Stories as a Tourist Experience Design Tool

Gianna Moscardo

Sad is the man who is asked for a story
And can't come up with one (Lee 1957).

Abstract Stories are a fundamental and universal form of human communication and learning [Bruner, Telling stories: Language, narrative and social life. Georgetown University Press, 2010]. People use stories to organise, understand, learn, remember and communicate about the world [Herman, Storytelling and the sciences of mind. MIT Press, 2013]. It is not surprising then that stories have been discussed in literature linked to design thinking [Brown, Change by design. Harper Collins, 2009], design science [Hatchuel, Journal of Management and Governance 5(3):260–273, 2001] and user, consumer and tourist experiences [IDEO, Design thinking for educators, 2012; Battarbee, Proceedings of the 2003 international conference on designing pleasurable products and interfaces. ACM, 2003; Mathisen, Advances in Hospitality and Leisure 8:21–41, 2012]. While stories are often mentioned as elements of design and user experience or as key methods to understand experience, their use as a framework to guide the design process has not been examined in detail. Within the literature on consumer experience stories have been linked to drama and theatre [Pine and Gilmore, The experience economy: Work is theatre and every business a stage. Cambridge, 1999], but this use of the theatre metaphor has been criticized as a unidimensional and superficial treatment of experience [Gelter, Articles on experiences, 2006; Lugosi and Walls, Journal of Destination Marketing and Management, 2(2):51–58, 2013]. This chapter goes beyond both the use of stories as a method of understanding user experience and the dramaturgical approach to consumer and tourist experience to present stories as a framework for guiding the design of tourist experience opportunities. It begins by outlining the parameters of the topic and defining the main concepts of stories and experience. It then analyses the relationship between stories and tourism identifying the major dimensions of tourist stories and their links to design and experience. These dimensions and analysis provide a foundation for a story framework to guide tourist experience design.

G. Moscardo (✉)
James Cook University, Townsville, QLD, Australia
e-mail: gianna.moscardo@jcu.edu.au

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Once Upon a Time: Setting the Scene with Definitions and Delineations

> Every short story must include a setting. It provides the backdrop of the story, establishing the time, place, and context (Hood 2011).

1 Introduction

Cross (2001) provides a history and overview of three different traditions within design—design science (Fuller 1975), the science of design (Simon 1969), and design thinking (Brown 2009). While these three traditions come from different disciplines and continue to develop in distinctive ways, there is considerable convergence between them (Cross 2001). This convergence can be seen in both their definitions of design and their descriptions of the major components of design, as summarised in Table 1. Common elements in all three approaches include making decisions based on evidence about user intentions and evaluations, taking a holistic approach to problems and opportunities, and combining creativity and science for more effective innovation. Two concepts common to all three design traditions are stories and experiences.

2 What Is Experience?

Experience is conceptualized in two main ways in these design literatures. Firstly, it is used to summarize user perspectives and behaviours related to the designed product or service (IDEO 2012). Secondly, it is used to describe the outcome of the design process (Hatchuel 2001). So experience is simultaneously the thing being designed and user responses to that designed thing. In the former sense experience is what happens when users interact with the design and in the latter sense experience is about how users make sense of, evaluate and communicate about these interactions with the design.

Similar approaches to the use of the experience construct also exist in the consumer and tourism literature. In this chapter a tourist experience will be defined as a memorable episode within the constant stream of activity and sensory input that make up human lives, that occurs within a specific time period and spatial context, and that is associated with emotional responses, personal meaning and significant memories (Lugosi and Walls 2013; Moscardo 2009). This definition combines both aspects of experience and focusses attention on how tourists act in, make sense of, and evaluate specific episodes while they are in tourist settings. This definition was also chosen because it recognises that many tourist experiences

Table 1 Design definitions and elements in the three traditions

Tradition	Design science	Science of design	Design thinking
Definition of design	"Design is the deliberate ordering of components to realize intention" (Fuller quoted in Ben-Eli 2006)	"The essence of design is to devise courses of action aimed at changing existing situations into preferred ones" (Glaser 1976, p. 6)	"An intentional process in order to get new relevant solutions that create positive impacts" (IDEO 2012, p. 11)
Key elements in, or features of, the design process	Identifying intentions Formulating alternatives Realizing the chosen alternative Operating it Transformation	Proactive problem solving based on evidence from use Creative generation of solutions Adoption of innovation	Discovery Interpretation Ideation Experimentation Evolution

Sources: Ben-Eli (2006), Glaser (1976), and Goes (2014)

occur outside of and beyond the control of commercial and other management organizations (Darmer and Sundbo 2008; Lugosi and Walls 2013). This matters because unlike many other products and services, most tourist experiences have not been subject to any formal design process. Finally, in this definition experiences occur within the mind of the individual. In other words, if the individual cannot or does not focus their attention on an episode and recognise it as meaningful and memorable then it is not an experience. Thus organizations do not design experiences per se, they design and offer opportunities for individuals to create their own experiences. Whilst recognising the importance of this co-creation reality (Battarbee 2003), this chapter will use the phrase experience design as a shortcut to describe the design of experience opportunities.

3 What Is a Story?

While experience has been a central concept in both design and tourism, stories are a commonly mentioned but much less analysed idea. Neither the design nor tourism literature has focussed much attention on defining a story. Stories have, however, been subject to considerable analysis in other disciplines. There is a general agreement that a story is a description of an event or set of connected events, the reactions of characters to that event, their decisions and the consequences of these reactions and decisions (Adaval and Wyer 1998). All stories have a setting, characters, and plots which link actions to consequences and reactions (Chaitlin 2003; Herman 2013). According to Aristotle a story must have an adventure in which something unexpected, atypical or surprising happens (Husain 2002). The story then offers actions involving the events and reactions of the different characters to these events, followed by a resolution (Husain 2002). A story is therefore more than just a description of events, it is a form of entertainment that aims to

produce an emotional or affective response in its audience (Stein 1982; Brewer and Lichtenstein 1982).

In cognitive psychology stories are recognised as a universal structure for organising, storing and communicating experience (Stein 1982). There is substantial evidence from cognitive psychology (Brewer and Lichtenstein 1981; Bruner 2010; Herman 2010, 2013; Hogan 2011; Mandler 1984; Stein 1982), marketing (cf., Lundqvist et al. 2013), environmental education (cf., Shen et al. 2014) and heritage interpretation (Moscardo and Ballantyne 2008) that stories are the way people think about what happens in their lives, organise their memories and talk to others. If stories are universal, commonly used cognitive structures for organising and storing information about experiences, then it is not surprising to find that stories are also suggested as important tools for communication and education, in the design literature (Simon 1980; IDEO 2012), in advertising (cf., Green et al. 2004), and in heritage interpretation for visitors (cf., Curthoys et al. 2012).

This use of stories as an informative or educational tool recognises that stories have more than just cognitive functions they also have critical social functions. These social functions can be classified into two categories. The first includes functions related to personal development. Stein (1982) proposes that stories can help people resolve personal problems by providing examples of likely consequences from different decisions. Herman (2013) also argues that stories set out problems and their resolution, offering guidance to the listener/reader on what is normal and expected. The second category of social functions focusses more on the role of stories in establishing and maintaining social order by providing examples of what is socially acceptable and demonstrating the negative consequences of going outside these boundaries (Bruner 2010). Fables, parables and many stories told to children are typical examples of this story function.

The importance and universality of these story functions supports the idea that there exist universal archetypes for story plots, characters and themes (Mandler 1984; Hogan 2011). While there is widespread support for the existence of archetypes, there is little agreement on how many and what these archetypes are. One of the most common sets of story plot archetypes is that of Booker (2006) who described seven basic story plots—overcoming the monster and escaping death, rags to riches, the quest, a voyage and return, comedy, tragedy, and rebirth. Hogan (2011) argues for three archetypes, the heroic quest focussed on anger, pride and suffering; the romance focussed on happiness, union and attachment; and the sacrifice. Moraru (2011) describes six archetypal plots—creation, a hero's adventure, love, revival, return to origins and the sly trickster. There are multiple lists of archetypal characters but some common to most lists include the hero/heroine, the explorer, the adventurer, the artist, the magician, the warrior, the rebel, and the jester (Acuff 2010; Moraru 2011). Suggestions for universal story themes include death, survival under threat, family interactions, heroism, altruism, and standing against injustice (Davis and McLeod 2003; Sugiyama 2001).

Before examining how stories have been considered in the design and tourism literatures it is important to discuss what a story is not. The terms story and narrative, for example, are often used interchangeably but they are not the same

thing. Narrative has been used in two quite different ways, both of which are distinct from stories. In one tradition a narrative is seen as the description of a specific sequence of events presented in linear temporal order. This use of narrative sees them as "knowledge structures that consist of a sequence of thematically and temporally related events" (Adaval and Wyer 1998, p. 208) and stories then are a particular type of narrative distinguished by the goals of creating an emotional or affective response, providing explanations or interpretations of the events, and entertaining an intended audience (Stein 1982; Brewer and Lichtenstein 1982). In the second tradition the term narrative refers to a broad theme that connects a series of stories. In this use of narrative, stories are descriptions of particular events and a narrative is a theme that connects these stories and offers some more abstract or fundamental meaning (Chaitlin 2003; Halverson 2011). An example of this connection between stories and narrative as a theme can be found in Carl Hiaasen's series of crime novels set in Florida in the United States. Each novel has a different set of characters, often a different location and a different set of events but together they consistently portray tourism development as a negative and destructive force, consistent with Hiaasen's stated goal to use his novels to discourage tourists from coming to Florida (Hiaasen 2014). This concern about the destructive nature of tourism is the underlying narrative that links the stories presented in the novels.

In a similar fashion stories are linked to, but not the same as theatrical performances. At the simplest level not all stories are presented through theatre and not all theatrical performances are stories. While this may seem self-evident it is an important distinction in the present context because of the dominance of the dramaturgical approach or theatre metaphor in discussions of consumer and tourist experiences. MacCannell (1973) introduced the theatre metaphor to describe tourism based on Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical approach to social life. In this approach all social life is seen as being like a theatre with a front stage where social roles are performed for audiences and a backstage where performers can rest and prepare away from the audience gaze. MacCannell (1973) applied this to tourist spaces arguing that tourists are driven by a desire to look behind the curtain and see the backstage in other places and cultures. He further argued that they were never likely to achieve this, as all tourist places offer either a frontstage or a false backstage. In MacCannell's tourism as theatre metaphor, the tourist is always in the audience, plays no real part in the experiences on offer, and is usually unaware that he/she is being duped into thinking otherwise.

Pine and Gilmore (1999) revisited the drama metaphor describing the management of consumer experiences as a type of theatre production. In this more descriptive use of drama, the business designs the appropriate setting, offers props, structures a sequence of actions, and encourages staff to play a role akin to being in a theatrical performance (Harris et al. 2003). Experience design is then considered as a process of deciding on the production aspects of this performance (Zomerdijk and Voss 2010). Despite the appeal of this metaphor it has been critiqued with concerns raised about the treatment of consumers as passive participants within the experience, an almost exclusive focus on the staging rather than the meaning of experiences, and a tendency towards homogenisation of experiences

(Lugosi and Walls 2013). It has been argued that applications of this theatre metaphor rarely explicitly consider the role of the consumer in these produced experiences, and where it is described they are typically presented as the audience (Baron et al. 2001; Morgan et al. 2008). A wider set of roles for tourists could include voyeur, passive spectator, active audience member, critic, connoisseur, supporting cast member or extra, script writer, set designer, lead actor or director (Morgan et al. 2008; Williams and Anderson 2005). As noted by Mathisen (2013) and Williams and Anderson (2005), there are more roles for tourists within dramatic experiences than are usually considered, and arguably there are more stories than are, or can be, told through drama.

4 Stories in Tourism

There are two main themes in discussions of stories in the tourism literature—one that focusses on the stories about places told to tourists and one that focusses on the stories about experiences told by tourists to others. This first theme of the stories told about destination places to tourists can be further broken down into two areas, one concerned with destination representations and one with heritage interpretation. There is a long history of tourism studies analysing the ways in which destinations are represented in tourism marketing and management (Chronis 2012a). Central to these discussions are questions of how these destination representations influence tourist choices and actions and how various stories and myths are used to create these representations (Salazar 2012). Of particular concern in this work is whose stories are chosen to be told to tourists (cf. Hunter 2011) and how stories are created and/or changed in the process of building and selling destination images (cf., Larson et al. 2013). Discussion of how stories are chosen for presentation to tourists is also a major topic in heritage interpretation with similar concerns over whose stories are told and whose are ignored (Moscardo 2015). In both these areas there is also recognition of the power of place stories for building destination images, encouraging visitation and influencing tourist expectations and behaviours (Moscardo 2015; Salazar 2012).

The second theme focusses on the stories that tourists tell others about their travels. The bulk of this research uses these tourist stories as data collection tools to access to other variables (Botterill and Platenkamp 2012). Growth in online presentation of tourist stories has renewed interest in stories as a research tool (Banyai and Glover 2012). Research about the stories themselves is much less common with the most extensive program in this area offered by Woodside and colleagues (Woodside et al. 2008, 2007; Hsu et al. 2009; Martin et al. 2007). This research analyses the stories that tourists tell about their experiences in different cities in Asia and Italy and has generated a set of five principles linking stories to tourism:

- Stories are the way people think about their experiences;
- Stories are the way people store information in their memory;

- Stories are the way people make sense of the world;
- People tell stories about their travel because it is pleasurable and allows them to relive archetypal myths; and
- Companies can assist people in developing these experience stories.

The first four principles are consistent with what is already known about stories from cognitive psychology and other areas. The fifth principle proposes that tourist experience design should, at least, consider the ways in which experiences contribute to tourists' stories.

Moscardo (2010) expanded on this fifth principle and attempted to link the two traditions of place stories and tourist stories by connecting research about stories of places in heritage interpretation to the design of tourist experiences using the concept of mindfulness. Mindfulness theory is a type of dual processing theory from psychology that argues in any given situation people can be either:

- Mindful, defined as a type of deeper cognitive processing associated with greater mental activity and focused attention to the immediate situation that supports learning, better decision making and problem-solving, more positive affect and enhanced memory (Langer and Moldoveanu 2000), or
- Mindless, defined as shallow cognitive processing with little attention given to the immediate situation, behaviour guided by established routines, poor decision-making, feelings of boredom and poor memory (Langer 2009).

It has been argued that it is desirable to encourage tourists to be mindful (Ablett and Dyer 2009; Frauman and Norman 2004; Moscardo 2009). It has also been argued that mindfulness is a necessary prerequisite for a tourist experience as tourists must remember a set of events in order to recognise it as an experience (Tung and Ritchie 2011).

Moscardo (2009) noted that there was considerable consistency in the factors that encourage mindfulness in general and the factors associated with effective and memorable tourist experiences including:

- Unique, rare, novel or surprising elements;
- Variety across a range of experience features;
- Multi-sensory immersive settings;
- Perceived authenticity;
- Opportunities for interaction and participation;
- Allowing the individual to control aspects of the experience and make decisions;
- Personal relevance through connections to personal history or meeting individual needs;
- Perceived authenticity;
- Opportunities for learning;
- The use of consistent themes, especially archetypal ones; and
- The presentation of the experience as a story.

In 2010 Moscardo expanded this discussion of mindfulness and tourist experiences by arguing that stories should be the central element of on-site experiences.

In particular, she used the connections between stories and mindfulness to recommend that tourist settings be designed to support both the telling of stories to tourists and to allow tourists to enact, create or recreate stories, especially those based around archetypes. Like Woodside and colleagues (2008), Moscardo (2010) makes the suggestion that stories be used to guide experience design but does not elaborate in any detail on how this could be done.

5 Stories and Design

The discussion of stories in the three design traditions has focussed mainly on using stories as a research tool to study user experience and understand how people use and evaluate products and services (Brown 2009). In this case the word story is used to describe a simple narrative in which people describe their use of a product or service. A similar use of stories is given in discussions of how to explain the design process to key participants (IDEO 2012). There has also been some mention of stories as providing a holistic way to think about design (Hatchuel 2001). These exceptions aside, there has been little detailed analysis of stories in this literature.

In summary, what is sometimes hinted at (McLellan 2000), but rarely explicitly addressed, in the design literature is that stories, as they are defined for this chapter, might be used to guide the design process. What has been proposed (Woodside et al. 2008; Moscardo 2010), but not yet fully examined, in the tourist experience literature is how stories might be used to more centrally guide the design process. The rest of this chapter will describe a story framework for tourist experience design. Before presenting this framework it is important though to map out the main dimensions of stories in tourism.

6 Finding the Path: Dimensions of Stories and Links to Tourist Experience

> The universe is made of stories,
> not atoms (Rukeyser 2000, p. 133).

An examination of Woodside and colleagues' (Woodside et al. 2008) and Moscardo's (2010) work on tourist stories indicates that they are operating on two different levels of analysis. The former looks at the stories that tourists tell about their travel to a whole destination, while the latter looks mainly at the stories connected to a specific experience within a destination. Figure 1 demonstrates the three main levels at which tourist stories can be analysed and how each is embedded in the next. At the top level is the ongoing life story of the individual tourist. It could be argued that this is less of a story and more of a narrative theme that contributes to their personal and social identity. At this level stories about whole trips contribute

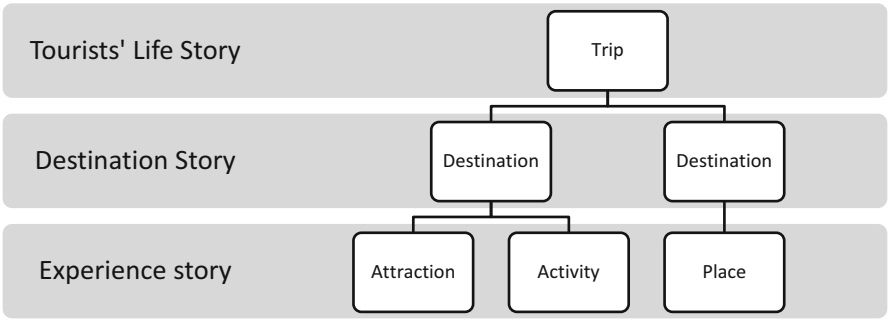

Fig. 1 Levels of analysis for tourist stories

to the narrative along with stories about work, family, and other leisure activities and incidents (McCabe and Foster 2006). The second level is the one referred to by Woodside (2010) and focusses on the story of a destination which is made up of multiple episodes. It could be argued that this level sits on the boundary between a multi-episode story and a narrative theme. The third level is the one focussed on by Moscardo (2010), which are the stories linked to experiences of specific places, attractions or activities within a destination. Within this third level a story can be either linked to a single location, for example within a specific historic site, or could be told across several locations, such as is encountered in a guided walking tour of an historic district. While it is possible to consider tourist experience design issues related to the second level, the destination story, this chapter will concentrate on the lowest level, the experience story.

Based on the key characteristics that define a story and existing research into tourist stories it can be suggested that there are three interconnected dimensions of tourist experience stories that need to be recognised:

– why the story matters;
– whose story is being told; and,
– what the role of the tourist is in the story.

The first dimension is that of why the story matters and it combines two concepts—the functions of stories, which can be connected to the motives of the different participants, and the timing of the story. Figure 2 provides the basic connections between these two concepts. Firstly the figure divides stories in terms of time into three categories—pre-existing stories, unfolding stories and post experience stories. Pre-existing stories are those that tourists can access before they arrive at the specific destination place, attraction or activity location which will serve as the experience setting. For tourists pre-existing stories matter because they provide information for planning and decision making. For experience managers these stories matter because they influence images of the potential experience and generate expectations that can influence on site actions (Pan et al. 2007). Pre-existing stories offer an opportunity for experience managers to encourage tourist participation and prepare them for the experience on offer. These stories

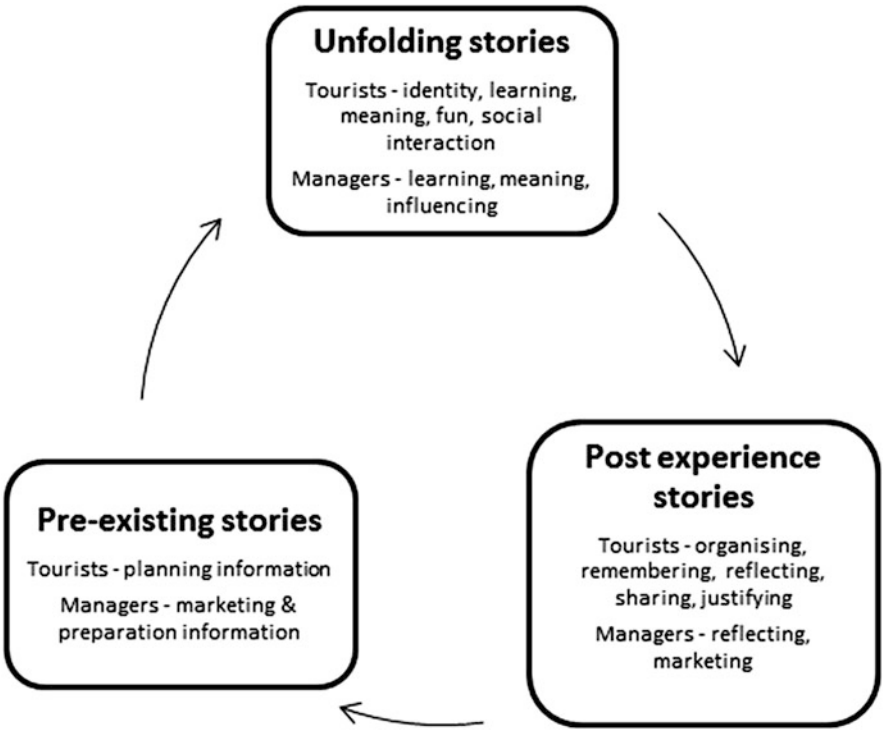

Fig. 2 Why different tourist experience stories matter

can be created either through formal marketing activities, or more informally by other tourists. The rise of travel blogs and reviews disseminated online has shifted the balance in these types of stories from the formal to the more informal (Lange-Faria and Elliot 2012).

The informal pre-existing stories that are accessed and used by tourists before they start the experience come from the post experience stories told by the tourists that have gone into the experience setting before them. For the individual tourists, telling post experience stories allows them to organise, remember and reflect on their experience, which is an important step towards integrating the experience into their destination story and the narrative of their life story. These stories also support social functions for the tourists such as connecting with significant others and enhancing social status. Post-experience stories also serve a number of functions for experience managers, such as marketing tools and as a source of service evaluations.

The stories that unfold during the experience matter to tourists in multiple ways as they provide opportunities to:

– relieve past memories and confirm identity;

– engage in challenges and/or live out imagined roles that contribute to their identity;
– share activities with others and enhance social and family bonds;
– have fun and be entertained; and
– learn about and understand the place being visited.

These different functions give meaning to the experience for the tourists. For the experience managers stories offer two main types of function. The first is that stories can enhance tourist experiences making them more satisfied customers and thus more open to management requests. The second is that stories are a useful educational tool for providing important information to tourists. Taken together these two functions support managers in their attempts to influence tourist behaviour. For some types of experience, managers want to influence tourists to buy more products or services and/or recommend the experience to others. For others, the goal may to be influence tourists to behave in more sustainable ways both on site and when they return home. Within the experience itself there are different types of unfolding story that can be distinguished by whose story is being told and the role of the tourist in the story.

Figure 3 provides an overview of the second dimension of whose story is being told. There are four main tellers of stories in a tourist experience. Firstly, there are the stories of the tourists themselves which can be used to explain who they are, why they have come to this experience setting and if and how an activity or place is significant to them personally. Such personal stories are linked to the life narrative and identity of the tourist and they are told to other tourists, to people at home and to tourist staff (Chronis 2012b; McCabe and Foster 2006). These tourist staff, especially guides and volunteers, may also tell personal stories that explain who they are, why they have come to the destination, how or why they work in tourism, and how an activity or place is significant to them personally (Moscardo 2010). These stories may be formally structured as part of the tourist experience and presented by local guides/interpreters, or they may be more informally told as part of the ongoing interaction between tourists and staff (Jennings and Weiler 2006). The various businesses and other organisations that manage and/or support the experience may also have stories that can be told (Woodside 2010). As in the previous two cases, these stories can be about the history of the organisation and its links to the destination. Finally there are the stories of the place, attraction or activity itself. These stories about the history, culture, people and environment of the place or activity are the ones most traditionally associated with tourist experiences. In many destinations these stories are central to heritage interpretation and are told through guided tours, interpretive signs, museums and guidebooks (Moscardo 2015). This dimension can also be linked to who has control over, or responsibility for, the story. On the far left of the dimension in Fig. 3 the tourist has the greatest control over and responsibility for the story, while on the far right control over and responsibility for the story resides in the experience managers. This control is also linked to the role the tourist plays in the story being told.

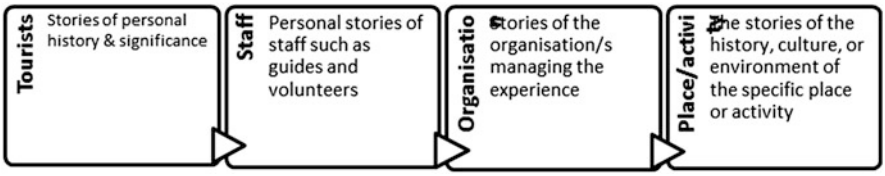

Fig. 3 Whose story is being told?

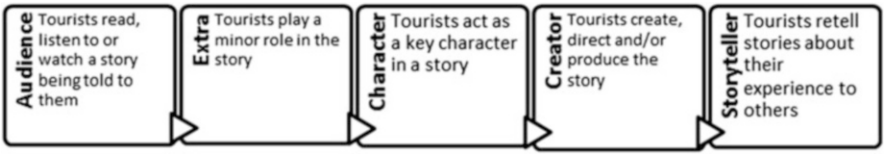

Fig. 4 What is the role of the tourist in the story being told?

One of the most common criticisms of the use of the theatre metaphor in the consumer experience literature has been that it typically limits the consumer to the role of passive audience member (Baron et al. 2001; Lugosi and Walls 2013; Morgan et al. 2008). As noted in the earlier discussion of these critiques a range of roles are possible and the key categories of these for tourists are presented in Fig. 4. In the first category tourists read stories from interpretive signs, guidebooks or websites, hear stories through various audio technologies, and/or watch stories told by guides or through audio-visual or theatrical performances. This is the most common role for tourists in destination stories and in this category they have very little control over the experience and the story is usually that of the destination place or business. In the second category tourists may be able to play a minor role in the story. For example, in many guided tours the guide may recruit members of the group to assist them. In various performances presented at tourist attractions it is also common for audience members to be asked to come on stage to assist the presenters in various ways. The control is still held by the presenters, but this option does allow the chosen tourists to build a stronger personal connection to the story.

The next two categories give much greater control and more active roles to the tourist but are much less common in traditional tourist experiences. One exception to this is the field of mobile and multimedia technology applications where considerable attention has been focussed on the use of storytelling as an educational and experience enhancement tool (Lombardo and Damiano 2012; Winer 2014). While there is some recognition of the potential for using these applications in tourism (Benckendorff et al. 2014), there have not yet been many examples in practice. Some exceptions are provided by Hansen et al. (2008, 2012) and Christrup (2008) with examples of mobile urban dramas which use mobile phones and location based technologies to provide information and options to users as they move through different spaces.

Some of the examples are summarised in Table 2 and provide a range of ideas on how tourists could be involved as either key characters in a story or as the directors

Table 2 Examples of tourist involvement in experience stories

Name	Objective	Plot synopsis	Settings	Tourist roles
Corridor[a]	Dramatic performance	A female journalist must find a PR manager to write a story due the next day. The manager keeps changing locations, her personal life becomes stressful and her boss keeps calling. A type of treasure hunt.	Different locations throughout the city	The tourist takes on the role of the journalist and moves to different locations interacting with paid actors in each location
Hikuin's Vendetta[a]	Themed self-guided tour of the city focussed on history	A murder mystery set in the year 1049 where the character Hikuin must try and solve the murder of his father.	Different locations around the city starting at the Viking Museum	The tourist takes the role of Hikuin and moves around the location, making choices that guide the story plot
The Battle for the Soul of Gullestrup[a]	Themed self-guided tour of the city aimed at new markets	An adventure story in which the key character, Mohammed, is contacted by the soul of Gullestrap asking for help to save the city from evil.	Multiple locations	The tourist takes on the main character role
Hasleinteractive[a]	Education about nature conservation (focus on children)	A science fiction thriller set in 2022 where two scientists are seeking to find out why large areas of nature are dying.	In a natural environment	Children take on the role of assisting the two scientists by conducting tests and collecting information
Black Rose Trick[b]	Tourism themed dramatic performance	A hotel has been taken over by a military regime and is in a state of emergency as a deadly virus has infected most of those in the hotel	A hotel which includes hospital ward, restaurant, casino, bar and suites	Participation ranges from voyeur where the guests can move around the space watching the performance, through acting as hotel guests making simple requests, interacting directly with the actors, to acting as a key character in the action

[a]Hansen et al. (2008, 2012)
[b]Christup (2008)

and producers of the story. They also demonstrate the power of new technologies to enhance tourist experiences. In these examples the tourist can be either the main character and/or the creator of what is explicitly presented as a story. It is also possible for tourists be the main character and/or creator of their own personal stories. These personal stories can be seen as implicit in that they are rarely described or recognised as a specific story. Mathisen's (2013) account of tourists participating in a dog sled race and a hunt for the Northern Lights in Norway provides examples of these implicit stories. Tourist directed implicit stories fall across the last two categories on this dimension in that stories created by tourist from a selection of activities available to them at a destination are likely to be told to others after the experience. The tourist as storyteller can also, however, retell stories they learn through their experiences to others after the experience and they can also tell stories as part of the experience.

Taken altogether it is clear that stories are embedded in tourist experiences in many ways and at many levels and in any given situation there may be multiple stories at play simultaneously. Figure 5 attempts to summarise these dimensions

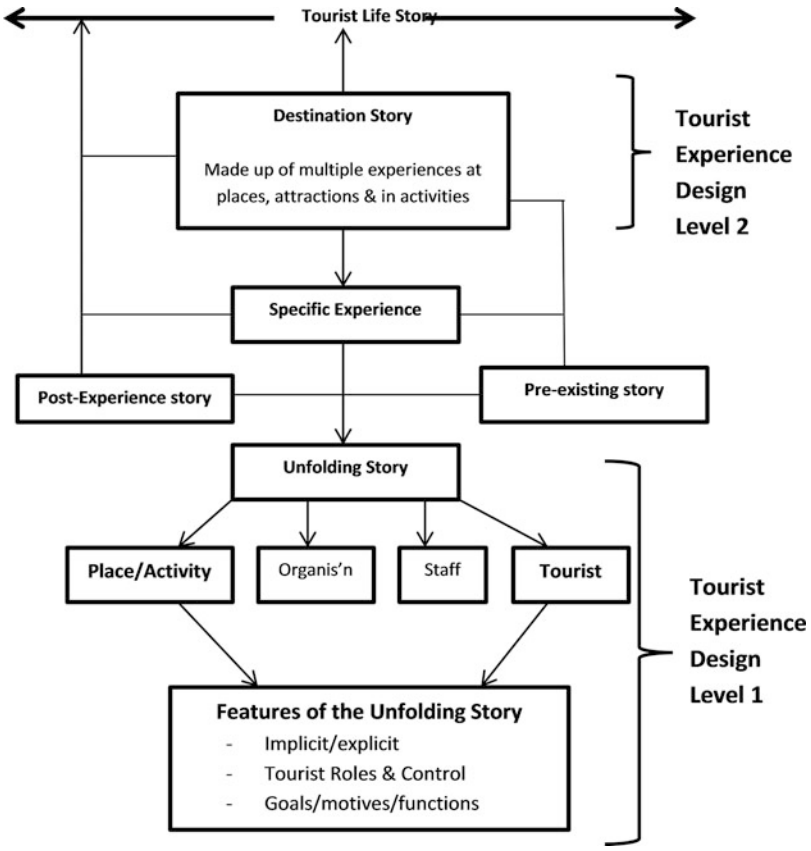

Fig. 5 A story framework for tourist experience design

and patterns and highlight where tourist experience design is most likely to be focussed. The figure indicates two levels or main areas for tourist experience design—the destination story and the unfolding story for the specific experience of a place or activity.

7 Crossing the Threshold: Using Stories to Guide Tourist Experience Design

Because the story of our life
becomes our life
Because each of us tells
the same story
but tells it differently
and none of us tells it
the same way twice (Mueller 2003)

The typical approach to customer experience design, especially when based on a theatre metaphor, starts by describing the various production elements (physical setting, servicescape, sensory inputs, logistics, and staff training) that need to be considered and directing attention to questions specifically about each production element (Chang and Lin 2015; de Farias et al. 2014: Fawcett et al. 2014; Gelter 2006; Schmitt and Zarantonello 2013; Shaw and Ivens 2005; Zomerdijk and Voss 2010). Within this approach there is sometimes discussion about the use of a theme as a guide to direct the production of these different elements (Darmer and Sundbo 2008) and occasionally awareness that decisions about experience elements should consider the story you want customers to tell others about their experience (Shaw 2005). Taking stories as the central element of experiences suggests, however, a subtle but significantly different approach in which the story comes first and design principles are focussed on creating good stories. In this approach the various production elements are then seen as tools or strategies to achieve these story design principles not design features in themselves (Wyman et al. 2011).

Using a story framework for tourist experience design is therefore based on two fundamental premises. The first is that an effective tourist experience design must be organised around and for stories, and must recognise that any given tourist experience is connected to multiple stories. The second is that an effective tourist experience must encourage participants to be mindful. Therefore we can take what we know about the factors that encourage mindfulness (Langer 2009; Moscardo 2009), what has been shown to contribute to positive evaluations of consumer and tourist experiences (Moscardo 2009; Schmitt and Zarantonello 2013), and what is known about creating good stories (Beamish and Beamish 2015; Bruner 1990; Delgadiilo and Escalas 2004; Moscardo 2010; Pollock and Bono 2013; Tu 2015) to suggest a set of 12 experience design principles which are:

- Determine key story dimensions
- Consider story content carefully

– Offer surprise, build suspense and encourage curiosity
– Plan story pacing around a main event
– Establish authentic characters
– Support physical orientation and access
– Provide good cognitive orientation
– Provide choice and control for tourists
– Include appropriate challenges for tourists
– Encourage learning
– Build in connections
– Be consistent

The first principle directs the experience designers to analyse and make decisions about the various story dimensions summarised in Fig. 5, answering questions such as:

– Is this a destination story or a story for a particular place or activity?
– Is there a single dominant story or multiple stories linked by a narrative theme?
– Will the experience offer an explicit story or a set of potential episodes for an implicit story?
– What are the functions of the story for the various participants?
– Is this a story meant to entertain, inform or transform the participants?
– Whose stories are being told?
– What roles are available for the tourist in these stories?

Once these questions are answered it should be clear what the basic nature of the key story or stories are.

The second principle is that experience designers should consider story content carefully. This directs attention to the choice of story plots and themes. In terms of plot it is important to actually ensure that the experience has the key elements that distinguish a story from a sequence of activities, that is, some sort of challenge, unexpected event or incident, the opportunity for various characters to react to this challenge, event or incident and a resolution. As noted earlier there are several common types of story plot and experience designers need to consider which is best suited to both the place/activity that is the focus of the experience, the interests and expectations of the tourists, and the constraints and opportunities of the physical setting. A guided tour of the Predjama castle in Slovenia provides an example of these choices. It is would be easy to simply present the castle in terms of the history of how and when it was built. Instead more effective guides explain why the castle was built in its location and how it was constructed to meet the needs of its occupants through the story of one inhabitant, the knight Erazem. Erazem extended the castle in order to withstand sieges and protect his people, but was ultimately betrayed by a servant and killed. His story serves as both an explanation of the construction of the castle, and also builds a story around a universal theme. The use of universal or archetypal themes is an important aspect of story content. These themes, which include dealing with and/or avoiding death, survival under threat, managing family interactions, heroism and altruism, and changing injustice (Davis

and McLeod 2003; Sugiyama 2001), can be used to both guide the choice of story and to make the experience more vivid and connected to the tourists.

An effective story offers surprise, builds suspense and encourages curiosity (Hoeken and van Vliet 2000). The Historium Brugge is a visitor attraction that provides an example of building surprise and suspense into a tourist experience. This audio guided tour takes visitors through a series of rooms and uses film and special effects to tell a story of the van Eyck painting of the Virgin and Child with Canon van der Paele, a famous artwork associated with Bruges. Rather than describe the painter and the chronology of the painting, this attraction presents a story about a young assistant of the painter who has to collect the various items and the model the master requires for the painting. The assistant is responsible for the painter's parrot which escapes creating a series of adventures generating surprise and suspense and a reason to include information about multiple historic sites around the city. This example creates surprise and suspense within the story plot. It is also possible to create surprise and suspense through the physical design of an experience setting. One commonly noted feature of the Singapore Night Safari, a nocturnal Zoo, is the design of the pathways, lighting and animal enclosures such that animals are often encountered unexpectedly and appear to be free rather than in an enclosure. This adds to the sense of the tourist being on their own personal adventure journey.

The fourth principle is to plan story pacing around a main event. As noted previously stories are defined by having a major event, incident or challenge as a focal point. An effective and entertaining story is one that builds up to this focal point at an appropriate pace and that is neither too long nor too short (Pollock and Bono 2013). Story pacing includes a number of decisions about timing including the overall length of the experience, when it is offered, the amount of time taken to get to the focal point and how many episodes are required to explain the story in enough detail for the tourists (Göbel et al. 2006). The Imhoff-Schokoladenmuseum (Chocolate Museum) in Cologne Germany, offers an example of careful pacing leading up to a focal point. The museum presents a series of exhibits explaining the origins and history of chocolate which leads tourists through to a replica of a chocolate factory demonstrating how chocolate is made and packaged. At the end of the path through the manufacturing process the tourist reaches the key focal point of the experience—a three metre high chocolate fountain—where tourists are rewarded by being given the opportunity to taste the chocolate they have seen being made.

The fifth principle focusses on another critical defining feature of a story—the characters. Authenticity is a concept that has been much discussed in the tourism literature (Zhu 2012) with more recent analysis highlighting the relevance and importance of existential authenticity (Brown 2013). Discussions of this concept focus on individuals being self-aware, true to themselves and able to experience the world without artificial social constraints (Brown 2013). There are similarities here with discussions of authenticity in stories which focus on credibility and the creation of connections between the experience of the audience or reader and the experiences and reactions of the characters in the story (Hinken 2006). Effective

stories then need to have credible characters that respond to events in ways that are familiar to the audience or reader. Using stories of real people, the incorporation of personal stories of the staff into experiences, and the use of local people as story tellers and guides, are all ways to include authentic characters in an experience story.

The evaluations of the mobile urban drama experiences summarised in Table 2 identified wayfinding or physical orientation as a major issue for the story experience participants (Hansen et al. 2012). Being lost in a physical space has been shown to be very distressing and distracting (Carlson et al. 2010). Therefore the sixth principle for experience design highlights the importance of providing easy physical orientation and access for tourists. Issues to be considered here include:

- The effectiveness and location of maps and directional signage;
- The availability of transport options to and through the setting;
- The provision of alternative forms of access for people with a diverse range of physical abilities and needs;
- Clear entrances, exits and pathways; and
- The use of physical design features such as colour or architectural style to distinguish between different areas.

Effective experiences also need to have good cognitive orientation. Cognitive orientation includes logistical information such as what tourists will need to have with them when they come into the experience, how long the experience will take, what is included in the experience and some indication of what they might expect to happen. It also includes issues of what tourists need to know to understand the experience. Freeman Tilden, an often cited author on communication with visitors in national parks quotes a colleague as saying that every guide "has the tendency to overestimate the background the tourist brings to the scene and on the other hand to underestimate the intelligence of the average visitor" (Tilden 1977, p. 46). For example, many guided tours of the Gallipoli Peninsula in Turkey focus on the World War One battle between Turkish troops and the allied forces including Australia and New Zealand. The battle is an iconic one for Australians and often cited as central to the country's identity and amongst the stories told to Australian children is one about John Simpson and his donkey who is reported as having rescued many wounded soldiers during the battle. The English language tours of Gallipoli typically include a stop at Simpson's grave. For most Australian tourists this is an important element of the tour, but it can be a confusing option for tourists from other nations who do not know the story of Simpson and his donkey and so do not appreciate the significance of the grave. It can also be seen by some New Zealanders as insulting, as it is now realised that an iconic painting of the donkey being used to assist wounded men is not of Simpson but actually of a New Zealand soldier, Dick Henderson, who has not been given the same recognition despite similar feats.

The mobile urban dramas described in Table 2 provide examples of several ways in which mobile technologies can be used to provide choice and control for tourists. Choice and control are necessary for participation and engagement and allow

tourists to co-create experiences that have greater personal relevance and meaning (Moscardo 2009). The provision of choices and control can also allow an experience to be adapted to suit a wider range of tourists. While the examples in Table 2 use technology to provide choices and to give tourists control over their experience, this principle can also be enacted through other mechanisms such as providing a range of activities that tourists can select from to make up their experiences, the provision of different themed routes through attractions and settings, and by encouraging tourists to engage in personal journeys of adventure and discovery which can be done without technology (cf., Mathisen 2013).

Mindfulness has been proposed as a necessary precondition for Csikszentmihalyi's concept of flow (Kee and Wang 2008; Wright et al. 2006). In turn flow, which refers to a positive state in which an individual is totally focussed on their activity, has been linked to positive customer and tourists experiences (Palmer 2010). Flow is most likely to occur when there is an appropriate balance between the challenges of the task or activity and the skills and abilities of the individual (Palmer 2010). When the challenge is too easily met the individual is likely to become bored and disengaged, but when the challenge is too hard and beyond the individual's skills and ability then the individual is also likely to disengage and respond negatively to the experience (Wright et al. 2006). Experience designers therefore need to consider the challenges they offer tourists in their stories and what skills, knowledge and abilities are needed to meet these challenges. For some stories this will require considering the physical abilities of tourists, for others, such as those within dark tourism sites, it may be an examination of knowledge and skills needed to deal with confronting and distressing stories, or it may be that tourists need to be able to access the appropriate information to meet challenges.

Another important aspect of flow is that individuals respond positively to increasing their skills and being able to take on greater challenges (Wright et al. 2006). This suggests that tourist experiences that encourage learning are likely to be viewed as more rewarding (Palmer 2010). This tenth principle directs experience designers to think about what they would like tourists to learn, or what take home message the experience story should have. Research into tourist evaluations of wildlife based experiences suggests that linking the experience to specific directions for how tourists can change their behaviour at home is critical to support the wider conservation goals of the experience managers (Ballantyne et al. 2007).

This research into wildlife based tourist experiences emphasizes the importance of making connections between the tourists' travel experiences and their lives at home. Building connections is the eleventh principle and includes multiple connections. At the level of the tourists it means finding ways to connect the experience story to the tourists' personal interests, to their personal narratives, to things that are relevant to their lives and to their emotions. An example of these types of connection can be found at the Neanderthal Museum in Mettman, Germany. One exhibit area in this museum presents the stories of the daily challenges faced by two families—one contemporary and one Neanderthal. Each family member provides their perspective on these challenges and their interactions and the exhibit

highlights the similarities in these stories. At the experience setting level it means connecting the story to the unique features of the place, while at the destination level it can refer to building connections between different specific experiences.

Design for experiences across multiple locations and for multiple experiences that make up a destination story must not only have clear connections between the elements, they must also be consistent in supporting the unfolding story or the underlying narrative theme. Consistency does not mean that all the production elements, including the physical design and the personal stories told by the staff, are organised around a single topic, but rather that they either directly support the main unfolding story or they offer other stories that are consistent with the main story or a chosen narrative theme.

8 The Moral of the Story: Ethical and Sustainability Issues in Storytelling

> Have I found the moral?
> Only in time we shall see,
> For all I did was eat an apple-
> From the Knowledge tree (Waters, n.d.).

An example of the ethical issues that can arise in stories for tourists can be found in the case of a story told to tourists about the Three Sisters in Australia. The Three Sisters, a rock formation on a cliff face looking out over the Jamison Valley, is a major tourist attraction in the Blue Mountains west of Sydney. Many tourists to this site will have read or heard what they are told is the local Aboriginal story of the creation of this rock formation (see Table 3, first column). But this is not the Aboriginal story, it was created by a Caucasian schoolgirl, Patricia Stone, for the children's section of the Sydney Morning Herald newspaper in 1931 (South Coast Register 2015). The story was reprinted in 1949 in a book of local legends and distributed to guests staying at hotels in the region by a naturalist, Mel Ward, who also acted as a guide for tourists to the region in the 1940s and 50s (Burge 2013). More recently an alternative, and supposedly more authentic, Aboriginal story has been presented (see Table 3, second column) to tourists but the earlier story persists and there continues to be doubts about the authenticity of any of the stories told about the attraction (Burge 2013). This story within a story highlights the issues of authenticity in stories and determining who has the authority to present and/or alter stories that originate with the destination residents. This question of who tells stories to tourists can be extended to include a consideration of the stories that are not told. As noted in the introductory sections, a contentious area of heritage management and presentation is about power and conflict within destination communities and how the presentation of some stories and not others to visitors can disempower certain groups (Bramwell and Lane 2005; Wong 2013).

A second group of ethical issues around stories for tourists can be linked to sustainability concerns. A major theme in Fuller's design science was the need for

Table 3 Two versions of supposed aboriginal story of the three sisters

Earliest version	More recent version
Three sisters, 'Meehni', 'Wimlah' and 'Gunnedoo' lived in the Jamison Valley as members of the Katoomba tribe. These beautiful young ladies had fallen in love with three brothers from the Nepean tribe, yet tribal law forbade them to marry. The brothers were not happy to accept this law and so decided to use force to capture the three sisters causing a major tribal battle. As the lives of the three sisters were seriously in danger, a witchdoctor from the Katoomba tribe took it upon himself to turn the three sisters into stone to protect them from any harm. While he had intended to reverse the spell when the battle was over, the witchdoctor himself was killed. As only he could reverse the spell to return the ladies to their former beauty, the sisters remain in their magnificent rock formation as a reminder of this battle for generations to come.	The Three Sisters legend is about three Aboriginal sisters, Meenhi, Wimlah and Gunnedoo. Long ago there was a fierce Bunyip who lived in a deep hole. Passing this hole was very dangerous so whenever the girls' father, Tyawan, went into the valley he would leave them safely on the cliff. One day, Tyawan waved goodbye to his daughters and descended down into the valley. At the top of the cliff, Meenhi was frightened by a large centipede. She took a stone and threw it at the centipede. The stone rolled over the cliff, crashing into the valley below which woke up the Bunyip. The creature emerged from his hole and charged at the sisters. To protect them, their father used a magic bone to turn them into stone. This made the Bunyip really angry, and he chased Tyawan instead. Tyawan escaped by changing himself into a magnificent Lyre Bird; however, in the process, he dropped his magic bone. Once the Bunyip had disappeared, Tyawan returned to the valley to search for his magic bone. The Lyre Bird has been scratching around in the undergrowth looking for the magic bone ever since. The Three Sisters stand silently looking over the valley, hoping that one day he'll find the bone and turn them back into humans.

Sources: Burge (2013) and Jenkin (2012)

design to contribute to more sustainable living (Ben-Eli 2007). A major concern for tourism in general is the need to improve both the sustainability of tourism operations (Bramwell and Lane 2013; Saarinen 2013) and the ability of tourism to contribute to greater sustainability in general (Pomering et al. 2011; Truong and Hall 2013). The first of these concerns directs us to consider the sustainability of the activities that support tourist experiences. Increasingly tourist businesses and management organisations will be expected by tourists and destination stakeholders to think about reducing the environmental footprints and improving the social impacts of the experiences they offer to tourists. This is particularly applicable to the resources and supplies used to support the experience, the management of waste generated by the experience, and the way in which the staff involved in the experience are selected, trained and paid.

Sustainability issues also apply to the nature of any stories connected to these tourist experiences. There are three dimensions to this aspect of tourist storytelling:

– the need to include stories about the sustainability strategies being used in the experience to encourage tourists to think about the impact of their activities;
– the need to consider stories that explain the significance of the destination's social, cultural and environmental heritage to encourage tourists to support its conservation; and
– the need to assess the extent to which the stories embedded in the experience encourage inappropriate consumption more generally.

This latter dimension presents a serious challenge for those involved in the commercial elements of tourist experiences as much of the existing literature on consumer experiences and the use of stories in marketing is driven by the goal of encouraging increased consumption. This challenge is not unique to tourism and in the wider sustainability literature there are moves towards changing marketing in various ways to support improved business sustainability (Belz and Peattie 2010). Within these moves is a growing interest in social marketing which uses traditional marketing techniques to support changing public behaviours in positive ways (Moscardo 2015). In tourism this means designing experiences so that at least some of the stories told or enacted by tourists are part of strategies that encourage these consumers to behave in more sustainable ways when they return home from their travels.

The widespread adoption of mobile technologies and use of these technologies to access social media is exemplified in the significant increase in travel blogs and the online posting of images and comments about tourist experiences (Pearce and Moscardo 2015). As previously noted, this has further emphasised the importance of stories as a way for tourists to remember and share their experiences. While this trend may have many positive aspects, one potential negative feature is that pressure from social media audiences can encourage inappropriate and/or dangerous behaviours as tourists seek to relive stories already presented in social media and/or to tell more extreme and dramatic stories in order to capture audience attention. Pearce and Moscardo (2015) provide multiple examples where dangerous and inappropriate tourist behaviour can be linked to attempts to recreate images and experiences that have been presented online. For tourist experience designers this suggests that they need to find ways to provide appropriate stories that are likely to meet tourists' social media requirements. It also suggests a need for tourism managers to think about how they interact with and influence social media audiences more generally.

9 The End: Leaving the Door Open for a Sequel or Two

> I wanted a perfect ending. Now I've learned, the hard way, that some poems don't rhyme, and some stories don't have a clear beginning, middle, and end (Gilda Radner cited in Goldberg and Jessup 2007, p. 360).

This chapter has presented the beginnings of a story framework for the design of tourist experiences. The suggested principles are a first attempt to extend what is known about effective and entertaining stories into the realm of tourist experience design. To be developed further the framework needs more than just additional focussed research into stories and tourist experiences. It also needs to address a number of issues that have not yet been considered. These include:

- how to use stories in tourist experiences to enhance social interactions amongst tourists;
- the relative importance of the design principles;
- how to create, manage and maintain the cooperation necessary for stories across locations and for the effective creation of destination stories; and
- how to incorporate the social media audience that many tourists now bring with them into tourist experience settings.

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