

PALGRAVE  
HANDBOOKS



# THE PALGRAVE HANDBOOK OF DARK TOURISM STUDIES

Edited by Philip R. Stone (Editor-in-Chief),  
Rudi Hartmann, Tony Seaton,  
Richard Sharpley and Leanne White



# The Palgrave Handbook of Dark Tourism Studies

Philip R. Stone • Rudi Hartmann  
Tony Seaton • Richard Sharpley  
Leanne White  
Editors

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*“We’ve gone on holiday by mistake!” Richard E. Grant (Withnail and I, 1987)*

*This Handbook is dedicated to my daughter and son—Sara and Aaron—as they embark into adulthood and discover that life is not about finding yourself, life is about creating yourself.*

*Dr. Philip R. Stone (a.k.a. Dad)*

*Editor-in-Chief: The Palgrave Handbook of Dark Tourism Studies*

# Dark Tourism Themes, Issues and Consequences: A Preface

Man stands in his own shadow and wonders why it's dark. (Zen Proverb)

In 2015, a commissioning editor from the internationally renowned publishers Palgrave Macmillan approached me to suggest dark tourism warranted a subject 'Handbook'. Consequently, 'dark tourism' as a scholarly field of study had come of age and this Handbook was born. The aim of any academic Handbook is to offer a seminal 'must-go-to' reference text for a specific subject. The aim of the *Palgrave Handbook of Dark Tourism Studies* is no different. During the past 20 years or so, dark tourism research has permutated heritage tourism discourse, thanatology, and memory studies. As a result, the term 'dark tourism' has been branded into an internationally recognised taxonomy to denote travel to sites *of* or sites associated *with* death or 'difficult heritage' within global visitor economies.

Yet, dark tourism is a provocative and contested concept. It divides opinions and emotions both within academic practice and empirical circles. The concept is also often used by sensationalist media to hook readers or viewers with stories of apparent touristic malpractice or dubious ethical visitor behaviour. In essence, dark tourism attempts to capture contemporary (re)presentations of the Significant Other dead within economic paradigms of business supply and consumer demand, as well as highlighting issues of dissonance, politics and historicity, and furthering our sociological understandings of death, the dead and collective memory. Moreover, modern morality is encapsulated through the tourist gaze at mortality at 'dark sites'. Dark tourism also allows us to commercialise the dead and to retail tragic memories in safe and socially sanctioned tourist environments. Even so, the semi-compulsive nature of consuming dark tourism ensures we do not encounter the actual corpse, but instead mediate specific narratives of the known and unknown dead.

In turn, the dominion of dark tourism offers a selective voice and records tragedy across time, space and context and, subsequently, can provide reflectivity of both place and people. Different cultural, political and linguistic representations of dark tourism and varying interpretative experiences are complex and multifarious and cannot be taken at face value. Instead, dark tourism offers visual signifiers and multiplicity of meanings within touristic landscapes, as global visitor sites function as retrospective witnesses to acts of atrocity or tragedy. Contemporary memorialisation is played out at the interface of dark tourism, where consumer experiences can catalyse sympathy for the victims or revulsion at the context. Yet, despite the cultural complexity and managerial dilemmas of dark tourism, we disconnect the (tragic) past from the (fretful) present for our (hopeful) future. We gaze at dark tourism in the knowledge that the victims are already dead, though the precise context and history of the victims can never be truly or fully understood. Ultimately, dark tourism is about death and the dead, but through its current production and ephemeral consumption, it perhaps tells us more about life and the living.

It is upon these inherent complexities of dark tourism that I imagined this Handbook. Of course, I was never ever going to address every single issue of dark tourism in every single cultural context. For any oversights and omissions, then these are either purposeful or by mistake—and I take this opportunity to apologise for the latter. Rather, I wanted a reference tome that provided readers with a selective yet coherent framework of dark tourism studies. I wanted a Handbook that critically addressed the theoretical and practical complexities of dark tourism but also left readers with questions that can open up new avenues for future research. I also wanted a reference book that incorporated the views of internationally recognised authors along with new emerging scholars in the field. To that end, four Associate Editors from the UK, USA, Ireland and Australia joined me, along with 45 authors representing every continent who contributed 30 original chapters spread across six thematic sections. Undoubtedly, what has transpired is the first-ever comprehensive Handbook of Dark Tourism Studies that readers can explore contextualised issues, examine key theoretical topics, and evaluate practical consequences of difficult heritage from around the world. The Handbook chapters are introduced and summarised by the respective editor in the section introductions; but each chapter may be read as a stand-alone paper or in conjunction with other sign-posted chapters in the book. The six thematic sections are:

- *Section One—Dark Tourism History* (edited by Tony Seaton). The opening section offers thought-provoking and wide-ranging historical accounts of

dark tourism from touristic practices of yesteryear. In doing so, the first section underpins dark tourism not only as a contemporary phenomenon but also with foundations firmly rooted in historicity.

- *Section Two—Dark Tourism: Philosophy and Theory* (edited by Philip R. Stone). The second section outlines a number of different cultural frameworks and theoretical paradigms in which to conceptually locate dark tourism studies. As a result, the section provides a number of conceptual templates that offer future researchers a defined philosophical agenda to interrogate meta-narratives of dark tourism.
- *Section Three—Dark Tourism in Society and Culture* (edited by Richard Sharpley). The third section provides a number of themes that relate to dark tourism in practice. In doing so, the section offers the reader sociological and cultural issues that focus on dissonant heritage and interpretation, political and stakeholder approaches, notions of identity and nation building, tourism mobilities, as well as media representations of dark tourism.
- *Section Four—Dark Tourism and Heritage Landscapes* (edited by Rudi Hartmann). The fourth section focuses on geographical accounts of dark tourism and journeys through difficult heritage landscapes. As a result, the section provides a number of extensive and contextualised accounts of slavery tourism, battlefield tourism, and disaster tourism, as well as ‘Holocaust tourism’.
- *Section Five—The ‘Dark Tourist’ Experience* (edited by Philip R. Stone). The penultimate section deliberates issues of tourist experiences and dark tourism consumption. The section provides critical insights into visualisation and interpretive experiences, the motivations of tourists at dark tourism sites, political and educational dimensions of visitation, as well as children’s perspectives of visiting particular dark sites.
- *Section Six—The Business of Dark Tourism* (edited by Leanne White). The concluding section focuses on business aspects and commercialisation of dark tourism. In doing so, issues of marketing and retailing are examined, as are issues of exhibiting death, as well as the semiotics of tourist souvenirs, and online media and digital encounters of dark tourism.

On a final and personal note: editing, writing and leading this book project reminded me of what Anne Frank wrote in her diary—‘The world will keep on turning without me; I can’t do anything to change events anyway’. Of course, Anne Frank through her death at the hands of the Nazi regime during World War Two and subsequent memorialised reincarnation *did* change events. By the agency of her diary testaments she helped us to come out of the shadows of genocide; she helped us glimpse the fragility of life and precariousness of death and, as a result,



return us to a world that did indeed keep on turning. This Handbook cannot change the tragic events that sadly inspire dark tourism, including that of Anne Frank. However, as an increasingly fragmented modern world appears to spin ever faster, the themes, issues and consequences discussed in this book can change our perceptions of how and why tragic events are interpreted, remembered and commemorated. It is for this reason that dark tourism and its scholarly endeavours must continue to shine a critical light on the darker recesses of humanity. Without it, we shall remain in the shadows.

Preston, UK

Philip R. Stone

# Acknowledgements

While I thought that I was learning how to live, I have been learning how to die.  
(Leonardo Da Vinci)

I would like to thank Palgrave Macmillan for commissioning this *Handbook*. In particular, I am grateful to Andrew James as commissioning editor (Sociology & Education) for his professional intuition for a book of this nature.

I would also like to say a special thank you to all the authors in this volume for their patience during the compilation of this publication and for providing the Handbook with such rich material. The authors in this Handbook represent every continent, and I am very grateful for their critical insights and international perspectives of ‘dark tourism’ and ‘difficult heritage’.

And finally, I would like to say a very special thank you to the Associate Editors of this volume—Rudi Hartmann, Tony Seaton, Richard Sharpley and Leanne White—for their scholarly passion and commitment, as well as their editorial expertise and professional diligence. *Gratia vobis ago!*

Dr. Philip R. Stone

Editor-in-Chief: *The Palgrave Handbook of Dark Tourism Studies*

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research focus is on travel to conflict areas, 'hot spots' and historical locations where 'dark' events took place. Dorina studies dark tourism with a specific focus on emotional dynamics between people and places, whereby these trips can act in an emotional or therapeutic way, or lead to more self-awareness. Dorina completed her doctoral research in the Geography and Tourism Programmes at the University of Waikato, Aotearoa, New Zealand, with a PhD thesis on 'Danger-zone tourism: Emotional performances in Jordan and Palestine'.

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**Graham Dann** has been researching tourist motivation and such allied topics as tourism promotion for the past four decades. He has been recognised for his contribution to their understanding by the award of a peer-reviewed higher doctorate. He is a founder member of the International Academy for the Study of Tourism and of the research committee on international tourism of the International Sociological Association where he correspondingly served a term as vice-president and president. His academic career (from the tropics to the tundra) began in 1975 with a 21-year attachment to the University of the West Indies in which he taught sociology and researched tourism. That was followed by an 11-year stint at the University of Luton

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**John Edmondson** is an independent scholar in the field of Victorian Studies, specialising in mid-nineteenth-century literature and society in England, cross-currents with Second Empire France, travel and tourism in literature, and urban space and place. He has published two books—*A Traveller's Literary Companion to France* (1997) and *Dickens on France* (2006)—and has contributed many articles and reviews to magazines and journals on literary, publishing and education topics. His most recent research interests have included the repeated journey as a means of textual interpretation and how perceptions of the city are mediated by proximity and distance—see, respectively, 'Making Sense of Place: A Short Walk in Paris with the Uncommercial Traveller' *Dickens Quarterly*, Vol. 31, No 2, 2014, 127–154, and 'From a Distance—the Remote Cityscape as Dream and Nightmare', *E-REA, Revue électronique d'études sur le monde anglophone*, Vol. 13, No. 2, 2016, <https://erea.revues.org/4889> (open access). Among his other activities, John is editor of the bimonthly journal *Industry and Higher Education* and a publishing consultant. Until recently he was the co-owner and director of IP Publishing Ltd., a small independent publishing house founded in 1990 and specialising in academic journals—the company was sold to SAGE Publications in April 2016.

**Elsbeth Frew** is an associate professor in tourism management in the Department of Management and Marketing at La Trobe University, Australia. Elspeth's research interests are within cultural tourism, with a particular focus on dark tourism, as well as festival and event management, and she has published numerous articles in these areas. She has also undertaken research into industrial tourism and the relationship between the media and tourism management. Elspeth's research is interdisciplinary since she considers aspects of tourism within particular frameworks of psychology, media studies, anthropology and sociology.

**Mona Friedrich** earned her PhD from the Institute for Dark Tourism Research (iDTR) at the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan), UK. Her doctoral thesis explored complexities of (genocide) memorialisation processes in Rwanda and consequences of tourism development in post-conflict spaces. She previously completed a bachelor's degree in development studies at the University of Sussex, UK. She later graduated with a MA in Tourism, Environment and Development from the

Geography Department at King's College London. Mona has published in numerous publications, including a contribution to the *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, as well as presenting at international conferences, such as the 2013 Peace Conference in Wageningen, the Netherlands. Mona is currently engaged in a research role at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin.

**Stephen P. Hanna** is a professor of geography at the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, Virginia, USA. His current research focuses on the ways commemorative landscapes and their meanings to societies today are created and reproduced through both practice and representation. As a member of the Race, Ethnicity, and Social Equity in Tourism (RESET) Initiative, he has applied these interests to the ways African-American memories are or are not made present at tourism plantations through the complex interactions among visitors, guides, management and landscapes.

**Kevin Hannam** is a professor of tourism mobilities in the Business School at Edinburgh Napier University, UK. He is a founding co-editor of the journals *Mobilities* and *Applied Mobilities* (Routledge) and a co-editor of the books *The Routledge Handbook of Mobilities Research*, *Tourism and Leisure Mobilities* and *Event Mobilities*. He has a PhD in geography from the University of Portsmouth, UK, and is a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society (FRGS), vice-chair of the Association for Tourism and Leisure Education and Research (ATLAS) and a research affiliate at the University of Johannesburg, South Africa.

**Rudi Hartmann** is an associate professor (C/T) at the University of Colorado Denver, USA, where he has taught geography and tourism planning since 1992. He received his PhD in geography from the Technical University Munich, Germany, in 1983. Rudi has a long-time interest in the study of tourist experiences at heritage sites. He has closely examined heritage tourism at memorial sites of the Holocaust in Germany and in the Netherlands. He has also reviewed theoretical foundations and conceptual changes in the study of heritage sites, including places with a 'shadowed past'. During his long-time work in and commitment to the field of geography, Rudi has contributed to geographic education in various ways, among others with a volume jointly developed with Chinese geographers on a comparative analysis of China and of the USA. As a visiting scholar, he conducted research or taught at Clark University, Massachusetts; at Lund University, Sweden; at the University of California, Berkeley; and at Beijing Normal University, China. Rudi is also an Associate Editor of this volume—the *Palgrave Handbook of Dark Tourism Studies*.

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