs from the ninth to the 15th century. Internal local wars however, weakened their leadership and they lost control of much of their territory. Becoming a French colony in 1867, Cambodia remained so until the 1954 Geneva Accords (Marchak, 2003, p. 228). Before the Second World War, Cambodia was a highly taxed, quiet, and simple corner of the world. With Japan’s defeat in WWII by Allied forces in 1945, “the reimposition of French colonial rule in Vietnam and Cambodia provoked armed resistance in both countries from communist led Viet Minh and nationalist Khmer Issarak forces” (Kiernan, 2004, p. xx). Part of the French colonial empire, eighty percent of Cambodia’s population were comprised of Buddhist, rice-growing peasants. In 1954, the first Indochina War resulted in French defeat by Viet Minh forces, affording Cambodia full independence under King Norodom Sihanouk, who adopted a foreign policy of Cold War neutrality (Kiernan, 2004, p. xxi).

In 1964-65, when the United States escalated their offensive in the Vietnam War, Cambodia had little hope of retaining the peaceful lifestyle that had afforded it in the recent past. Its borders became increasingly vulnerable to rice smuggling which bankrupted the Sihanouk government, and the increasing waves of refugees fleeing Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City) across the Cambodian border, led the United States, President Nixon, in 1966, to order extensive B-52 bombing raids of Cambodia’s border areas to stop the flow of Viet Cong soldiers across the border for food, training and rest (Kiernan, 2004, p. xxii).

In 1967, the situation worsened again, and civil war broke out in the countryside. Pol Pot’s ‘Communist Party of Kampuchea’ mounted an insurgency, provoking military reaction. With the combination of this, bombing by America, the rice smuggling trade and floods of refugees from Vietnam, Sihanouk’s regime was unable to handle the impact of the Vietnam War, especially the economic crisis, and the continued US bombing. With the support of the United States, General Lon Nol (the then head of opposition in Cambodia) overthrew Sihanouk in March 1970, becoming himself president. He renamed Cambodia the Khmer Republic (1970-1975) (Kiernan, 2004, p. xxii).

The fall of Sihanouk in 1970 was not easily accepted by the peasantry, and the overthrow of his government led to significant uprisings against the Lon Nol government. Repression followed, and as political positions within the Cambodian society became increasingly
polarised, peasants in some areas of the country joined the Khmer Rouge forces (Marchak, 2003, p. 229). Sihanouk, in exile in Beijing, joined forces with the Khmer Rouge, led by Saloth Sar – or Pol Pot as he would become known. Lon Nol’s army quickly massacred thousands of the country’s ethnic Vietnamese residents, and three hundred thousand more fled back across the border into Vietnam, setting a precedent for the intensified ‘ethnic cleansing’ that was to come (Kiernan, 2004, p. xxii).

It has been argued that both the Sihanouk and the Lon Nol governments were corrupt, and unequal in their distribution of opportunities and wealth. Buddhism supported this ruling class through the concept of Karma stating that the only way to gain status, power, or wealth was to be born into it. Politics consisted of exchanges between those members of the ruling class, and little or no input was considered from those outside this clique. The majority of Cambodia’s population remained in rural areas as traditional peasants. By the end of the 1960s however, 21 percent of the country’s population lived in urban centres and semi-urban regions - with Phnom Penh, the capital, holding ten per cent. As commercial employment did not grow in balance with the city’s population, this concentration of people soon represented a large group of unemployed people. With the arrival of civil war in 1970, and increased bombing in the rural areas by the USA, this urban migration increased (Vickery, 1984).

The USA congress ended the bombardment of Cambodia in August 1973, and left the opposing Cambodian armies - the Khmer Rouge based in rural areas, and the Lon Nol republican forces bases in the cities – to fight out the last two years of war themselves. After initial urban euphoria, the Khmer Republic had been swallowed up by corruption with the increasingly narrow military dictatorship of Lon Nol. In the rural areas, projecting the genocide to come, the Khmer Rouge too, like the Lon Nol soldiers, turned on their Vietnamese allies, killing nearly all communist returnees from Hanoi. They also stepped up the violence against Vietnamese civilians, ethnic Thai, and other minority groups (Kiernan, 2004, p. xxiv).

On April 17, 1975, after defeating the Lon Nol government, and ending the five year civil war, the Khmer Rouge entered Phnom Penh, and deported its two million residents into the surrounding countryside. With the installation of ‘Year Zero’, the genocide began.
4.2.1 GENOCIDE IN CAMBODIA

On the morning of April 17, 1975, the Khmer Rouge army, under the control of Pot Pot, marched every occupant of Cambodia’s capital, into the countryside to become workers in a nationwide prison farm (Williams, 2004b, p. 234). “People were forced at gun points [sic] to leave their home with few personal belongings without knowing any certain destination” (Liév, 1998). The Khmer Rouge child comrades herded the crowd out of Phnom Penh, providing no food or shelter. On foot, people were forced to move towards their family villages, to the remote countryside. These journeys could take up to three to six months. On reaching the destination village, people were put to work building dams and irrigation systems, and planting rice. “Thus began the period referred to as “Year Zero,” the attempt to propel Cambodia into a pure communist state and radically alter traditional Cambodian society” (Bit, 1991, p. xvii).

In the three years, eight months and 20 days of Khmer Rouge control, cities were emptied to create vast slave labour camps. The population lived terrorised lives, and suffered continuously at the hands of child soldiers, prison guards, torturers and executioners (Bit, 1991, p. xvii). “As the Khmer Rouge took control of the country under the leadership of Pol Pot, stringent rules of conduct were imposed on the lives of its people. Cambodia was renamed Democratic Kampuchea and a four-year purge began in which the Khmer Rouge regime tried to eliminate all signs of the educated classes. The goal was to create an agrarian society” (Rosin, 2005, p. 7).

This mass evacuation marked the beginning of a genocide that would kill 1.7 million people, nearly one quarter of the country’s population. All aspects of material life were eliminated – money, markets, wages, and private property. Universities, schools, banks, cultural institutions, government buildings, and places of religious worship were abolished. Education and religious practices were prohibited and the use of foreign and minority languages were criminalised. Families were disbanded. “Under the rule of Pol Pot’s Democratic Kampuchea regime, Cambodia was a wretched landscape of absence and loss” (Williams, 2004b, p. 234).

The Khmer Rouge upended the Cambodian world in various ways. Children had to work like adults. Adults, given instructions like children, were treated like animals. Animals received better rations than workers. Adults became so alienated from the regime that young children became the only hope for the Khmer Rouge revolution to reproduce itself. Children were employed as militia, to spy on their families, and as soldiers and executioners. The Khmer Rouge hoped to use children as the basis of a new society without memory (Kiernan, 1997, p. xvii).

The regime ended in January 1979, with the invasion of 100,000 Vietnamese troops into Phnom Penh, ending its two-year war with the Khmer Rouge, and marking too, the end of the genocide in Cambodia. By late afternoon on January 7, 1979, Vietnamese troops occupied Phnom Penh. “Aside from a few hundred prisoners of war and other people . . . who were in hiding, waiting to escape, Phnom Penh was empty” (Chandler, 1999, p. 1).
With the fall of Pol Pot, Cambodia exploded into the world’s consciousness. A small country largely isolated from Western view, suddenly became an arena for some of the most terrifying images (photo 4.6) produced anywhere during the 20th century (Bit, 1991, p. xiii).
4.3 CAMBODIA: PRESENTING HISTORY

4.3.1 CASE STUDY SITE (a):

TUOL SLENG GENOCIDE MUSEUM

In the days following the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia, soldiers began to spread out throughout the decimated city of Phnom Penh. On 8 January, in the southern sector of Tuol Svay Prey, two photojournalists who had accompanied the Vietnamese invasion came across the Khmer Rouge Security Prison 21 (photo 4.3). Drawn by the odour of decomposing bodies, the photographers entered the site, and captured an image of Cambodia that would awaken the world (Chandler, 1999, p. 2). In the southernmost building, the two Vietnamese photojournalists came across the corpses of several men recently murdered (photo 4.4). “Some of the bodies were chained to iron beds. The prisoners’ throats had been cut. The blood on the floors was still wet. Altogether the bodies of fourteen people were discovered in the compound, apparently killed only a couple of days before” (Chandler, 1999, p. 3).

Photo 4.3
“Exterior View of Building in the Tuol Sleng Compound”
S-21, Cambodia
(From Veneciano & Hinton, 2007, p. 100. Courtesy of the Documentation Centre of Cambodia)

Photo 4.4
A photo presented on the wall of a ground floor cell at the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum as one of the images taken by the photojournalists on discovery of S-21 Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, Cambodia
Photo by Author, 2007
In the early 1960s, when Cambodia was ruled by Prince Norodom Sihanouk, Tuol Sleng was built as a high school. It was named after Ponhea Yat, a Cambodian king associated with the foundation of Phnom Penh. After Sihanouk was overthrown in 1970 (the event that sparked Cambodia’s civil war) the school took the name Tuol Svay Prey – meaning ‘hillock of the wild mango’ (Chandler, 1999, p. 4). During Khmer Rouge reign, the school was used as a security prison – S-21. Through this period, an estimated 17,000 – 20,000 people were imprisoned here. Although S-21 was just one of many prisons that operated around Cambodia, it is often referred to as the most important, as many of those imprisoned and tortured there, and inevitably murdered, were cadre who were accused of betraying the revolution (Ledgerwood, 2002, p. 106). Nearly all of the 17,000 – 20,000 prisoners were transported 20km to the outskirts of Phnom Penh, to Choeung Ek - the ‘killing fields’ - and executed. Just seven people are known to have survived Security Prison 21.

With the fall of Pol Pot on January 7, 1979, and the Vietnamese discovery of S-21 in the days after, the former school and prison was subsequently transformed into a national genocide memorial site that is today known as Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum. “Sensing the historical importance and the propaganda value of their discovery, the Vietnamese closed off the site, cleaned it up, and began, with Cambodian help, to examine its voluminous archive” (Chandler, 1999, p. 4). Tuol Sleng, the name of an adjoining primary school, and meaning ‘hillock of the sleng tree’- the fruit of which is poisonous, was given to the museum. (Chandler, 1999, p. 4). The Vietnamese had found an important Khmer Rouge interrogation and documentation facility. “Documents found at the site soon revealed that it had been designated in the DK [Democratic Kampuchea] era by the code name S-21. The “S,” it seemed, stood for sala, or “hall,” while “21” was the code number assigned to santebal, a Khmer compound term that combined the words santisuk (security) and nokorbal (police). “S-21,” and santebal, were names for DK’s security police, or special branch” (Chandler, 1999, p. 3).

In February/March 1979, Mai Lam arrived in Phnom Penh to begin work on the design and construction of the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum. A Vietnamese colonel who spoke fluent Khmer, Lam had extensive experience in legal studies and museumology, having already completed the Museum of American War Crimes in Ho Chi Minh City (now called the War Remnants Museum). He was given the task of organising the documents found at S-21 into an archive and museum, effectively turning S-21 into a museum of genocide. Today, the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum covers roughly a city block, and is surrounded by a warren of alleys in central Phnom Penh. Inside the gates, the view looks like any other high school: “five buildings face a grass courtyard with pull-up bars, green lawns and lawn-bowling pitches” (Maguire, 2002) – see figure 4.2 and photo montage 4.5. The realisation of the tragic use of this school however, soon becomes exceptionally apparent to those who visit.
Fig. 4.2
Plan view of the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum
Cambodia
Drawn by Author
On entering the museum complex, visitors, once having paid the US$2 entry fee, approach the 14 graves of prisoners left at S-21 by the fleeing Khmer Rouge (photo 4.6). Inside Building ‘A’, individual interrogation rooms are presented with an iron bed (photo 4.7), and some with a photo (as in photo 4.4) depicting one of the last 14 prisoners found dead by the invading Vietnamese, “torture instruments are still there, and the floors are still stained faintly with blood... years later” (Ledgerwood, 2002, p. 105).
Meticulously documented, the Khmer Rouge kept full and detailed accounts of each prisoner detained at S-21. From the initial mug-shot and the confession obtained, to the post-mortem photograph. Building ‘B’ consists primarily of the ‘facing death’ photographs (photo 4.8). “From this room you enter a second room of photos, and then a third” (Ledgerwood, 2002, p. 105). On an upper floor, and exhibition titled ‘Stilled Lives’ is housed (photo 4.9).
Building ‘C’ is covered in barbed wire to stop prisoners committing suicide (photos 4.10 and 4.11). Hurriedly broken into tiny individual cells (photo 4.12), prisoners were kept separately, unlike the mass detention rooms that typified much of the prison complex.
Building ‘D’ is a mixture of many museum elements. It houses more photo boards, a series of exhibitions, the display of torture equipment, victim skulls and paintings depicting torture and death scenes by S-21 survivor and artist Van Nath. Visitors can also view a short film about Cambodia and the 1970’s genocide.
4.3.2 CASE STUDY SITE (b):

CHOEUNG EK GENOCIDAL CENTRE

Originally a Chinese cemetery, Choeung Ek was operated by the Khmer Rouge as a killing site and burial ground during the genocide. Between 17,000 and 20,000 people are believed to have been executed here, most victims being former prisoners of S-21. “Choeung Ek is but one of more than 500 killing fields that have been located to date” (Williams, 2004b, p. 240).

Photo 4.14
Entry gate to the Choeung Ek Genocidal Centre
Choeung Ek Genocidal Centre, Cambodia
Photo by Author, 2007

Photo 4.15
‘Exhumed’ Pits
Choeung Ek Genocidal Centre, Cambodia
Photo by Author, 2007
The site, discovered in 1980, was transformed, according to David Chandler, under Vietnamese guidance into a tourist site. (Chandler, 1999, p. 139). Eighty-nine mass graves were exhumed out of an estimated total of 129 (photo 4.15), and 8985 individual skeletons were removed. The site design, also overseen by Mai Lam (who also held responsibility for creating the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum), is centred on the 30m high Memorial Stupa designed by Cambodian Architect Lim Ourk and constructed in 1988 (photo 4.16 - 4.17).
In the months prior to 1988, Lim Ourk produced three possible stupa designs for the site, “inspired by the sublime architectural forms of the Royal Palace of Cambodia in Phnom Penh” (Lim Ourk, personal communication; cited in Hughes, 2006, p. 274). Rachael Hughes, from the University of Melbourne, in her 2006 article ‘Memory and Sovereignty in Post-1979 Cambodia: Choeung Ek and Local Genocide Memorials’ states: ‘His three designs varied in height, roof structure and degree of carved detailing. The tallest, most decorative “stupa” design was chosen by the municipal committee. According to Lim Ourk, the final decision of the committee members was made with the local people of the Choeung Ek area in mind, considered to be rural folk with traditional tastes” (Hughes, 2006, p. 274). The ‘stupa’, considered a sacred structure in Buddhist architecture, usually contains the cremated remains of a greatly revered and respected individual (Hughes, 2006, p. 273). The memorial stupa at the Choeung Ek Genocidal Centre however is stacked with more than 8,000 un-cremated bones and skulls arranged by sex and age (Williams, 2004b, p. 240). “Many skulls are cracked because axes were used to bludgeon most victims, a method that saved valuable bullets. Rusted hammers, saws, shears, hoes, and leg chains lie on the floor of the stupa” (Williams, 2004b, p. 241). Today, the Choeung Ek memorial stupa “is an inescapably postmodern monument” (Hughes, 2006, p. 274). Disturbing to both Cambodians, and non-Cambodians alike (albeit for different reasons), Lim Ourk’s memorial stupa is an assemblage of multiple cultural and religious architectural forms, transformed under the dilemma of how to memorialise genocide? (Hughes, 2006, p. 274) The rest of the site is made up of a series of grassy and covered grave pits, a pre-Khmer Rouge orchard, and a conservation dyke that protects the memorial site from natural flooding processes.
4.4 RWANDA: A HISTORY & INTRODUCTION

Bordered by the Democratic Republic of Congo to the west, Uganda to the north, Tanzania to the east, and Burundi to the south, Rwanda is a land-locked country in East Africa and is home to approximately ten million people. With a total land area is 26,340km$^2$, Rwanda is less than half the size of Scotland (Booth & Briggs, 2006, p. 3). With a turbulent and highly complex history that includes war, colonisation and genocide, Rwanda today supports the densest population in Africa and like Cambodia suffers from extreme poverty and disease.

Rwanda’s earliest inhabitants, it is believed, were the pygmoid ‘hunter-gatherers’ – ancestors of today’s Twa who form roughly 1% of Rwanda’s population. Gradually they were joined by the Bantu speaking ‘farmers’ who were spreading throughout Central Africa around 700BC, seeking good land to farm. These new comers became known as Hutus. Finally came the ‘cattle raisers’ who became known as Tutsi (Tutsi – meaning ‘owners of cattle’). Tutsi, whether by conquest or by natural assimilation, emerged as the superior group in the forming hierarchy (Booth & Briggs, 2006, p. 7).

The origins of the division between Hutu, Tutsi and Twa, that had key influence on the 1994 genocide, is still debated today. Oral history however portrays a feudal society with Tutsi, the ‘cattle owners’ occupying a superior status within the hierarchical structure that formed, both in the social and political situations. Hutu became ‘clients’ of Tutsi, and Twa had various functions as potters, dancers and music makers in the royal court (Booth & Briggs, 2006, p. 8). Hutu formed the population majority in both Rwanda and Burundi, with the minority Tutsi comprising about 10-15 per cent of the total population in Rwanda (Marchak, 2003, p. 199). It is important to realise, that the terms Tutsi and Hutu were not used as racist terms, and may not even have been used as ethnic terms, before the colonial period: “Some observers have concluded that there is no racial distinction at all between these two peoples; the racist implications were, in their opinion, entirely created by the Belgium overlords during the twentieth century” (Marchak, 2003, p. 200). The labels of Hutu, Tutsi and Twa were socio-economic categories within the clans, which could change over time in relation to personal circumstances. Under colonial rule, the distinctions were made racial” (Kigali Memorial Centre, 2004, p. 9).
In 1885, under the name Ruanda-Urundi, Rwanda and Burundi were assigned to Germany as a part of German East Africa - no European at that stage however had ever stepped foot on Rwandan land. On May 4, 1894, the German Count Gustav Adolf von Gotzen entered Rwanda, crossing the country to reach the eastern shore of Lake Kivu. Booth and Briggs describe how, “En route he stopped off at Nyanza where he met the ‘mwami’, King Rwabugiri – apparently causing consternation among the watching nobles when he, a mere mortal, shook the sovereign by the hand. They feared that such an affront might cause disaster for the kingdom. At this stage the ‘mwami’ had no idea that his country had officially been under German control for the past nine years” (Booth & Briggs, 2006, p. 9).

Germany was surprised to find that their new colony of Rwanda was a highly organised country, with tight effective power structures and administration. Leaving these in place, Germany chose to rule through these already clearly established and effective divisions, “believing that support for the traditional chiefs would render them and their henchmen loyal to Germany” (Booth & Briggs, 2006, p. 11). Germany however, had little time to ‘make its mark’ in Rwanda, as in 1916 Belgium invaded Rwanda and Burundi, occupying the countries until the end of WWI, when they were subsequently officially entrusted to them by the League of Nations mandate in 1919 (Booth & Briggs, 2006, p. 11).

In its adjoining colony of the Congo, Belgium had full control, but for Ruanda-Urundi it remained responsible first to the League of Nations and then after 1945 to the United Nations Organisation. Annual reports had to be submitted and no important changes could be made without agreement from above. Despite these constraints, and despite the fact that Ruanda-Urundi had far less potential wealth than the Congo, Belgium took its charge seriously, and by the time of independence some 40 years later its material achievements (in terms of increased production; public services such as roads, schools and hospitals; and buildings and administrative infrastructures) were considerable. In terms of human beings it did far less well, as later events demonstrated (Booth & Briggs, 2006, pp. 11-12).

Belgian colonial policies led to a highly centralised and efficient bureaucracy in Rwanda. It also however, exacerbated hierarchical differences, and destroyed the cushions that had made the prevailing hierarchy tolerable. In 1934, the Belgians used ownership of cows as the criterion for determining race because the actual physical differences between Hutu and Tutsi were too variable for accurate identification, and high intermarriage rates obscured whatever differences might have once existed (Marchak, 2003, p. 200). Gerard Prunier, a French academic and historian specialising in East Africa, acknowledges that the two groups probably did have different origins at some remote period. But, like many contemporary scholars, he argues that the differences were/are minimal compared with the similarities. Identity cards specifying ethnic group were issued to every Rwandan from 1932. “[T]he colonial powers turned the labels into racist terms and treated the two groups differently, creating, in effect, ethnic identities where they were not previously consequential” (Marchak, 2003, p. 200).

Belgian policy abruptly changed in the mid-1950s. After longstanding support for Tutsi rule, and in response to pressures for democratisation from both Catholic missionaries and the
United Nations Trusteeship Council, they increased educational opportunities for Hutu and began a process of social reform (Marchak, 2003, p. 206). “Tutsi chiefs objected, Hutu leaders rebelled against them, and the deaths on both sides were brought to an end only by the intervention of Belgian troops” (Marchak, 2003, p. 206). Conflict continued to simmer as the country moved to self-rule in 1959. In 1962 both Rwanda and Burundi gained independence, and the Rwandan monarchy was overthrown in favour of a Hutu-dominated regime.

*Atrocities and other gross violations of human rights organized and carried out by the governments of the day continued throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Government repression against Rwandans who remained inside the country escalated and intensified, irrespective of ethnic identity. The independent press was suppressed. Political opposition was harassed, to the extent that deputies representing opposition politicians in the First Parliament had all been killed by 1966 and Rwanda was soon declared a one party state* (Ndahiro, 1994).

An estimated 600,000 to 700,000 Tutsi went into exile in neighbouring countries between 1962 and 1964. Episodes of violence erupted in 1963, 1966, 1973, and then repeatedly in the early 1990s. During this 30 year period, exiled Rwanda’s established the RPF (Rwandan Patriotic Front), a revolutionary army bent on regaining control of Rwanda (Marchak, 2003, p. 206).

By the late 1980s in Rwanda, there were grave economic problems in an overpopulated country with an insufficient food supply. Land tenure became a central issue, and President Habyarimana encountered challenges to his dictatorship from several directions. Tutsi exiles in the RPF recognised the crises in Rwanda as providing a platform suitable for an invasion. Times were tense. Gerard Prunier states, in his 1998 book ‘The Rwandan Crisis: History of a Genocide’, “The game was not two-sided as the later tragic events in Rwanda have tended to make onlookers believe, but in fact three-sided, between the Habyarimana regime jockeying for survival, the internal opposition struggling to achieve recognition, and the Tutsi exiles trying to make some sort of a comeback” (Prunier, 1998, p. 99).

Mounting pressure on Rwanda from the United Nations to stop its human rights abuses came together in what was called the Arusha Peace Accords. Signed by Habyarimana and his government, and the RPF, “Rwanda was to have a transitional government leading to a democratically elected government” (Kigali Memorial Centre, 2004, p. 14). French troops were to be replaced by UNAMIR [United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda], and the RPF and Rwandan army were intended to integrate, demobilise and disarm (Kigali Memorial Centre, 2004, p. 14). The transitional government however was never established, and Habyarimana entered into the largest ever Rwandan arms deal with a French company for $12 million, with a loan guarantee from the French government (Kigali Memorial Centre, 2004, p. 14). On April 6, 1994, President Habyarimana and President Cyrien Ntaryamira of Burundi, after signing the Arusha Peace Accords, were shot down in their plane on approach into Kigali. By 10 o’clock that night roadblocks had been set up throughout Kigali. By July 1994, Rwanda was on its deathbed.
4.4.1 GENOCIDE IN RWANDA

When Paul Kagame claimed that “never again” has now become “wherever again” he was saying that the post World War II settlement comprising of the United Nations and its various treaties and conventions have failed in their most basic premise - that it would prevent the reoccurrence of mass genocide (Mirzeoff, 2005, p. 36).

Responsibility for the attack on Habyarimana’s plane is still to this day disputed, but despite the disagreement over who shot the plane down, it is widely agreed that this action ignited the flame that had lain smouldering for many years, rearing its head from time to time, into full-blown genocide of the most brutal kind in 1994. “The slaughter was not, as Western media tended to present it, an instantaneous uprising of frightened peasants. On the contrary, death-lists had been distributed before the assassination of the president, and the militias had been trained to begin the killings immediately following it. For the most part, the massacre was conducted in an organized and orderly fashion” (Marchak, 2003, p. 209). Listed in advance, Hutu moderates were the first victims of the genocide. The next, Tutsi leadership and opposition party members, the Prime Minister, and other high-ranking officials. (Marchak, 2003, p. 208). Churches and mission compounds where Tutsis and moderate Hutus had sought refuge became killing grounds. “Throughout the attacks, the government-owned radio station and a private station, Radio Mille Collines, urged the killers on. In some regions, Hutus were ordered to kill Tutsi neighbours on pain of death for their own families” (Marchak, 2003, p. 208). Killings were carried out at speed and with devastating efficiency (Steele, 2006, p. 2).

In the absence of UN troops, which had been withdrawn early in the conflict following the targeting of assistance mission staff and troops, close to three quarters of all Tutsi in Rwanda were killed, along with thousands of Hutu, Twa, and foreign citizens. Whilst the UN had conceded that genocide was being committed in April 1994, UN forces were not deployed to the region until late June (International Peace Academy 2004; cited in Steele, 2006, p. 2).

In July 1994, 100 days after Habyarimana’s plane was shot down, the RPF finally broke the extremist regime, and ended the genocide that had seen between 800,000 and one million people killed. With the invasion of the Rwandan Patriotic Front in July 1994, Rwanda saw millions of Hutu soldiers and extremists flee across the border to displaced person and refugee camps in neighbouring countries (Berkeley; cited in Mills & Brunner, 2002, p. 107).
4.5 RWANDA: PRESENTING HISTORY

4.5.1 CASE STUDY SITE (c)

KIGALI MEMORIAL CENTRE

Opened on the 10th anniversary of the genocide in 2004, the Kigali Memorial Centre was built as a joint venture by the Kigali City Council and the UK based, non governmental, charity, the Aegis Trust. Including a museum, a series of mass graves (that now hold over 258,000 genocide victims), commemorative gardens, education centre and archive, the memorial serves multiple objectives (Steele, 2006, p. 6). Born primarily out of a need to move and bury the million victims in the aftermath of genocide, most of Rwanda’s memorials today are focused around mass burial sites.

The main building (photo 4.18) houses three permanent exhibitions, including an exhibition that documents the genocide in 1994, an exhibit dedicated to children, and an exhibit on the history of genocide internationally. As well as these exhibits, the centre displays artwork by local artists. The first series of sculptures (photo 4.19) by Rwandan artist, Laurent Hategekimana are crafted from regional wood and produced by locals. Employing traditional Rwandan, as well as contemporary styles and designs, the sculptures represent the three stages of the genocide exhibit: before, during and after the genocide (Steele, 2006, p. 7). The second artwork, titled ‘Windows of Hope’, is made of stained glass by Ardyn Halter, the son of a
genocide survivor who was commissioned by the Aegis Trust to create the stained pieces of artwork for the Centre (Steele, 2006, p. 7).

Outside the main building there are eleven mass graves, which were established shortly after the genocide to offer a place for bodies from around Kigali to be re-buried (photo 4.20). More graves are being constructed presently, as victims are still being found. “The Kigali City Council undertook to relocate the thousands of bodies from around the city to a ‘single place of burial where victims could be laid to rest with dignity’ . . . The graves are concrete, three metre deep crypts filled with coffins filled with victims’ remains. Because of the difficulty in identifying individual remains, the majority of coffins contain multiple victims, being ‘symbolic of the dignity that Kigali wishes to afford to its dead’” (Kigali Memorial Centre 2004, cited in Steele, 2006, p. 8).
The gardens within the memorial complex provide a place for contemplation and quiet reflection (photo montage 4.31). Set on Gisozi Hill across from the bustling streets of Kigali City, the gardens, map terrace, and memorial wall, with its engraved names of victims “not only provides survivors with a place to mourn lost loved ones, but also provides a site which confronts the individual to consider the scale of the genocide. By leaving some of the graves open for viewing, the non-Rwandan is directed to consider the magnitude of violence, indicating an additional desire for the graves to serve as educational and warning devices as well” (Steele, 2006, p. 8).
4.6 CONCLUSION

Outlining the basic accepted historical narrative of events in Cambodia and Rwanda, this chapter has introduced the three case study memorial sites of the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, the Choeung Ek Genocidal Centre and the Kigali Memorial Centre, and the contexts in which they sit - both historically and today. Discussed and analysed in relation to the key research aims in more detail in subsequent chapters, this chapter has laid the foundation from which analysis investigating the internationalisation of memorial design in Cambodia and Rwanda, and also Euro-Western interpretation of these memorial sites, can occur.

Specifically looking at the design of site, and the subsequent Euro-Western interpretations that manifest from site experience, Chapter five that follows will establish and present the methodology adopted to carry out the field research in Cambodia and Rwanda.