

DARK TOURISM IN CONTEXT: THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK

Graham Busby
Miss Helen Devereux
Plymouth University, United Kingdom

ABSTRACT: Dark tourism concerns visits to tragedy sites. This research examines the influence of *The Diary of Anne Frank* on motivation to visit her house in Amsterdam. The literature suggests that whilst motivations for undertaking dark tourism have been studied, there has been little research into what influences these motivations. This study examines whether literature, specifically *The Diary*, can influence the motivation to visit dark tourism sites by raising awareness. From 400 questionnaires issued, a response rate of 82.75% was secured; 55% of respondents being female and 45% male. With a mean age of 47, it is surprising that nearly 60% were graduates; 51% of the respondents had read the book. There was a significant association (99% level) between gender and whether the book had been read; perhaps, not surprisingly, there was a similar level of association between those who had read the book and a wish to visit the location in Amsterdam, indicating the direct influence of literature. Respondents who had read the book were more likely to be encouraged to visit the site of the ‘Secret Annexe’ than those who had not. **Keywords:** Dark Tourism; Literary Tourism

INTRODUCTION

Dark tourism means different things to different people. Visitors to sites of some form of tragedy come readily to mind. Throughout academic literature, dark tourism has been referred to using many different terms including thanatourism (Seaton, 1996), morbid tourism (Blom, 2000), and black spot tourism (Rojek, 1993). Although, dark tourism seems to be the most commonly accepted, these terms are described by academics as interchangeable (Dunkley, Morgan, & Westwood, 2007). This study reviews the effect of literature as an influence for visiting a dark tourism attraction. The work of literature studied (in which there have been screen adaptations) is *Anne Frank – The Diary of a Young Girl* which is associated with the story of the Holocaust during World War II. Anne Frank “kept a diary from 12th June 1942

Graham Busby has been with Plymouth University for over twenty years. For half of that time, he has been programme manager for the undergraduate tourism degrees. He has published on a range of topics, including film and literary tourism. Author’s email: g.busby@plymouth.ac.uk. **Helen Devereux** is a graduate in Tourism Management from the University of Plymouth. With a personal interest in heritage and historical texts, Helen took her curiosity further, researching specifically the nexus between visits to dark tourism attractions and literature. Author’s email: Heloux3592@hotmail.com

to 1st August 1944. Initially, she wrote it strictly for herself... one day in 1944... a member of the Dutch government in exile, announced in a radio broadcast from London that after the war he hoped to collect eyewitness accounts of the suffering of the Dutch people... which could be made available to the public. As an example, he specifically mentioned letters and diaries” (Frank & Pressler, 2001:v). Anne Frank was inspired and convinced that her diary should be published after the war and began to make amendments to suit the post-war public (Waaldijk, 1993). Aged 13 when she started writing the diary, she died in Belsen concentration camp, aged 15.

The Anne Frank House (including the Secret Annexe), in Amsterdam, opened in 1960 and provides a space to commemorate the life of the author and family besides millions of other victims of the Holocaust. Readers of the Diary are presented with somewhere to undertake a pilgrimage to because Anne Frank “is simultaneously ‘the Holocaust’s most famous victim’, ‘the most famous child of the twentieth century’, and ‘her face with the sad shy smile is one of the icons of this century’” (Cole, 1999:23). The ‘Americanisation’ of the Diary via Broadway play and Hollywood film has been comprehensively analysed by Tim Cole (1999). What is of particular relevance in this research is The Diary, literature, rather than the film or play.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literary and dark tourism can be considered special interest forms of the larger phenomenon of mass tourism. However, as with a number of forms, they can be linked. Critically, to visit an attraction there needs to be motivation, whether interest or education or entertainment. “Generated motivation constitutes a major parameter in expectation formation” (Gnoth, 1997:283) – this motivation can often come from reading an article or book, watching a film, television programme or the news (Busby & O’Neill, 2006; Busby & Laviolette, 2006). To understand how these two types of tourism are linked, it is important to grasp the meaning of each and their influence on one another. As an academic concept, dark tourism is relatively new. Much research has been carried out to measure participation and motivations into consumers visiting these tourist attractions (Stone & Sharpley, 2008; Stone, 2006; Biran, Poria & Oren, 2011). However, little research has been undertaken into where these motivations originate from, ultimately, this concludes that these motivational factors into dark tourist attractions have not been fully explored (Poria, Reichel, & Biran, 2006; Seaton & Lennon, 2004).

Some commentators have argued that a fascination with sites of death is not a new phenomenon nor has it increased; rather, it has finally been recognised by researchers and commercial interests as ‘tourism’ (Sharpley & Sundaram, 2005; Stone, 2006). Seaton (1996:234) backs this up stating “thanatourism is a phenomenon which has always been an intrinsic part of human activity”. Dating back to the start of human civilization, there are signs that show the interest society had in death. Examples include the Romans who held many vicious gladiatorial games, which usually resulted in death; leading on from this is the interest in public executions which were still popular and seen as a ‘day out’ right up until the early 20th century (Dunkley, Morgan, & Westwood, 2007; Stone & Sharpley, 2008). Stone (2006) suggests that the Roman Coliseum could be seen as one of the first official dark tourism attractions. Some pilgrimages can also be construed as dark tourism depending on the nature and destination of the travel (Stone & Sharpley, 2008). An example is the travel to Canterbury Cathedral pre-16th century, to see the location in which Saint Thomas (of Canterbury) was killed in a most brutal manner, his death is what led to his Canonisation in 1173 (Dunkley, Morgan, & Westwood, 2007). However, pilgrimage tourism is a longer established concept than that of dark tourism; this illustrates branches between the different types of already established tourism and dark tourism.

Whilst Austin (2002) states that dark tourism attractions are only visited by people fascinated by death, Biran, Poria, & Oren, (2011) point out that consumer-orientated research of tourist visits to dark tourism attractions has barely begun. They then go further to point out that some tourists during visitation to these sites may not even be aware of the ‘dark’ aspect, but could be having an educational experience or even enjoying the scenery; concluding that these tourists may not always have thanatourism motives (Biran, Poria, & Oren, 2011). Wight (2006:127) draws attention to the debate over what should “count as dark tourism both chronologically and functionally”, advising that “contemporary issues in the domain include visitor motivation”. Whilst researching tourist behaviour has been undertaken for many years; in the case of dark tourism, such motivations include morbid curiosity, grief, pilgrimage, education, and entertainment. However, little research has been undertaken into the reason behind these motivations for tourists to visit dark tourism attractions. Prime reasoning behind motivations in current Western European society can come from media; ranging from a newspaper or book through to a film, television series, or the news (Busby & O’Neill, 2006; Busby & Laviolette, 2006). The remaining part of the literature review considers literary tourism.

Fawcett & Cormack (2001:690) define a literary attraction as a “site that may be constructed around the life of an author or the characters

and/or settings described in the literature”. These attractions vary from the houses in which authors/characters lived, worked, or died to sites that have been used in screen adaptations (Philips, 2007). In modern society, many well-known books have been dramatised into a film or television series. As Busby & Klug (2001:319) point out “it is apparent by now that many films and television dramas owe their existence to literature in the first place”. Pocock (1992) and Herbert (2001) go further, claiming that these famous books now get a higher level of recognition through the remakes in television series and films. Research has been conducted into the make-up of literature and screen destinations and attractions, including Notting Hill (Busby & Klug, 2001); Beatrix Potter and Harry Potter (Busby & George, 2004); Anne Frank (Poria, Reichel, Biran, 2006); L.M. Montgomery (Fawcett & Cormack, 2001); Jane Austen and Dylan Thomas (Herbert, 2001); Dracula (Muresan & Smith, 1998); Daphne du Maurier Country (Busby & Hambly, 2000); and Catherine Cookson Country (Pocock, 1992). Researchers tend to agree that visitors’ expectations and motivations will differ across literary sites and depend upon their location, a site’s qualities, and the popularity of a literary figure, associated with them (Busby & Shetliffe, 2013). Having mentioned Dracula here, an example can be shown of where dark tourism is not always concerned with real-life tragedy: in the novel, Count Dracula landed at Whitby where a festival celebrated by Goths is held each year – linking dark and literary tourism (Spracklen & Spracklen, 2014).

Herbert (2001) suggests that visits to literary places are more likely if a tourist can personally relate to the literature or screen adaptations; this may lead to the view that women are more likely to want to further their cultural capital with this specific attraction (the annexe of Anne Frank) than males. Given that literary tourism is a sub-set of cultural tourism, it is interesting to note Kim, Cheng, & O’Leary’s (2007:1367) assertion that “Females, in general, are known as more active consumers of cultural products than males”. Citing Craik (1997) and Urry (1990), Kim, Cheng, & O’Leary (2007) state that this type of tourist is frequently described as wealthy, older, well educated, and female. Such tourists may well be seeking to further their personal cultural capital (Busby & Meethan, 2008).

Researchers have discussed the motivation to visit a place after the film/television programme has occurred and this is a key reason for many tourists to visit (Busby & Haines, 2013). However, in most cases relating to the dark tourist perspective, the ‘attraction’ is already there; film and literature are another way of marketing this and making people aware of what has occurred in these areas. Herbert (1996; 2001) and Busby & George (2004) have considered the existence of multiple motivations for visiting a literature-related site. Herbert (2001)

identifies four key reasons for tourists to visit literary attractions; the first is when a tourist is drawn to this attraction as it has connections with the author's life. He goes on to suggest that visitors may also be drawn to places that act as settings in the literature. The third reason, and one that may be most relevant to this study, is that tourists may be visiting for a deeper emotion than the particular author or story *per se*. The fourth reason also has much relevance, he states that the reason for visit "may be less concerned with the literature than with some dramatic event in the writer's life" (Herbert, 2001:315). An example that may be cited directly connected with the research area is the holocaust that deeply affected Anne Frank's life, which led to the editing of her diary for public viewing, and the interest that was invoked in others from this. "Anne Frank can represent not only all who died in the holocaust but also all children, all civilians, everyone whose lives are destroyed by war and racism" (Walter, 2009:48).

Linking the concepts of Dark and Literary Tourism

Poria, Reichel, & Biran (2006:164) point out the "need to study heritage tourism in ways other than those based on recreation and leisure concepts". Looking at the research into literary tourism, it is portrayed that tourists seek leisure focussing particularly on the positive aspects and that tourists come to feel this positivity as a way of escape from their everyday lives (Rojek, 1993; Busby and O'Neill, 2006). However, linking the two concepts of literary tourism and dark tourism, this is obviously not always the case. The association that derives from literature and film has been noted, with the increase in marketing on dark tourism attractions, with literature mediating between the living and the dead (Walter, 2009). Furthermore Seaton (1996) discusses the role of media in tourism and that this has been a key factor in the growth of the dark tourism industry. Strange & Kempa (2003:387) point out that "new files of representation (including memoirs, films, novels) give moral meaning to sites of violence and death". Magazines can also have a great impact on this industry with direct referencing to dark tourist attractions in in-flight magazines, promoting the touring of suffering and death (Strange and Kempa, 2003). These are examples of researchers observing the connection between media and the increase in interest of dark tourism attractions; as Tarlow (2005:57) points out "television and film can define modern dark tourism". However they have not taken this observation further into directly relating research. Table 1 provides examples of literature and film that may have affected dark tourism attractions.

Table 1: Literature, film and dark tourism attraction examples

Literature, film – or not	Location	Visitor numbers – annual approximate
Anne Frank – The Diary of a Young Girl Multiple editions of The Diary: 1947 onwards Film 1959 onwards Television 1959 onwards	Amsterdam – The Secret Annexe	1,000,000 +
Schindler’s Ark/List Book 1983 Film 1993	Auschwitz	1,400,000 +
The Boy In The Striped Pyjamas Book 2006 Film 2008	Auschwitz	1,400,000 +
Pearl Harbor Film 2001	Pearl Harbor	1,000,000 +
Alcatraz Prison Film The Rock 1996 Film Escape From Alcatraz 1979 Film Birdman of Alcatraz 1962	San Francisco (Hamilton, 2009)	1,000,000 +
World Trade Center Ground Zero	New York	3,000,000 +
Flight 93	Shanksville (Begos, 2012)	200,000 +

To conclude this section, the extant literature clearly covers a range of aspects concerning dark and literary tourism; it does not, however, relate the two in depth, discussing the direct link as literature and film as a motivational tool into potential visitors to dark tourism attractions. Although dark tourism can still be seen as a sensitive subject, Johanson (2012) makes the point that “there’s a place for this type of tourism” within society. Literary tourism is travel to a place associated with an author or book; dark tourism is the travel to a place where death or disaster has occurred. The link here is a direct one where the travel to a place associated with death or disaster may be motivated by the literature about it.

METHODOLOGY

Primary data collection was undertaken and, for participants who had an interest in reading the book, copies were made available. Considering the academic ethical arguments that have occurred concerning the topic of dark tourism, it was deemed important that the questionnaire did not offend any of the participants. Following a pilot study with eight respondents, ranging in age from 18 to 68, some of the sur-

vey questions were amended. Convenience sampling was chosen as this was deemed the only feasible method possible, taking into account time restraints and the reliability of receiving the copies of the book given out, back from respondents; all respondents are British citizens. Acquaintances and their friends were approached in Gloucestershire, London, Birmingham, Reading, and Plymouth.

Findings and discussion

In total, 331 respondents, out of 400 potential responses, fully completed the questionnaire, providing a response rate of 82.75%. Out of the 331 responses, 55% were female and 45% male. The highest level of education that each participant had acquired indicated that 6.6% had no academic qualifications, 13.3% held the equivalent to GCSE's (traditionally taken at age 16), 22% held A Levels (traditionally taken at age 18), 50.2% held a level equivalent to a degree, leaving 5.4% with a Master's and 2.4% at PhD level. Ages of respondents were also assessed and categorized accordingly with the mean age being 47. In relation to the book, *Anne Frank – The Diary of a Young Girl*, 50.8% of the respondents had not read the book. To analyse the statistical data collected, SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software was utilised. Responses were cross-tabulated with the independent variables being the socio-demographics of the participants, such as age, gender, and highest level of education, in order to establish any associations.

Within the questionnaire, respondents were directly asked as to what extent they believe that media has on their knowledge about what occurred during the Holocaust. From this, the concept of media was broken down into five categories: newspapers, film, television programmes, books, and magazines. Each of these media types have been discussed in literature as having an impact upon visitors' perceptions of an attraction or destination (Strange and Kempa, 2003; Tarlow, 2005). Just over 46% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that newspapers have influenced their awareness and understanding on what occurred during the Holocaust. However, this leaves 53.9% of respondents having no opinion or disagreeing with the statement in relation to newspapers. On the other hand, comparing the opinions of respondents in relation to newspapers to films, the outcome is significantly different. The percentage believing that film created awareness of the discussed era reached 82.2%, with less than one in five having no opinion or disagreeing with the statement with regard to films.

Respondents who had read *The Diary* were more likely to have engaged with television media relating to Anne Frank (significant at the 99.9% level). *The Diary*, therefore, seems to act as a catalyst in the search for further information, possibly associated with personal cul-

tural capital acquisition. Perhaps not surprisingly, the chi-square test showed an association between respondent's gender and whether they have read the book discussed, significant at the 99.9% level. It is important to question whether the book is aimed at a certain age or gender (Busby and Hambly, 2000). The results from this study show that more females have read the book than males. This could have affected the outcome of whether females are in fact more likely to visit the destination than males. Although the book does not have a specific target market, it would seem plausible that it would appeal more to young females, than any other socio-demographic group. This could be due to the literature having been written by a young teenage girl and so in some aspects young females may be able to relate to the author more than others as Henshon did (2010). Consequently, the suggestion by Herbert (2001) that visits to such places are more likely if a tourist can personally relate to the literature or screen adaptations, may lead to the view that women are more likely to want to further their cultural capital with this specific attraction (the Annexe of Anne Frank) than males. Women indicated they would be more likely to visit a dark tourism site for reasons of education, interest, or curiosity than male respondents (significant at the 99.5% level). Another factor that could affect the validity of this study are the results of previous research on what variables affect the level of time a person spends in reading for leisure. The results from these studies often resulted in the hypothesis of females reading more for leisure than males. This could point to the book having even greater appeal to women than men and so the results of this particular study may not have global generalizability, probably only being able to apply the results found to females.

It is clear from the results of this research that having read *The Diary of Anne Frank* considerably impacts the perceptions of respondents toward dark tourism. Perceptions of the Diary, and its ability to encourage or deter dark tourism to the Annexe, were noticeably different between those who had, and had not read the book previously. While respondents who had read the book identified that they were encouraged to visit the site, this perception differed remarkably from the responses of those who had not read it, who instead perceived that reading the Diary would deter them from the site (significant at the 99.9% level) – this seems quite stark as an implication. Chi-squared testing suggests that literary representations have the ability to encourage dark tourism to locations within narratives. Furthermore, the results suggest that respondents who have not read *The Diary of Anne Frank* hold negative perceptions of the story and its setting.

Given that respondents who have read *Anne Frank – The Diary of a Young Girl* are more encouraged to visit the 'Secret Annexe' than those who have not, this shows the direct influence that literature can have

on a travel-related decision, thus resulting in literary tourism. This desire to visit the site could be motivated by different aspects, whether the relation that the place has with the author, to the dramatic events that happened within the book, and so the author's life (Herbert, 2001; Fawcett and Cormack, 2001; Busby and George, 2004; Herbert, 1996; Smith, 2003; Philips, 2007). The questionnaire did not seek to ascertain why the potential tourists may be encouraged to visit the site, which is now considered to be an oversight. This may have given the opportunity to further understand the influence that film and literature have on the motivation to visit dark tourism sites, and so it cannot be determined within the available data as to what aspects of film and literature influence potential tourists on the whole.

There was also a significant association (99.9% level) between the age of respondents and the likelihood that they had watched TV media relating to Anne Frank, whereby a greater proportion of the respondents in the 46-60 age groups had watched media relating to Anne Frank. This grouping is, clearly, more likely to have seen one or more of the television or film adaptations. The results also revealed disparities in the anticipated motivations of respondents to visit dark tourism sites. While those who had read the book identified they would be likely to visit a holocaust site for purpose of education, interest or curiosity, those who had not read the book were more likely to visit because they were in the area (significant at the 99.9% level). In many respects, the findings might appear to be obvious, but attention is drawn to the work of Baratz (1983) who pointed out this frequently seems to be the case after the results are available.

CONCLUSION

Without doubt, there are many motivational factors for people visiting dark tourist attractions. Furthermore, literature and film can play a key role in motivation. Although only some of the findings have been reported here, the results indicate that there is an association between literature and dark tourism motivational factors. It would seem that educational reasons are often the prime factor for tourists to visit such attractions; however, this could be a flaw with lack of honesty from participants in acknowledging their morbid curiosity.

Within the results, it was also shown that respondents who had read the book are more likely to be encouraged to visit the site of the 'Secret Annexe' than those who had not. This shows the direct impact that a book can have on the visitation of a site that is not associated with recreation or leisure concepts. On the other hand, although many respondents stated that having read the book would encourage them to visit, few had actually acted upon this. It was also indicated that film

and television programmes are the most influential out of the five media types discussed, in educating and making people aware of the Holocaust. Almost certainly, the most concerning finding was that those who had not read *The Diary of Anne Frank* perceived that reading it would deter them from visiting the site. Although Staiff (2014:9) refers to a "... now pervasive education paradigm in heritage interpretation", it is argued that education is of paramount importance to this topic.

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