

Humanizing Death

The Fontanelle Cemetery: analyzing tourists' motivations, experiences and evaluations



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Abstract

Thanatourism refers to the practice of visiting places connected with death, sufferance and grief. Although the label, together with dark tourism, has been strongly questioned because of its implications, it is still recognized as valid not only by academic scholarship but also by its audience. Its popularity is recently connected with the massive presence of death-related contents within mass media and mainstream cultural industry, but it is an ancient phenomenon, which can be traced back to thanatopsis, i.e. the medieval contemplation of death. Consequently, thanatourism is the practice of travelling in order to experience, directly or indirectly, the presence of death. While the explanations of the phenomenon are still at the stage of hypothesis, this field of tourism has recently seen a great increase. Started as niche tourism, it is now sharply increased to significant numbers. Even Naples, an Italian city building its tourist attractiveness on the Mediterranean *joie de vivre*, is experiencing an increasing number of visits to places such as catacombs, crypts and ossuaries. The Fontanelle Cemetery is one of these Neapolitan sites, a huge ossuary located in Sanità, an urban district unfortunately infamous for a high level of social exclusion and unemployment. The thousands of human remains stored in this cave, turned into an ossuary in the 19th century, became soon objects of faith. The cult of souls of Purgatory, which used to take place until 1969, featured here a specific practice: the adoption of unknown skulls. Nowadays the site is managed as part of Neapolitan cultural heritage and it attracts an increasing number of tourists year after year: what are the motives, experiences and post-visit evaluations of people visiting this site? The research aims to answer these questions through the content analysis of 27 in-depth interviews conducted with tourists of the Fontanelle Cemetery. Both autonomous tourists and tourists who joined a guided tour have been taken into analysis. Additionally, interviews with two guides from two different tours were conducted in order to grasp understanding of how the respondents may be influenced by different approaches. The content analysis suggest that the visits at the Fontanelle Cemetery are perfectly framed into the hypothesis, suggested by Seaton (2009), of dark tourism as a way to face death within a safe tourist experience. The particular atmosphere, different from any catacomb or normal cemetery, together with traditional legends connected to specific skulls, made easier for the respondents to deal with the great amount of human remains. Furthermore, as for noticed for *Body Worlds* (Lantermann, 2009), tourists were more likely to be reflective and meditative about the issues of human mortality and vulnerability after the visit. To conclude, the research includes suggestions for further inquiries about the role of storytelling practices in facing the fear of death and the agency of contemporary Western people within the paradigm of medicalization.

Keywords: dark tourism; thanatourism; Fontanelle Cemetery; Naples; storytelling;

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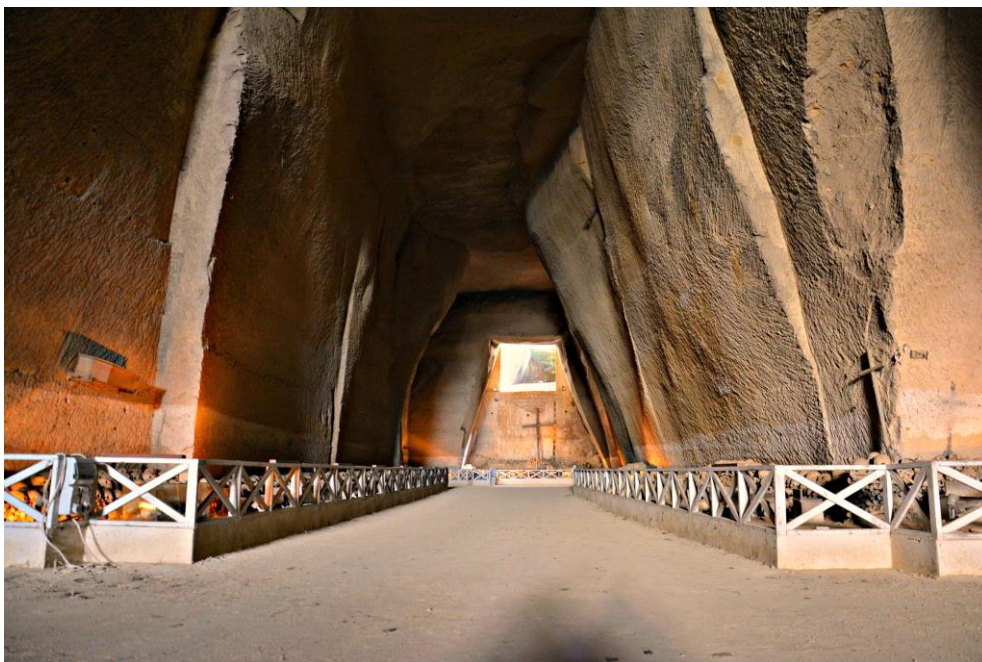
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1. Introduction

The Fontanelle Cemetery is a huge ossuary located in Sanità, an urban district of Naples unfortunately infamous because of high levels of social exclusion, unemployment and crime. Around the cemetery there are two other buildings which are, in a certain sense, symbolic of this reputation: the former secondary school (now abandoned) and the building of Valentino factory, a famous Neapolitan shoe industry now relocated abroad, fallen into disuse.

As soon as the visitor crosses the main entrance, the first impression of the Fontanelle Cemetery is dominated by its dimensions: the cave is about 10-15 meters tall; it is divided into three corridors and the whole cave is about 30.000 m³ (Civitelli, 2012). The ossuary is located into this huge tuff cave, from which materials to build many buildings of the historical center were extracted since Greek times. The name of the site comes from a hydrogeological phenomenon, which used to occur in the past: Fontanelle literally means “little fountains”, in reference to the streams which run down the nearby hill during intense rains.

Within the cave, the arrangement of bones and skulls in organized layers and lines can be traced back to the 19th century, when the parish Gaetano Barbati decided to shape the previously unordered gathering of human remains into a proper Christian ossuary. The ossuary contains thousands of human remains, their number has never been exactly calculated. Some areas exclusively contain skulls, other contain also femurs and other bones, organized along the corridors (Picture 1).



Picture 1: Corridors

The origins of the bones are various but broadly divided in three categories: bones coming from the crypts of churches after the edict of Saint-Cloud (Napoleon's ban which prohibited urban burials), bones coming from urban squares and streets, brought to light by renovation works and, eventually, bones coming from the first urban cemetery of the city, the Cemetery of 366 graves (Civitelli, 2012).

The skulls are covered with dust and musk (the latter is due to the high level of humidity) but some of them are also contained into small boxes in the shape of little temples. In Neapolitan they are called *scarabattole* (Picture 2) and remind, for shape and materials, small reliquaries. This is the most evident trace of the cult of Purgatory, which used to take place here and in other sites of the city (such as the churches of Purgatorio ad Arco and San Pietro ad Aram). The cult of Purgatory is not a specific and unique feature of Naples, it used to be spread across the whole Christian world. It consisted of paying devotion, worshipping and making offers for the dead waiting for judgment in Purgatory. In ancient times, nobles used to leave in their testaments great amount of inheritance to the souls of Purgatory, namely for public masses in their honour. However, in the city of Naples, the cult was enriched by an additional feature: the adoption of unknown skulls (Civitelli, 2012).

Worshippers referred that they dreamt the skull of someone still stuck in Purgatory asking them for prayers. According to Catholic tradition, souls of unknown remains are suffering in Purgatory to earn the Paradise and they need prayers from the living, in order to accelerate the process of purification. Souls of Purgatory grant wishes in return for prayers and this miracle is also called "grazia" in Italian.



Picture 2: Scarabattola

Whenever a skull granted a wish, the worshipper established a small scarabattola in his honour, making this small space as comfortable as possible for its guest. The skull is put on a soft pillow and constantly cleaned; the worshipper incise its gratitude on the material (often marble): “per grazia ricevuta” (literally: “for receiving a miracle”) (Ciambelli, 1980). The majority of inscriptions are traced back to the 1940’s when the city was suffering the consequences of war and Allied occupation.

In that period of chaos and disgrace, many women went to the Fontanelle Cemetery to pray for their sons, brothers or husbands still missing after the troops returned from the Russian front. The cult, intended as a mass devotion, was prohibited in 1969 because of an edit released by the cardinal Ursi: the decision was connected with the Second Vatican Council, which ordered to focus on Christ more than popular devotions (Civitelli, 2012).

In recent times, the Fontanelle Cemetery was closed and reopened several times, due to the mismanagement of municipality in avoiding collapses and water damages. The last reopening was in 2010, after a pacific sit-in organized by the inhabitants of the district (Perrillo, 2010). The site is considered an important part of Neapolitan cultural heritage: guided tours and cultural activities (such as concerts and theatrical plays) take place here, bringing new audiences to this site.

Now a property of the municipality, the Fontanelle Cemetery has become a famous tourist destination, attracting a constant flux of visitors every year (Civitelli, 2012): what are the motives, experiences and post-visit evaluations of people visiting this site?

The research aims to answer these questions through the analysis of 27 semi-structured and in-depth interviews conducted with tourists who visited the Fontanelle Cemetery. The respondents are divided into two categories: who joined a guided tour and who did not (here called Autonomous tourists). Additionally, two different guided tours have been considered. The first was offered by the association Insolita Guida, the second from IRIS Fontanelle. Accordingly, the 2 tourist guides have been interviewed in order to analyze if, and to which extent, their different tours influenced the respondents.

The combination of modern tourists’ more sophisticated needs and the labelling tendency of academic research (Puczko, 2006) have brought great attention to the analysis of new niche tourist fields. Thanatourism is one of these niches, and the increase in both its supply and demand is connected with a general growth of the whole tourist market occurred since the second half of the twentieth century (Sharpley, 2009).

The theoretical relevance of this research comes from the possibility of refining, confirming or rejecting previous theories about dark tourism through this specific case study. The information provided by the analysis of the interviews will frame the Fontanelle Cemetery within Stone’s dark

tourism spectrum and Sharpley's matrix (Sharpley, 2009). Moreover, it is of great interest to explore possible similarities with the feedback received by Whalley and Lantermann (2005) by visitors of Body Worlds. Tourists visiting this particular exhibition mentioned that, after the visit, they adopted a more contemplative and meditative approach to their own life and mortality. In this sense, the experiences at the site have been analyzed considering Stone's theory about dark tourism as an institution of social neutralization of death (Stone, 2009). Confirming or rejecting this theory is important to verify or question this crucial paradigm, together with the paradox of absent-present death on which it relies on (Shilling, 1993; Willmott, 2000). Explanations to this paradox are still hypothesis (Durkin, 2003) and data provided by the analysis of the respondents could contribute to a deeper understanding of this debated issue.

The research's societal importance comes from the deep comprehension provided about the relationship between the site and its management strategies adopted to deal with ethical issues, marketing issues, interpretation issues (Stone, 2009). In this sense, the results aim to provide the management of the site with useful insights to enhance understanding of the touristic appeal and consequently elaborate more informed strategies; the findings aim to fill the lack of academic scholarship on the topic of dark tourism at the Fontanelle Cemetery, since the majority of previous research focuses almost exclusively on the cult and its practices (Civitelli, 2012).

2. Literature Review

The analysis of tourists' motivations, experiences and post-visit evaluations are framed into current scholarship about dark tourism. Consequently, the literature review starts with taking into analysis the developments of dark tourism: where it has its origins and how scholars have addressed it.

Following the research questions, academic literature about dark tourism demand, supply and experience is reviewed, in search of how academic research has tackled tourist motivations to visit these sites, which are the implications of supplying and managing places connected with death, how this experiences may affect people. To conclude, existing scholarship about the Fontanelle Cemetery is explored.

2.1 Thanatourism and Dark Tourism

The term *thanatourism* was coined by Seaton in reference to “travel to a location wholly, or partially, motivated by the desire for actual or symbolic encounters with death, particularly, but not exclusively, violent death, which may, to a varying degree be activated by the person-specific features of those whose deaths are its focal objects” (Seaton, 1996, p. 234).

Although academic scholarship on this topic has been largely produced in recent years and it owes its rising popularity to new mass media (Gorer, 1955), it is not a new phenomenon and it finds its origin within the thanatopic tradition, namely the medieval contemplation of death (Seaton, 1996). The process which brought fascination with death out of churches and monasteries into internet websites, cinema, music, popular culture, new media and even tourist itineraries passed through Romantic nostalgia (Ariès, 1974).

Rooted in the Middle Ages, during the Romantic period thanatopsis was turned into a broader fascination with caducity of life and transience of human glories. Nostalgic and gloomy landscapes of ruins, wrecks and rural cemeteries were portrayed by Romantic artists into paintings (the foggy and sorrowful vestiges by Caspar David Friedrich and Johann Heinrich Füssli), poetry (the melancholic poems by Shelley and Keats) and literature, with the rise of horror fiction (Horace Walpole, Edgar Allan Poe, Mary Shelley and Bram Stoker). The artistic fascination of Romanticism with these features will deeply affect the following supply and consumption of dark elements within European popular culture (Gorer, 1965).

The connection between thanatopsis and tourism started in the 18th century. In that period, in fact, North European intellectuals used to attend the so-called Grand Tour, a journey directed

southward, usually to Italy or Greece: it was a proper rite of passage from adolescence to adulthood (Chaney, 2000). The key feature of Grand Tour was the nostalgic contemplation of remains of the past, observed in Pompeii, Rome or Athens (Seaton, 1996). Indeed, this emotional necessity made the nineteenth century the first epoch which witnessed a massive participation of the middle class in such long journeys: thanatopsis became a tourist element of travel (Seaton, 2009).

Subsequently, the nineteenth century featured tours and attractions even more properly connected with death itself, turned into commodities of tourist interest, such as the episode around Morro Castle, a luxurious ship connecting New York and Cuba, whose wreck caused the death of 137 passengers. The relic became immediately a massively visited tourist destination: up to a quarter of million people travelled there from the whole country to watch the relic near the coast. According to the press of that time, souvenirs and postcards were sold in a carnival atmosphere. (Hegemann, 2000). This case showed that thanatourism, at that time, was experienced not only by intellectuals but also by a broader audience.

Thanatourism is not the only term used to describe this various and complex phenomenon. Also other different labels have been provided by academic scholarship: *dark tourism* (Foley and Lennon, 1996; Sharpley and Stone, 2009), *morbid tourism* (Blom, 2000), *black spot tourism* (Rojek, 1993), *grief tourism* (Dann, 1994), *fright tourism* (Bristow and Newman, 2004) and others.

Dark tourism, in particular, is the most used term even in media and non-academic texts (Sharpley, 2009). Foley and Lennon coined the term in *JFK and dark tourism: A fascination with assassination* within the *International Journal of Heritage Studies* (Foley and Lennon, 1996). Already in that paper, dark tourism was strictly connected with massive media coverage and what Gorer addressed thirty years before as “pornography of death” (Gorer, 1965).

However, the validity of this label has been questioned: firstly, it is used as umbrella-term to address a broad spectrum of phenomena which are far too different from each other (Sharpley, 2009). For example, dark tourism as keyword encompasses both tours of haunted houses and visits to Rwanda genocide memorials. The second element of scepticism comes from the use of the adjective “dark”, which could be misleading and deceptive (Sharpley, 2009). In this sense, Ryan and Kohli suggested to research how these sites are perceived as dark by visitors, rather than defining them dark in advance (Ryan and Kohli, 2006). More than a label, the perception of the sites as dark by visitors makes them dark attractions (Smith and Croy, 2005).

At the light of this debate, the research adopts both the terms of thanatourism and dark tourism. According to Seaton, the two terms are synonymous since “dark tourism is the ‘travel dimension of thanatopsis’ (hence thanatourism)” (Seaton, 2009, p. 15), but Foley and Lennon

(1996) indicated dark tourism as a sign of post-modernity, while Seaton (1999) stressed the medieval roots of the phenomenon of travelling to sites associated with death.

On the one hand, thanatourism has a more specific field of application, particularly suitable for a Christian monumental ossuary such as the Fontanelle Cemetery: “less a fascination with death per se, than feeling for the particular people who have died (personal, nationalistic, or humanitarian)” (Seaton, 1996, p. 234). More importantly, this term addresses the specific aims of being interested into peaceful scenarios of death (the word itself comes from the medieval meditation on caducity) and producing authentic feelings in the encounter with victims of the past (Knudsen, 2011).

On the other hand, although at this stage the use of the term dark tourism could be considered odd and almost counter-productive, there are still some valid reasons to employ it in academic research. On the one hand, it provides researchers with a broader theoretical framework for their analysis. On the other, the term is nowadays so rooted in media discourses that it stimulates great curiosity in the audience (Sharpley & Stone, 2009).

2.2 Motivations

Tourists’ motivations for visiting sites connected with death and suffering have been largely investigated by scholars and the results highlighted that there is a great number of reasons why tourists visit these sites. To begin with, not all the visitors attended these routes purposefully. In this sense, the research conducted by Pécsek within the historical cemetery of Budapest demonstrated that visits to a site considered dark may not be planned with a specifically dark purpose. None of her interviewees mentioned any dark interest among their main motivations (Pécsek, 2015).

A large and diversified body of literature has been provided about visitors’ different motivations and needs in visiting these sites. As stressed by Pécsek’s research, tourists may visit a monumental cemetery only because of a pure appreciation of its naturalistic setting, interest in local history and cultural values embedded (Pécsek, 2015). Also, the feeling of *Schadenfreude*, literally a morbid and ambiguous attraction to others’ suffering, has been taken into the analysis (Seaton and Lennon, 2004). Some tourists visit dark sites because of the abnormal and bizarre experience they provide (Preece and Price, 2005), with the aim of being surprised and astonished by an unusual destination (Ashworth and Hartmann, 2005). In particular, Ashworth and Hartmann considered also empathy towards victims and the possibility of being naturally attracted by dread and horror. Tourists’ motivations may also entail the search for the physical enactment of myths (Henning, 2002) and need for a thrilling experience out of one’s ordinary, enjoyed within the safety of a

tourist framework (Tarlow, 2005). In regard to the need for the thrill, Sharpley suggested that dark tourism, especially when sought in potentially dangerous environments, might be intended as a marker of social status (Sharpley, 2009).

Places of dark tourism are often strictly related to collective events and historical disasters. In this regard, Ashworth suggested that people are brought to this kind of places also by a constant need for roots and identity (Ashworth, 2002). In this sense also Tarlow considered the connection between motivations for attending dark tourism routes and social and personal identity development. Dark sites are, for some, a pretext to grasp a better understanding of the present, of one's own history and national identity (Tarlow, 2005).

Dann is representative of a listing-tendency in addressing motivations within academic scholarship. He enumerated eight factors which he believes may explain the rising demand for dark tourism: "the 'fear of phantoms' (i.e. overcoming childlike fears); the search for novelty; nostalgia; the desire to celebrate crime or deviance; a more basic bloodlust; and, as noted above, 'dicing with death'" (Dann, 1998, p.3).

Considering the motivations highlighted by Dann, Reader perceived a kind of reluctance in considering a positive desire for dark experiences, warning that a lack of reflection about tourists' deep motivations could leave a number of issues related to the future of this field of study unsolved (Reader, 2003). In response to Reader's considerations, Seaton adopted a behavioural approach to address dark tourism issues. Thus, in this perspective dark tourism is considered as a continuum of intensity, depending on the different reasons why tourists decide to experience sites of death and suffering (Seaton, 2009).

Accordingly, Seaton outlined five categories within the continuum: travelling to experience death *at work* (for example during public executions); travelling to visit places where mass murders occurred (battlefields, concentration camps or sites of genocides); travelling to see memorials or graveyards (such as the cemetery of Père Lachaise); travelling to watch symbolic representations of death at unconnected sites (museums of deadly weapons); travelling to experience a re-enactment of death, either secular or religious (festivals and reenactments of battles) (Seaton, 2009).

2.3 Management of Death

Analysis of experiences tourists make is strictly connected with narrations provided by management and tourist guides, the kind of experience may change in accordance with these actors' choices (Blyablina, 2015). The space tourists move through has not a fixed meaning, its significances oscillate among four directions: it is shaped by people's imagination and concrete

experience, its meaning is socially constructed and modified by other people's influence. Eventually, its meaning is not stable but rather temporary, depending on the attributes that are given to it through practices of management (Seaton, 2009).

As shown, the will of satisfying a dark supply is fundamental to evaluate which kind of tourist experience visitors will be likely to have in a specific site. Referring again to Pécsek's research in Budapest, which did not find any premeditated dark purpose in visitors' motivation (Pécsek, 2015), it must be taken into account to which extent management strategies may confer a dark aura to the tourist experience. In this sense, a visit to a cemetery is not inevitably attended with a particular interest for death and suffering. On the other hand, an anatomic exhibition may be so much more than an attraction for specialised doctors (Walter, 2009).

"Body Worlds" is Gunther Von Hagens' travelling exhibition of true human bodies. Thanks to the process of plastination, cadavers have been dried and turned into sculptures, then they have been put in positions representing human everyday life. The exhibition has been surrounded by numerous debates about the alleged lack of respect towards the cadavers and the uncertain origin of the bodies. However, the exhibition features panels with philosophers and intellectuals' quotes about death and human final demise and empirical researches conducted within its visitors demonstrated the positive effects in terms of gaining a contemplative and meditative approach towards one's own life and death (Whalley, 2007; Lantermann, 2007). These respondents perceived "Body Worlds" as a modern memento mori.

Sites' owners and controllers have to deal with ethical issues related to the management of controversial attractions, marketing strategies adopted and tourist interpretation. First of all, a number of ethical issues are entailed in developing a site of death as a tourist attraction: the legitimacy itself of an exhibition of death can be easily questioned. Consequently, a deep understanding of the relationship between a site's marketing strategy and its audience is definitely required as well as politics of interpretation. The management of these sites needs a certain sensibility in the ways they represent others' past of suffering and death. Eventually, site owners' tasks concern also keeping the integrity of the site and establishing a good relationship with the local community (Sharpley, 2009).

Referring to management's interpretation of the tourist site, its approach has been revolutionised by Freeman Tilden. Before that, interpretations were never referred to the possible relationships between the visitors and the site itself. Tilden suggested a new kind of tourist interpretation, which aims to create this kind of connection. The only useful interpretation, according to Tilden, was an interpretation that allowed the tourist to grasp a better comprehension not only of the site but also of his own social world, enhancing his understanding of the present

(Tilden, 1977). Nowadays, interpretations provided by museums are not only professionalised but also deeply influenced by new technologies, allowing tourists to listen to speaking holograms and attend 3D experiences thanks to augmented reality. A massive use of interpretation has generated some issues within the management of the sites: its massive use could be at the service of ideology-driven storylines and, consequently, narrations provided could be inauthentic and not accurate. The issue of inauthenticity is also highlighted by researches conducted in Fort Siloso, in Singapore, claiming that dark tourism strategies usually privileges visual and experiential forms of spectacle rather than historical rigour (Muzaini et al., 2007). On the other hand, to make an proper use of interpretation is necessary not only to guarantee the dignity of who is represented but also to fulfill tourists' emotional demand (Howard, 2003).

The issue of interpretation comes together with concerns about commodification of dark tourism sites. The right extent of commodification which should be allowed has been largely questioned. Commodification has three problematic issues: whether entrance fees are fair or not to get access to places considered sacred, who should benefit from these incomes and, lastly, whether commercialization can negatively affect the integrity of the site. However, these issues may appear less problematic if considered that the incomes provided may be used to employ local inhabitants and foster a good maintenance of the site (Seaton, 2009).

More importantly, the most challenging task is to mediate among all possible stakeholders revolving around the site: represented groups, local communities, visitors and media (Seaton, 2009). The "heritage force field" model focuses specifically on possible conflicts among different stakeholders. These relationships may reflect the different level of power owned by diverse groups, even if the level of power itself may change over the years. In this sense, management's task is being aware of the different stakeholders' claims and conciliating their interests (Seaton, 2009).

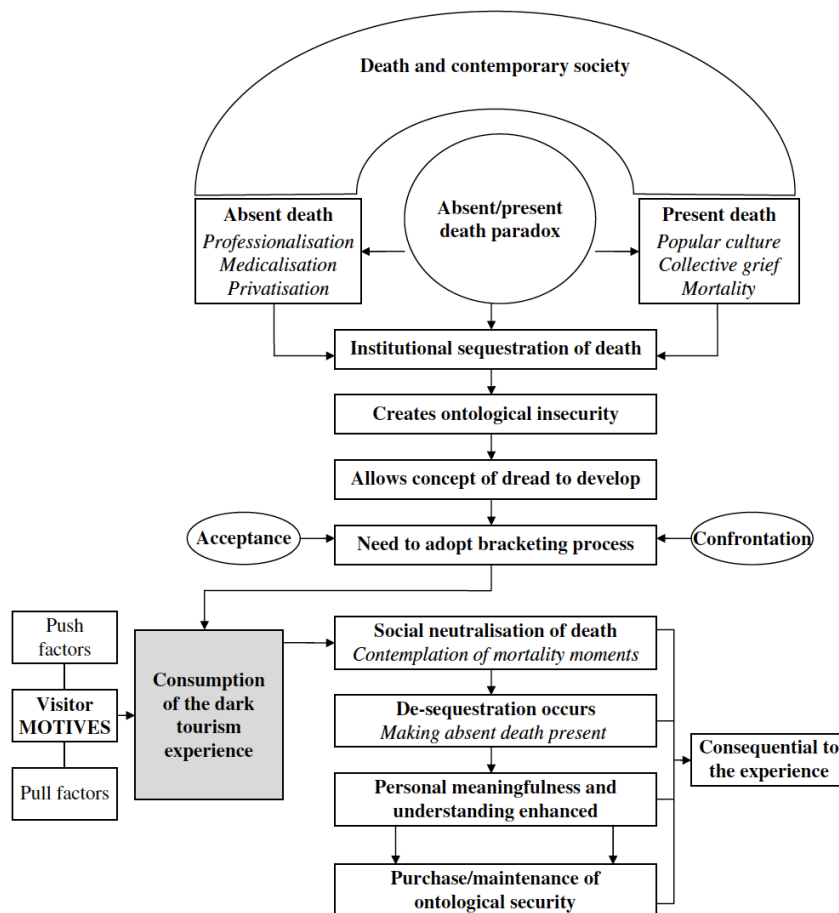
2.4 Experiencing Death

Dark tourism provides more and more people with the opportunity of getting in contact with death and caducity of existence (Lee, 2002). In this sense, dark tourism has been considered a new social institution (Seaton, 2009) and even compared with religion in its aim to fulfill human needs (Walter, 2007). The experience of facing death is extremely important in Western contemporary societies, where death has disappeared from the public space (Ariès, 1974). Medicalisation is the process through which death has been closed into a private world of medics and professionals in order to be experienced hygienically and noiselessly (Elias, 1985).

Even if death is disappeared from public gaze and everyday life, people are paradoxically more uncertain and unprepared when it is time to deal with their own demise (Shilling, 1993; Willmott, 2000). The experience and practice of dark tourism could be an answer to the so-called paradox of absent-present death (Seaton, 2009).

Although death is considered absent within contemporary society, it is now more present than ever in popular culture and new media. Gorer noticed this trend already in the 50's, making use of the expression "pornography of death" (Gorer, 1955).

Death is nowadays almost obsessively present in television (Walter, 1994; Merrin, 1999; McIlwain, 2005), cinema (Mortimer, 2001) and even in black humour jokes (Thorson, 1993; Sayre, 2001). The fundamental difference with a real experience of death is that all the aforementioned are indirect experiences. It is an intellectualized and abstracted death, we see it but we do not touch it (Tercier, 2005).



Picture 3: Dark Tourism Consumption within a thanatological framework (Stone and Sharpley, 2008)

Durkin (2003) gave two explanations of this apparent paradox (Picture 3): firstly, the morbid curiosity rises in response to the taboo, this forbidden experience. Secondly, experiencing death in a comfort zone environment can help people to exorcise and tame it. In this sense, dark tourism experience is a commodified confrontation with death but it is still physically connected with events of suffering.

Accordingly, Sharpley suggested that dark tourism could be a proper social institution with the specific aims of neutralizing dread and fear of demise by providing people experiences called “mortality moments”, instants of pure reflection and meditation upon one’s own fragility (Sharpley, 2009). The contemplation of bones themselves stimulates meditation and contemplation. In this sense, the will of experiencing dark tourism as a need for a thrilling experience out of one’s ordinary, enjoyed within the safety of a tourist framework is strictly related to Sharpley’s argumentation (Tarlow, 2005).

The so-called Bones Collective, a network of scholars constituted at the University of Edinburgh, tackled the effective relationship between people and materiality of bones by exploring which emotions, meanings and responses human remains provoke during tourist experience. “The substance of bones: the emotive materiality and effective presence of human remains” (Krompotich, Fontein, Harries; 2010), is precious because of its insight about how bones and corpses are constantly negotiated and constituted within the relationship with the other. More importantly, the concept of agency is here applied to bones and human remains: from “what do people do with bones? to what do bones do with people?” (Krompotich, Fontein, Harries; 2010, p. 373)

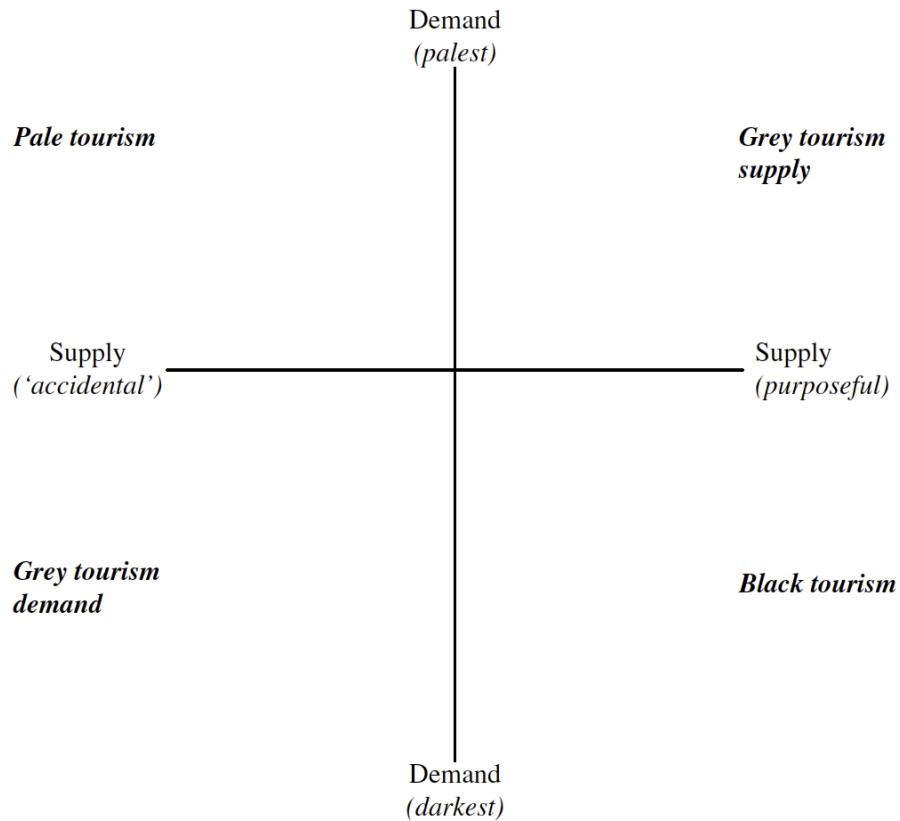
Issues connected with the physical dimension of dark tourism are largely unaddressed (Edensor, 2001). Most of the classifications for tourists’ motivations are intellectual, without taking into account the bodily and sensitive experience (Edensor, 2001; Baerenholdt, 2004; Crouch, 2005). These physical stimuli were not taken into account until a phenomenological turn in tourism studies: according to this new paradigm tourists are people who experience the site also at an immediately bodily and sensuous level (Crouch and Lubben, 2003). Tourists seek to experience personally certain qualities, to feel the atmosphere, to look for an intimate experience (Trauer, 2006). Therefore, this approach focuses on how tourist experience relies on feeling and to which extent these feelings influence tourists’ experiences.

Furthermore, cemeteries are complex attractions, which provide visitors with a number of different stimuli. Cemeteries are usually located in outer areas of the town: accordingly, in the context of urban tourism, cemeteries can represent a break from the congested and noisy city. Cemeteries’ natural environments give pleasure to the eyes, more and more often cultural activities such as concerts take place in this sites, fulfilling the entertainment requirement (Pècsek, 2015).

Additionally, famous people's burial sites give visitors knowledge and information, feeding both escapist and educational needs (Pine and Gilmore, 2012).

Supply-centered approaches to the study of dark tourism have stressed the number of issues site managements deal with and the impact of their strategies on tourist demand. Stone's model outlines a possible spectrum for dark tourism supply, on the basis of higher or lower political and ideological influence, direct or indirect connection with the death, orientation, authenticity, time-scale from the event, purposefulness and tourism infrastructures. Accordingly, seven dark suppliers are identified within this model, from the lighter to the darkest: "dark fun factories, dark exhibitions, dark dungeons, dark resting places, dark shrines, dark conflict sites and dark camps of genocide" (Stone, 2006, p. 170).

Referring to this model and including information about both demand and supply, Sharpley outlined a Cartesian scheme crossing demand categories (on the vertical axis) and sites' supply (on the horizontal axis) in order to identify four categories of dark tourism: pale tourism (featuring tourists with a minimum direct interest in death, visiting sites became tourist attractions accidentally), grey tourism demand (featuring tourists with a certain interest in death, visiting unintended dark sites), grey tourism supply (featuring tourists whose main interest is not death, visiting sites purposefully established as dark attractions) and, lastly, black tourism (featuring tourists with a dominant interest in death, satisfied by a supply fulfilling this desire purposefully) (Sharpley, 2009) (Picture 4).



Picture 4: Sharpley's matrix (Sharpley, 2009)

Finally, although their great power of providing convincing interpretations and meanings to the visitors, guided tours have not received the academic attention they deserve (Schmidt, 1989). Guided tours are “multi-faceted, situationally designed and continuously developed in order to meet needs from new audiences around the world” (Zillinger et al., 2012, p.1). Since the deep influence guided tours can have on experiences perceived by tourists, they have become subject of academic study (Salazar, 2005; Tucker, 2007). In particular, storytelling techniques plays an important role in the contemporary framework about new kinds of guided tours.

The tourist guide is both a performer and a tour leader; he is required to demonstrate abilities connected with the role of actor and storyteller (Overend, 2012). Although the guides have a great power on tourists, they are expected to engage a broad range of visitors, he is a tour design, the experience the tourists have is filtered through the words, eyes and gestures of their guide (Mossberg, 2006).

In particular, stories and legends told during the visit to the Fontanelle Cemetery are framed in the storytelling paradigm. Storytelling is described as a “sharing of knowledge and experiences through narrative and anecdotes in order to communicate lessons, complex ideas, concepts, and causal connections” (Sole and Wilson, 1999, p. 6). Stories told during the visit deeply shape

tourists' memories and experiences. As will be described more in-depth in the section about Results, the encounter with the raw materiality of human remains is made easier to face thanks to the constant reference to traditional stories. Tales, legends and stories about the individual skulls, described as characters of stories, contributed to the process of humanizing death.

2.5 The Fontanelle Cemetery

Eventually, concerning the literature available about the Fontanelle cemetery, there is a complete lack of academic scholarship about the rising flux of tourists interested in this specific site. All the literature on the Fontanelle cemetery, from Ciambelli (1980) to Niola (2003), is focused only on the cult which used to take place in this cave, without considering the site from the tourist point of view.

The book *Il Cimitero delle Fontanelle. Una storia napoletana (The Cemetery of Fontanelle. A Neapolitan history, 2012)* by Rocco Civitelli is fundamental to get a deeper insight into the religious background and motivations behind the construction of the ossuary but also on its tourist appeal. Civitelli is the first to conduct an archival research about the history of Fontanelle but the interest in this text is not only historical. He is the first to question the reasons why tourists are attracted to this site and to go beyond the folkloric interpretation of the site, taking into consideration its "dark" attractiveness. Unfortunately, Civitelli's statements are still hypothesis and no specific work has been conducted in this sense. There is neither a clear reference to academic research about dark tourism nor a deeper insight into issues connected with the management of the site.

3. Method

In order to answer the research question, 29 interviews have been conducted with 18 tourists who attended a guided tour to the Fontanelle Cemetery and 9 autonomous visitors of this site. Subsequently, interviews have been transcribed and analyzed, in order to understand tourists' motivations, their experiences and their final evaluations. Interviews have been adopted as data gathering method because of two necessities connected with the research question: a participant role of the researcher in the data collection and a flexibility method of data gathering.

First of all, answering the research question requires not only an in-depth analysis but also an in-depth method of data collection. Collecting data already provided by tourists (through a content analysis of tourist online comments, for example) or providing tourists with categories suggested by the researcher (through a survey) would not permit any flexibility in the data collection phase and, consequently, it there would be no flexibility to move through tourists' mental process of answering (Bryman, 2012). Both evaluations and experiences may cloud the memory of original motivations (Reijnders, 2015), so the researcher's participation into the data collection process is fundamental in order to stress possible discrepancies, similarities and lack of information through follow-up questions (Bryman, 2012).

Accordingly, the involvement of the researcher could threaten his neutrality and consequently his reliability. However, in this sense, the aim of not driving tourists' answers and the approach of researching how this site is perceived rather than defining it dark in advance guarantees the required neutrality (Ryan and Kohli, 2006).

3.1 Data Gathering

The physical context of the research was the Fontanelle Cemetery. Consequently, all the tourists interviewed had visited that specific site. The respondents were selected on the basis of a double layer selection: first of all, between who joined a guided tour and who did not (here called Autonomous tourists). Secondly, regarding tourists who followed a guided tour, they were additionally divided into who joined the tour offered by Insolita Guida and who joined the tour offered by IRIS Fontanelle. There are no official tours of the site, so different associations provide their tours. The two associations were selected since they adopt a significantly different approach. The first, more focused on legends and Neapolitan traditions, the second more concentrated on historical research and connection with religion. After asking local tourist guides for permission, their visit has been joined and then tourists have been asked for their telephone numbers in order to

be interviewed within the following days. Since the exploratory approach of the research, no gender issue has been considered in the selection of respondents. The overview of the respondents (Appendix 1) shows that they are equally divided into Autonomous tourists, tourists who joined the tour offered by Insolita Guida and tourists who joined the tour offered by IRIS Fontanelle.

Since tourists are generally really busy after the visit and, on the other hand, they are often likely to arrive in late at the appointment with the guides, interviews outside the Cemetery have been avoided. Instead, they have been conducted by phone within one week of distance from their visit to the Cemetery of Fontanelle. Although telephone interviews have not been massively used within qualitative research, this method of data collection has its benefits (Bryman, 2012).

First of all, when considering a large group of people attending a guided tour through a tourist site such as the Cemetery of Fontanelle, interviewing all of them after the tour is not possible since it would require a great amount of time tourists are not generally likely to spend after their visit. Instead, by collecting their telephone numbers and conducting follow-up interviews it will be possible to interview all of them within the following days. Then, asking sensitive questions by telephone may be more effective, since interviewees may be less distressed and more confident without the physical presence of the interviewer (Bryman, 2012). Academic research has demonstrated that there are few differences in terms of responses given during telephone interviews and face-to-face interviews (Sturges and Hanrahan, 2004). On the contrary, during face-to-face interviews the interviewees may be more likely to give vocalized responses and not to finish fully their answers, which are generally less grammatically correct in face-to-face interviews (Irvine et al., 2010). Possible issues with telephone interview may be the possibility of involving people with a limited access to the phone, the impossibility of observing body language and their less effectiveness with long interviews (Bryman, 2012). To record telephone interviews there is need of special equipment and necessity of a good line. Then, for the recording, I have made use of a digital recorder and a professional microphone to be used on the speakerphone.

The questions that have been posed to the interviewees are based on an interview guide (Appendix 3) and although the flexible structure of the interviews, a general pattern of questions has been used for all the interviews. Additionally, this form of interview features an open-ended and discursive approach, allowing an interactive process of refinement (Lupton, 1996). Moreover, in line with Leidner (1993), the focus was on how the interviewees interpret and frame the specific experience, what they see as important within the interaction with the site.

Interview topics are divided in three main areas, reflecting the inner division of the research question: motivations (Why did they choose this site? How did they find information about the Cemetery of Fontanelle? Have they ever been to cemeteries and ossuaries before for leisure? What

did they expect?), experience on the site (What sensations did they receive from the physical space of the cave which encompasses the ossuary, its overall atmosphere? How was their reaction to the huge amount of human remains? Did they get impressed by any specific area within the Cemetery of Fontanelle?) and eventually post-visit evaluations (How did they broadly evaluate the experience? Did they find it macabre? Did they grasp any stimulus for post-visit reflections? Are they satisfied at the light of their initial expectations? How is the maintenance of the site?).

In particular, motivations have been addressed considering that they are not always connected to any dark reason (Ryan and Kohli, 2006) or dark interest (Pécsek, 2015), in order to receive answers not filtered by researcher's expectations (Reader, 2003). In this section it is also important to refer to tourists' previous experiences in supposed-dark sites and how they received information about the Fontanelle Cemetery to take into account specific interest towards this kind of sites (Dann, 1998) and the influence of media on tourists' choices (Bloom, 2000). Questions addressing people's experience in the Fontanelle Cemetery aim to collect information about their emotional experience, especially in the encounter with the human remains (Krompotich, Fontein, Harries; 2010) and eventually their post-visit evaluation is taken into consideration collecting their final feedback about the management of the site, any cause of reflection generated by the tour and a comparison with their previous expectations (Seaton, 2009).

3.2 Data Analysis

The interviews have been personally transcribed without the help of any computer software, according to Rebecca Barnes's approach (2004), in order to start since the first transcripts to get closer to the data collected, to identify the key themes and to become aware of patterns similarities and differences among the different interviewees. After coding, the analysis has searched out underlying themes within the transcriptions, adopting ethnographic content analysis (ECA) and thematic analysis.

The coding has focused on the macro-categories of motivation, experience and evaluation, in accordance with the structure of research question. Then, while coding, other sub-categories have been identified: information before the visit, expectations, other dark tourism sites visited, atmosphere and feelings about the place, the effect of bones points of interest, tourists and management. These sub-categories have been shaped by the questionnaire itself and then they have been analyzed as sub-themes (Appendix 2).

ECA's aim is to be systematic and analytic but not rigid, categories and variables initially guide the study, but others are allowed and expected to emerge during the process (Altheide, 2004).

Framework, an approach developed at the National Centre for Social Research in the UK, assists thematic analysis by providing an index of key themes and subthemes, then represented in a matrix resembling a SPSS spreadsheet with reference to different cases and variables (Ritchie et al., 2003).

The aim is to identify themes and subthemes in the text, recurring motifs within the data collected, which will be analysed in search of information about tourists' motivations to visit this site, their experiences there (also referred to their use of the interactive signage introduced by the municipality, the maintenance itself of the site) and their final evaluation of the experience. In this sense, their final evaluations have been compared with original motivations in order to understand if tourists' expectations have been satisfied or there are specific kinds of discrepancies.

3.3 Ethics

The research has been conducted in accordance with the Framework for Research Ethics (FRE), produced in 2010 in order to outline the Economic and Social Research Council's guidelines in terms of ethical practices of research. First of all the research has been accurately designed to answer the research question, otherwise it would have been unethical regardless of its contents (Bryman, 2012). Secondly, for what concerns the relationship with the interviewees, the interviews have been conducted without harming any of the participants, always asking for informed consent, avoiding any invasion of privacy and any form of deception (Boeije, 2010).

The involvement in the research has been totally voluntary, the confidentiality of the information and the anonymity of the participants have been respected. All the participants have been provided with a consent request for participating in research, assuring that they would only be addressed by their first name in the thesis. They were always free not to answer in case any question in conflict with their sensibility, there was no risk associated with participating in the research and all the material collected will be only used for academic work.

4. Results

4.1 Guided Tours

The interviews have been conducted both with tourists who attended guided tours and autonomous tourists. In order to grasp a better understanding of experience and evaluations of tourists involved in guided tours, even the two tourist guides have been interviewed and their tours analyzed. The space tourists move through has not a fixed meaning, its significances oscillate among four directions: it exists in people's imagination as well as in their physical experience, its meaning is socially established and obtained through other people's influence. Eventually, its meaning is temporary, it depends on the attributes that are given to it (Seaton, 2009).

In this sense, guided tours are sources of interpretations, they add meanings to the places visited. The way tourists experience a site may be deeply influenced by people they are with, information provided by the management and, in this sense, also the guided tour they are attending (Blyablina, 2015). Analyzing tourists' answers without taking into consideration the conditions within which their experiences have been attended would not guarantee a deep content analysis. The two different tours taken into consideration were conducted by two associations: Insolita Guida and IRIS Fontanelle.

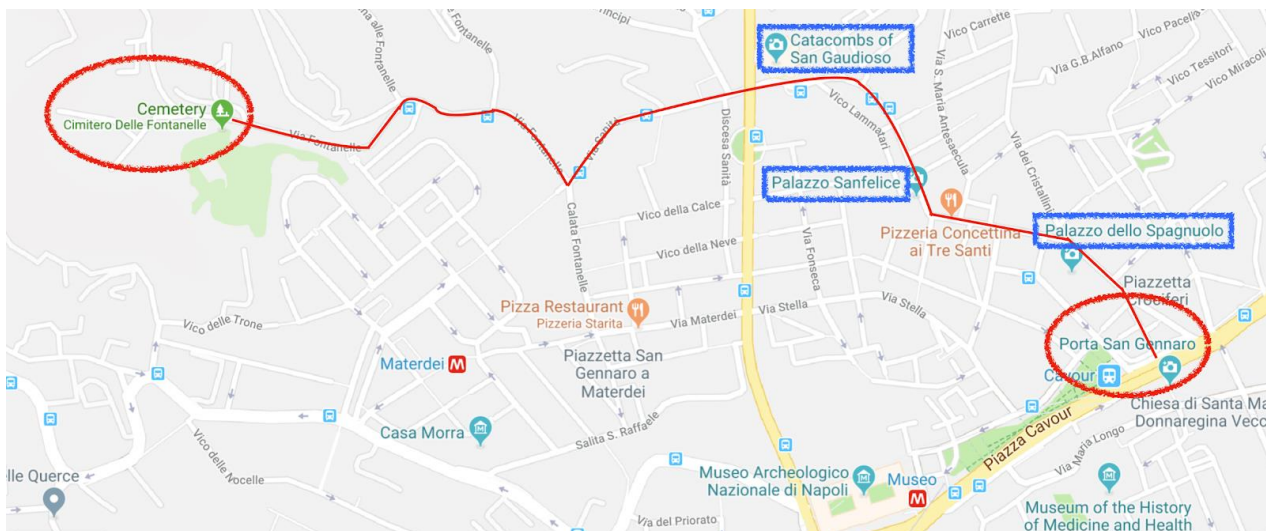
Insolita Guida

The tour offered by Insolita Guida does not start in front of the Fontanelle Cemetery. It is intended to be a Sunday promenade from Saint Januarius gate (which delimits the border of the old town) up to the site of Fontanelle, passing through Sanità, the district just a few kilometers far from the center. The tour has three middle stops, plus the starting point (Saint Januarius gate) and the final destination (Fontanelle Cemetery). Interestingly, since the Fontanelle Cemetery is not easy to reach from the city center, especially for tourists who do not know the city very well, this format, the promenade, is also suggested by one interviewee:

“The Cemetery is not really close to the center. The royal palace, the San Carlo theatre and Piazza del Plebiscito are close to each other, they are easier to visit. The Cemetery should be included into a tour, together with other attractions”

- Dario, 27, doctor, Caserta, IRIS Fontanelle

The middle stops include Palazzo dello Spagnuolo, Palazzo San Felice and the church of Santa Maria alla Sanità (Picture 5). While the church of Santa Maria is visited because of its historical importance and even its connection with the cult of Purgatory, the first two buildings (Spagnuolo and San Felice) are two aristocratic palaces in the middle of Sanità, famous for their appearance in well-known Neapolitan TV series.



Picture 5: Tour offered by Insolita Guida

“Someone join the tour because TV series and movies featuring these buildings made him curious, such as I Bastardi di Pizzofalcone, there we have the Palazzo dello Spagnuolo, or even Gomorra. A great part of the new episodes are set in Sanità”

- Lina, 30, tour leader, Naples

The mission of Insolita Guida is making tourists (or even Neapolitans) experience the city from a different perspective. The tour explores a different face of the city, a face that does not find its place within the daily narration of the media or the mainstream tourism industry. That is the reason why the tour brings tourists throughout Sanità, an unfortunately infamous district, making them discover its cultural treasures and monuments, “to make people know Naples outside the standard tourist box, those districts unknown even to Neapolitans” (Lina, 30, tour leader, Naples).

According to the guide, the massive use of stories, tales and legends coming from oral folk tradition makes the tour and the visit to the Cemetery more enjoyable. Actually, these kinds of stories are highly appreciated by tourists. For this reason, during the visit great importance is given to the legends of the captain, Mother Concetta, San Vincenzo’s statue.

On the one hand, giving large space to tales and folk stories is a way to make the visit lighter and more enjoyable but, on the other hand, the guide strongly believes that this kind of traditional stories are one of the most interesting and typical features of the whole city. These tales make the human remains closer to living people, the humanization of the skulls passes through the gossip, their life stories:

“Principally, we pay great attention to traditional stories, anecdote because people are curious about all those skulls, but then when they hear how many stories lie behind the remains they realize how much life there is in that place. The anecdotes give the idea of how Neapolitans really are. Tourists want anecdotes. They make the walk more enjoyable. They want some gossip, some tales, you know”

- Lina, 30, tour leader, Naples

Oral tradition is in constant change and, consequently, also the tour follows its changes:

“Our tour has an open structure. I mean it is not definitive, it has been changing a lot since we started. We speak with people living in this area in order to grasp new stories, unknown legends. Consequently, we add them to the tour”

- Lina, 30, tour leader, Naples

Insolita Guida considers oral tradition the most natural way to show foreigners the Neapolitan spirit. Furthermore, the least tourist areas of the city are believed to keep untouched the true Neapolitan tradition, passed from father to son:

“In these areas, such Sanità, Borgo Vergini, Santa Lucia, you find the true Neapolitans, people who received the true traditions. This does not happen in other parts of the city”

- Lina, 30, tour leader, Naples

In the relationship with the tourists, Insolita Guida wants to make them feel what being Neapolitan means. This is a way to make them feel comfortable, and it is considered the special feature of their tour:

“We cuddle the customer, we offer everyone a coffee before starting, we greet them smiling, we do not treat them as foreigners. We tell them some jokes to break the ice, you know, it is the Neapolitan way”

- Lina, 30, tour leader, Naples

IRIS Fontanelle

IRIS Fontanelle has a totally different approach: to begin with, the association defines itself as an association of historical research. The main source of information the guides look for and so, consequently, they provide the tourists with, are documents and historical archives. In fact, according to their guide, the approach is extremely focused on historical information against false beliefs, connections between the church and the cemetery, the struggle against the mismanagement of the municipality. In this sense, the struggle perceived by IRIS Fontanelle is also against spectacular tour with no reference to historical rigour (Muzaini et al. 2007).

Relying on several publications made by its members, the association:

“Tends to adopt an approach more historical and based on documents. We give less importance to legends and folk stories. Basically, we try to communicate the religious features behind the construction of the site”

- Emanuele, 24, student, Naples

This point is central in the organization of the tour, which takes place only in the Fontanelle Cemetery. First of all, the site is described as a “tuff cathedral” (Emanuele, 24, student, Naples), in contrast with the “Sybil’s cave” (how the Cemetery is addressed by Lina). This semantic difference is quite representative of the opposite tendencies of the two associations. The Sybil is a mythological and legendary character, appropriate to the folkloric approach of *Insolita Guida*. On the contrary, the image of a tuff cathedral is perfectly suitable to the focus on history and religion of IRIS Fontanelle. However, even guides from IRIS Fontanelle understand the precious role of stories and legends during the visit, they do not avoid them completely:

“Of course we also refer to the captain and mother Concetta, but they are examples of something else. They reflect the capacity of Neapolitans to transform stories. For example,

the legend of the captain is the Neapolitan version of Mozart's Don Giovanni. Mother Concetta's sweating is connected with the biblical story of Jonah"

- Emanuele, 24, student, Naples

In fact, the association comes from the former parish association, and also the way of making tourists experience the space in the Cemetery is affected by the religious meaning behind it. The tour starts with a brief introduction at the entrance, where the environment of Fontanelle Cemetery is described as a religious path.

First of all, there is a small and old church (the original church built before the new parish was established in the 20th century), representing the Nativity of Jesus Christ. Then the tour's next stops are the area with three crosses (representing the Calvary, namely Jesus's death), the Tribunal (representing God's judgment) and, finally, the Ossoteca (a structure built with bones, disposed in order to shape the entrance of a small temple, it represents the possibility of deliverance through Christian cults of redemption).

The third element of IRIS Fontanelle's tour is the struggle against the management of the site. During the tour, the guide constantly stresses the mismanagement of the site, highlighting the footprints in the area containing the bones, tickets and cigarettes left around the remains, the coins on the skulls:

"We also want to stress how disappointing is the management of municipality. The site is not respected. It is both a holy place and a piece of cultural heritage. It is not respected properly"

- Emanuele, 24, student, Naples

Interestingly, when tackling the issue of coins and various materials left around the human remains, the guide from Insolita Guida was less strict, probably considering the fact that during her tour she herself mentioned the coins as part of a ritual:

"Sure, someone puts coins on the skulls, but it is just because of the legend of Charon. He puts in connection the world of the living and the world of the dead"

- Lina, 30, tour leader, Naples

The two guides agree with the idea that tourists are attracted by the Fontanelle Cemetery because of curiosity for the human remains displayed and the cult of Purgatory. Furthermore, both guides have

sometimes spotted visitors touching skulls and bones or leaving coins on the skulls. According to the guide from IRIS Fontanelle, this is possible on the one hand because of the lack of control and, on the other, because of the particular atmosphere tourists find. They reported to the guides no sense of morbidity or macabre: the environment of Fontanelle is described to them as relaxing, peaceful and calm.

4.2 Tourists

4.2.1 Motivations

A significant number of native respondents show that an important motivation to visit the Fontanelle Cemetery is the will of discovering their own city. In their eyes, Naples has a great cultural heritage for both foreign visitors and its citizens. The interviews show that native visitors consider a shame that tourists from other Italian regions, or even from abroad, come and visit the Fontanelle Cemetery while they themselves have never seen it. Although Luigi and Fulvio live in Naples it was the first time they visited the Fontanelle Cemetery. In this sense, the idea of citizen they have in mind is fully participatory to the cultural heritage of his hometown. Alessandra lives exactly in the area around the Fontanelle Cemetery and she almost feels “sorry for not visiting it before”. According to these interviewees being a good citizen requires being a good tourist of one’s own city: tourists’ answers highlight that visiting, exploring and discovering unknown local areas is a moral task for Neapolitans nowadays. Dario specifically mentioned the need of being a tourist of his own city, probably in reference to the *Sii Turista della Tua Città* movement (literally “Be a tourist of your own city), started from the association with the same name in order to spread acknowledge about Neapolitan heritage.

Several interviewees referred to the Sunday practice of visiting local attractions they never attended as a pleasing way to spend their holiday. This time, it was the turn of the Fontanelle Cemetery. Antonella usually brings her children to visit new sites or any interesting event in town, exploring Neapolitan cultural heritage for them is also a way of enjoying a weekend together. In this sense, the visit to a place associated with death can be exactly framed into positive desires outlined by Reader (2005). In this sense, Corrado claims that:

“We try to visit every Sunday something new in Naples, since there is so much to visit. People usually associate tourism with something outside their city, but here there is so much to see as well”

- Corrado, 46, dentist, Naples, Autonomous tourist

Interest in cultural heritage is a motivation highlighted by Pécsek (2015) in the analysis of tourists' experiences at the monumental cemetery of Budapest. These respondents do not perceive visiting a cemetery as a dark or macabre experience. On the contrary, they are attracted by interest in cultural values embedded (Pécsek, 2015) and the site's relationship with the story of the city (Tarlow, 2005).

Going deeper into specific reasons and motivations interviewees were brought by, one theme quite common among the interviewees is the fascination with mysteries and esoterism. The Fontanelle Cemetery has attracted some of the interviewees because of “its aura of mystery” (Mario, 53, doctor, Foggia, *Insolita Guida*), “esoteric stuff, rituals” (Maria, 36, employee, Caserta, *Insolita Guida*), its appearance of “incredibly mysterious place” (Alessandro, 35, employee, Naples, IRIS Fontanelle). This sense of mystery is vaguely defined and it is not possible to be interpreted as a fascination with dark features but it still plays an important role in many respondents' answers.

Additionally, tourists' responses show that another important motivation the possibility of viewing an incredible amount of skulls and bones, “The presence of all those bones I saw in pictures” (Tania, 45, dentist, Salerno, Autonomous tourist), “visiting an ossuary with bones around” (Silvana, 64, teacher, Naples, Autonomous tourist), “all those bones disposed everywhere” (Raffaella, 85, retired, Benevento, Autonomous tourist). Mauro was the only tourist who explicitly referred to the Neapolitan fascination with death as the main reason why he decided to visit the site. More than the sense of mystery, this desire of seeing human remains may be more easily associated with a certain morbid curiosity that attracted the respondents to this site (Dunkley, 2006). These tourists were seeking for concrete symbols of death (Seaton, 2009) because of a morbid attraction or simply a bizarre experience (Price, 2005).

The interviews show that key features in motivations to visit the Fontanelle Cemetery were “voices around the cult of Purgatory” (Raffaele, 30, chef, Naples, *Insolita Guida*) and the legends associated with individual and well-known skulls. Carmela and Tania were looking forward to visiting the places connected to many legends she had heard, all of them connected with ancient Neapolitan traditions, while Nina was specifically interested in one single legend, “the story around the captain's skull” (Nina, 72, housewife, Naples, Autonomous tourist). At this point, the morbid interest in the human remains displayed in the site is connected with the fascination with tales and

legends (Henning, 2002). The captain's skull is attractive not simply because it is a human remain but because of the story behind it, a story that the respondents have heard and now want to experience directly. Moreover, in reference to the unknown remains and the cult towards them, respondents' answers show also empathy for people buried there (Ashworth and Hartmann, 2005).

Interestingly, one respondent admitted that he visited the Cemetery in order "to get some anxiety" (Maria, 36, employee, Caserta, Insolita Guida). This specific motivation is framed by Tarlow (2005) within the need for thrilling experiences out of the ordinary. What Antonio is describing is the desire of experiencing fear in the condition of safety provided by the tourist framework, something similar to enjoying horror movies (Gorer, 1965).

Chiara, Maura, Lucrezia and Giusy are four respondents who visited the Fontanelle Cemetery following the tour offered by Insolita Guida. They mentioned the way the tour was conducted by the association as an important motivation to go. In particular, "the idea of having a long walk through a Neapolitan district, especially an underestimated such as Sanità" (Lucrezia, 42, housewife, Pescara, Insolita Guida) is a strong point of interest to such an extent that one respondent "chose it because of this particular itinerary" (Maura, 43, receptionist, Sydney, IRIS Fontanelle). One respondent decided to attend this tour because of suggestions of their friends, "they mentioned this tours, their guide was very fun and easy-going, they strongly suggested it" (Mario, 53, doctor, Foggia, Insolita Guida). Hence, for these respondents, the word of mouth still plays a great role in choosing the itinerary and their positive desires of visiting the site (Reader, 2005) are also connected with the specific tour, even the specific guide.

Information before the visit

Information tourists get before joining a tour or visiting a place may deeply influence expectations, experience and evaluations of the place itself (Cohen, 2014). Consequently, sources of information are important elements of analysis, with special reference to media exposition (Bloom, 2000), and information before the visit may influence both tourists' motivations and their experience. When asked about their motivations, most tourists did not refer spontaneously to how they knew about the site: they are important information that needs to be grasped in order to identify possible influences on the visit (Coehn, 2014). Interestingly, in accordance with Péček's findings (2015), almost no one of the interviewee reported of getting well informed before going to the Fontanelle Cemetery.

The principal ways through which the interviewees grasped some information about the place are two: Internet and word of mouth. Predictably, tourists joining guided tours reported of

getting informed on the website of the association, looking for how the tour was structured and why there was so much interest around that place.

Many interviewees received information about the place via Facebook and YouTube. Facebook was the way through which these tourists found out the different tours, a significant number of respondents saw the guided tour at the Fontanelle Cemetery on Facebook for the first time and decided to book, while one respondent “learned something about the restoration of the site on YouTube” (Maddalena, 41, teacher, Naples, Insolita Guida). Paolo mentioned media as the main source of information and interest about the site of Fontanelle Cemetery, he saw “something about it on television, on the Internet and in some magazines” (Paolo, 46, insurance agent, Rome, Autonomous tourist).

Interestingly, although the Internet and social media have brought what Gorer (1965) claimed about the pornography of death to a higher level of influence (Seaton, 2009) the word of mouth is still the main source of knowledge about the site for many respondents. A significant number of them report to pay great attention to what their friends tell them about any new tour, site or attraction around the city: they knew about the existence of the site thanks to the word of mouth.

For example, a significant number of respondents were told about the site by his friends, who described it as one of the most interesting places in Naples, and they “have always been hearing about it” (Alessandro, 35, employee, Naples, IRIS Fontanelle) thanks to some friends. From this point of view, there is no sensible difference between tourists who followed the tour offered by Insolita Guida and IRIS Fontanelle. Autonomous visitors grasped no information about the site before going there, but tourists which attended guided tours had already some information about what to find in Fontanelle Cemetery.

The information the interviewees grasped from the Internet are basically about ghost stories, legends and myths around the Fontanelle Cemetery more than on the history of the place. Mario was attracted by information about “some legends, the sweating skull and the coins people used to put on the edge of a chosen skull in order to alleviate its sufferance” (Mario, 53, doctor, Foggia, Insolita Guida). Similarly, other respondents were curious about rumors around the cult and he decided to visit the site immediately. According to the interviews, the Internet provided respondents with a great number of dark stories, legends and tales about the human remains displayed in the site. In this sense, reading this information have deeply affected respondents’ expectations and, consequently, may have had a significant role during their experience (Cohen, 2014).

Expectations

As for the information received before going on the spot, expectations that tourists have towards the site may have a deep influence not only about their motivations to go but also on their evaluations and experiences (Cohen, 2014). When referring to their original motivations, tourists can be slightly influenced by the experience itself. It may be not so easy for a tourist to distinguish between experience and expectation after the visit. One could accidentally *adjust* his previous expectation to fit the experience attended (Reijnders, 2015). Consequently, questions addressing directly the decision-making phase may counterbalance this possibility of self-deception (Bryman, 2012).

Since tourists following a guided tour received information about the site on the associations' websites or on the Facebook event, some of them reported experiencing almost exactly what they expected before visiting the place. Expectations are also built upon information obtained, so these two analyses are inevitably interconnected. For example, many respondents' expectations were deeply built on the information grasped on the associations' websites.

The majority of tourists interviewed admitted that their expectations were lower if compared with what they found. Some of them only expected “expect a simple, even small, ossuary” (Paolo, 46, insurant agent, Rome, Autonomous tourist), a smaller place, an underground tunnel or a normal catacomb, “expectations about the site were definitely lower” (Raffaele, 30, chef, Naples, Insolita Guida). According to their reports, the environment they expected was more similar to a catacomb, the surprising experience described by a great number of respondents may be explained also in reference to this different expectation. A significant number of respondents mentioned that what they found did not fit the image of the cemetery they imagined. Carmela did not find the atmosphere “you breath in cemeteries” (Carmela, 35, doctor, Rome, IRIS Fontanelle) and Tiziana, similarly, expected to find “more graves and headstones” (Tiziana, 47, teacher, Naples, Autonomous). In this case, the site's name has misled these two respondents but, at the same time, shaped their expectations.

The analysis of the interviews show that the respondents who joined a guided tour had also a clearer idea of what to find at the site, especially features related to popular culture, esoteric believes but also a religious atmosphere. After looking at some photographs of the site, Maura and Maddalena expected to find a “mystic and religious place, also because of the stories belonging to popular belief” (Maddalena, 41, teacher, Naples, Insolita Guida), an esoteric atmosphere, created by the presence of the skulls. This double face of the Fontanelle Cemetery particularly fascinated Salvatore, “a site halfway between a tourist attraction and a holy, religious place” (Salvatore, 28,

computer technician, Naples, IRIS Fontanelle). In this sense, these respondents are attracted by the idea of experiencing an unusual and bizarre destination (Price, 2005).

Similar sites visited

In order to understand if any dark feature played an important role in tourists' motivations, it has been interesting to analyze their answers when asked about similar places visited in the past. This kind of question makes room for people's spontaneous connections among sites they perceive as similar, instead of considering them similar and dark from the beginning (Ryan and Kohli, 2006). Understanding tourists' motivations and their relationship with dark features allows locating their interest in the continuum outlined by Seaton (2009). In this sense, interviewees' answers provided an interesting feedback.

First of all, similar places addressed by the interviewees are divided into three different categories: catacombs, cemeteries and Nazi concentration camps. Starting with the first genre, some respondents reported their visits to the Capuchins catacombs, either in Rome or in Sicily, while some others visited the ossuary and the catacombs in Paris and also Neapolitan catacombs of Saint Januarius. Some respondents, who never visited the latter, stressed that the visit to the Fontanelle Cemetery motivated them to visit also this site. Tourists who visited other catacombs described them as something very different from the Fontanelle Cemetery. Basically, the Fontanelle Cemetery is not a catacomb but is constantly compared to a catacomb by the interviewees. The corridors and the structure of the Fontanelle Cemetery give the perception of being underground without giving a dark impression. Namely, the windows on the left corridor and the wide entrance let penetrate enough light and the lack of gloomy sensations in respondents' words may be strictly related to this structure. On the other hand, a catacomb may be claustrophobic and instill anxiety, as reported about respondents' experiences at the crypt of the Capuchins, while no respondent who visited the Fontanelle Cemetery reported any similar sensation.

Secondly, a high number of interviewees had visited monumental or historical cemeteries, either in Italy or abroad. Five of them have been to the Jewish cemetery of Prague, fascinated by issues connected to the religious persecutions which took place during WWII. Two interviewees mentioned the Parisian cemetery of Père-Lachaise, visited because of their fascination for famous people's graves (such as Jim Morrison, Oscar Wilde, Gioacchino Rossini), but also less famous foreign cemeteries. In particular, Tiziana mentioned cemeteries typical of the British Islands as an important reason to visit those countries. At the Fontanelle Cemetery, she experienced peacefulness, quietness and serenity she usually associates to the British cemeteries:

“In British cemeteries you can feel care and serenity. It is something I never felt in our cemeteries, do you know what I mean? I feel relaxed and not worried about death. In the Fontanelle Cemetery I felt something similar”

- Tiziana, 47, teacher, Naples, Autonomous tourist

Many respondents compared the Fontanelle Cemetery with similar sites they visited and the comparisons highlight the positive features of the Neapolitan site since. The Fontanelle Cemetery is perceived as less gloomy and melancholic than other locations, such as Purgatorio ad Arco (another Neapolitan ossuary) and the crypts of the Capuchins. As Carmela says:

“I visited the underground of Purgatorio ad Arco but it looked as a smaller Fontanelle Cemetery, the atmosphere was similar to the one you find in a normal cemetery, do you know what I mean?”

- Carmela, 35, doctor, Rome, IRIS Fontanelle

One respondent still remembers the experience at the crypt of the Capuchins:

“I live in Rome and some years ago I visited the crypt of the Capuchins. Well, it was more tremendous. I was younger, it is true, but I got shocked”

- Mirta, 37, manager, Rome, IRIS Fontanelle

The third category of places addressed when asked about similar sites visited in the past are Nazi concentration camps. In particular, Maura reported her experience during a guided tour in Auschwitz:

“When I went to visit Auschwitz, well, when I was there, I could really feel death in the air, a gloomy atmosphere. While the Fontanelle Cemetery never gave me this sensation, these feelings as I told you, I could feel peacefulness and serenity, those bones were sweetly resting”

- Maura, 43, receptionist, Sydney, IRIS Fontanelle

Interestingly, while discussing similar places visited, Maura reflected about the existence of a proper tourist trend to sites connected with death and suffering:

“I am not sure it is a trend, people go to concentration camps to learn things... The more you are in contact with your mortality, the more you realize you have to deal with it, instead of ignoring the issue... yeah, maybe it can be a niche of tourism but this stuff has always existed around catacombs, pyramids, tourism to death sites has always existed and it will always exist”

- Maura, 43, receptionist, Sydney, IRIS Fontanelle

A significant number of respondents relate the Fontanelle Cemetery to sites they perceive as similar but, in any case, the Neapolitan site is less gloomy and macabre, no unpleasant feeling was connected to this place. Interviewees' answers demonstrate how the category of dark tourism is still valid. Tourists themselves make connections, highlight similarities and differences among sites analyzed by scholars under the label of dark tourism.

4.2.2 Experience

Atmosphere

The structure itself of the Fontanelle Cemetery is perceived as astonishing many interviewees, bigger than they expected, instilling a sensation of solemnity, an aura of respect. One of the main features on which the visitors focused their attention is the esoteric atmosphere, connected with the cult of Purgatory and its traces in the corridors of the ossuary. One respondent was deeply fascinated by the esoteric spirit of the site and while looking at the skulls around she was “driven deep into the identification with those people worshipping unknown skulls, carrying on this cult” (Giusy, 37, radiologist, Turin, Insolita Guida).

The interviews show how the esoteric spirit, this borderline between religion and superstition, is perceived as something typical of Neapolitan people, deeply rooted in their ancient traditions. The close relationship with the souls of the dead is considered a traditional Neapolitan feature, the place itself is perceived as filled by this kind of feelings. Among these, the central role of superstition and death in the essential definition of the Neapolitan. The Neapolitans are reported as “very devoted to the dead” (Mariangela, 65, custodian, Naples, Autonomous tourist) and the city of Naples is perceived as featuring “a particular relationship with the realm of the dead” (Salvatore, 28, computer technician, IRIS Fontanelle), “a bond with unknown dead, it is something deeply rooted in the Neapolitan tradition” (Paolo, 46, insurance agent, Rome, Autonomous tourist).

The answers of the interviewees give great importance to the cult of Purgatory, mentioned as one of the main factors of interest within the site. Several respondents considered it a childish practice, almost ingenuous, testifying the innocent spirit of Neapolitan people who used to attend these rituals. Two respondents explain the cult with the great capacity of imagination typical of the Neapolitans or the power of desperation, which drives people to take care of unknown bodies as replacements of a missing relative. At this point, otherness plays a central role, especially considering that some of the interviewees are not Neapolitans, they come from every corner of Italy and they often referred to the Neapolitan as an incredibly different subject, almost primitive in a certain sense. It must be considered that the guide from *Insolita Guida* massively stressed this aspect. The category of ignorant and superstitious Neapolitan is deeply exploited in order to attract tourists' attention to the site (Seaton, 2009). On the contrary, guides from IRIS Fontanelle provided a completely opposite narration.

The place is also experienced as a precious part of Neapolitan heritage, a cultural treasure to safeguard. In this sense, the consideration of Fontanelle Cemetery as a borderline site, halfway between a holy place and a tourist attraction, is often addressed by the interviewees. One respondent admits that “it is strange to say that it is a tourist attraction to exploit, but it is a great piece of heritage and it worth increasing its value” (Antonella, 46, teacher, Naples, IRIS Fontanelle).

Analyzing the sections of the interviews where tourists go deeper into the kind of emotions evoked by the Fontanelle Cemetery, it can be easily noticed that none of them reported negative feelings coming from the massive display of skulls and bones. Additionally, the atmosphere perceived in the huge tuff cave is described as mystical, astonishing, inspiring and evocative, with no reference to any morbidity caused by the human rests disposed all around. The environment is described by almost all the respondents as inspiring, evocative, calm, not scaring at all. In this sense, Alessia claims that:

“The feelings in that place were of peacefulness and respect. The atmosphere was neither gloomy nor creepy. I never felt uncomfortable and my experience was definitely positive”

- Alessia, 35, teacher, Naples, IRIS Fontanelle

As mentioned, despite the name, the Fontanelle Cemetery is not a proper cemetery: it is an ossuary since there are not official entombments. More than one interviewee compared the mainly negative or gloomy sensations experienced in canonical burial places with the amply positive feedback received from their visit here. First of all, in normal cemeteries there is no display of bones or skulls, visitors may see only tombstones or commemorative plaques. In Fontanelle Cemetery the

showy display of human remains creates a totally different atmosphere. On the one hand, it is more impressive, evocative and mystical. On the other, both less formality and austerity allow visitors to experience a place of death in a completely different way if compared to a normal cemetery. There is not the same strictness, the same gravitas, after all now it is a place for tourists and not for relatives of deceased people:

“I did not feel it as a place of death, in fact at a certain point we even were ironic about some features. My husband told me a black humour joke, can you believe that?”

- Tiziana, 47, teacher, Naples, Autonomous tourist

Interestingly, black humour was considered by Sayre (2001) as a sign of the invasive presence of death in daily routine. In this case, it was used to exorcise the fear of death.

None of the characteristics that the respondents usually associate with cemeteries seem to be appropriate to describe the Fontanelle Cemetery:

“I did not feel I was in a cemetery, I mean usually cemeteries are sad and gloomy, this one gave me only positive sensations, even with all those skulls, bones, and that stuff all around”

- Raffaella, 85, retired, Benevento, Autonomous tourist

The lack of formality and control was perceived as a positive feature, especially in the relationship the respondents established with the human rests:

“You know, in cemeteries there is a certain formality, isn't it? Well, there was nothing like that. You feel comfortable, I did not even feel it as something sacred, the nice thing was that there was not the formality I usually expect from a cemetery. I did not feel disrespectful in making some black humor jokes while walking in those corridors”

- Corrado, 46, dentist, Naples, Autonomous tourist

If some perceived the place as a holy space, a sacred temple with a massive display of remains, others blamed the excessive amount of bones for a lack of sacred stimuli. In particular two respondents claimed that the sensation of sacred is deeply connected with mystery. As in a horror movie, the more you see, the less your imagination can create. Consequently, the enormous amount of human remains totally filled their imagination, making the whole place just a depot of bones. In this sense, Fulvio claims that:

“It is like an exhibition, a mere exhibition. Do you know IKEA? Well, it is like walking through its corridors but instead of furniture you have... well, bones. Please do not misunderstand me, I do not want to sound disrespectful, but I mean... there is lack of sanctity, it is just a spectacle, an exhibition. I think they should be buried”

- Fulvio, 69, banker, Naples, Autonomous tourist

This large display of human remains has an effect on the aura of sanctity, whose lack has been perceived as a possible explanation for the rise of the cult of Purgatory:

“Did you see them? They are so many! You lose perception of the sanctity, they have been touched, moved, displayed. In my opinion, this manipulation wasted any sacred aura. Maybe this is the reason why there was such a particular cult. They are not simply skulls, they are friends to each other”

- Corrado, 46, dentist, Naples, Autonomous tourist

These two opposed interpretations are both interesting and worth taking into consideration. If the shape itself of the place, the atmosphere and the peaceful environment gave the sensation of sacred, esoteric, mysterious, on the other hand the over-display of human remains may generate the opposite effect.

However, the majority of interviewees reported that meditation and reflection upon death and their own mortality was a central feature of their visit to the site. The light coming from the wide windows on the left side and nature, visible through them, contributed to shaping a relaxing and peaceful atmosphere, which allowed visitors to positively face this experience of death.

In complete contrast with experiences in more standard cemeteries or in similar tourist sites (or addressed as similar by the interviewees themselves), such as the ossuary of Purgatorio ad Arco or the crypts of Capuchins in Rome and Palermo, bones here displayed did not instilled tourists with negative sensations. These references provided by the interviewees are interesting since Purgatorio ad Arco is described as a gloomier, standard crypt, more likely to instill disturbance or even anguish. On the other hand, the crypts of Capuchins provided visitors with the view of still assembled human bodies and not simply scattered remains:

“The crypt of Capuchins is much more impressive and disturbing. There you can see... well, dead people. Here they have been manipulated, strewed around”

- Raffaella, 85, retired, Benevento, Autonomous tourist

The experience at the crypt of Capuchins is described by more than one respondent as extremely different from the one at the Fontanelle Cemetery:

“We went out of the crypt quite shocked, I was bothered. On the contrary, this place never gave me such a negative impression, never, trust me”

- Vincenza, 48, teacher, Naples, IRIS Fontanelle

Bones are an important stimulus for meditation upon death and our final demise while, on the contrary, the lack of death does not imply a more relaxing or pleasant atmosphere. Even normal cemeteries, where bones are not displayed, are referred by the interviewees to provide a depressing environment and melancholic feelings. When asked about feelings and sensations in the corridors of Fontanelle Cemetery, more than one mentioned his/her experience in German and Austrian concentration camps. The fact itself of connecting a place as the Fontanelle Cemetery with a concentration camp is worth noting. Academic scholarship aiming to define dark tourism practices and essence consider both an ossuary and a concentration camp within the broader label of dark tourism (Seaton, 2009). Interestingly and maybe unpredictably even tourists themselves made this connection. Although the lack of skulls, bones and other human remains in sites such as Auschwitz or Dachau, the atmosphere is described as gloomy, depressive, heavy:

“I have visited Auschwitz and there I found pain, despair, anguish. I could clearly feel death in the air. The pain of tortured and killed people was still there. On the contrary, the Fontanelle Cemetery gave me a sensation of peace. Those bones were resting in peace”

- Maura, 43, receptionist, Sydney, IRIS Fontanelle

A significant number of respondents claimed that in a standard cemetery there is no exposition of human remains but, at the same, time the general atmosphere is gloomier, while in a kind of catacomb or crypt such as the ones of Capuchins human bodies are directly in front of tourists' eyes, without any filter.

The Fontanelle Cemetery, in this sense, seems to be a perfect halfway between these two models: the massive display of human remains does not threaten the peaceful atmosphere created by the structure itself, its huge windows and wide spaces. The structure and the shape of the tuff cave are fundamental to create this specific atmosphere. Analyzing the interviewees' feedback, the

environment is described as evocative and inspiring because of the aforementioned windows, which allow natural light to penetrate the darkness of the ossuary, and the spectacular entering with its astonishing overview of hundreds of bones. The cave itself is described by many respondents as an astonishing, breathtaking and evocative environment or even compared to a potential location as “setting for a movie, a novel” (Salvatore, 28, computer technician, Naples, IRIS Fontanelle). For this reasons, many interviewees reported positive reflections about death, mortality, and their own bodies’ fragilities.

The experience at the ossuary gave precious stimuli to realize that any possible difference among human beings is completely erased by the inevitable process of death. Looking at skulls is something people generally do not experience in their everyday life, as confirmed by the interviewees, and this encounter is an interesting generator of awareness about what they are.

“We clearly see what we will be turned into, what we are basically.

The more you are in contact with the idea of your own mortality, the more you deal with it and keep on living without that fear”

- Maura, 43, receptionist, Sydney, IRIS Fontanelle

The experience at the Fontanelle Cemetery is reported in many interviews as a way to face the fear of death:

“People should experience these human remains, the less you speak about your fears the worse it is”

- Dario, 27, doctor, Caserta, IRIS Fontanelle

The possibility of facing death (or, at least, its traces) is something completely out of people’s daily routine and make them get access to unusual sources of reflection. Two interviewees admitted that speaking about death is not usual at all, but paradoxically everyone thinks about it when he is alone, in his own bed, before falling asleep. Moreover, they stressed that death is a taboo in the society they live in. Maura grew up in Australia, but even there death was a taboo, “a topic you never talk about” (Maura, 43, receptionist, Sydney, IRIS Fontanelle). Similarly, Dario claims that:

“Have you ever heard someone speaking about death while drinking a beer with friends? I guess no. Well, it is the same person bothering himself before going to sleep, thinking at the inevitability of death”

- Dario, 27, doctor, Caserta, IRIS Fontanelle

At the end of the tour, many tourists agree in considering the encounter with death, which took place at this site as a positive experience, enriching and deeply significant. Positivity and peacefulness are often mentioned to describe the atmosphere within this reflection upon themes of life and death were carried out.

On the contrary, not all the tourists agree on the sanctity of the place. According to the majority, Fontanelle Cemetery is perceived as a sacred, holy environment, with an intrinsic aura of respect. Gaetano Barbati's spectacular sculpture kissed by the feeble light coming from above, the disposition of bones beneath the three crosses, the traces of the cult of Purgatory visible all around. Several respondents reported sensations of holiness, religiousness and devotion at the site of the monumental ossuary filled with skulls and bones. Raffaele stresses that the site seems strongly connected with religion, pushing him to reflection and meditation. Mary could perceive the deep holiness of the place to the point of not taking any photo as a sign of respect. It is worth mentioning that one of the main factors which brought Mary to the Fontanelle Cemetery was the aim of taking amazing pictures. Nevertheless, the sense of respect did not allow her to use the camera. Also in other studies about tourists' behaviours at cemeteries and holy places it is mentioned that photos are often perceived as profanations or lack of respect. On the contrary, for Corrado, it is not a problem to take a selfie with the skulls on the background. He did not perceive the formality and the gravity of the place. The lack of formality, in this respondent's opinion, is one of the factors which allowed him to enjoy the display of human remains without perceiving any oppression.

Similarly, also other interviewees claimed that they did not perceive any aura of sanctity in Fontanelle Cemetery. Lack of formality, strictness and the typical audience that usually attend cemeteries makes the ossuary an unusual attraction. The display of bones itself is at the center of this distinction of ideas. For some, they instill visitors with a sensation of holiness, of respect; for others, this showy spectacle is something so physical to prevent visitors from watching beyond:

“I am sure the majority of people will only look at the skulls, they will not go beyond. The physical exposition will be enough for them”

- Fulvio, 69, banker, Naples, Autonomous tourist

For what concerns feelings experienced and the atmosphere perceived in the ossuary of Fontanelle, a clear difference is observable by comparing tourists who joined Insolita Guida's tour and tourists who attended the visit with IRIS Fontanelle. Probably it is in this section of analysis that differences between the two groups are clearer. In this sense, while IRIS Fontanelle paid more attention to the esoteric spirit, the mix of popular religion and superstition, IRIS Fontanelle is more focused on the religious and historical background of the site. Consequently, after joining Insolita Guida tourists are more likely to describe the site using words such as esoteric, pagan or popular. On the other hand, who attended the tour with IRIS Fontanelle experienced the site in a slightly different way, describing it as religious, holy and sacred. Clearly, even some tourists who joined IRIS Fontanelle's tour found the place halfway between religious and pagan or a sign of popular religion but terms connected with esoterism and paganism are much more used by who attended the tour with Insolita Guida.

Responses from autonomous tourists show how they perceived the holiness of the place only in specific areas, such as the Calvary, and they described the site as incredibly suggesting, magic and evocative. Paolo is an autonomous tourist surprised by the enormous amount of human remains but at the same time Fontanelle Cemetery seemed to him a huge monument to human capacity of survival:

“I thought that there are so many calamities that can wipe out thousands of lives in a moment. For example illnesses, wars, natural disasters, but mankind still survives. We are still here. Such a long time has passed and now every sufferance is almost passed away with it. I was so fascinated by the capacity of men of surviving and getting by in every situation”

- Paolo, 46, insurance agent, Rome, Autonomous tourist

In this sense, Paolo's answer shows how visiting a memorial, built after a catastrophe, may be intended without any dark reason in mind (Lisle, 2004).

Paradoxically, one respondent described the site as “full of life” (Laura, 65, teacher, Rome, Insolita Guida), meaning that they can clearly feel all the everyday life stories behind those human remains. One respondent admitted she was so affected that felt the need of writing down a story about some of the souls behind the skulls. Looking at the pieces of paper, wood and other material lying around the bones, she was impressed by some items:

“A piece of chocolate just in front of a skull, a cigarette, a pill... then I found out it was an antidepressant and I was surprised, it was so impressed. I could write a novel about them”

- Tiziana, 47, teacher, Naples, Autonomous tourist

Bones

During the interviews, one question was specifically dedicated to the experience of standing among those hundreds, thousands of human remains. The analysis of how people reported their experience with these physical traces of death provided interesting insights into their relationship with the final demise. Predictably, not all the interviewees were affected by the sight of human remains at the same level.



Picture 6: Detail of the bones

Interestingly, half a dozen of the interviewees are medical doctors or healthcare assistants, there were also some radiologists and an osteopath. In this sense, they were not only used to the view of bones, skulls and other human remains, but such a display at the Fontanelle Cemetery made their curiosity sparkle (Picture 6). Some of them had used real human skulls during anatomy lectures, some others went around the whole site looking for significant differences in the shape of the skulls:

“It was a kind of special emotion. You know, I am a doctor, so I even recognized some femur around. I do not know if I am superficial but... you know, since I am used to doing autopsies I was not affected or bothered at all”

- Mario, 53, doctor, Foggia, Insolita Guida

Giusy is a specialist in radiology:

“I am a specialist in radiology, so you can easily understand I looked at them through the eyes of my profession. Even my lecturer at the university used to show us real human skulls, can you believe that?”

- Giusy, 37, radiologist, Turin, Insolita Guida

Similarly, Dario's main interest was to recognize the shapes of different skulls and he stresses that people not used to the sight of blood and bones may perceive that experience in a different way:

“People are not used at all to seeing human remains. You know, they are even afraid of taking a blood sample. For me it is different, I can recognize a femur very easily. I spent all my time going around to recognize the origin of the different skulls. Do you remember the area on the right just after the entrance? Well, there were homogenous skulls because that section, as the guide told us, was dedicated to a guild of artisans. That was clear to me: bigger skulls and longer bones mean they were men, probably sharing the same social origin”

- Dario, 27, doctor, Caserta, IRIS Fontanelle

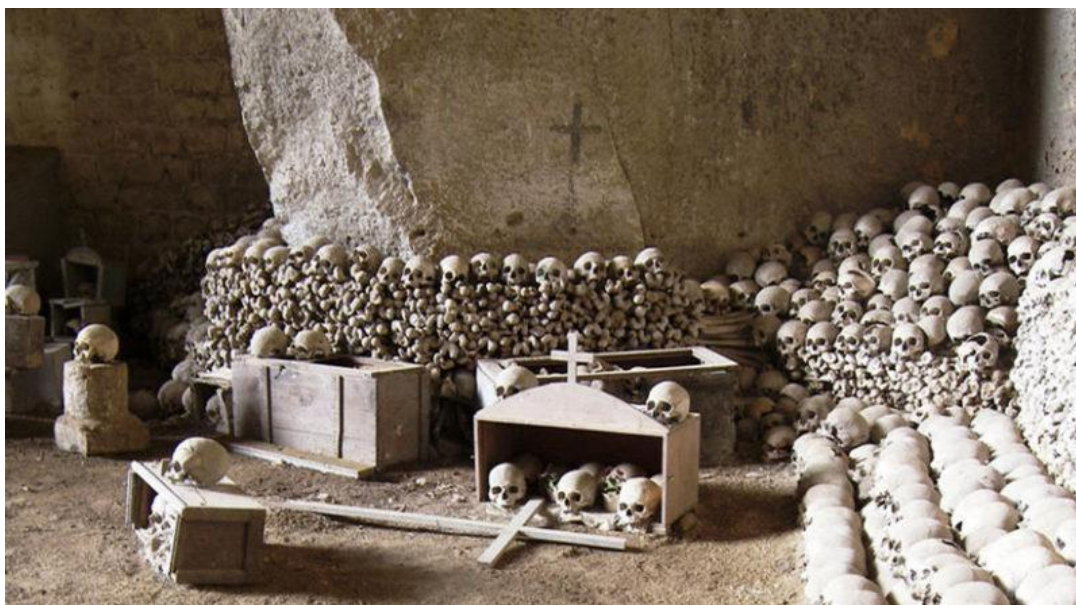
In this sense, Antonella claimed that:

“After a while, I started wondering how those people were when they were alive. All those remains were people, every difference in the structure of the skeleton, of the skull, was a reflection of their aspect in life”

- Antonella, 46, teacher, Naples, IRIS Fontanelle

Even if the skulls did not have to them an intense effect from the physic point of view, anyway they reported sensations of astonishment and fascination due to both the huge amount and the disposition itself of the bones. Anatomical characteristic of the skulls drew the attention of the other visitors as

well, even if they were not doctors. Interviewees, in this case, reported feelings of curiosity and astonishment when considering that before this, those remains were people. Sometimes, the awareness that skulls and bones displayed in Fontanelle Cemetery are real people's remains comes just after the visit.



Picture 7: Skulls at the Entrance

A significant number of respondents answered that, in a first moment, they did not experience the ossuary as a place of death. The connection between physical remains and their origin is not always addressed during the visit. Just after, the respondents realize they were a few centimeters close to dead bodies:

“It is strange to say now, I mean those human remains were not horrifying to me. I even forgot that they were human remains, that they were... real. They were so many that I almost forgot they were real human remains. I mean, before they were real people, I cannot imagine”

- Antonella, 46, teacher, Naples, IRIS Fontanelle

In other cases, interviewees were not strictly interested in the physical and anatomical characteristics but in the story behind the remain. As for the highly appreciated legends and tales about individual skulls (the captain, mother Concetta), also the unknown remains are supposed to have stories behind them. Even if they are only simple stories, stories of everyday life, they are perceived by tourists as something incredibly moving and effective.

Many respondents found interesting to imagine stories behind the human remains, who those people were, what they did, who they loved. The affection for everyday life stories beyond death is strictly connected with the fascination with tales and legends. Vincenza was amazed to realize that she was not simply looking at a skull, but a former human being with a whole life story ended in that place. She was moved by this consideration.

“I meditated upon death but not only. I wonder how many stories are hidden behind all those bones. All those stories were alive and now forgotten. Will it be the same for us?”

- Vincenza, 48, teacher, Naples, IRIS Fontanelle

Then, realizing those objects were really human bodies or, at least, parts of them, is also shocking when tourists think about it after the visit, in a sort of delayed affection:

“I realized just after, when we went home, that I was standing in an ossuary surrounded by humans, by corpses. I mean, they were corpses, they were alive before and now they are just dismembered bones”

- Antonella, 46, teacher, Naples, IRIS Fontanelle

The role of children is an interesting sub-theme, often spontaneously addressed by tourists without any incentive. Planning a weekend visit to a place of heritage some tourists, informed about what they would have found, did not bring their children with them. The display of human remains is addressed by these parents as not appropriate for children. They can get easily impressed, it is largely understandable the attempt of “avoiding them creepy nightmare caused by all those skulls, all those dead people” (Paolo, 46, insurance agent, Rome, Autonomous tourist). On the other hand, some tourists brought their children with them intentionally, to make them experience the human remains and make them used to death as a part of life not to be afraid of:

“Children are usually afraid of bones, aren't they? Well, mine were not. For them this was a positive experience, they had no nightmare at all”

- Tania, 45, dentist, Salerno, Autonomous tourist

Raffaele tried to make his children receive a positive experience of the human remains through what he calls a “playful visit” to the ossuary:

“I went with my children, they are ten, so we made a playful visit with them, we did not make them experience those remains with severe or negative attitude. We told them a kind of story: these were people and now we have to find out who they were, you know what I mean? Like a game. Then, I also told them that in this place you can meet again missed people”

- Raffaele, 30, chef, Naples, Insolita Guida

In this sense, visiting a site like this with one’s own children is a reason to experience it in a different way. Antonella admitted that she forced herself to attend the visit with a positive attitude because of the presence of her children:

“I visited the site with my children, so I did not want to give them the impression of being worried or bothered by the skulls, the bones and that kind of stuff. So I ended up with not thinking about death and this stuff just because I was with them”

- Antonella, 46, teacher, Naples, IRIS Fontanelle

Interestingly, two respondents reported that they not only brought their children to the Fontanelle Cemetery, but they try to make them visit as many similar places as possible in order to deal with the issue of death. For example, one respondent mentioned a visit they attended to the anatomy museum: it was forbidden for children below the age of 16 but he managed to let him in. Similarly to what observed and studied for Body Worlds (Whalley and Lantermann, 2005), these places can be a kind of *training*, an experience of memento mori. In this sense, this is strictly related to the sociological idea of how death has been removed from society (Willmott, 2000). The respondent’s answer shows how sites connected with death and mortality can be experienced as a comfort zone to face the fear of death and final demise (Lantermann, 2005).

In this sense, children are an interesting topic of analysis within tourists’ interviews, but their feelings towards children’s remains are interesting as much. Smaller skulls drew the attention of some interviewees who noticed them in specific areas or even little coffins displayed among the bones. This sight is described with great affection and compassion, but also with curiosity by Alessia and Raffaella, who were shocked at the sight of the small coffins among the human remains. The tiny bones made them feel a sense of great tenderness.

Before comparing tourists who attended the tour with Insolita Guida and IRIS Fontanelle it must be taken into consideration that many of them who enjoyed the tour offered by Insolita Guida were medical doctors, so their approach to the human remains, as written, is very typical. They are

people used to scenes of sufferance and even death, bones and human remains. On the contrary, a significant number of respondents were not used to such an unusual display and, in fact, their reaction is different.

Tourists in visit with IRIS Fontanelle stressed that they perceived an aura of sanctity, of holiness or, at least, of mystery. The guides from IRIS Fontanelle made the relationship with religion and the history of Church a central feature of the visit. More importantly, they describe and interpret the Fontanelle Cemetery as a modern representation of mystery of death. The site is often described as a monumental memento mori, a tuff cathedral (Civitelli, 2012), a path through the stages of Via Crucis (typically Italian representation of Jesus Christ's life and death, usually displayed and played by actors in the period of Easter). Consequently, these respondents' are generally more focused on the mystery of death, personal reflections and meditation about caducity and mortality. Interestingly, one of the interviewees referred to her Catholic beliefs when addressing the ambiguous feelings coming from the encounter with the unknown skulls:

“I did not experience this encounter negatively. In my opinion, death is just a normal stage of life, it is natural. Probably it depends on my Catholic beliefs, I am a Christian, I believe in the afterworld. So, well, I do not live negatively this perspective”

- Maura, 65, teacher, Rome, Insolita Guida

Furthermore, the sight of the skulls and the awareness they are still there after such a long time made a visitor reflect upon the final destiny of her own body. Although she refers her previous will of being cremated after death, now she is questioning this method, going back to a more traditional entombment. The key feature that caused this reflection was the care and attention with which these remains have been kept and maintained, and not only displayed:

“This experience at the Fontanelle Cemetery made me reflect about the idea of burial. Before going there I was sure about incinerating my body after death and dispersing it in the wind. But in the ossuary I saw that there is something left, something remaining of that people, so maybe it is not the right choice to destroy our bodies completely in the way I figured out”. I was sure: when I die, I want to be cremated. But... you know, there is always something remaining so I wondered... why should I erase it without leaving any trace of my body?”

- Vincenza, 48, teacher, Naples, IRIS Fontanelle

Focus

In this section, it is analyzed the feature on which the respondents focused the most. What drew their attention and why. In this sense, it is useful to compare if the main object of attention fits the original expectations or if it is something completely different and unexpected. A great number of respondents showed a deep fascination with tales, stories and legends connected to the human remains resting in the Fontanelle Cemetery. Specifically, tourists who attended the tour with *Insolita Guida* and *IRIS Fontanelle* equally mentioned the legends of the skull of the Captain and the one of Mother Concetta (Picture 8). Of course, since no reference is present about Mother Concetta on the few information boards no autonomous tourist mentioned it.



Picture 8: Mother Concetta's skull

According to the interviewees, this kind of tales and legends has the healthy effect of humanizing the remains, instilling empathy and curiosity. Furthermore, Neapolitan visitors often connect these legends with Neapolitan traditional stories, tales and even local songs. The respondents' answers show that stories about Saint Vincent, the captain and Mother Concetta are the most appreciated.

“It is nice to make use of death for positive purposes. For example the legend of the captain... it is part of our tradition, I do not mind if it is true or false, it is part of our spirit”

- Vincenza, 48, teacher, Naples, IRIS Fontanelle

Storytelling and ironic attitude are perceived by some respondents as a typical Neapolitan feature. In this sense, in the Fontanelle Cemetery even stories may be used to exorcise death:

“I was fascinated by Mother Concetta’s skull. Neapolitan beliefs and stories are great. We always find an ironic meaning behind everything. I do not find it disrespectful”

- Alessia, 35, teacher, Naples, IRIS Fontanelle

Interestingly, respondents stressed that life stories, tales and legends can give meaning to an object, like a skull, complicated to address. The majority of tourists referred to their astonishment and their amazement, the encounter with death and its trace can be, in this way, easier to deal with. So, in this sense, stories and legends are not only elements of folk history but also interpretative tools still valid nowadays in a site like Fontanelle Cemetery “to exorcise the fear of death” (Carmela, 35, doctor, Rome, IRIS Fontanelle).

As mentioned, another element that drew the attention of visitors, are children’s skulls and coffins. It is perfectly understandable, since death may be something difficult to deal with but when it is referred to children it gets even more complicated to address. As mentioned, children’s coffins and skulls were reported as one of the most interesting things in the whole site, both for medical doctors and other tourists. In one case the sight of a small coffin was so moving for one of the interviewees that she was almost pushed to give a symbolic present, an offering, while for another visitor the presence of coins, tickets, candies and similar materials was even more deplorable when dedicated to dead children. In some cases, Neapolitan attitude previously appreciated by Alessia is seen in a completely different light:

“I felt an unpleasant sensation when I saw those small skulls with dolls on the top. It was a kind of profanation. It is typical of Neapolitans, making use of death for other purposes”

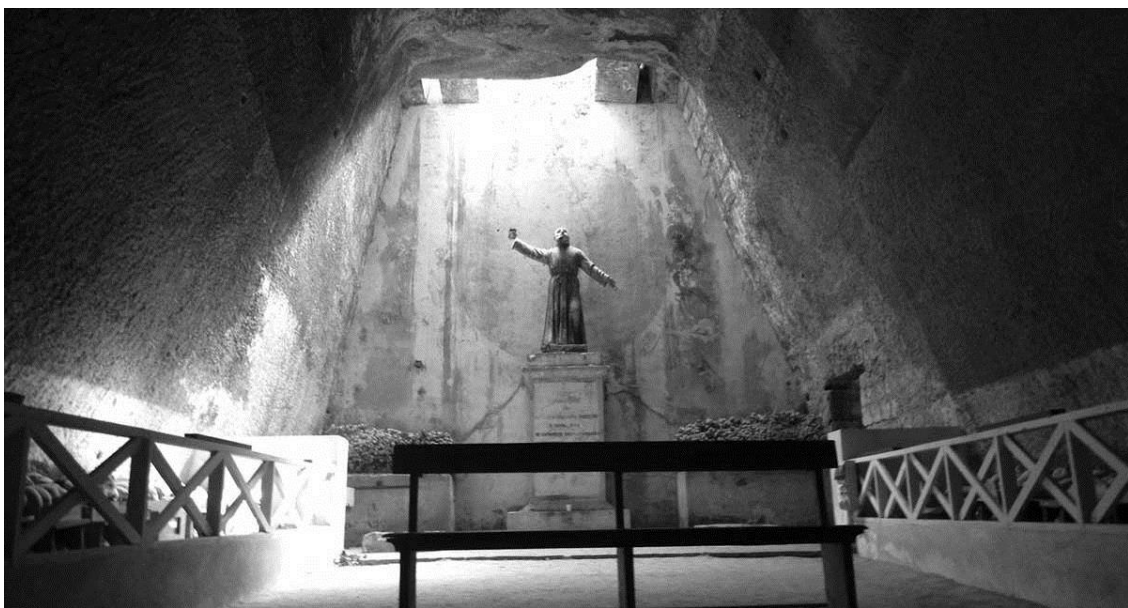
- Vincenza, 48, teacher, Naples, IRIS Fontanelle

Another element of great interest, noticed by a lot of interviewees and reported during the interviews, is the enlightenment. In the Cemetery of Fontanelle there are just a few electrical lights. In the left wing, the biggest amount of enlightenment is composed of natural light penetrating from

the high windows cut off the tuff wall. Three of them are just above Gaetano Barbati's sculpture, the behead Saint Vincent's statue and the area with the three crosses representing the Calvary. The visitors found the effect of light astonishing, softly illuminating those figure making them even more evocative and inspiring at their eyes:

“There was this window. There was the sunlight coming in from there and, in fact, I took a beautiful picture. The contrast was amazing: on the one side this dark environment with skulls and bones, then the crosses softly illuminated by the sunlight”

- Maria, 36, employee, Caserta, Insolita Guida



Picture 9: Barbati's sculpture

The environment was perceived by many respondents as definitely moving and amazing. Alessandro found it even cinematographic (Picture 9):

“The window let some light into and I had a sensation... you know? For example, in movies, when a character who is about to die sees a bright light and he goes towards it, beyond”

- Alessandro, 35, employee, Naples, IRIS Fontanelle

The third most addressed element of interest is the legends, the folk tradition of tales connected with individual skulls. The legends of the captain and Mother Concetta are often reported as

extremely interesting, for the aforementioned reasons related to the humanization of human rests, fascination with Neapolitan folklore and life stories.

4.2.3 Evaluations

The Fontanelle Cemetery is a property of the municipality, which needs a certain sensibility in the ways they represent others' past of suffering and death (Seaton, 2009). Furthermore, the owner's tasks concern not only keeping the integrity of the site and establishing a good relation with the local community but also maintaining the dignity of the human remains kept in the area (Sharpley, 2009).

In this sense, an issue perceived as extremely important by many interviewees in their post-visit evaluation is the massive presence of "junk" (a word used by a significant number of respondents) in the area containing the human remains. It consists of many different pieces of stuff, both religious-connected and profane: subway tickets, dolls, flowers, and prayer cards. There is no clear evidence of who left these items, but almost every interviewee agrees with the necessity of cleaning them out in order to restore the dignity of such a burial place. The presence of cigarettes, tickets and other items among the remains was perceived as inappropriate by a significant number of respondents.

"All that stuff left over there looks like a profanation to me. They should remove all that stuff immediately"

- Salvatore, 28, computer technician, Naples, IRIS Fontanelle

Furthermore, many tourists highlighted a lack of security and surveillance. This issue is connected with the sense of profanation perceived by the interviewees, since on the ground, in the area where bones and skulls are kept, there are traces of footprints. It is a clear sign that someone crossed the low fence, which divides the main corridor (and so the visitors) from the human remains:

"Honestly, they are at your fingertips, anyone can just stick your arm out and take a skull, touch it, leave some stuff on them. Management should be enhanced, the site deserves to be better kept and the human remains deserve dignity and decency"

- Salvatore, 28, computer technician, Naples, IRIS Fontanelle

“I mean, I did not see any annoying behaviour when I was there, but you know there are anyway traces of profanation. You could clearly see some footprints in the area with the human remains. So someone entered that area, it is unbelievable. It cannot be allowed”

- Dario, 27, doctor, Caserta, IRIS Fontanelle

A second important issue addressed by many respondents is the free entrance. On the one hand, the site is perceived as a sacred space, so some interviewees agree with the free entrance politics. On the other, more than one interviewee suggested that they would have been glad to support the management of the site through a voluntary offering. This is suggested since they understood the complexity of managing such a complex site and they would have liked to give their support. In other cases someone believes there should be a ticket to get access to the site:

“I think people should pay to see it. I am well informed. I know it is considered a cemetery and for this reason the access must be free for everyone. Anyway, honestly, I think it cannot be considered a proper cemetery anymore. I mean, there are human remains, it is not a normal cemetery. Additionally, at this point it must be considered part of our cultural heritage, it is visited by many foreign tourists”

- Maddalena, 41, teacher, Naples, Insolita Guida

Apparently, nowadays tourism is used to commercial strategies and economic development around sites of cultural heritage, so it is strange, in their eyes, to realize that there is nothing like this in a place like the Fontanelle Cemetery:

“I would have liked that such an amazing site could generate also an economic development. I was shocked by the free entrance system. I mean, there are some bones, people simply enter without any control, it is such a pity”

- Carmela, 35, doctor, Rome, IRIS Fontanelle

Corrado suggested to keep the entrance free, with the possibility of a voluntary sum of money:

“Paying a ticket, or even a voluntary sum of money is a way to give value to this site. They could add some extra lights, provide tourists with better information boards or better surveillance”

- Corrado, 46, dentist, Naples, Autonomous tourist

Comparing the answers given by interviewees who joined the tour offered by Insolita Guida and IRIS Fontanelle, it is clear that the tourist guides from the latter instilled their visitors with the condemnation of the actual management of the site. In fact, although also some tourists from Insolita Guida showed their disapproval, almost all the tourists who attended the tour with IRIS Fontanelle referred their worries for the “terrible status of preservation” (Emanuele, 24, student, IRIS Fontanelle).

Actually, among the autonomous tourists, there is positive feedback about the site management. According to some autonomous tourists interviewed, the place is not badly managed and, moreover, the free entrance is even appreciated by Mario:

“I highly appreciated the free entrance, the site is generally well managed. Of course, it is a particular place, you know, the whole cave is made of tuff. It is a friable material and it is very dusty. You know, it is not easy to keep it clean. It is generally well kept”

- Mario, 53, doctor, Foggia, Insolita Guida

Similarly, according to Corrado, the place is closer to an archeological site more than to a museum. Consequently there is not such a necessity of keeping the site totally clean and shiny:

“I mean, maybe for someone coming from abroad it can seem bad managed or even dirty, but in my view the place must be kept this way. Anyway, the maintenance could be enhanced”

- Corrado, 46, dentist, Naples, Autonomous tourist

Considering the management of the site, tourists’ evaluations are negatively affected by several traces of profanation. Voluntarily or not, the presence of items among the skulls increases the sensation that the cult is still active in the Fontanelle Cemetery. So, on the one hand, the presence of these items affected negatively respondents’ evaluations, on the other, they keep the audience interested in this ancient and esoteric cult, connected with the stereotype which portrays Neapolitan people as superstitious and not fully civilized. This sense of otherness (Seaton, 2009) is exactly the central core of the guided tour offered by Insolita Guida.

Comparing expectations

When compared to previous expectations, post-visit evaluations of the Fontanelle Cemetery are always positive and, in this sense, no tourist gave a negative final feedback about the site. All the respondents strongly recommended the site to their friends and provided an excellent feedback about their visit.

Many interviewees who attended the guided tours were also enthusiastic of the two associations. Although the two missions are different and, in a certain sense, opposite to each other, they are equally appreciated by the tourists. Since in the Fontanelle Cemetery there is a true lack of information about the historical background, many tourists answered that an autonomous tour, without any guide, “would not be the same” (Vincenza, 48, teacher, Naples, IRIS Fontanelle).

Interestingly, the appreciation of tourists towards the approaches of Insolita Guida and IRIS Fontanelle address different issues. The ability of the guide to engage the visitors, showing them sincere passion about the site, is considered important by many respondents. Insolita Guida is not only more focused on popular culture, legends and folk tales, but the guide herself is described as communicative, captivating and interesting. A significant number of respondents answered that without a guide it would not be the same.

“The guide was very good, she gave us information on the historical background but she built also a nice relationship with us all. When someone asked her a question she answered as a Neapolitan, she was proud of that. I mean, for example, one of us asked us the reasons behind the sweating of Mother Concetta’s skull. She answered that, like every Neapolitan, she believed it was true. Of course, there was a scientific explanation, but I appreciated her way of giving us this double explanation”

- Giusy, 37, radiologist, Turin, Insolita Guida

What satisfied the respondents who visited the site with IRIS Fontanelle are the fascination with mystery and esoteric atmospheres, the curiosity for the Neapolitan spirit and a great attraction to legends and tales referring to individual skulls such as the captain or Mother Concetta. On the contrary, IRIS Fontanelle gave a different kind of stimuli to his tourists. Since its characteristics are drastically different from Insolita Guida, as previously analyzed, the answers given by the tourists reflect this different approach. IRIS Fontanelle is more focused on historical analysis, religious background and the polemic with the management carried out by the municipality, the feedback given by tourists who joined this tour is in line with this narration. Although this general

correspondence, even the tourists who joined the tour with IRIS Fontanelle highly appreciated legends and stories about traditional characters. None of them seem to perceive these tales as superficial and inappropriate. On the contrary, engagement caused by the specific legends are perceived as the main elements of interest, more than the historical rigour. Accordingly, fascination with legends and tales is the most mentioned motivations to visit the site, with no sensible difference between the respondents. In fact, a significant number of respondents perceived the tour offered by IRIS Fontanelle as a good mix, able to provide historical analysis based on documentation and publications produced by the association itself without forgetting references to the legends:

“It was a good mix, in this kind of places I have been always told about the supposed esoteric features. On the contrary, this time I appreciated this different approach, more focused on the historical research. It sounded more... let’s say objective”

- Vincenza, 48, teacher, Naples, IRIS Fontanelle

The polemic with the management of the site is mentioned several times by the interviewees. In this sense, Maria claims that:

“I got very angry because of the bad management, highlighted by the guys of the association. There was such a mess around. The guide said that is it quite neglected by the municipality, he was completely right”

- Maria, 36, employee, Caserta, Insolita Guida

No one mentioned an excessive use of legends and stories but, on the contrary, the constant focus on mismanagement was perceived by one respondent as inappropriate. In this sense, Dario claims that:

“The guided tour was very detailed. Anyway, the polemic against the municipality was excessive. I found it excessive. He could have mentioned it just one time, shortly”

- Dario, 27, doctor, Caserta, IRIS Fontanelle

Both the guided tours are also appreciated because of their aim of reevaluating the urban area where the Fontanelle Cemetery is, Sanità, better known for its crime wars than for its monuments and attractions.

The word which represents at best the experience in the Fontanelle Cemetery is without any doubt “surprise”. According to a significant number of respondents, the place is not well advertised and information available on the internet are believed to be either lacking or unable to represent how the site is. After the visit, the majority of tourists is astonished of what they found if compared to what they expected before entering the site. The place they expected was smaller, gloomier and more macabre, more similar to a catacomb or a tunnel, nothing more than a storage of human remains. A significant number of respondents were completely astonished by the size of the structure since they expected only a small ossuary. On the contrary, they found a huge cave, with thousands of bones and skulls displayed at every corner. More importantly, they seem to be disposed in a proper staging and not simply clumped in random positions.

The atmosphere perceived at the Fontanelle Cemetery One is reported as one of the main elements which made tourists enjoy the site more than expected. Visitors expected to find a cemetery atmosphere of sadness, grief and melancholy, but what the most of them found was completely different. Raffaele describes the experience at the Fontanelle Cemetery as completely positive, he could distinctly feel “a kind of positive energy in the whole place” (Raffaele, 30, chef, Naples, *Insolita Guida*). As Fulvio stresses:

“I got astonished by three elements I really did not expect: the number of human remains, their position and the Christian elements. I did not expect anything like that”

- Fulvio, 69, banker, Naples, Autonomous tourist

The site is appreciated by visitors both as an unknown piece of Neapolitan heritage and experience of encounter with human remains without the gloomy atmosphere they recognize in a standard cemetery.

5. Conclusion

The content analysis of the 29 interviews conducted with 27 visitors and 2 tourist guides gave interesting insights at the light of the research question: what are the motives, experiences and post-visit evaluations of people visiting this site?

5.1 Motivations

Considering the tourists' answers about their original motivations in visiting the site and crossing these information with the supply provided by the management, the Fontanelle Cemetery could be considered within the "grey tourism demand sites", featuring "tourists with a certain interest in death, visiting unintended dark sites" (Sharpley, 2009, p. 20). The interest in death is not the first reason why the majority of interviewees visited the Fontanelle Cemetery, but it was for some of them. More importantly, the site is not intended to be a dark attraction; it is a public historical ossuary part of the cultural heritage of the city. The feedback provided by the visitors confirmed Kohli's suggestions not to address attractions, themes and motivations as "dark" when interviewing tourists who attended a supposed-dark location (Ryan and Kohli, 2006). In fact, not all the interviewees mentioned the curiosity about the human remains displayed in the Cemetery as the main motivation. The analysis of the interviews shows that the respondents have two principal motivations to visit the site.

The first is the great desire to fulfill a gap: only local visitors shared this motivation and their answers highlight a sense of guilt for never visiting the Fontanelle Cemetery. Most Neapolitan tourists mentioned that being a citizen of their own city directly implies being engaged in a constant work of cultural heritage exploration. Consequently, since the respondents' answers show that the Fontanelle Cemetery is mainly known because of a massive word of mouth among the citizens, who form a community of heritage explorers, visiting the site is perceived as a moral task. The Fontanelle Cemetery is perceived as a place that every Neapolitan should visit once in a lifetime. Therefore, the visit to such a site is not always planned with a specifically dark purpose in mind; many other interests pushed Neapolitans and foreigners to the Fontanelle Cemetery, among these the interest in the neighborhood to local history (Pécsek, 2015; Tarlow, 2005).

The second most important motivation perceived by the interviewees to visit the site is the great fascination with mystery, esoterism, ancient legends and human remains. With no sensible difference, both tourists who joined a guided tour and autonomous tourists perceived the site as typically Neapolitan. The Fontanelle Cemetery embodies all the characteristics of Neapolitan

tradition, perceived by a significant number of respondents as mysterious, esoteric and halfway between sacred and pagan. The elements of mystery attracting the respondents are the presence of a cult connected with the adoption of unknown skulls and the structure itself of the site, a huge cave not far from the city center.

Furthermore, the possibility of encountering human remains is mentioned as an important motivation to visit the site. In this sense, a certain morbid curiosity (Dunkley, 2006) is certainly a key element. Skulls are the main elements featured in pictures and websites the interviewees have used in search of information about the site. Consequently the place is mostly identified with the abandoned skulls portrayed as catchy marketing tools.

5.2 Experience

The analysis of the respondents' answers shows that all the interviewees perceived the Fontanelle Cemetery as a unique place which provided a unique experience. The site is a place to experience a bizarre and unusual visit (Ashworth and Hartmann, 2005) and the interviewees describe the whole environment as something completely new and different from any other site they have visited. The most impressive experiences reported by the respondents are the encounter with the human remains displayed everywhere and the particular atmosphere perceived.

The Fontanelle Cemetery could have been negatively perceived as a dark cave filled with human remains, skulls and bones staring at the visitors from every corner. On the contrary, it did not instill any of the respondents with sensations of macabre, suffering, bother and grief. Interestingly, almost every interviewee reported a clear atmosphere of tranquility, peacefulness and serenity: a perfect place to meditate and reflect. Although it is in a high-populated district, not far from the center, the inside of the cave is quiet and peaceful. The interviewees' descriptions perfectly framed the site into the model of city cemetery as alternative tourist destination far from the chaotic urban area (Pècsek, 2015). From the big windows on the left corridor, it is even possible to see glimpses of nature and light, penetrating into the shady environment, is reported to generate a cinematographic effect, which was still in tourists' minds after the visit, captured in a photo or simply remembered.

Additionally, the encounter with the human remains plays a crucial role in the respondents' experience. None of the interviewees described this encounter negatively as oppressive, morbid or macabre. On the contrary, the skulls were considered with tenderness, interest and curiosity. According to the analysis of the interviews conducted with the tourists, this positive experience is principally due to two factors: the atmosphere and the humanization of the bones.

As mentioned, all the respondents described the atmosphere of the Fontanelle Cemetery as relaxing, reassuring and meditative. The site is not totally in the dark, cinematographic lights penetrate the shadows and provide spectacular effects. For this reason, the encounter with the human remains does not take place in a dark narrow environment. On the contrary, a respondent describes the site as closer to a “British country cemetery” (Silvana, 64, teacher, Naples, Autonomous tourist), with the associated categories of peace, nature and quietness. In this sense, the corridors filled with bones are more spectacular than macabre in the eyes of a significant number of respondents.

Secondly, the interviewees did not simply perceive the human remains as corpses, dismembered cadavers now slowly falling to pieces: thanks to a process of humanization, bones are not experienced as symbols of decay. The analysis of the interviews shows that this process is possible thanks to legends told by the guides and the traces of the cult. The interviewees mentioned tales, stories and legends about specific skulls as a way not to consider the remains as cadavers but more like characters of a story. In this sense, this strategy of storytelling managed not only to amuse the participants, but also to make their encounter with death more acceptable.

Additionally, traces of the cult worked in the same direction. The worshipped skulls are still easy to identify: they have been put inside small temples, lying on soft pillows; most of them are marked with personal items which have been left there. Namely, the presence of the human touch, of personal items which reminded visitors of everyday life, are a second element in the process of humanization which made easier for a significant number of respondents to face the great amount of human remains.

5.3 Evaluations

Almost all of the respondents evaluated positively the site, especially when comparing what they expected and what they actually found at the Fontanelle Cemetery. A significant number of respondents expected to visit a catacomb or a cemetery. The emotions these respondents connected to these kinds of places are sadness and unpleasantness; on the contrary, the Fontanelle Cemetery was described as reassuring, relaxing and meditative. Accordingly, the previous expectations have not been fulfilled and this generated a sense of surprise, which enhanced the positive feelings perceived at the site.

In this sense, the positive feedback provided by the respondents brings to conclusions in line with Lantermann’s findings (2007). Interestingly, the Fontanelle Cemetery and Body Worlds are not too different from each other. They both are purposefully built (Seaton, 2009) around a display

of human bodies (raw bones in the former, plastinated corpses in the latter). More importantly, they both have been prepared (by Gaetano Barbati the former, by Gunther Von Hagens the latter) in order to provide visitors with an experience of meditation and reflection about their human condition. Lantermann (2007) stressed that a cemetery is not always expected to instill visitors with a sensation of meditation, while an exhibition such as Body Worlds, which was explicitly managed in this sense (with even philosophers' quotes about death written on panels), was more likely to achieve this purpose. In this case, even the Fontanelle Cemetery was originally managed for a purpose of meditation. Clearly, Barbati's outcome was religious, while Von Hagens is a scientist, but both the exhibitions provoked the same kind of reflections in their visitors. People who experienced Body Worlds were deeply affected by the view of their mortality (Lantermann, 2007) and, after the tour at the Fontanelle Cemetery, Vincenza even reflected about the cremation she had been planning so long, questioning her beliefs, Dario was still reflecting about life as struggle and man's mortality just like many others. Surely, the visit to the Fontanelle Cemetery provided these respondents with so-called "mortality moments" (Sharpley, 2009).

Many interviewees debated about the free access and its related issues: whether entrance fees are fair or not to get access to places considered sacred, who should benefit from these incomes and, lastly, whether commercialization can negatively affect the integrity of the site (Seaton, 2009). Some were horrified by tickets, cigarettes and other materials left on the human remains, as an act of profanation. On the contrary, some others interpreted it as a sign of shorter distance between the living and the dead, a sign that sometimes we can touch death without any fear, literally (Tercier, 2005).

Interestingly, it is exactly the public mismanagement of the site which generates a less formal atmosphere, experienced by tourists as positive in their encounter with death, as stressed by Corrado. Even one of the respondents was so attracted to those skulls to leave a bus ticket within the human remains, "I know, I was not rational, but I felt engaged in that scene and I felt I had to do that" (Tiziana, 47, teacher, Naples, Autonomous tourist). As existing literature has shown, tourists are people who experience the site also at an immediately bodily and sensuous level (Edensor, 2001; Baerenholdt, 2004; Crouch, 2005; Crouch and Lubben, 2003). Tourists aim to perceive certain qualities in first person, to feel the atmosphere, to look for an intimate experience (Trauer, 2006).

5.4 Further inquiries

Apart from confirming existent literature and finding a place in current scholarship, the results question some concepts of the dark tourism field. Interviewees' answers fit Seaton's theory about dark tourism as a new social institution (Seaton, 2009). Both the guided tours and the autonomous visits provided positive feedback about the encounter with the human remains and tourists' considerations about final demise (Whalley and Lantermann, 2005). Additionally, this encounter was extremely simplified and filtered by the particular atmosphere at the site and the process of humanization of the human remains. Namely, the analysis shows that visiting the Fontanelle Cemetery is a perfect way of experiencing death in the safe area of tourism (Seaton, 2009).

Seaton's theory relies on the paradox of present-absent death, according to which death is disappeared from public gaze and everyday life, leaving people more uncertain and unprepared when it is time to deal with their own demise (Shilling, 1993; Willmott, 2000). Nevertheless, according to the interviews' results, in this case the perspective may be overestimated. Some of the interviewees claimed to be used to the sight of death (or its traces). The majority of this subgroup was composed by medical doctors, nurses, healthcare assistants, but some others were simply people who experienced a loss of a member of the family. According to Shilling and Willmott (2003), medicalisation made Western people lose contact with death, closing it in a private world of specialists and sterilized spaces. Still, in this sense the hospital and the whole system of medicalization, as just like dark tourism, seems a social institution able to make people experience death in a comfort zone: the hospital, the burial ceremony.

In this sense, the actual presence of death in people's lives could need further inquiry, in order to grasp a better understanding of the current relationship between people's lives and experience of death. Even though nowadays, in Western countries, the experience of death is less public and more private, this does not exclude the importance of experiences connected with death within the medicalisation paradigm. Ignoring this would mean not considering people's agency.

Additionally, data provided by the research conducted with visitors of the Fontanelle Cemetery highlighted another interesting direction of inquiry: the importance of tales and stories in addressing the encounter with human remains. The interest of tourists in great personalities' life stories, when visiting their resting places, has already been addressed (Pécsek, 2015). On the contrary, the Cemetery of Fontanelle's uniqueness is featuring unknown remains able to establish a relationship of intimacy with the visitor. This relationship is possible principally because of the aforementioned atmosphere of serenity perceived at the site. Even so, it must not be forgotten the

role that the imagined life stories (or the ones told, as for the legends referred to individual skulls) played in fostering visitors' confidence and curiosity towards these traces of death.

To conclude, on the website of Insolita Guida it can be read "May children visit the Fontanelle Cemetery? Yes. Of course, it is an ossuary but they will be amazed by the different stories of the skulls" (www.insolitaguida.it). Going after the Bones Collective's approach and thus adopting the concept of agency to bones and human remains (from "what do people do with bones?" to "what do bones do with people?") it could be wondered how much life people see in death, instead of how much death they see in their lives.

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Appendix 1

Overview of the respondents (in order of interview date):

Name	Sex	Age	Profession	Place of Birth	Guided Tour
Alessandra	Female	24	Student	Naples	IRIS Fontanelle
Vincenza	Female	48	Teacher	Naples	IRIS Fontanelle
Alessandro	Male	35	Employee	Naples	IRIS Fontanelle
Alessia	Female	35	Teacher	Naples	IRIS Fontanelle
Dario	Male	27	Doctor	Naples	IRIS Fontanelle
Maura	Female	43	Receptionist	Sydney	IRIS Fontanelle
Laura	Female	65	Teacher	Rome	Insolita Guida
Mario	Male	53	Doctor	Foggia	Insolita Guida
Maria	Female	36	Employee	Caserta	Insolita Guida
Maddalena	Female	41	Teacher	Naples	Insolita Guida
Antonella	Female	46	Teacher	Naples	Insolita Guida
Raffaele	Male	30	Chef	Naples	Insolita Guida
Mariangela	Female	65	Custodian	Naples	Autonomous
Salvatore	Male	28	Computer technician	Naples	IRIS Fontanelle
Lucrezia	Female	42	Housewife	Pescara	Insolita Guida
Giusy	Female	37	Radiologist	Turin	Insolita Guida
Mary	Female	32	Photographer	Rome	Insolita Guida
Tania	Female	45	Dentist	Salerno	Autonomous
Paolo	Male	46	Insurance agent	Rome	Autonomous
Tiziana	Female	47	Teacher	Naples	Autonomous
Silvana	Female	64	Teacher	Naples	Autonomous
Raffaella	Female	85	Retired	Benevento	Autonomous
Nina	Female	72	Retired	Naples	Autonomous
Fulvio	Male	69	Banker	Naples	Autonomous
Mirta	Female	37	Manager	Rome	IRIS Fontanelle
Carmela	Female	35	Doctor	Rome	IRIS Fontanelle
Lina	Female	32	Tourist guide	Naples	Insolita Guida (tour leader)

Emanuele	Male	23	Student	Naples	IRIS Fontanelle (tour leader)
Corrado	Male	46	Dentis	Naples	Autonomous

Appendix 2

Code list

1. Motivations

1.1 *Expectations*

1.1.1 Bones

1.1.2 Stories

1.1.2.1 The captain

1.1.2.2 Mother Concetta

1.1.2.3 Saint Vincent

1.1.3 Guided tour

1.1.4 Cult

1.1.5 High expectations

1.1.6 Low expectations

1.1.7 Sanità (the district)

1.2 *Information*

1.2.1 Internet

1.2.1.1 Facebook

1.2.1.2 Other websites

1.2.2 Word of Mouth

1.2.2.1 Friends' feedback

1.3 *Similar Sites*

1.3.1 Ossuaries

1.3.1.1 Capuchins

1.3.1.2 War ossuaries

1.3.2 Catacombs

1.3.2.1 San Gaudioso

1.3.2.2 Neapolitan sites

1.3.2.3 Catacombs of Paris

1.3.3 Cemeteries

1.3.3.1 Jewish cemetery of Prague

1.3.3.2 Père-Lachaise

1.3.4 Concentration camps

1.3.5 Graveyards

1.3.6 Reliquary

1.3.7 Differences

1.3.8 Similarities

2. **Experience**

2.1 Atmosphere

2.1.1 Gloomy

2.1.2 Dark

2.1.3 Relaxing

2.1.4 Meditative

2.1.5 Oppressive

2.1.6 Spectacular

2.2 Bones

2.2.1 Profanation

2.2.1.1 Junk

2.2.1.2 Footsteps

2.2.1.3 Coins

2.2.1.4 Other tourists

2.2.1.5 Management

2.2.2 Respect

2.2.2.1 Sanctity

2.2.3 Scientific interest

2.2.4 Children

2.3 Focus

2.3.1 Ossoteca

2.3.2 The Calvary

2.4.4 The Tribunal

2.4.5 Skulls

2.4.6 Structure

- 2.4.6.1 Tuff cave
- 2.4.6.2 Light
 - 2.4.6.2.1 Windows
 - 2.4.6.2.2 Pictures
- 2.4.6.3 Environment
- 2.4.6.4 Cathedral

2.4 Death

3. **Evaluation**

3.1 Tourists

- 3.1.2 Laughs
- 3.1.3 Photographs
- 3.1.4 Respect

3.2 Management

- 3.2.1 Negative
 - 3.2.1.1 Suggestions
- 3.2.2 Positive
- 3.2.3 Free access
- 3.2.4 Human remains

3.3 Final feedback

- 3.3.1 Higher than the expectation
- 3.3.2 Lower than the expectation

3.3 Reflections

- 3.3.1 Final demise
- 3.3.2 Mortality
- 3.3.3 Human condition

Appendix 3

Interview Guide for tourists

The interviews were structured in 12 questions, equitably divided to address tourist's Motivation, Experience and post-visit Evaluation. However, the structure of the interview has been integrated with follow-up questions in accordance with each specific respondent.

In the Motivation section, great attention has been paid to avoid references to dark tourism, considering that tourists visiting sites labeled as dark do not always mention any dark reason (Ryan and Kohli, 2006) or dark interest (Pécsek, 2015). The aim was to receive answers not filtered by the researcher's expectations (Reader, 2003). In this sense, question number 4 tackles previous experiences in similar sites to verify which places tourists connect to the Fontanelle Cemetery. Question number 2 investigates how the respondents received information about the Fontanelle Cemetery, in order to take into account specific issues of the decision-make phase (Cohen, 2004) and, in particular, the influence of media on tourists' choices (Bloom, 2000).

The Experience section aims to collect information about tourists' emotional experiences at the Fontanelle Cemetery, addressing the encounter with the human remains (Krompotich, 2010), the atmosphere perceived and their favourite area. At this point, even if question number 8 is priming, it is located in the second half of the interview, and it might help to press the respondents about this crucial information.

Finally, the last section of the questionnaire tackles tourists' post-visit evaluations, addressing their final feedback about the management of the site, other tourists' behavior at the site, any cause of reflection generated by the tour and a comparison with their previous expectations (Seaton, 2009).

Motivation

- 1) What pushed you to visit the Fontanelle Cemetery?
- 2) Did you get any information about the site before going there? If yes, how?
- 3) What did you expect from the visit?
- 4) Did you visit other similar sites before? If yes, why and where?

Experience

- 5) What sensations did you receive from the site? What was the atmosphere?
- 6) Specifically, how was it for you to watch all those human remains?

- 7) Did you get impressed by any specific area/feature? Why?
- 8) Did it make you reflect about death, and if so, in what way? Is something changed in the way you think about death?

Evaluation

- 9) Are you satisfied of the visit at the light of your initial expectations?
- 10) Did you grasp any particular stimulus of reflection from the visit?
- 11) How do you evaluate other tourists' behaviours?
- 12) How do you evaluate the management of the site? Was it well maintained? Which information were provided?

Interview Guide for the tourist guides

The interviews with the tourist guides were structured in three sections. The first 4 questions explore how the tour is structured, what is stressed in the different steps and which is the association's mission. The Association section aims to tackle the influence of different approaches on tourists' visits (Blyablina, 2015).

Hence, the second section addresses the relationship between the guide and the tourists, the way in which the guide perceive the visitors, their feedback and, consequently, how the tour responds to these requests (Schmidt, 1979). Finally, the third part explores how the guide perceive the main features and the tourist attractiveness of the Fontanelle Cemetery.

Association

- 1) Talking about your tour at the Fontanelle Cemetery, how is it divided? Which features do you consider in the different sections?
- 2) Which aspects do you highlight the most in your tour?
- 3) What is your association's mission and how does the tour fit it?
- 4) Did you previously work in other ossuaries, cemeteries or catacombs as tourist guide? If yes, which approach did you adopt?

Tourists

- 5) What do you think tourists are more interested in? How does the tour fit these interests?
- 6) Which are the most common reflections and questions coming from the tourists?
- 7) What were the most strange moments and visitors you encountered?

- 8) Which is your point of view on the general motivations, experiences and evaluations of the tourists?

The site

- 9) What are the Cemetery's unique features? Which is its tourist attractiveness?
- 10) Did you visit the Cemetery of Fontanelle as a tourist, before or after becoming a tourist guide? If yes, how was your experience there? How did it possibly influence your approach as a guide?