

## Influences on interpretation:

A critical evaluation of the influences on the design and management of interpretation at lighter dark visitor attractions

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## **Abstract**

Although previous tourism research has acknowledged the phenomenon of dark tourism, there is still an absence of research in relation to the design and management of interpretation at dark visitor attractions (DVAs) situated on the lighter end of the darkness spectrum (LDVAs). In order to bring a greater understanding of interpretation design processes within the field of dark tourism, this research, underpinned by an interpretivist paradigm, draws on three specific areas of study – heritage tourism, dark tourism, and interpretation. This research relies on qualitative methods, including semi-structured interviews with managers and focus group discussions with staff using rich picture building. These methods were employed for data collection at The Real Mary King's Close (RMKC), Sick to Death (S2D), and Gravedigger Ghost Tour (GGT). These LDVAs were selected as examples of the wider range of LDVAs, which promote edutainment agendas using a variety of interpretive methods, including re-enactment, in order to deliver information pertaining to unpleasant histories of the more distant past. The findings of this research include a range of influences based on management challenges at RMKC, S2D, and GGT. These influences include stakeholder inclusion and experience with interpretation design; budget restrictions; access, spatial limitations, and conservation concerns; edutainment and selecting interpretation methods; and managing ethical concerns and authenticity. The findings also revealed a series of relationships between these influences and further exposed a number of management challenges relating to interpretation designs. The findings also demonstrate that LDVAs are critically concerned with matters of authenticity and historical facts, despite their entertaining nature and higher commercial infrastructure. In order to manage these influences and the exposed management challenges, this thesis argues that LDVAs would benefit from a holistic model that comprises steps of interpretation planning, designing, and on-going management activities. It therefore proposes a guiding model, contributing to both theory and practice.

Keywords: Heritage tourism; Dark tourism; Interpretation; Interpretation design; The Real Mary King's Close; Sick to Death; Gravedigger Ghost Tour

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## List of Abbreviations

BH	Big Heritage
CA	Continuum Attractions
DVA	Dark Visitor Attractions
GGT	Gravedigger Ghost Tour
HDT	Hidden Dublin Tours
HVA	Heritage Visitor Attractions
LDVA	Lighter Dark Visitor Attractions
RMKC	The Real Mary King's Close
RP	Rich Picture
RPB	Rich Picture Building
S2D	Sick to Death
VA	Visitor Attractions

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

### 1.1 Introduction

This thesis critically evaluates the influences on the design and management of interpretation at lighter dark visitor attractions (LDVAs). In doing so, this thesis explores the practice of interpretation – an activity that uses a variety of methods and media to create provoking and engaging experiences – as it is applied within dark tourism – a travel activity situated within the wider context of heritage tourism. It also provides a greater understanding of the management challenges that have been discussed in academic literature as having an impact on interpretation outcomes and how these challenges can influence the design and management of interpretation at LDVAs.

Dark tourism is a niche form of heritage tourism (Hartmann, 2013) that is defined as ‘the act of travel to sites associated with death, suffering, and the seemingly macabre’ (Stone, 2006, p. 146). Dark tourism has become a widespread and diverse area within the tourism industry (Hooper, 2017). This has led to its use as an analytical lens to promote academic discussion relating to interpretation and issues of mixing leisure and entertainment with commemoration and tragedy (Dunkley, 2017). While academic interest in dark tourism has continued to grow since the subject became a formal field for study in 1996 (Hooper, 2017), research remains challenged by the range of interdisciplinary studies that offer divergent perspectives on the social and cultural realities of recreating death and historic tragedies for their presentation to tourism audiences (Jamal & Lelo, 2011; Stone, 2013).

Dark tourism literature has become saturated with studies focused on dark visitor attractions (DVAs) of the darkest nature, which largely represent modern tragedies through commemorative and educational agendas. There is clearly a need for more understanding of LDVAs – attractions recognised for their higher level of tourism infrastructure and their interpretation of historic tragedies of the more distant past through edutainment agendas (Ivanova & Light, 2017; Light, 2017a). Exploration of interpretation at LDVAs, specifically the influences on the design and management of their interpretation, is necessary for a greater

understanding of not only interpretation practice in general, but for how tragic histories are used and represented at LDVAs through edutainment agendas – an interpretation approach that uses innovative and engaging methods to create experiences that are both educational and entertaining.

This thesis undertook data collection fieldwork at three different LDVAs, identified through purposive sampling – The Real Mary King’s Close (RMKC) in Edinburgh, the Sick to Death museum (S2D) in Chester, and the Gravedigger Ghost Tour (GGT) in Dublin. These LDVAs are used as example representations of the wider range of LDVAs not yet explored in dark tourism research. They each present interpretation, which, as both process and activity, aims to educate and inspire audiences about the harsh realities of 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> century life, through edutainment agendas that provoke and engage audiences through a variety of media and methods, including guided and self-guided tours, character re-enactment, exhibitions and set dressings, and innovative technologies. The choice to use three LDVAs helped to produce greater transferability and also a greater understanding of the range of LDVAs, and the influences on the design and management of their interpretation.

## **1.2 Rationale for the research**

There is a lack of sufficient breadth and understanding concerning interpretation design within dark tourism, as well as the specific lack of attention given to LDVAs. This thesis, underpinned by an interpretivist approach, draws on the subjects of heritage tourism, dark tourism, and interpretation in order to expand knowledge on interpretation design within the field of dark tourism. In particular, it explores the influences on interpretation design and management at LDVAs that employ edutainment agendas and are specifically associated with pre-modern history.

Research into the influences on the design and management of interpretation is under-developed, specifically within the context of dark tourism. It is largely fragmented by individual nuances that underpin the subject, such as selectivity and narrative development (Cook, 2016; Spaul & Wilbert, 2017; Watson, 2018); exhibition presentation (Rátz, 2006; Wight & Lennon, 2007; Zalut, 2018); issues

with authenticity (Heuermann & Chhabra, 2014; Wong, 2013); and the role of tour guides in interpreting sensitive histories (Potter, 2016; Quinn & Ryan, 2016). As a result, there is not a holistic understanding of the practical processes for designing and managing interpretation within dark tourism. This lack appears to be a result of the literature largely reporting on specific interpretation methods and how histories are interpreted, as opposed to the influences and reasons that underpin an interpretation's design and how that design is managed over time.

In addition, some dark tourism research has investigated the management challenges at DVAs, which is significant, as this has outlined issues related to interpretation (see e.g.: Alderman, Butler, & Hanna, 2016; Benjamin & Alderman, 2017; Lennon & Weber, 2017; Rodriguez Garcia, 2012). That said, research remains under-developed on management challenges as influences on the design and management of interpretation at LDVAs, specifically at RMKC, S2D, and GGT.

Research concerning LDVAs in general remains under-developed. Much of dark tourism literature gives attention to DVAs situated at the darkest end of Stone's (2006) Darkness Spectrum (used to help identify DVAs based on their characteristics and darkness intensities). This includes DVAs such as Auschwitz (Miles, 2002) and other Holocaust memorial museums (Ashworth, 2002; Ashworth & Tunbridge, 2017; Cohen, 2011), Choeung Ek (Hughes, 2008; Lennon, 2009; Williams, 2004), and locations of slave history (Best, 2016; Cook, 2016; Dann & Seaton, 2001). While some studies have used LDVAs for investigation, these relate predominantly to ghost tours (Gentry, 2007; Holloway, 2010; Rodriguez-Garcia, 2012), the London Dungeons and Jack the Ripper tours (Ivanova & Light, 2017; McEvoy, 2016; Powell & Iankova, 2016). Most recently, Hooper and Lennon (2017) published *Dark tourism: Practice and interpretation*, which mainly focused on darker DVAs, and only twice examined LDVAs. This suggests that greater exploration of other types of DVAs is needed (Stone, 2011) – specifically LDVAs that offer edutainment experiences (Ivanova & Light, 2017; Light, 2017a; Rodriguez-Garcia, 2012). This study therefore focuses on LDVAs not yet explored in dark tourism

literature, which promote edutainment experiences through a variety of interpretive methods.

Dark tourism literature to date has not used RMKC, S2D, or GGT as case studies or as LDVA representations. Crucially, research remains underdeveloped in relation to DVAs interpreting events that took place prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. For example, horrific events of the Medieval or Middle Ages, such as the plague, torture, crime and punishment, persecution, and witch burning, are minimally explored within dark tourism research. While some scholars have explored this history (see e.g. Hovi, 2008; Ivanova & Light, 2017; Stone, 2009), it has been predominantly done at the London Dungeon, Jack the Ripper Tours or with ghost tours. These studies are also predominantly visitor-focused, and from within the wider realm of heritage tourism studies, as opposed to dark tourism. Subsequently, this study uses three LDVAs that not only depict pre-19<sup>th</sup> century history, but also promote edutainment agendas to reflect a variety of more grisly instances, including the plague, murder, and medieval crime.

Finally, the decision to use three LDVAs for this study is based on the acknowledgement that heritage and dark tourism research has been widely conducted through descriptive, and often single, case study approaches (Ashworth & Page, 2011; Ioannides, Halkier, & Lew, 2014; Leask, 2016). These studies commonly use interviews, observation, and focus group methods to collect data, leading to a breadth of commentary and analysis and opportunities for transferability (Goulding & Domic, 2009; Korstanje, 2018b; Light, 2017a; Munsters & Richards, 2010). While alternative approaches have been used, including discourse analysis (Wight, 2016) and netnography (Liyanage, Coca-Stefaniak, & Powell, 2015), there still remains a need for other analyses to shed new light on current understanding and to contribute to existing discourse (Dunkley, 2007; Johnston, 2013; Light, 2017a; Podoshen, 2013). This study therefore uses semi-structure interviews and focus groups, given their preferred use in dark tourism research (Korstanje, 2017; Light, 2017a; Wight, 2006), but also, rich picture building (RPB) as a tool for collecting data within the focus groups. This particular technique has not been used before in dark tourism research.



### **1.3 Aim and objectives**

The aim of this research is to critically evaluate the influences on interpretation design and management at lighter dark visitor attractions.

This aim is achieved through a series of objectives, which are as follows:

- 1) To critically review existing literature regarding dark tourism in relation to influences on interpretation design and management at lighter dark visitor attractions.
- 2) To empirically evaluate influences on interpretation design and management through a comparison of management challenges at lighter dark visitor attractions.
- 3) To explore and identify relationships between the influences on interpretation design and develop an understanding of their impact on interpretation design and management at lighter dark visitor attractions.
- 4) To contribute to heritage tourism, dark tourism, and interpretation research with a greater understanding of interpretation influences and design management to improve interpretation at lighter dark visitor attractions.

### **1.4 Methodology and methods**

The subjects of heritage tourism, dark tourism, and interpretation, which underpin this study, are predominantly supported by interpretative, qualitative research, as this approach allows for a deeper understanding of social, cultural and political activities within the realm of tourism (Wilson & Hollinshead, 2015). By asking 'what', 'why' and 'how' questions, as opposed to statistical questions of 'how many', qualitative research produces rich, descriptive data to help researchers better understand social realities and topics (Leask, 2016; Ormston, Spencer, Barnard, & Snape, 2014; Wahyuni, 2012). Given that much of heritage tourism research involves the exploration of meanings and underpinning issues of social realities, including investigations into visitor motivations, behaviours and influences at visitor attractions, it is appropriate to use qualitative methods. In summary, as the context of this study explores influences on the design and management of interpretation, including the values and meaning people give to the nature of tragic content, it is appropriate for this study to adopt an interpretative, qualitative research approach.

Previous research suggests that an interpretive, qualitative approach is largely advocated within niche areas of tourism research (Mason, Augustyn, & Seakhoa-King, 2010), such as heritage interpretation (Best & Phulgence, 2013; Chronis, 2012) and dark tourism (Farmaki, 2013; Wight & Lennon, 2007). It also suggests that it will allow this research to assume an exploratory form, which is characterised by its flexibility (Yin, 2014). While exploratory research has been found useful for its ability to uncover information pertaining to influences that affect tourist behaviour (Kolb, 2011), it appears underdeveloped within the research context of LDVA management and operations. Therefore, to achieve the aim and objectives of this study, an exploratory approach is adopted, further promoting its use within dark tourism scholarship.

This research, as a qualitative, exploratory study, underpinned by interpretivism, uses soft data collection methods, which include semi-structured interviews and focus groups that utilise rich picture building (RPB). While it is argued that much of heritage and dark tourism literature commonly use interviews and focus groups to collect data (Goulding & Domic, 2009; Korstanje, 2018; Light, 2017a; Munsters & Richards, 2010), RPB, hitherto, does not appear in dark tourism research. The choice to use this data-collecting tool was informed by a call for alternative data collecting methods that can provide greater insight into areas of dark tourism (Dunkley, 2007; Johnston, 2013; Light, 2017a; Podoshen, 2013).

### **1.5 Thesis structure**

This thesis is composed of seven chapters, which commencing with this introduction chapter, includes three literature review chapters, and chapters on the study's methodology and methods, findings, and conclusion. Chapter One – the introduction chapter – introduces the research project to the reader, including the background and rationale for the study, the overall aim and objectives, an overview of the methodological approach and methods used for fieldwork, and a review of the limitations and contributions associated with this study. The literature review is then provided in the next three chapters. They provide a critical review and discussion of the topics underpinning this study, including the key concepts and developments, in order to achieve the first

objective. Chapter Two discusses heritage tourism and provides a contextual foundation for discussions relating to heritage interpretation and the development of niche forms of heritage tourism, including dark tourism. Chapter Three provides an in-depth understanding of interpretation scholarship and practice, including the processes for designing and delivering a visitor experience. Finally, Chapter Four draws on the previous two chapters in discussing dark tourism as a form of heritage tourism and the application of interpretation within the dark tourism context. It further discusses management challenges identified in the previous two chapters within the context of dark tourism.

The methodology and methods employed for this study's fieldwork are discussed in Chapter Five. It provides a review of the interpretivist theoretical perspective that underpins this study and the qualitative methods employed to collect data at RMKC, S2D, and GGT. These methods include semi-structured interviews with the LDVAs' managers and designers, and focus groups using RPB with the LDVAs' guides and staff. It further discusses the thematic approach used to analyse the findings.

Concluding this research, Chapter Six offers a discussion of the findings that emerged from the data gathered at RMKC, S2D, and GGT through the semi-structured interviews and focus groups using RPB. It explores the identified influences on the design and management of interpretation at RMKC, S2D, and GGT, providing greater insight into interpretation practice at LDVAs. Following, Chapter Seven provides a summary of the key research findings and the study's contribution to knowledge and practice, as well as recommendations for future research and a reflexive summary.

## **1.6 Limitations to the study**

There are several potential limitations for this study. First, this study is conducted through an interpretative, qualitative approach, which might lead to criticism that its findings are subjective, non-generalisable, and not comparable with the findings of other studies conducted through mixed-methods or quantitative methods. While that might be justified, the aim of this research, as

reflected in its interpretative, qualitative approach, is not to produce generalisable findings but to provide greater understanding of the study topic. Other limitations to this study may also be the use of purposive sampling, which can be time consuming; seasonality issues, if conducting fieldwork during peak season; and the use of RPB, which hitherto, does not appear to have been applied within a tourism context, and therefore can present additional unforeseen challenges. All of these factors were considered, and the chosen methodology and methods adopted for this study were deemed most appropriate.

## **1.7 Conclusions**

This chapter has introduced this thesis, which aims to explore the influences on the design and management of interpretation at LDVAs. In summarising the seven chapters that this thesis encompasses, the reader should be familiar with the structure, overall content and methodology that underpin this research, have a background of the underpinning topics and understand its rationale. It also introduces existing knowledge and highlights areas that require further research, the study's aim and objectives, the methodology and methods used in the primary fieldwork and the contributions to both knowledge and practice. In support of this, this chapter has introduced RMKC, S2D, and GGT, which have been particularly selected to represent a range of LDVAs, to produce new information that will further enhance this study's contributions.

## CHAPTER 2: HERITAGE TOURISM, HVAS, AND HVA MANAGEMENT

### 2.1 Introduction

Heritage is a complex and multifaceted concept that, since the 20<sup>th</sup> century, has grown exponentially as a contributor to present-day society. Through its interpretation and multidimensional function, heritage has become a significant component of the tourism industry. It has become one of the most researched and widespread types of tourism. However, it is surrounded by debate concerning the uses and perceived abuses of heritage. In particular, there is a view that the use of sensitive, dissonant heritage has led scholars and heritage practitioners to debate the benefits and dis-benefits of heritage tourism (see e.g. Lowenthal, 2015; Poria, 2001; Smith, 2006; Timothy, 2018). This academic debate has led to research initiatives that contribute to a comprehensive, evolving and developing understanding of heritage and the heritage tourism industry.

This chapter contributes to knowledge and understanding of heritage tourism by setting out the foundational context for the study through the critical examination of heritage use for tourism practice. It explores the wide range of heritage visitor attractions (HVAs) and their management challenges, emphasising issues related to interpretation and dark tourism experiences. It also sets out the issues relating to the interpretation of heritage within heritage tourism practice and the development of niche forms of heritage tourism, including dark tourism.

The chapter commences with an introduction on heritage, exploring its conceptual development and use as a packaged product for the tourism industry. It then follows with a critical examination of heritage tourism developments and its role within academia as a field of study. This provides a foundation to introduce HVAs and an analysis of the academic discourse on key HVA definitions and classifications. The final section of this chapter examines HVA management challenges and factors identified in literature as being influential on HVA management and operations, including interpretation.

## **2.2 Heritage**

Heritage itself underpins both the subjects of heritage tourism and HVAs. It is therefore essential to discuss heritage both as a concept and as a product for tourism packaging, in order to provide an understanding of heritage tourism developments. Heritage itself has become a distinct area of research for the study of the past and its influence on the present and future (Sørensen & Carman, 2009; Uzzell, 2009). It has been subsequently defined as the value-laden representation of a past that is selected, framed, and interpreted under the influence of political and multicultural values, through skills and agendas, for an intended audience to appraise (Marmion, 2012; Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996). Thus, as the representative product of history and national memory (Harvey, 2008), heritage has become a socially constructed and negotiated, present-centred phenomenon (Park, 2014), that draws on the expertise of varied disciplines (Sørensen & Carman, 2009).

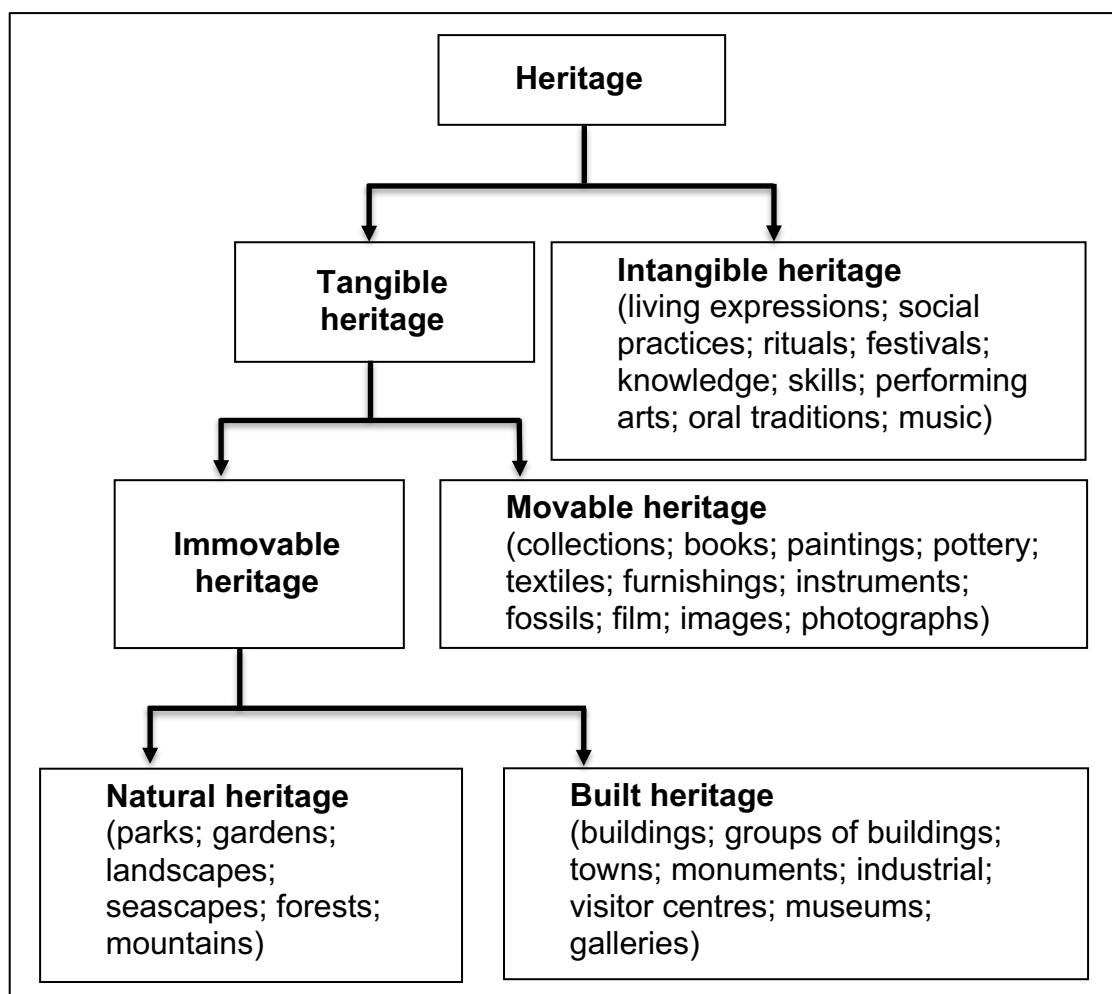
### **2.2.1 The changing role, value, and meaning of heritage**

Heritage, as a term, stems from the French words *heritage*— meaning legacy, and *patrimoine*— a generalisation used in place of the terms monument, property, and inheritance (Ferry, 2005; Howard, 2003; Vecco, 2010). Its understanding has been shaped by the collection and preservation practices of museums and international organisations (e.g. International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS); United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)) (Howard, 2003). Subsequently, heritage has become the representative term for tangible archaeological, architectural, cultural, monumental, and artistic artefacts (Vecco, 2010).

Publications from the early-to-mid 20<sup>th</sup> century described heritage as immovable natural or manmade monuments of historic value with a public interest to conserve (Ahmad, 2006; Vecco, 2010). However, the mid-to-late 20<sup>th</sup> century reflected a change concerning the meaning of heritage. In European terms it became more specific to emphasise architectural heritage (UNESCO, 1972); cultural significance; material fabric (ICOMOS, 1975a); natural landscapes; historic gardens (ICOMOS, 1975b); land covered by water (ICOMOS, 1993); underwater heritage (UNESCO, 2001); and intangible

heritage (UNESCO, 2003). Non-European countries, including Vietnam and the Philippines, also referred to heritage as moveable and immovable cultural properties (Ahmad, 2006). Also, the Association of the Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN) has classified heritage as ‘structures and artefacts, sites and human habitats, oral and folk heritage, written heritage, and popular cultural heritage’ (Ahmad, 2006, p. 298). Because of these varying descriptions of heritage, since the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the concept of heritage has come to mean all forms of tangible and intangible heritage, which is set out in Figure 2.1.

**Figure 2.1. Forms of heritage**



(Author, 2019)

Drawing on these 20<sup>th</sup> century publications on heritage definitions and classifications, heritage scholars of the 21<sup>st</sup> century looked critically at the meaning of heritage and its perceived value among heritage practitioners and audiences. Scholars, including Nuryanti (1996) and Howard (2003), argued that

heritage must be understood within the broader meaning of inheritance, as traditionally, it means something transferred from one generation to another. Through this lens, heritage has become defined as 'that which has been, or may be, inherited' and 'circumstances or benefits passed down from previous generations' (Howard, 2003, p. 6). This understanding suggests heritage can mean unofficial, familial heritage (e.g. heirlooms; photo albums; items of little financial value), or official, national heritage (e.g. tangible and intangible elements deemed worthy for preservation and national memory) (Howard, 2003).

The critical lens on the value of heritage has led to academic discourse concerning a perceived preference for 'good' forms of heritage over 'bad' or undesired heritage (Howard, 2003). It is argued that while not all history is pleasant, its existence resides in memory and is therefore undeniably inherited (Poria, 2001). This concept of undesired heritage not only underpins this research, but also the field of dark tourism – a form of heritage tourism that is the topic of Chapter Four. On undesired heritage, Poria (2001) argues that although the preservation of bad history can negatively impact the image of heritage creators (i.e. families, nations or countries), it is still a record of important events and inevitably preserved in memory, if not in tangible and intangible sources.

From these developments, the postmodern meaning of heritage suggests it is both tangible and intangible manifestations of history, which are chosen, accepted, or created, and considered relevant for preservation in the present day (Howard, 2003; Poria, 2001; Poria, Butler, & Airey, 2003; Poria, Reichel, & Biran, 2006). In essence, heritage means 'anything you want' and is 'anything that someone wishes to conserve or collect, and to pass on to future generations' (Howard, 2003, p. 6). This understanding has however led to divergent views in academia.

Scholars have argued over whether heritage means the value of tangible assets (Carman & Sørensen, 2009); a practice of values and understandings (Smith, 2006); a present-day interpretation process that uses the past to create



values, identity, and place (Harvey, 2008; Moody, 2015; Waterton & Smith, 2009); or a consumable product contributing to economic growth (Ho & McKercher, 2004). Drawing on this discourse, Marmion's (2012) discussion of heritage suggests it is actually each of these. It is a contemporary, value-laden representation of a past, that is selected, framed, and interpreted under the influence of conditions, such as values, skills, and agendas, for an intended audience to appraise and consume (Marmion, 2012, p. 34). This description suggests that heritage is different from historical fact, as it is the purposeful remembrance of a past, which can vary between those who wish to maintain its memory through interpretation for tourism consumption. This suggests that although heritage can be manipulated through selective and framed interpretation, it is significant as it both promotes heritage tourism discourse and underpins on-going debates concerning dissonant heritage and how such heritage is remembered.

Through consumption practices within museums, historic sites, the arts, and performances (Ho & McKercher, 2004), heritage has become a service product, represented in the form of the tangible and intangible features of both cultural and natural facets. These differing interpretations within academia have not only altered the meaning of heritage, but have also prevented scholars from coming to a universally accepted definition (Ahmad, 2006). Waterton and Watson (2015) suggest this is partly due to the complex and multidimensional nature of heritage but also the extensive research interests employed across a wide range of interdisciplinary fields with opposing philosophies and methodologies. For the purposes of this research, heritage is defined as the representation of a past, which is selected and interpreted under the influence of varying factors for remembrance, personal identification, and audience consumption.

### ***2.2.2 Progress in heritage research***

Heritage is a complex subject, difficult to define, and explored through an array of interdisciplinary fields (Apaydin, 2017). As an evolving subject, heritage understanding has broadened in scope over the last fifty years (Ahmad, 2006). It owes much of its postmodern developments to the academic discourse of the

1980s when it was recognised that postcolonial and post-war reactions were producing alternative views about history, its representation and remembrance (Carman & Sørensen, 2009).

In its early development, heritage research was practice-led, focusing on commentary and guidance concerning the preservation of tangible manifestations of heritage (Howard, 2003). This is largely attributed to the efforts of the international organisations, such as UNESCO and ICOMOS, as well as museums and national park practices. On this, Graham, Ashworth and Tunbridge (2005, p. 28) argue that 'the will to preserve heritage became the focus of a passionate, educated and generally influential minority'. This minority of heritage practitioners worked primarily to preserve artefacts (Macdonald, 2011). However, the economic and socio-cultural developments of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century resulted in the increasing proliferation of heritage sites and tourism developments, creating competition for heritage practitioners with other established recreational activities (Keitumetse, 2009).

Emerging from these developments, historians, including Hewison (1987), Lowenthal (1985), and Wright (1985), published a series of works that commented on heritage preservation and the economic and political reasoning that underpinned the need to preserve. Critiquing the modern representations of history and ideologies reflected in those presentations, Hewison (1987), for example, charged the heritage industry with presenting 'safe' versions of history, concealing real and unpleasant historic events (Carman & Sørensen, 2009). Separating history from heritage, these early commentaries took issue with heritage interpretation and charged it as a popularisation of history (Carman & Sørensen, 2009). As in Marmion's (2012) description of heritage, these commentaries expose the issues for heritage, particularly of purposefully selecting and framing interpretation to provide a sanitised version for tourism.

Subsequently, heritage research evolved into a discipline grounded in heritage practice, with scholars (see e.g. Ashworth & Tunbridge, 1990; Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996) recognising there existed different communities who valued different types of heritage. This was significant because it not only drew

attention to the different audiences that valued heritage, but it also revealed varying forms of heritage found worthy for remembrance. At this time, scholars explored alternative means of reaching audiences who valued specific histories not represented in heritage institutions (i.e. museums; national parks) (Carman & Sørensen, 2009). This challenged museums, specifically, to re-evaluate their role in preserving and presenting heritage.

By the late 1990s, the rise of academic concern for heritage had a lasting effect on heritage institutions charged with the responsibility of heritage practice (Carman & Sørensen, 2009). From this, heritage practitioners acknowledged the economic benefits of heritage as a packaged product (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992; Macdonald, 2011). This resulted in a need to grow demand among audiences (Kotler & Kotler, 2000). Practitioners became not only tasked with audience development work to help increase visitor numbers (Goulding, 2000), but to also proactively create offerings that would generate visitor satisfaction and positive learning outcomes (Kotler & Kotler, 2000).

In line with these heritage research developments came an increase in dedicated university programs and academic journals, including the *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, *Heritage Management*, *Journal of Cultural Heritage*, *International Journal of Intangible Heritage*, and *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, among others. As a result, heritage has become underpinned with varying theoretical and methodological approaches (Sørensen & Carman, 2009), contributing to its development as a prevalent framework for guiding practice in an array of disciplines. These include conservation, curating, archaeology, history, sociology, anthropology, psychology, art, architecture, culture, and tourism (Garrod & Fyall, 2000).

Following this, heritage scholars argued for more research into what heritage actually is and what issues from its content (Tunbridge, Ashworth, & Graham, 2013). Others have argued for greater exploration into heritage practice, including its purpose, function, and management within heritage tourism (Garden, 2006; Hu & Wall, 2005; Leask, 2010). This points to a perceived need

for a greater understanding of heritage and its varying forms, as well as how heritage is represented and managed through, for example, interpretation.

### **2.3 Heritage tourism**

Heritage is a process through which society engages with and makes use of the past through tourism activities (Light, 2015). Society has always been drawn to places of historic resonance (Light, 2015). Based on this social relationship between heritage and tourism (Fonseca & Ramos, 2012) and a heightened public demand for packaged heritage (Timothy, 2018), heritage tourism has become a social phenomenon. It is not only one of the most notable, widespread types of tourism, but also one of the largest researched subjects in the field of tourism studies (Timothy & Boyd, 2006). It has become a complex and multifaceted subject focusing on the commercial use of the past for the present (Park, 2014) and continually evolving alongside changing political, economic, and socio-cultural influences (Park, 2014). In consequence, heritage tourism has become an increasingly significant component of the wider tourism industry, contributing to economic developments, security, stability, and the ideological framing of history and identity (Park, 2014).

#### ***2.3.1 Development and the changing nature of heritage tourism***

As the oldest form of tourism and encompassing all forms of heritage, heritage tourism has been present since ancient times (Timothy & Boyd, 2003). However, the concept of heritage tourism, as it is understood today, is rooted in societal changes of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. These changes developed as a result of industrialisation, leading to a proliferation of museums and antiquarianism (Merriman, 2000). With the rise of industrialisation and new sciences, temporal distance separated society from the past, consequently leading to greater curiosity, nostalgia, and sentimentality (Plumb, 2004). As a result, the heritage industry emerged, capitalising on the public's need for escape, by offering audiences packaged, sanitised versions of the past through 'shop-front commodification' approaches (Merriman, 2000).

With the increase in packaged heritage (Best, 2010; Jovicic, 2016), a mass demand for idealised, commoditised heritage developed (Uzzell, 1996). This

resulted in the spread of the heritage tourism industry at world, national, and local levels through the commodification of heritage and the rise of HVAs. Cultural and natural properties were increasingly developed into HVAs, recognised for either their universal value, global importance, representation of collective and national ideals, pride, and patriotism, or local pride and memory (Timothy & Boyd, 2003).

By late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, the globalisation of the heritage industry led to increased competition between suppliers and to societal changes, as a result of increased education levels, holiday breaks, disposable incomes, and technology (Fonseca & Ramos, 2012). As a result, new forms of HVAs proliferated, endorsing emergent trends and themes to attract a wider audience and increase profits through higher visitor numbers.

The rapid expansion of heritage tourism offerings led it to become one of the fastest growing industries in the world (Baram & Rowan, 2004). It has since developed processes and procedures that now support other leisure and recreation activities including accommodation, hospitality, transportation and visitor attractions (Zaei & Zaei, 2013). Within this expansion, heritage tourism has not only helped to advance mass migration and transnationalism, but has also allowed for greater integration across nations, as people from around the world are able to move more freely and connect through culture and social relations (Appadurai, 2001; Labadi & Long, 2010). Specifically, heritage tourism has allowed for people to engage with different identities, places, and values, which helps to provide people opportunities to witness distant cultures and places (Jahnke, 2013; Marmion, Calver & Wilkes, 2010). It has also helped to promote economic growth and the interplay of culture across communities at international, national, and local levels through revenue generation, greater employment opportunities, and wider destination development (Harrison, 2015; Leask, 2010; Timothy & Boyd, 2003).

### ***2.3.2 The role and meaning of heritage tourism***

Stemming from academic discourse concerning the economic associations and mass production of heritage goods, heritage tourism owes much of its

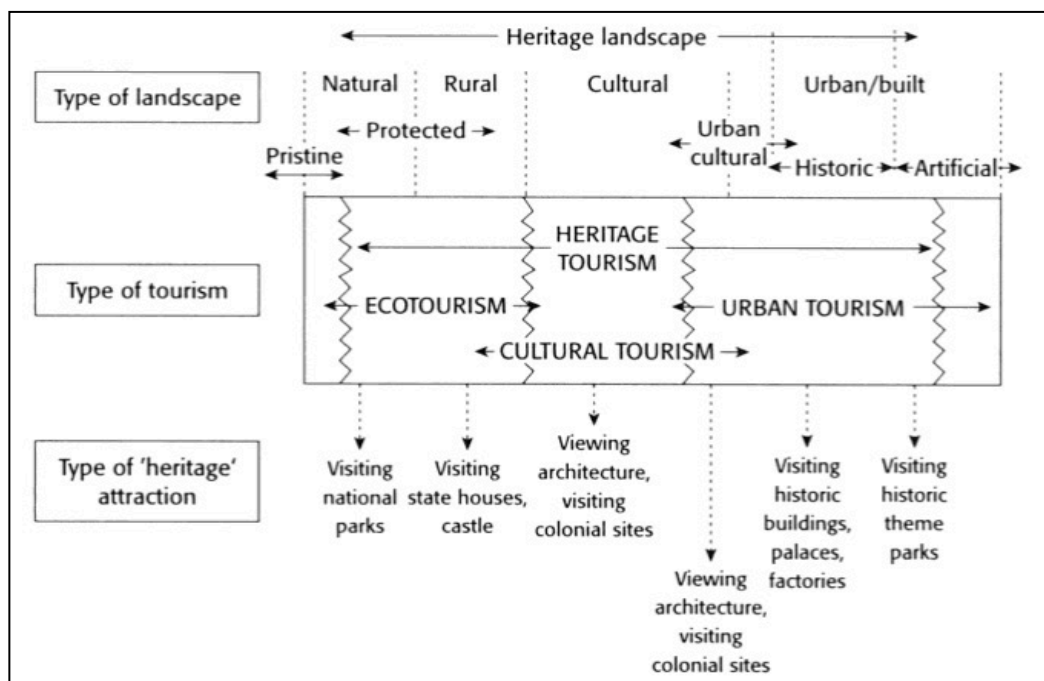
contemporary identification to Fordist and subsequent Post-Fordist thinking within heritage research (Richards, 1996). Through a consumer lens, scholars of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century described heritage tourism in a variety of ways – as a travel experience rooted in nostalgia for the past (Zeppel & Hall, 1992), as the consumption of cultural goods (Richards, 1996), and as an activity where tourists learn and experience the products and practices of other people and the uniqueness of their cultural identity (Dahles, 1998).

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, scholars have become even more divergent in their views on the role and meaning of heritage tourism. Some defined heritage tourism as a travel activity focused on what society has inherited, including historic buildings, art works, and landscapes (Garrod & Fyall, 2000). This view was thought to overlook the tourist's role, which led other scholars to argue heritage tourism is rather travel, motivated by tourist perceptions of a location's heritage characteristics (Poria, Butler, & Airey, 2001). It has also been defined as an experiential activity, in which visitors seek an encounter or connection to nature or the history of a place (Timothy & Boyd, 2003) and as travel to heritage sites, with varying motivations or expectations (Kausar & Nishikawa, 2010; Poria, et al., 2006). Still more recent contributions have referred to heritage tourism as an economic activity, in which history is packaged and commoditised for economic gain in contemporary society (Light, 2015a).

It appears that the challenge in coming to a universally accepted definition for heritage tourism is largely driven by its world-wide nature. For example, heritage tourism is widely understood in the UK and Northern Europe as travel to built locations, while in Australia and New Zealand it is considered as travel to places of indigenous culture and traditions. Other parts of the world view it as travel to natural land and waterscapes (Light, 2015). Because of these variances, Light (2015) and Timothy and Boyd (2003) argue that heritage tourism understanding has become obscured by scholars (see e.g. Molloy, 1993; Moscardo, 2000; Richards, 2001; Timothy, 2011; Zeppel & Hall, 1992) who have used heritage tourism interchangeably with cultural tourism, when in fact cultural tourism is part of the wider heritage tourism industry.

A further challenge to a single definition is caused by the proliferation of varying niche forms of tourism within the heritage industry (Light, 2015), such as dark tourism, literary tourism, and sport tourism. Such developments have led to a blurring of these varying forms of heritage tourism, causing considerable overlap between them (Light, 2015). This argument echoes Timothy and Boyd (2003), who suggest, as reflected in Figure 2.2, that heritage tourism overlaps with a range of other tourism types (e.g. ecotourism; urban tourism; cultural tourism).

**Figure 2.2. The heritage spectrum**



(Timothy & Body, 2003, p. 9)

It is clear from the preceding paragraphs that the meaning of heritage tourism is flexible, encompassing varying roles within an array of contexts. It is also clear that heritage tourism provides opportunities for people to witness and connect with distant cultures, places, and the past. In practice, heritage tourism is now an economic enterprise, and at its core, is dependent on society's desire to travel to places of historic, cultural, or natural value. This understanding is essential for this research, as it parallels the understanding of heritage tourism's subset, dark tourism—the social phenomenon that is dependent on society's motivation to visit places of, or associated with, historic death, tragedy, or the seemingly macabre. This is explored further in Chapter 4.

### ***2.3.3 Progress in heritage tourism research***

As a complex and multifaceted subject with a focus on the commercial use of the past for the present, heritage tourism is a subject supported by interdisciplinary studies that aim to provide insight on the dialectical and symbiotic relationship between heritage and tourism (Park, 2014). Consequently, heritage tourism has become one of the most researched subjects in tourism studies (Timothy & Boyd, 2006).

Academic discourse on heritage tourism emerged in early 20<sup>th</sup> century publications (Merriman, 2000), which acknowledged the recreational and educational benefits of heritage (Timothy, 2018). This research provided a foundation for heritage tourism research developments, with 1960s and 1970s scholars emphasising concepts inherently related to tourism, including visitor uses of heritage, museum management, conservation, interpretation, and authenticity (Timothy, 2018). These foci, along with the proliferation of packaged heritage tourism initiatives, expanded academic inquiry into heritage tourism substantially in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Heritage tourism research of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century focused on the role of heritage within the tourism industry, including the condition of heritage within the tourism industry (Millar, 1989; Boniface & Fowler, 1993), the contributions of heritage as a marketable product for developing cities (Ashworth & Tunbridge, 1990), and the opportunities created by packaging heritage to deepen the public's appreciation for the past (Samuel, 1994; Nuryanti, 1996). These contributions intended to identify the meaning of heritage within the tourism industry, how it was used as a product, and for whom heritage was packaged. Subsequent publications emerged recognising the development of themes within heritage tourism, which were attributed to the proliferation of HVAs and their issues (Prentice, 1993; Yale, 1991). This included industrial heritage tourism through the lens of quarry and mining heritage (Edwards & Coit, 1996; Goodall, 1993), rural heritage tourism and its connection to sustainable tourism (Bramwell, 1994; Lane, 1994), and urban heritage tourism and its efforts to redevelop municipal spaces (Chang, Milne, Fallon, & Pohlmann, 1996; Page, 1993).



As heritage tourism research advanced, heritage scholars became more analytical, focusing on the actual heritage tourism experience through theoretical discourse (Timothy & Boyd, 2003; Timothy, 2018). For example, scholars explored the supply and demand of heritage tourism (Prentice, 1994), how HVAs are managed (Goodall, 1993; Leask, Fyall, & Garrod, 2002), the nature of the heritage on display (Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996; Tunbridge, Jones, & Shaw, 1996), how heritage is interpreted and represented (Moscardo, 1996a; Tooke et al., 1996) and the relationship visitors have with interpreted heritage (Moscardo, 1996b). These provided a foundation for academic efforts of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in areas such as the use of heritage in identity building (Smith, 2006, Graham et al., 2005), the interpretation and representation of heritage (Howard, 2003) and the authenticity of heritage offerings (Chhabra, Healy, & Sills, 2003; Jamal & Hill, 2004).

Since then, heritage tourism research has since become largely divided along supply and demand lines. On one side, demand-oriented research has explored visitor experiences (Chen & Chen, 2010; Falk & Dierking, 2000), visitor motivations (Poria et al., 2006a; Prayag & Ryan, 2011), visitor preferences (Poria, et. al., 2009; Willis, 2009) and visitor impacts (Garrod, Fyall, & Leask, 2008). On the other side, supply-oriented research has explored the development of HVAs and some of their associated management issues, including community involvement (Grimwade & Carter, 2000); interpretation and authenticity (Moscardo & Ballantyne, 2008; Moscardo, 2014) and sustainability measures (Jamal & Stronza, 2009). In the last decade, however, scholars have argued for a merging of these two perspectives to provide a more holistic understanding of the heritage tourism experience (Alazaizeh et al., 2016; Biran, Poria, & Oren, 2011; Farmaki, 2013; Timothy, 2018).

During the 21<sup>st</sup> century, heritage tourism research has moved towards niche forms of heritage tourism that promote unique and original tourist experiences (Di Pietro, Mugion, & Renzi, 2018; Fonseca & Ramos, 2012). These include, for example, film-induced heritage tourism (Bakiewicz, Leask, Barron, & Rakic, 2017; Warick Frost, 2006), dark tourism (Lennon & Foley, 2000; Sharpley, 2009; Stone, 2006) and sport heritage tourism (Ramshaw & Gammon, 2005;

2017). The acknowledgement of niche forms of heritage tourism has stimulated discussions concerning the wide range of tangible and intangible heritage that could be packaged for tourism purposes and consumed by a variety of audiences and subsequently inspired scholars to explore interpretation and the visitor experience within these niche areas (Timothy, 2018). To date, these developments appear largely observational or focused on visitor preferences, motivations, and interpretation methods (see e.g. Kerr & Price, 2015; Lade & Frew, 2017; Oviedo-García, Castellanos-Verdugo, Trujillo-García, & Mallya, 2016). Few studies, including Bakiewicz et al. (2017) and Ramshaw and Gammon (2017), have provided greater insight into the management and operations of niche heritage tourism. Light (2017) and Timothy (2018) suggest management and operational understanding still requires research, hence this research's focus on interpretation practice through an evaluation of its design and management.

#### **2.4 Heritage visitor attractions (HVAs)**

The developments in heritage tourism research progress have been significant for heritage tourism understanding and have also provided a platform for a greater understanding of the vast array of HVAs and variety of tourism experiences (Di Pietro et al., 2018). As experiential, multi-functional products, HVAs are symbolic of historic events, beliefs, concepts, and ways of life (Kessler & Raj, 2018; Wu & Wall, 2017). Accounting for two-thirds of the wider visitor attraction (VA) supply (Leask, 2010; Leask et al., 2002), HVAs are one of the most visible, accessible, and tangible manifestations of heritage (Garden, 2006). They are often considered to be a catalyst for drawing large visitor numbers and promoting economic development (Ram, Björk, & Weidenfeld, 2016). As a result, HVAs have not only become recognised as the foundation for heritage tourism (Timothy & Boyd, 2003), but also a prominent topic of discussion in VA literature (see e.g. Dewhurst & Thwaites, 2014; Leask, 2010, 2016; Strange & Brown, 2013). As they continually expand through emergent and varying forms of heritage tourism (e.g. dark tourism; sport heritage tourism; film-induced tourism), they have become significant heritage tourism resources and integral to the wider tourism industry (Sweet & Qian, 2017; Youn & Uzzell, 2016).

#### ***2.4.1 The meaning and classification of HVAs***

HVAs are recognised as a form of VAs, representative of historic events and human heritage (Dewhurst & Thwaites, 2014; Strange & Brown, 2013). Scholars have commented on the distinction between HVAs and VAs, noting their main difference is heritage (Leask, 2010; Prentice, 1993). As Prentice (1993) suggests, HVAs are sites, themes, or areas promoted as heritage products for consumption by tourists. Although, if stripped of the heritage term, this meaning could be easily applied to other VAs, in that they too are sites, themes, or areas promoted for consumption by tourists (Prentice, 1993). Thus, in coming to a universally accepted definition for HVAs, the emphasis of heritage is imperative.

Arriving at a set definition for HVAs is important due to the variety of terminologies and comparative features that can impact HVA understanding and analysis (Leask, 2010). As reflected in Table 2.3, there have been a variety of HVA definitions proposed, many classifying HVAs by type rather than arriving at a definition (Leask, et al., 2002). This lack of a definition has inhibited HVA understanding (Timothy, 2018).

**Table. 2.3. HVA Definitions**

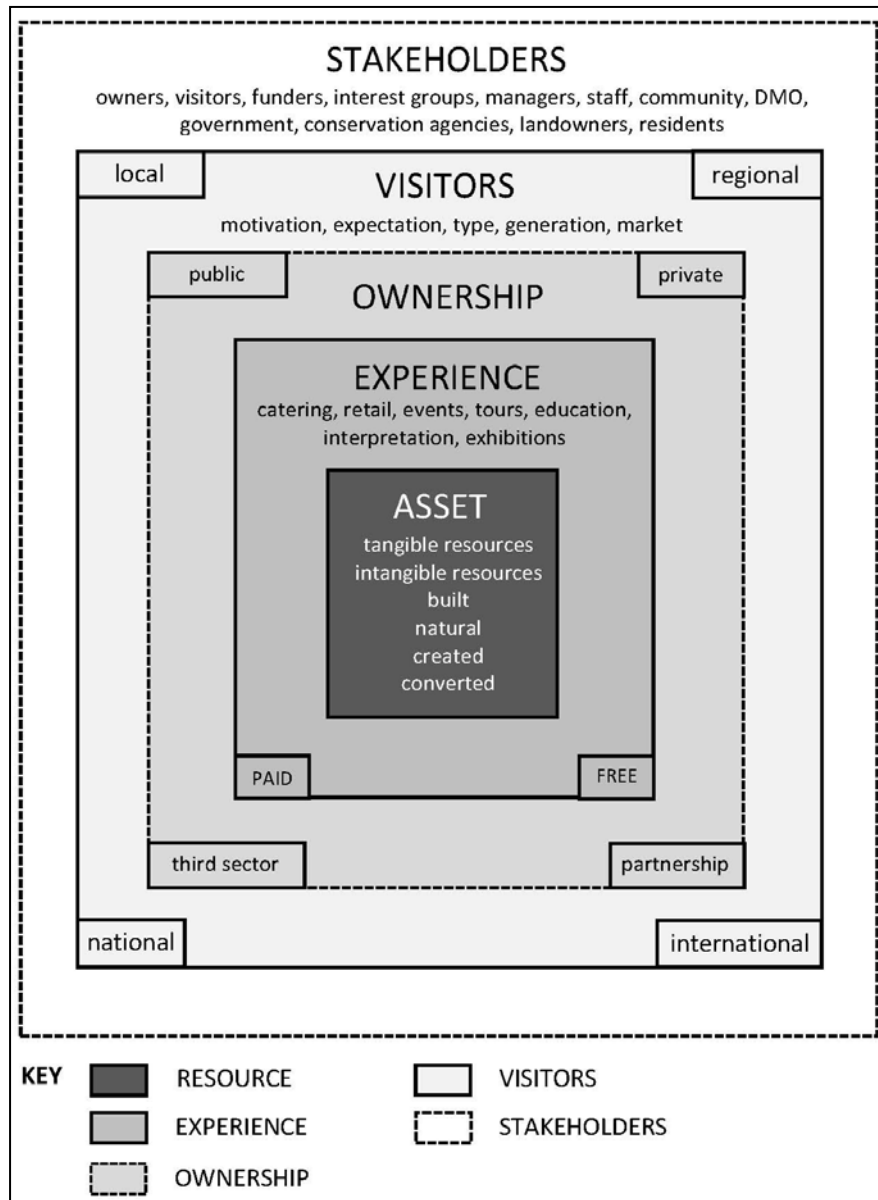
Source	Definition- Heritage attractions:
Yale (1991, p. 21)	Are places centred on what we have inherited, which can mean anything from historic buildings, to art works, to beautiful scenery
Prentice (1993, p. 35)	Are sites, themes and areas promoted as heritage products for consumption by tourists and day trippers visiting from home
Tahana and Oppermann (1998, p. 23)	Will range from historical monuments to handicrafts or artefacts, from festivals to music and dance presentations, and from the bustling street of life of a different culture to the distinct lifestyle of indigenous people
Boyd (2000, p. 153)	Are predominantly a built landscape, ranging from an interest in viewing historic buildings, to those which commemorate the past, and/or those that record the past
Garrod and Fyall (2000, p. 685)	Are any property that attracts the public by virtue of its explicit connection with the past
Spenneman, Lockwood and Harris (2001, p. 16)	Are places ascribed cultural significance according to their aesthetic, historic, scientific, and social value
Leask, Fyall and Garrod (2002, p. 250)	Are those that stimulate visits motivated wholly or in part by interest in the historical, artistic, scientific or lifestyle offerings of a community, region or group
ICOMOS (2008, p. 4)	Are sites recognised and often legally protected as places of historical or cultural significance.
Leask (2010, p. 156)	Places containing an aspect of historical interpretation.
Wong and Cheng (2014, p. 477)	Are representative of the legacy and relics of the past, whether that be the former glory of a nation, atrocities from which people have overcome, or traditions and narratives that uphold a community's identity
Cooper (2016, p. 148)	Anything that has sufficient appeal to attract a visit.

The challenge of coming to a universally accepted HVA definition is arguably in part due to their proliferation (Fredheim & Khalaf, 2016). Until recently, much of literature, (see e.g. Connell, Page, & Meyer, 2015; Hu & Wall, 2005; Leask & Yeoman, 1999; Millar, 1999) had discussed HVAs in terms of their permanence. However, changing consumer demands and product innovations have led to the development of new HVAs, such as heritage themed bus tours and traveling exhibitions. This has inevitably impacted understanding

concerning their role and meaning (Costa, 2017; Gotham, 2017; Leask, 2018; McDowell, 2008).

The proliferation of HVA types diverted academic discourse away from definitional debates to focus on their individual nature and key features (Connell et al., 2015; Garden, 2006; Leask, 2008). For example, focus has been placed on their physical nature (Leask, 2016), their authenticity (Apostolakis, 2003), their role in tourism supply and demand (Poria et al., 2006b), their product offerings (Connell et al., 2015) and their management and operational features (Aspridis, et al., 2015). As a result of these foci, scholars have sought to understand HVAs through their classification, which has been largely grounded in VA classification models (e.g. Leask, 2008; Millar, 1999; Prentice, 1993; Walsh-Heron & Stevens, 1990). Leask's (2018) classification model for example, reflected in Figure 2.4, suggests that the identification of key features, which also underpin HVAs, help to classify the wide range of VAs. These features include the type of resource and nature of the asset, commercial emphasis and product offerings, ownership, market features, and supporting stakeholders. These not only impact the nature of an HVA, but also its purpose and management objectives (Leask, 2018).

**Figure 2.4. Classification of visitor attractions**



(Leask, 2018, p. 301)

As a result of these varying features, some scholars have suggested HVAs can include anything that has sufficient appeal to visitors (Cooper, 2016). However, HVAs are distinct from other VAs due to their specific representation of heritage, which, as reflected earlier in this chapter, is the selected and interpreted representation of a past for remembrance, personal identification, and audience consumption. Given heritage tourism, as earlier described, is dependent on society's travel motivations to places of historic, cultural, or natural value, for the purposes of this research, HVAs are defined as places for tourism consumption (e.g. natural, human-made, permanent, moveable) related

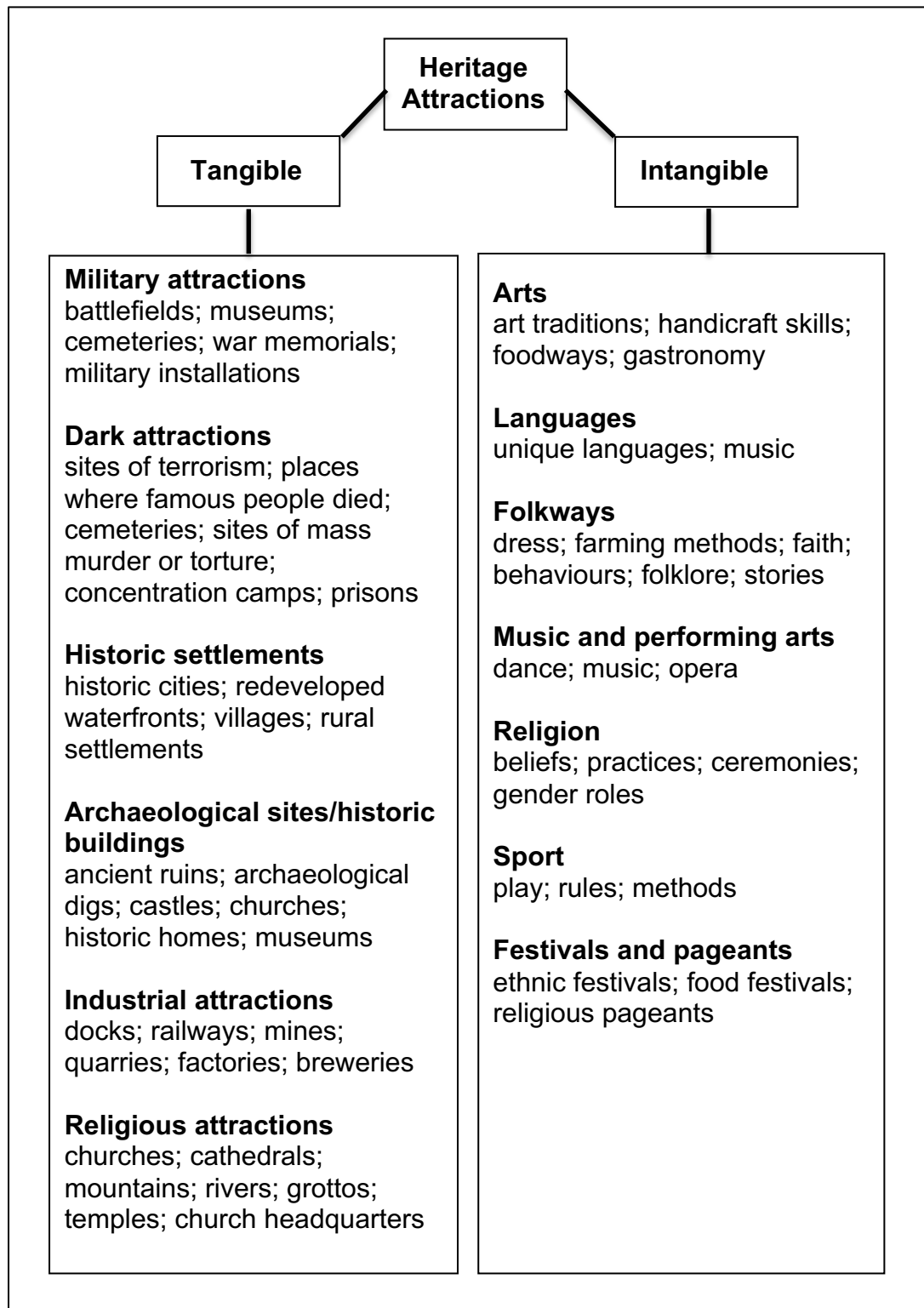
to or representative of historic and/or cultural events artefacts, identity, and tradition.

#### ***2.4.2 The individuality of HVAs***

HVA scholarship has produced a general agreement among scholars that they encompass a wide range of built, natural, and cultural spaces (see Leask, 2008; Millar, 1999; Nuryanti, 1996; Prentice, 1993; Ramshaw & Gammon, 2017; Timothy & Boyd, 2003). These include, for example, man-made relics; buildings; towns; natural environments; places associated with art, culture, and language (Nuryanti, 1996); museums; historic houses; country parks; historic gardens; nature reserves; archaeological sites; heritage centres; heritage theme parks (Millar, 1999); castles; forts; monuments; industrial places; dark spaces; military places (Leask, 2010); and places of sports heritage (Ramshaw & Gammon, 2017).

To compartmentalise HVAs, Prentice (1994) developed a list of HVA groups, in which individual HVAs may be located (see Appendix A). However, Timothy and Boyd (2003) propose many HVAs overlap in terms of their key features highlighted by the VA classification models. Thus, as reflected in Figure 2.5, they suggest HVAs are best identified as either tangible or intangible representations of heritage, and may be further typified as either museums, war sites, religious sites, places of living culture, industrial locations and relics, or literary sites (Timothy & Boyd, 2003, p. 21).

Figure 2.5. Timothy's HVAs and types



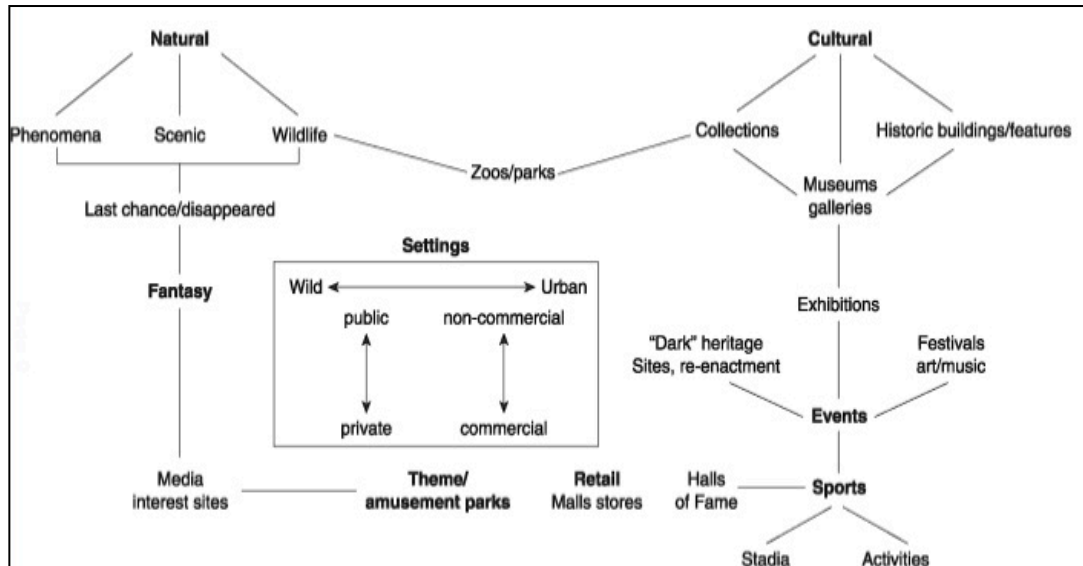
(Timothy, 2011, p. 49)

Drawing on Timothy and Boyd (2003), Weidenfeld, Butler and Williams (2016) proposed HVAs are best classified by the thematic links of their individual features and the type of heritage represented. As reflected in Figure 2.6,



Weidenfeld et al. (2016) propose HVAs are built, natural or cultural, as Timothy and Boyd (2003) suggest. However, they contend that HVAs can be also identified within emergent trends within heritage tourism (Weidenfeld et al., 2016).

**Figure 2.6. Themes of HVA types**



(Weidenfeld et al., 2016, p. 9)

Adding to the complexity of HVA typologies, McDowell (2008) recognises mobile attractions in the form of bus tours as a form of HVAs. This is of particular significance, because while scholars, such as Rojek (1991) and Silberberg (1995) have explored bus tours as a form of VAs, the proliferation of sightseeing city bus tours, day trip coach excursions to places of heritage interest (Costa, 2017), and themed bus tours to places of historic significance (Gotham, 2017) highlight changes in HVA demand. Moreover, the inclusion of mobile HVAs confirms traditional understanding has evolved from labelling HVAs only as permanent. More research into mobile HVAs is therefore necessary, as it can provide heritage experts with an enhanced understanding of how demand trends are evolving within the heritage industry.

The proliferation of HVAs and developments in HVA understanding has expanded heritage tourism scholarship by providing scholars with a wide variety of potential locations for future research. However, as Timothy and

Boyd (2003) suggest, many HVAs overlap in terms of their key features, and therefore HVAs may be situated within more than one classifying theme. For the purposes of this research, the identification and classification of an HVA is viewed as dependent on the field from which it is studied and how it has been defined within that field.

### ***2.4.3 Progress in HVA research***

HVAs provide a means to connect the past and present through narrative communication built upon symbolic cues (Rickly-Boyd, 2012). HVA discourse has thus developed into an independent field for study, continually evolving alongside supply and demand changes. The earliest HVA publications emerged in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century alongside developments in heritage studies and heritage tourism research. While much of these publications were in reference to the conservation of World Heritage sites, scholars, including Chippindale, et al., (1990), Coburn (1983) and Moulin (1990), promoted discussion on HVA ownership and management.

As HVA understanding progressed, publications emerged concerning deeper issues of applied tourism within HVA settings including audience characteristics and visitor behaviour (Light, 1996; Masberg & Silverman, 1996), stakeholder preferences for HVA planning (Yuksel, Bramwell, & Yuksel, 1999), visitor management (McArthur & Hall, 1993; Moscardo, 1996) and interpretation challenges (Tooke et al., 1996). From these advancements, Leask and Yeoman (1999) published a seminal piece for HVA understanding, which through case studies, drew attention to service standards and delivery by focusing on management and operational issues and challenges.

As HVA research progressed into the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, two divergent perspectives emerged, both expanding on deeper applied topics within the field of HVAs. First, many scholars continued to explore HVAs within the wider realm of heritage tourism, emphasising visitor preferences and motivations to HVAs (Phaswana-Mafuya & Haydam, 2005; Poria et al., 2009, 2006), the local benefits and economic value of HVAs (Kim, Wong, & Cho, 2007; Smith, 2002) and quality issues of the HVA visitor experience (Drummond & Yeoman, 2001;

Prideaux, 2003). Other scholars, however, began to explore issues of particular types of HVAs from the emergent trends of heritage tourism, such as film-induced heritage (Riley, Baker, & Doren, 1998), literary heritage (Squire, 1996), dark heritage (Foley & Lennon, 1996b) and sport heritage (Higham, 1999).

This acknowledgement of emergent trends within heritage tourism has helped to progress HVA research into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. However, much of these developments have led to a divergence in research across mutually exclusive supply and demand orientated lines. As a result, some heritage scholars have called for more HVA demand-oriented research. For example, the impact of social media on visitor motivations to events and attractions (Leask, 2016), visitor behaviour as a result of interpretation (Albrecht, 2014; Puczko, 2005), visitor based value perceptions on authenticity (Calver & Page, 2013), visitor inclusion in measuring experience quality (Hansen, 2016) and visitor motivations to special-interest HVAs, such as dark sites (Isaac & Cakmak, 2014).

Other scholars (see e.g. Chew, 2009; Hu & Wall, 2005; Leask, 2010; Leshem, 2013; Weidenfeld & Leask, 2013) have called for more HVA supply-oriented research, specifically that which investigates underpinning influences on HVA management, in order to produce a more comprehensive understanding of HVAs. As a result, recommendations have been made for greater supply-oriented research into HVA management and operational characteristics (Leask, 2010, 2016), influential management aspects (Weidenfeld & Leask, 2013), the impact of interpretation on the overall experience (Roberts, 2014) and interpretation management and its impact on authenticity (Chew, 2009; Leshem, 2013).

To date, HVA research has become heavily saturated with contributions that have helped to expand HVA understanding of types, classifications, demand-oriented issues, such as visitor travel motivations and preferences, while numerous supply-oriented areas have become under-researched. This includes, for example, the practical management of HVAs (Hu & Wall, 2005), HVA operational characteristics (Leask, 2010) and HVA interpretation

management (Poria et al., 2009), including the management of narratives and authenticity (Basu & Modest, 2015; Silverman, 2011; Wilbert & Hansen, 2009). These gaps in research are of particular concern for HVAs located within the niche areas of heritage tourism, such as sport heritage tourism, film-induced tourism, and dark tourism, where little research has been carried out. There is still a need for greater understanding of how these unique heritage spaces are managed and operated for tourism purposes and their underpinning management challenges (Light, 2017a; Ramshaw & Gammon, 2017), which supports the aim and objectives of this research.

## **2.5 HVA management challenges**

HVA management is a complex and challenging practice that requires strategic planning for operations and the visitor experience. This is largely due to the fact that the ideological and institutional context of HVAs is fundamentally different from other VAs, (Garrod & Fyall, 2000; Leask, 2010). HVAs, by their very nature, are prone to management challenges, given the tension between their concerns for conservation, authenticity, and commercialisation (Hughes & Carlsen, 2010). While most management teams seek to promote their HVAs as a product for tourism consumption, there is no standard system for HVA management (Leask & Yeoman, 1999). Consequently, the reality of such expectations are often skewed by numerous management challenges that can influence HVA operations and visitor experience outcomes (Ho & McKercher, 2004).

Operationally, HVA management challenges include a variety of concerns, such as conservation needs; limited budgets (Garrod & Fyall, 2000); the impact of climate change on natural assets; ownership and stakeholder involvement; inadequate planning and promotion (Pedersen, 2002); the competitive tourism market; over-estimation of demand; deficient staff development; lacking management experience in operating HVAs; bureaucracy; and reinvestment (Richards & Wilkes, 2008). In addition and reflected in the literature, HVA management challenges include inventory management; product development; tourism supply chain coordination; information technology management (Page, 2015); promoting sustainability; meeting varying stakeholder needs; fluctuating

market conditions; and seasonality (Leask, 2016). An HVA's size can obviously create other management challenges. For example, smaller HVAs generally receive fewer visits annually when compared to larger HVAs, impacting their revenue generation (Richards & Wilkes, 2008).

For the visitor experience specifically, HVAs are often challenged by the task of ensuring relevant content and education programs; having appropriate leisure or entertainment activities; and ensuring the quality of service and experience (Garrod & Fyall, 2000). Additionally, the availability of resources; the use of innovative media within in-situ (i.e. original, non-purpose built) HVAs; acknowledging cross-cultural sensitivities, which may be impacted by the experience (Timothy & Boyd, 2003); poor recognition of need for experience enhancement; inadequate premises; limited funding for reinvestment (Richards & Wilkes, 2008); and ensuring visitor accessibility (Leask, 2018) are also identified as HVA management challenges.

Undoubtedly, HVA management is highly complex with a variety of contributory factors. However, given that HVAs exist without a standard management model (Leask & Yeoman, 1999), much of their success is predefined by objectives. These objectives are influenced by an HVA's physical nature and stakeholder involvement (Richards & Wilkes, 2008). This means that managing stakeholder roles, conservation concerns and access issues are core challenges for HVA management (Leask, 2016). In addition, revenue generation, visitor management and managing interpretation, which together impact HVA operations and visitor experiences, have also been identified as core challenges for HVA management (see e.g. Leask & Fyall, 2015; Leask et al., 2002; Prideaux, 2008; Sharples, Yeoman, & Leask, 1999; Timothy, 2016).

### ***2.5.1 The impact of stakeholder roles on HVA management***

Effective HVA management is arguably based on an understanding of the complex relationship between stakeholders (see Alazaizeh et al., 2016; Leask, 2016, 2018; Todd, Leask, & Ensor, 2017; Tribe & Xiao, 2011; Weidenfeld & Leask, 2013) with stakeholders defined as individuals who have 'the right and capacity to participate in the process of HVA management' and thus, 'anyone

impacted by the development positively or negatively' (Aas, Ladkin, & Fletcher, 2005, p. 31). These individuals can include HVA owners; attraction managers; the local community, including residents and other businesses; tourists (Timothy & Boyd, 2006); specialists (e.g. conservationists, historians, architects, archaeologists, educators); planning and development consultants; the attraction staff (Pedersen, 2002); and investors (e.g. government, non-government agencies, charitable bodies, private businesses, individuals) (Weidenfeld & Leask, 2013). Together, stakeholders collaborate in 'a process of joint decision making in an effort to resolve planning problems and/or management issues related to the planning and development of the attraction' (Aas et al., 2005, p. 30).

While stakeholder collaboration is necessary to resolve planning problems and/or HVA management issues, a variety of challenges can occur in this process. These challenges include added costs to planning and development; challenges in identifying relevant stakeholders to include in the collaborative process; and ensuring the stakeholders have essential skills and understanding for HVA planning and development (Aas et al., 2005; Garrod et al., 2008; Timothy & Boyd, 2006; Weidenfeld & Leask, 2013). Adding to these challenges, concerns relating to stakeholder collaboration are often tied to conflicting stakeholder interests (Leask et al., 2002) and inclusion, or lack thereof (Alazaizeh et al., 2016). For example, in managing built HVAs specifically, conservationists' concerns for the maintenance and preservation of in-situ HVAs, fabric, and traditions, will often conflict with management concerns for development and maximising revenue from the sale of admissions and services (Leask et al., 2002). Similarly, in managing an HVA representative of historic tragedy, conflicting interests concerning the selection and appropriateness of representation may develop between management and the local community (Seaton, 2009).

Underpinning stakeholder challenges is often power imbalance – a subject well documented in literature (see e.g. Arnaboldi & Spiller, 2011; Brohman, 1996; Jamal & Getz, 1995; Jamal & Stronza, 2009; Waligo, Clarke, & Hawkins, 2013). Power imbalance develops as a result of decision-making power residing with

an established individual or group, generally owners and/or delegated managers (Seaton, 2009). Consequently, a hierarchical structure forms, which can inhibit HVA planning and creative development (Pedersen, 2002), as power-wielding individual(s) may develop unrealistic expectations for the HVA or visitor experience (Aas et al., 2005). In addition, the literature suggests that issues of managers lacking experience and/or expertise for specific HVA management tasks also underpin stakeholder challenges. These issues include experience designing interpretation (Brohman, 1996; Roberts, 2015); failure to clarify planning or operational goals (Waligo et al., 2013); and the development of feelings relating to disempowerment – an issue often associated with HVA staff and the local community (Bryon, 2012; Potter, 2016; Waligo et al., 2013).

The fundamental task in preventing issues relating to stakeholder inclusion is arguably a distribution of decision-making power, which will help to increase the quality of planning, reduce the likelihood of conflict, and ensure sound plans remain intact over time (Aas et al., 2005). Some scholars argue the reality of being able to reduce conflicts through inclusion is impossible (Ashworth & Hartmann, 2005). However, Seaton (2009) suggests that inclusion and conflict aversion may be best achieved by simply identifying and acknowledging stakeholder interests and perspectives through consultation and attempting to reconcile their interests and perspectives prior to HVA planning, and ensuring those findings through to maintenance of the finished product.

Adding to this, DeLanda (2006) has suggested that stakeholder inclusion challenges may be further mitigated through non-traditional bottom-up approaches, which counter the troublesome hierarchy that often assumes decision-making power. In support of this, Rousselin (2016) notes bottom-up approaches help produce self-organisational solutions and eliminate feelings of dispossession among lower-level stakeholders, particularly in situations with an absence of structured leadership.

### ***2.5.2 Revenue generation – Challenges and concerns***

HVA management, in all forms, requires an enormous budget (Timothy, 2016). In addition to ensuring the inclusion of all relevant stakeholders in planning and

development activities, HVA management is often under pressure to increase funding, improve business, and meet or exceed competition, whilst ensuring conservation efforts are upheld and the visitor experience is not diminished (Dewhurst & Thwaites, 2014). Thus, HVA management is greatly challenged by the issue of revenue generation.

Revenue generation, which includes identifying funding sources and financial objectives, is generally the responsibility of HVA owners or managers (Weidenfeld & Leask, 2013). As such, these stakeholders must recognise and acknowledge any funding challenges that may greatly impact the expenses for planning, promotion, and the on-going maintenance of the HVA (Walmsley, 2014). This is of great importance for conservationists, given lacking funds negatively impact the maintenance and preservation of an in-situ or natural HVA (Pedersen, 2002). Hughes and Carlsen (2010) suggest the security of revenue generation requires a formal business plan, which should outline the financial objectives and goals to reach long-term sustainability. HVA management can then better evaluate their value and justify funding and investment need (Black, 2016).

As HVAs are under pressure by the increasing level of competition combined with a growing emphasis on commercial priorities, HVA management must ensure the optimisation of earning potential (Dewhurst & Thwaites, 2014). However, in many cases, as indicated by Leask et al. (2002), not all stakeholders consider revenue generation as a priority. This is a particular challenge for managing tensions between conservation and commercialisation, given the high costs of maintenance, limited funding arrangements and over-estimation of demand (Hughes & Carlsen, 2010). According to Leask et al. (2002), some stakeholders take issue with charging admission fees, despite the need for maximising revenue generation for conservation and long-term sustainability. As such, this issue has sparked immense debate about admission fees and why the public must pay to see their own heritage on display (Garrod & Fyall, 2000). However, with diminishing public funds, particularly over the last few decades, HVA management has been challenged



by inadequate funding, leading to conservation and maintenance issues (Timothy, 2016).

HVA management has responded to some of these revenue generation challenges by developing a broader range of product offerings and revenue streams, as well as introducing advanced pricing systems and improving communication gaps with visitors (Leask, et al., 2013). French and Runyard (2011) have further noted the impact government and politicians can have on revenue generation, as political involvement can be perceived as a way of boosting image, nurturing national identity and encouraging diversity. Dewhurst and Thwaites (2014) have also suggested involving innovative external organisations can also offer financial backing, as well as specialised support through the allocation of creative designers or interpretation experts, ideas or alternative methods for profit building. Alternatively, Timothy (2016) has proposed revenue can be further generated from car park charges; rental fees (i.e. for private parties or events); retail and souvenir shops; catering and food services; sponsorship and/or memberships; donations; grants; fiscal backing by private businesses or individuals; and interpretive media that may be rented or sold (i.e. audio guides, maps, guidebooks).

### ***2.5.3 Conservation issues***

Conservation, which refers to the preservation of heritage places and heritage, is a vital component of HVA management (Roza, Kausar, & Gunawan, 2018). However, conservation, which occurs in various forms, (e.g. preservation, restoration, renovation) is greatly impacted by numerous factors, including growing demand, advancing technologies, modernisation, and the effects of environmental changes (Timothy, 2016). As such, HVA management, specifically those of in-situ locations, are challenged to balance both public access for better visitor experiences and conservation for the sustainability of their attraction and its assets (Roza et al., 2018).

Naturally, HVAs are both a threat and threatened by modernisation. Heritage buildings and natural landscapes are often destroyed in favour of new structures that have more practical functions for contemporary society

(Timothy, 2016). In addition, modernisation has led to an increase of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions through tourism-led activities that require fossil fuels or electricity generated from petroleum, coal, or gas (Sisman, 2007). As a result, HVA management is challenged with the task of balancing these effects to ensure the long-term sustainability of their physical assets.

Modernisation and development pressures, for natural HVAs in particular, have led to habitat loss and fragmentation, including soil compaction, erosion, and water pollution from waste and pathogens (Martin, Arcese, & Scheerder, 2011; Pedersen, 2002). In addition to this, human-created pollution, as an effect of modernisation, increases the deterioration of both natural and built HVAs. As chemicals are emitted directly or indirectly into the atmosphere, built HVAs in particular become repositories, accumulating pollutants through rainwater, consequently influencing the growth of damaging microorganisms in stonework (Saiz-Jimenez, 2003). Built HVAs are further in danger of erosion from the effects of weathering and overgrowth of vegetation (Timothy, 2016). Adding to these issues, climate change has become a greater concern for HVA management. For example, for natural HVAs that promote snow sport tourism, climate change has led to a decrease in annual snowfall, which has impacted anticipated visitor numbers, and consequently caused challenges for maintaining revenue generation (Wyss, Abegg, & Luthe, 2014).

Conservation challenges are further impacted by demand growth. As newer technologies and social trends emerge, HVA management is challenged with the task of ensuring the conservation of heritage assets, whilst fulfilling tourism demands and generating enough revenue to maintain both tasks. While increased visitor numbers are necessary for revenue generation, Mustafa and Tayeh (2011) explain the high volumes of visitors touching heritage assets, displays, and the facades of built HVAs, as well as walking across old cobblestone streets creates conservation challenges. While concerns for statues and monuments exist due to visitors standing upon, kissing, climbing on, or leaning against them, other HVAs that house historic paintings maintain a concern for condensation caused by visitors' breathing, touching, and sweating (Timothy, 2016).

The conservation concerns for HVA management, as discussed above, are largely attributed to access and visitor control issues (Mason, 2016). Increased visitor numbers often leads to increased pollution, litter, and direct or indirect physical damage to an HVA (e.g. wear and tear, vandalism, graffiti) (Bhati & Pearce, 2016; Timothy & Boyd, 2006). Thus, as Mustafa and Tayeh (2011) note, HVA management must improve services, amenities, and security inside HVAs to counter these issues. More drastically, McGregor (2002) suggests management can limit access to specific areas of an HVA for effective control and resolution of degradation issues. Limiting access, however, is a solution that will vary between HVAs depending on its type, as well as the architectural layout of the site (Garrod, 2008). For example, as found with Stonehenge in England, HVA management have roped off certain areas to prevent visitors from physically contacting the heritage assets, only allowing small groups to cross boundaries during special events that are closely monitored by HVA management (Mason, 2016). While this form of visitor management can diminish the experience outcome, Mason (2016) contends it helps to control crowding, which has been found to weaken the visitor experience. Still, HVA management are becoming supported by the materials sciences, which is progressing in the development of innovative technologies that can help revert degradation processes and restore heritage assets to their original form (Baglioni, Chelazzi, Giorgi, & Poggi, 2013; Giorgi, Baglioni, Berti, & Baglioni, 2010).

#### ***2.5.4 Access limitations and the visitor experience***

Access, which refers to both physical and intellectual access to heritage on display, has been identified in the literature as a key challenge for HVA management (Weidenfeld & Leask, 2013). In managing access, HVA management must balance concerns for conservation and the impact of visitor access to heritage assets, with the task of fulfilling visitor needs and expectations, whilst ensuring authenticity and the experience are not diminished (Weidenfeld & Leask, 2013).

Firstly, an HVA's location and physical access can create significant management challenges if limited. For example, in cases where HVAs do not

have adequate walking paths or ramped sections or handrails to allow for more safe and extensive access, management can become challenged by the need to create access, which can consequently impact conservation concerns (Fox & Edwards, 2008). Limited access is also identified at HVAs located a considerable distance from a city centre or the centre of tourism activity, which can then impact visitors through travel costs (Prideaux, 2008). Adding to this, McKercher, Ho and du Cros (2004) note that the size, scale and layout of the HVA can further limit access. This issue is a particular challenge for in-situ HVAs, as their historic intent did not consider the social or physical carrying capacity of tourism services (McKercher et al., 2004).

HVA management is further challenged with providing open access to meet or exceed visitor needs and expectations, especially for visitors with physical and intellectual needs and/or impairments. Literature has emphasised the importance of recognising and understanding visitor needs and adapting the visitor experience to meet those needs (Duraó & Joao Carneiro, 2017). To allow for full open access to HVAs, Darcy and Buhalis (2011, p. 10) urge management to develop mobility, vision, hearing, and cognitive dimensions so that they function independently with equity and dignity through the delivery of universally designed tourism products, services, and environments. To do this, the Association of Heritage Interpretation (2017) and Lindley (2018) argue visitor experiences must be created from inclusive interpretation designs, that allow full access to all visitors.

Adding to this discourse, Ambrose, Darcy and Buhalis (2012) suggest HVA management must establish innovative departments or people that are able to create a barrier-free environment by resolving access issues for people with disabilities, families with young children, and the ageing population, alongside ensuring an adequate space for on-site staff to work. A barrier-free example is found with the British Museum in London, which offers a touch tour in the Egyptian gallery for visually impaired visitors. In another example, the Zeiss Z1 blue lens glasses, which has shown to help reduce epileptic photosensitivity (Capovilla et al., 2006), may provide access opportunities to HVAs that employ strobe lighting effects or flash photography. Yet, much of these additions

require added costs for the employment of specialists, staff training, and the innovative technologies (Timothy, 2016). Thus, as identified with conservation challenges, access challenges are also inherently linked to concerns with revenue generation.

### **2.5.5 Visitor management challenges**

HVA management is further challenged by visitor management issues, which, through overcrowding, the effects of human contact, increased litter, and vandalism, can impact the conservation of the site and its surrounding environment (Bhati & Pearce, 2016; Timothy, 2016). Regarding this, Shackley (1999) explains HVA management is often challenged by the need to control visitor demand within a fixed visitor capacity, whilst mediating visitor behaviour on site. Managing these challenges often requires techniques to communicate and engage with visitors in a way that promotes desired visitor behaviour and lessens the impact of degradation to heritage assets (Kempiak, et al., 2017).

To counter these challenges, Shackley (1999, p. 79) suggests adjusting business hours to mitigate periods of overcrowding; employing institutional rules and visitor regulations as quality control mechanisms (e.g. banning smoking or eating inside certain exhibits); and implementing operational procedures that will enhance the quality of the visitor experience (e.g. controlling group sizes, placing information points throughout the HVA). More recently, scholars have commented on the role of future technologies, which can promote a salutary effect on behaviour, such as recorded voices and prompts embedded in seats, walls, and bins (Bhati & Pearce, 2017). Adding to this, HVA management may also limit access, as previously discussed, to prevent inappropriate visitor behaviour and deterioration of the HVA as a result of human contact (Mustafa & Tayeh, 2011). In addition to roping off areas, HVA management may limit access by placing vulnerable artefacts behind glass or plastic panels, or informing visitors of CCTV as a means to deter inappropriate visitor behaviour (Timothy, 2016; Timothy & Boyd, 2003).

Managing visitors and their behaviour is also possible through the use of a quota system and the design of a strategic route for visitor flow (Timothy,

2016). Interpretation efforts, which act as an agent for education and promotes visitor learning and appreciation for an HVA's value and assets, is also key to managing visitor behaviour (Kuo, 2017). As such, interpretation, which is the topic of chapter three, can be used as a tool for visitor management, as it serves to educate and communicate information about heritage assets to visitors in order to both enhance visitor understanding and control visitor behaviour (Moscardo & Ballantyne, 2008).

Visitor management through interpretation allows HVAs to address visitor behaviour expectations (Van Dijk, Smith, & Weiler, 2012). It also allows for cognitive change among visitors through knowledge development; affective change, through resource-based interpretive programs; and behavioural change, from the use of interpretation to influence visitors while on-site (Benton, 2009). Such interpretation practices are generally found through the use of information signs relating to appropriate visitor behaviour (Ababneh, 2017); roped off paths limiting visitors to specific areas (Tubb, 2003); staff stationed as guides or information points (Poria et al., 2006); and lighting or special effects that draw visitor attention to a particular point or area (Kim & Lee, 2016). As a result, interpretation as a management tool for mediating visitor behaviour helps to sustain heritage assets (Merriman, 2005). Still, interpretation can be large-scale, complex, and interdisciplinary (Woodward, 2009), creating additional challenges for HVA management.

### ***2.5.6 Managing interpretation – Authenticity and visitor experience***

While interpretation is reflected as a key tool for managing conservation concerns and the visitor experience, it is not without its challenges. Scholars have suggested interpretation challenges are often linked to other management challenges for HVAs (Kennedy & Sawyer, 2005; Pedersen, 2002). For example, while challenges with stakeholder collaboration can influence decisions for interpretation planning and design, funding challenges can limit the extent of interpretation opportunities, thereby diminishing the potential visitor experience (Kennedy & Sawyer, 2005; Pedersen, 2002). Other challenges for interpretation can include: high design and maintenance costs, such as for AR experiences and advanced technology based exhibits (Han,

Jung, & Gibson, 2014); the unpredictability of live acting and character guides (Van Dijk et al., 2012); and concerns for spatial arrangements and coherent narratives (Kossmann, Mulder, & den Oudsten, 2012).

Yet, many interpretation challenges are linked to the perception of authenticity and manner in which an HVA's narrative is written. Weaver (2011) suggests authenticity issues underpin interpretation challenges when a marketable historic past is lacking, which generally occurs in decision-making processes through complications of disagreements concerning what histories to include in the narrative. This issue is generally found with HVAs situated within the niche heritage tourism area of dark tourism, where sensitive heritage and historic controversies dictate narratives and choices in selecting and interpreting the past (Weaver, 2011). For example, the management of Colonial Williamsburg – an HVA recognised for its ties to colonial and slave history – is often challenged by the nature of the content, which has led to purposeful softening of the narrative, consequently limiting the possibility for visitors to gain a full understanding of this past (Silverman, 2011). To counter these issues, Weaver (2011) argues HVA management should face matters of authenticity and provide whole narratives in order to facilitate personal growth among visitors, rather than nostalgic yearnings of an idealised past.

Some scholars, including Alderson and Low (1985) and Brochu (2003), have suggested HVA management challenges relating to interpretation exist due to the lack of universal best practices for planning and designing interpretation. However, others, including Black (2005) and Roberts (2015), have argued that such challenges exist as a result of HVA management lacking knowledge and experience in interpretation design. While these challenges have existed since the proliferation of HVAs in the mid-to-late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the issue of authenticity has become an even greater challenge for HVA management within the realm of dark tourism given the sensitive nature of the heritage on display. For these HVAs, or rather, DVAs, management challenges relating to interpretation and authenticity are significant. Although further explored in Chapter Four, the fundamental challenge for DVA management is determining whether interpretation should be non-sensational, allowing visitors to reflect and

contemplate their experience (Frew, 2011), or more engaging, creating transformative experiences through thrill-induced journeys (Rodriguez-Garcia, 2012).

## **2.6 Conclusions**

This chapter has provided a critical review of current literature relating to heritage, heritage tourism, and HVAs. It has explored the development and progress of heritage and heritage tourism, which has led to the proliferation of HVAs. By exploring HVAs, this chapter has provided a review of their role and nature within heritage tourism and has further observed emergent themes that have identified new forms of HVAs. Finally, this chapter has explored core HVA management challenges, as identified in the literature and has further discussed recommended preventative measures and resolutions for these challenges.

From the review, it is evident that heritage understanding has helped to advance heritage tourism activities and the diversification of heritage tourism products. The advancements in both heritage and heritage tourism research have allowed for a breakdown of research boundaries and have further created a dialogue concerning niche forms of heritage tourism offerings, including film-induced heritage tourism (Bakiewicz et al., 2017), dark tourism (Lennon & Foley, 2000), and sport heritage tourism (Ramshaw & Gammon, 2005; 2017). Through these efforts, knowledge concerning HVAs has developed and advanced over time.

Despite its core position within tourism (Page, 2015), this review has shown that HVA understanding still requires further research, particularly concerning their management and operations (Leask, 2016). While various aspects of HVA management have been explored, including management challenges (Garrod & Fyall, 2000; Ho & McKercher, 2004; Leask, 2016; Richards & Wilkes, 2008) and the use of interpretation as a tool for managing visitors and conservation concerns (Bhati & Pearce, 2017; Moscardo & Ballantyne, 2008; Mustafa & Tayeh, 2011; Timothy, 2018), there is still a limited understanding of deeper, applied topics relating to HVA management. For example, knowledge relating



to best practices and the actual processes involved in developing and delivering HVA interpretation is under-developed. This gap may be due to the difficulty in achieving a set standard for best practices, given the proliferation of HVA types (Leask & Yeoman, 1999). There are therefore many opportunities to understand the nature of HVAs, how they operate over time, and in relation to each other (Garden, 2006) through greater exploration of applied topics, within both the wider realm and niche forms of heritage tourism.

Interpretation is clearly a significant factor for HVA management and there is a distinct need to develop knowledge relating to HVA interpretation practice and its application for heritage visitor experiences. The following chapter explores interpretation, including its conceptual development and use for heritage tourism. In addition, by drawing on a range of interdisciplinary studies, the following chapter reviews current literature relating to interpretation practice within the realm of heritage tourism and niche forms, including dark tourism.

## CHAPTER 3: INTERPRETATION, DESIGN, AND MANAGEMENT

### 3.1 Introduction

Interpretation is recognised as an essential component of HVA management. It is the means for establishing understanding between an HVA and its visitors (Ababneh, 2017). In consequence, it is seen as an informational and inspirational process designed to enhance understanding, appreciation and conservation of heritage assets (Beck & Cable, 2002). With such significance, interpretation has become a focus of scholarly interest and analysis, specifically in heritage studies, heritage tourism, and museum studies (Ababneh, 2017; Veverka, 2011). Yet, despite such significance and academic interest, the field of interpretation still lacks a comprehensive understanding relating to its design and management for heritage tourism experiences (Roberts, 2014; Skibins, Powell, & Stern, 2012), as well as a universal framework for practice (Hems, 2006).

Key to interpretation is its design (Forrest & Roberts, 2014). As an emergent hybrid field of interpretation and design, interpretation design is a large-scale, complex, interdisciplinary practice used to enhance HVA experiences through a holistic, human-centred approach (Woodward, 2009). Despite the importance of designing quality interpretation, interpretation design has been largely overlooked in heritage tourism literature until recently, with publications usually found within the areas of natural heritage tourism and museums (see e.g. Bogle, 2013; Boyle, 2016; Forrest & Roberts, 2014; Roberts, 2014, 2015, Wells, Butler, & Koke, 2016; Woodward, 2009, 2015).

This chapter is important for this study as it provides an understanding for how interpretation is applied within heritage tourism and its niche forms. It critically examines the conceptual development and use of interpretation for tourism purposes, with a particular focus on guiding principles and practical applications. Crucially, it explores issues relating to the design and management of interpretation for HVAs and niche forms, including DVAs.

The chapter commences with an introduction on interpretation, exploring its conceptual development, meaning, and role within heritage tourism and is followed by a discussion on the methods in which interpretation is delivered. This discussion provides a foundation to introduce interpretation design, including its meaning and role for interpretation projects. The chapter also includes a discussion on the interpretation process, including the stages of planning, design, and on-going management and examines the influences on interpretation management through a discussion of interpretation challenges. Finally, this chapter reviews the progress of interpretation research and future research recommendations, which help to provide a more comprehensive understanding of interpretation, its development, and design.

## **3.2 Interpretation**

Drawing on tangible and intangible resources, interpretation serves as a communication process that links heritage and tourism through the reconstruction of the past for the present (Nuryanti, 1996; Sliverman, 2011). Stemming from practice-based activities of the early-to-mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, interpretation has become an effective method for enriching visitor experiences and promoting the understanding of heritage to support the maintenance and sustainability of heritage assets (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992). Thus, as a means for promoting visitor understanding and appreciation for heritage, interpretation has not only become a management tool for HVAs but has also grown in academic interest in a variety of disciplines within the tourism industry.

### ***3.2.1 Development and the meaning of interpretation***

Interpretation is a complex, multi-faceted concept that provides a variety of meanings and applications (Bacher et al., 2007). Contemporary society applies interpretation to numerous contexts (e.g. communication; education; experience; conversation; explanation; emotion; relationships). However, its meaning stems from much older civilizations through the act of storytelling (Cater et al., 2015; Weaver, 1982). For example, it is understood in Latin as *interpretari*, meaning to expound or explain (Wadensjö, 1998), while in ancient Greek, it is understood as both *hermeneuein*, meaning to translate or interpret, and *periegete*, meaning to guide something or someone (Lawn & Keane, 2011;

Stewart, Hayward, Devlin & Kirby, 1998.) The commonality among these variations shows that interpretation is inherently understood to be an action of translating or explaining information.

To date, there is no universally accepted definition for interpretation (Cater et al., 2015). However, within heritage tourism, it is traditionally understood as 'an educational activity that aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, first-hand experiences and illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information' (Tilden, 1957/2007, p. 33). This definition, developed by Freeman Tilden (1957), is rooted in earlier works by Scottish naturalist John Muir (1886) and American naturalist Enos Mills (1906), which referred to the quality of interpretive programs for the US national park system (Bacher et al., 2007). Tilden's (1957) work argued that interpretation is an activity that can create understanding among visitors about the natural environment, leading to appreciation and subsequent protection for it (Ham, 1992). From this, Tilden (1957) developed a set of six principles for interpretation practice (see Appendix B), underpinned by theoretical and empirical studies from interdisciplinary fields (e.g. education; museums; communication; psychology; tourism). These principles proposed that visitor experiences are constructed from interpretive opportunities that allow audiences to find meaning in what is being presented (Timothy & Boyd, 2003).

Through the mid-to-late 20<sup>th</sup> century, Tilden's (1957) work continued to underpin much of subsequent interpretation definitions. As reflected in Table 3.1, many scholars (e.g. Alderson & Low, 1985; Ham, 1992; Sharpe, 1976; Wallin, 1965), continued to view interpretation as an HVA activity or service delivered to visitors in order to create understanding and appreciation for heritage assets. However, in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, scholars began to acknowledge visitors maintained their own notions of the past, heritage values, and sense of place (Hems, 2006). As a result, interpretation definitions have evolved in relation to the process of its practice (Mayo, Larson, Barrie, Bliss, & Wolter, 2009).

**Table 3.1. Definitions of Interpretation**

Source	Definition- Interpretation is:
Tilden (1957, p. 17)	An educational activity which aims to reveal meaning and relationships through the use of original objects, by first-hand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information
Wallin (1965)	The helping of the visitor to feel something that the interpreter feels - sensitivity to the environment; a sense of wonder; a desire to know.
Sharpe (1982, p. 4)	An activity that seeks to assist visitors in developing a keener awareness, appreciation and understanding of the area he is visiting; accomplish management goals; and promote public understanding of the agency's goals and objectives
Alderson & Low (1985, p. 3)	A planned effort to create for visitors an understanding of history and significance of events, people and objects with which a site is associated
Ham (1992, p. 3)	An approach to communication, separated from other forms of information transfer in that it is pleasurable, relevant, organised, and has a theme
Beck & Cable (1998, p. 2)	A method that gives meaning to a 'foreign' landscape or event from the past or present.
Moscardo, (2000, p. 327)	An activity that seeks to explain the significance of an object, culture or place through core functions of enhancing visitor experiences, improving visitor knowledge, and assisting in conservation of places or cultures.
Weiler and Ham (2001)	A service that provides meaning and understanding for tourists about what they are visiting and experiencing.
National Park Service (NPS) (2003)	A catalyst in creating an opportunity for the audience to form their own intellectual and emotional connections with the meanings and significance inherent in the resource
Pastorelli (2003)	A learning experience which seeks to enrich the meaningful relationships we hold with our world, and to foster and build a set of values which supports those relationships
National Association for Interpretation (NAI) (2007)	A communication process that forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and the meanings inherent in the resource
Cater, Garrod & Low (2015)	A process that aims to communicate ideas and feelings that helps enrich people's understanding and appreciation of their world and their role within it.
Association for Heritage Interpretation (AHI) (2018)	A communication process that helps people make sense of, and understand more about, your site, collection or event.

As interpretation understanding developed, the new common perception suggested interpretation is not an activity. Rather it is a process, built on the communication between HVAs and visitors, which creates emotional and intellectual connections between visitors' knowledge, interests, and values, with the meanings inherent in heritage assets (Carr, 2016). Through this process, interpretation is understood as a contribution to visitor conversations, explaining of inter-relationships, and conveying feelings or values among audiences (Cater et al., 2015).

Many of the definitional debates on interpretation relate to its role as an activity or process. However, coming to a universal agreement on definition has been hindered by the use of the term 'presentation', which is used interchangeably with 'interpretation' within interpretation literature (see e.g. ICOMOS, 2007; Silberman, 2009). Many scholars (e.g. Fowler, 1992; Jenkins, 1991; Johnson, 1999; Millar, 1989) have identified interpretation as separate from presentation, arguing interpretation is a component of the visitor experience for creating understanding, while presentation is instead a physical display or method for interpretation. This view reflects a dichotomy between the two terms, and also reveals how interpretation is operated and managed on both intellectual and physical levels (Fowler, 1992; Goulding, 1999).

Reflecting on the above, it is certain that there is a need for fine-tuning interpretation's definition, not only for universal agreement, but also for the standardisation and future development of its practice (Brochu & Merriman, 2002). This issue may be resolved through future research that can help to better identify and assess the essential elements of interpretation (Knapp & Benton, 2004). For the purposes of this research, interpretation is defined as a strategic effort, encompassing both process and activity, with the aim to educate and inspire audiences about heritage through provoking and engaging experiences that employ a variety of practical methods and media. More simply, interpretation is the foundation of an offered visitor experience.

### **3.2.2 *The role of interpretation at HVAs***

As main factor in enhancing people's awareness and understanding of a place (Herbert, 1989), interpretation is the strategically planned effort that helps to enrich visitor understanding and appreciation for heritage assets (Roberts, 2014). It therefore plays a significant role in heritage tourism, especially for HVA management. It supports the facilitation and evaluation of the overall visitor experience by addressing expectations and organisational goals (Van Dijk et al., 2012). More specifically, it is used to both create the visitor experience and as a management tool for visitor management (Loulanski & Loulanski, 2011), benchmarking and promoting economic sustainability (Betty Weiler & Ham, 2010).

Charged with the task of enhancing visitor understanding, the role of interpretation, traditionally, is to create the visitor experience through thought-provoking displays that encourage visitors to be less passive in their visits (Smith, 2016). Therefore, scholars suggest interpretation should be interesting and informative, offering engagement and some form of enjoyment or entertainment (Goulding, 2000; Smith, 2016). Through interpretation, visitors have the opportunity to connect their memories, knowledge, and interests with history and heritage on display, which can be an emotional, educational and/or entertaining experience (Kavanagh, 1996). Thus, as a way of enhancing HVAs with value-added components, interpretation serves as both educator and entertainer, often through edutainment agendas that use educational and entertaining interpretation methods (Harvey, 2008; Uzzell, 1989a). Some interpretive experiences can be shocking, moving, or cathartic (Fyson, 1982; Uzzell, 1989c). However, the goal is to communicate the significance and meaning of heritage to visitors (Grimwade & Carter, 2000), and allow them to utilise their understandings of the past in order to make sense of their visitor experience (Kidd, 2011).

In creating a visitor experience, interpretation is also charged with the task of considering visitor management requirements and facilitating long-term conservation and environmental sustainability (Ham & Weiler, 2012). In mediating visitor behaviour and reducing negative impacts on HVA

conservation (Merriman, 2005), interpretation is used to communicate messages and offer first-hand experiences that encourage visitor mindfulness and acceptable visitor behaviour (Benton, 2009; Knudson, Cable, & Beck, 1995; Moscardo, 1996b; Tubb, 2003). This role is based on the notion that through the strategic use of particular interpretive methods (e.g. sign-posting; limited access; strategically stationed staff; strategic aesthetics), visitors are informed about the consequences of inappropriate behaviour while on-site, and are subsequently encouraged to behave in a certain way (Ababneh, 2017; Garrod, 2008; Kim & Lee, 2016; Poria, et al., 2006; Tubb, 2003). It is clear that appropriate interpretation can help to address several of the HVA management challenges discussed in chapter two, specifically those for natural or fragile in-situ HVAs. These challenges include conservation and visitor management issues related to seasonality, increasing visitor numbers, litter, and vandalism (Bhati & Pearce, 2016; Mason, 2016; Mustafa & Tayeh, 2011; Tubb, 2003).

Interpretation is also charged with the task of promoting revenue generation and economic sustainability for HVAs and their local communities. It can aid economic sustainability by not only creating employment opportunities, but also satisfying visitor demands (Ham & Weiler, 2012). In the first instance, interpretation supports economic growth for local communities, as it not only requires the hiring of on-site staff, but also ancillary services (e.g. food; drink; facilities maintenance; merchandising) and consultation of specialists (e.g. designers; historians; architects; archaeologists; researchers; educators). These services and specialists are generally hired from within the local community (Fallon & Kriwoken, 2003).

Interpretation further facilitates economic growth by helping to increase visitor numbers and continued visitor interest by satisfying visitor demands (Bramwell & Lane, 2014). Since such demands are greatly impacted by visitors' travel motivations, needs, and expectations (Ham & Weiler, 2012), HVA management must ensure they understand their intended audience – made possible through audience development research – to ensure revenue generation through interpretation (Black, 2005; Bogle, 2013; Visocky-O'Grady & Visocky-O'Grady, 2017).



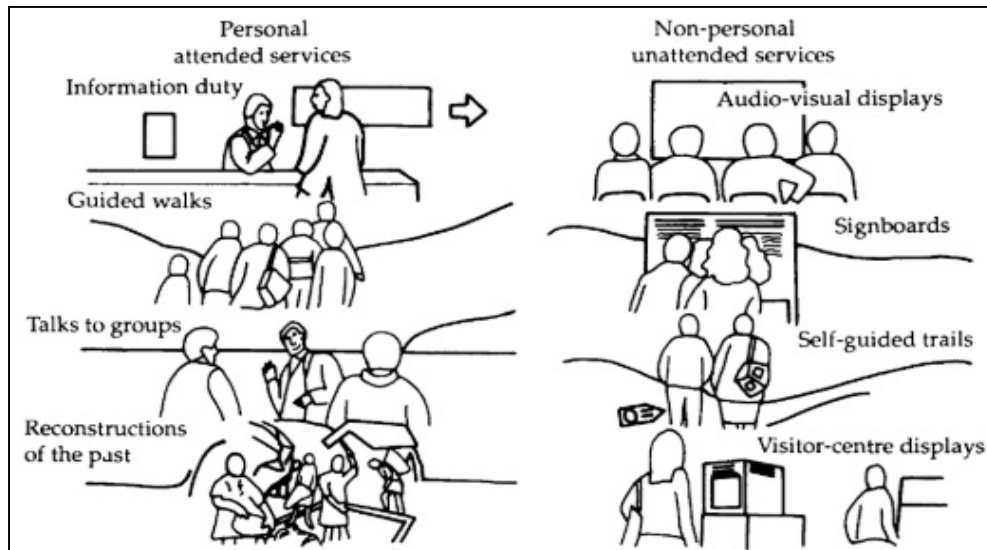
### **3.3 Interpretation methods**

As interpretation is meant to create and help manage visitor experiences, it is delivered through a wide-range of methods. These include formal learning (i.e. curriculum based) and informal learning (i.e. non-traditional) strategies; non-personal (i.e. static, passive interpretive methods) and personal or interpersonal (i.e. interactive, innovative) methods for interpretation delivery and varying agendas (e.g. education, entertainment, edutainment) (Bacher et al., 2007; Skibins et al., 2012). Interpretation is traditionally delivered through more formal strategies supported by static methods and educational agendas. However, it can also be delivered through informal, non-traditional strategies supported by innovative methods through entertainment and edutainment agendas (Sturm & Bogner, 2010; Timothy & Boyd, 2003).

Informal learning strategies have been labelled uncontrollable and unpredictable (Robb, 1998). However, recent studies suggest formal learning strategies do not provide visitors with enough opportunities to fully understand and become inspired about heritage (Museums Association, 2017). Research has further shown that visitor preferences reflect a desire to learn through an accumulation of informal experiences through experiential interpretation, which provides more customisable visitor experiences (Poria et al., 2009; Smith, 2016). To this end, a number of interpretive methods are used to bring the past to life through both formal and informal strategies (Van Dijk et al., 2012).

The range of interpretation methods is extensive. As reflected in Figure 3.2, scholars (e.g. Cooper, 1991; Copeland, 2004; Ham & Weiler, 2012; Kempiak, et al., 2017) have classified them as either non-personal (e.g. self-guided tours; audio-guides; brochures; maps; signage; exhibitions; and audio-visual technologies) or personal/interpersonal (e.g. guided tours; talks; demonstrations; re-enactments; and live performances). While some HVAs may prefer to strictly use one type over the other, in reality, most interpretation requires combination of both non-personal and personal methods to deliver interpretation, which interplay with an HVA's space, aesthetics, and other perceptual influences (McManus, 2016).

**Figure 3.2. Interpretation methods**



(Cooper, 1991, p. 227)

### **3.3.1 Non-personal interpretation methods**

Non-personal interpretation methods are generally static, one-way communication techniques (Cooper, 1991). These include text panels, signs, publications (e.g. leaflets, brochures, maps, guidebooks), self-guided tours; visitor centre displays, audio-guides and static exhibitions. The literature suggests non-personal methods are often limited in their ability to adapt to changing contexts and audience needs (Munro, Morrison-Saunders, & Hughes, 2008). However, due to their generally lower costs for purchase and maintenance, signage, exhibitions, and self-guided tours, specifically, are considered the most common and simplest form of delivering information to visitors at HVAs (Alderson & Low, 1985; Hughes, 2004).

#### Signs and publications

Described as 'an inscribed board or space that can act as either an information board, or as an interpretive panel' (Gross, Zimmerman & Buchholz, 2006, p. 10) signs are used to help communicate messages to visitors (Brochu, 2003). They are often used to help orientate visitors, directing and informing them about useful information (e.g. hours of operation; admission fees; optional tour languages; essential contextual information) (Ababneh, 2017; Alderson & Low, 1985). As such, they are viewed as one of the more important and popular methods for interpretation (Ababneh, 2017).

Signage is, however, less flexible than the face-to-face interactions found with personal interpretation, and therefore requires precise designs in order to prevent misunderstandings of messages (Ballantyne & Hughes, 2006). The effectiveness of signage is thus based on the aesthetic features, text placement, and content (Ababneh, 2017). In addition, its size, location within the exhibit or site, colour, symbol use, and text, including font size and style, are important (Ballantyne & Hughes, 2006).

Cahyadi, Bandung and Wiguna (2012) have highlighted signage progress and the growing popularity of information and communication technologies (ICT) within the tourism industry, suggesting digital signs, in particular, have become highly beneficial for HVA management. Digital signs, generally in the form of LCD screens or wall displays, are able to compress large amounts of information, including text, images, animations, videos and music into an interactive media platform that is controlled by computer touch screen options or media playback (Cahyadi et al., 2012). The advantages of using digital signs include the reduction of costly static signs and panels, reaching more visitors through dynamic and customisable displays and delivering a variety of information through a single source (Arsan, Parkan & Konu, 2014). Digital sign management, including troubleshooting and software updates, can often be done remotely, which, in addition to the compression of content that would have required multiple signs and panels, is argued to offset the costs of printing, construction and upkeep associated with traditional signs (Cahyadi et al., 2012).

### Exhibitions

Exhibitions are understood as conscious spatial arrangements of consistent groups of objects based on succinct sets of selection criteria. They function as documentaries of themes and produce coherent narratives for audiences (Kossmann et al., 2012). Traditionally, they present collections and provide information through storylines about the significance of a collection or place (Moser, 2010). As static displays, exhibitions allow narratives to unfold in space and time in which audiences are able to move about freely (Kossmann et al., 2012).

For HVAs, specifically in-situ locations or historic house museums, exhibitions are often designed as roped-off scenes of furniture and décor, providing audiences with a more authentic view of life in the past (Butler, 2002). Exhibitions do not simply display objects for observation, however. Rather, they can inform and construct knowledge through the use of interpretive media, including audio-visual techniques, digital displays, and even AR applications, that work both together and independently to convey meaning to diverse audiences (Falk & Dierking, 2000). Exhibition designs must therefore take into consideration potential functional and structural influences on the design outcome, including architecture, location, setting, allocated space, access within the space, lighting and colour palates, text panels and message signs and the overall layout of the exhibition (Moser, 2010).

### Self-guided tours

Encompassing elements of signage, exhibitions, and interpretive technology, self-guided tours allow visitors to independently tour HVAs (McManus, 2016). Self-guided tours are often beneficial for HVAs with spatial limitations, unsuitable for large guided tours. For example, despite limited resources and a small staff, Alcatraz, as reflected in Figure 3.3, is able to provide full access and an individualised learning experience to large crowds by offering self-guided tours using point-to-point directed audio-guides that narrate prisoner stories (Levy, 2001).

**Figure 3.3. Alcatraz self-guided audio tour**



(NPS, 2019)

However, self-guided tours have been criticised for confining visitors to the structure of guidebooks and signposting, consequently restricting them to specific information and limiting their ability to ask questions and engage with others (Cheong & Miller, 2000; Moscardo, 1996b). As a consequence, self-guided tours have been labelled as passive experiences, which can hinder visitor learning and understanding, as many times visitors ignore or overlook important information (Xu, Cui, Ballantyne, & Packer, 2013).

### ***3.3.2 Personal interpretation methods***

Personal methods are generally interactive, two-way communication techniques used to deliver an interpretation (Cooper, 1991). They include guided tours; talks; demonstrations; re-enactments; live performances; and immersive technologies. Personal methods are challenged by higher purchase and maintenance costs, particularly for innovative technologies and training requirements, such as expert consultation and time (Hughes & Morrison-Saunders, 2002; Munro et al., 2008). However, the literature still suggests that personal methods are usually ascribed with having greater influence on the visitor experience, as these methods can adapt to changing contexts and diverse audience needs (Munro et al., 2008).

#### Interpretive technology

Traditionally, interpretive technology has been delivered through non-personal methods. These include digital signage, audio-guides, and audio-visual displays (e.g. videos; light and sound; still photographs; animated productions) (Alderson & Low, 1985). However, through technological advancements, including augmented reality (AR), quick response (QR) codes, and 3-D imagery, this method has become more personal. As a form of information communication technology (ICT), AR, QR, and 3-D technologies offer visitors customisable experiences for their personal needs and preferences (Cahyadi et al., 2012). As a result, technology has become favourable and grown in popularity for enhancing HVA experiences (Yovcheva, Buhalis, & Gatzidis, 2013).



where visitors are fully immersed in virtual environments with less interaction with the real world (Guttentag, 2010).

Despite the usefulness of AR technology for enhancing visitor experiences, challenges are often found with user requirements. These include the speed of AR applications, loading times, ease of use, and personalisation features, such as multi-language options (Han et al., 2014). In addition, the quality of the AR experience can pose challenges for the rendered features of 3-D images and the need to avoid latency from the delay between user movements and corresponding AR features (Guttentag, 2010). The accuracy of the 3-D texture-mapping process, including the ability to recreate real reflections and light refraction has also been shown to be a challenge for managing AR technologies (Bruno et al., 2010). So while advanced technologies are shown to provide immersive and engaging visitor experiences, scholars have argued the use of such advanced technology in HVA settings is still limited by its critical factors, such as management and user requirements (Han et al., 2014).

#### Live interpretation and re-enactments

Popular, but at times controversial, live interpretation and re-enactments are used for personal interpretation at HVAs. Conducted through costumed performances, re-enactments deliver scripted monologues with the intent to educate and facilitate engagement between visitors and heritage (Kidd, 2011). Re-enactments use period-inspired costumed actors who engage visitors using humour, drama, pathos and other characteristics reminiscent of the period they are portraying (Ward & Wilkinson, 2006). There are three different types of re-enactment techniques, which include first-, second-, and third-person re-enactment scenarios. First-person actors assume the role of a specific person from the past, complying with the mind-set of that time-period and therefore dismissing references outwith that time (Wicz, 2013). Second-person actors, actors assume the same role, however respond to modern day references (Wicz, 2013). Similarly, third-person actors are dressed in period-inspired costume, however they do not assume the role of a particular person from history, but rather serve as a general guide (Jackson & Kidd, 2008). As an interpreter of heritage, first- and second-person actors are often referred to as

role players, while third person actors are largely considered demonstrators (Butcher-Youngmans, 1993).

Re-enactments can also include live exhibitions of period-inspired activities enacted by costumed performers who do not engage with audiences, but rather provide an authentic re-enacted moment in history (Peirce, 2014). They can further include live action role-play (LARP), where visitors participate in re-enactments (Jackson & Kidd, 2008), as well as smaller hands-on activities or co-constructed opportunities where visitors are able to participate in various period-inspired activities (Magelssen, 2007). Examples of re-enactments include the annual re-enactment of Gettysburg, renaissance fairs, and Old Sturbridge Village, which as reflected in Figure 3.5, visitors are able to spend a week living like 19<sup>th</sup> century New Englanders.

**Figure 3.5. Re-enactments at Old Sturbridge Village**



(Old Sturbridge Village, 2019)

When performed effectively, re-enactment interpretation is able to communicate the significance of heritage and establish a connection with audiences through learning, understanding and empathy (Van Dijk et al., 2012). However, in a study on re-enactments, Tivers (2002) found the effectiveness of the interpretation largely depends on the passion of actors for the history and their commitment to selling the history. Moreover, Potter (2016) found that re-enactments are not only dependent on the actors' performance skills and commitment, but also the much more complex and detailed interpretation design of the scripted narrative and site.



Re-enactments are however challenged with concerns for authenticity, as they are heavily criticised for producing idealised pasts (Tivers, 2002; Uzzell, 1989b). Such concerns are more common with DVAs, which, as introduced in chapter two and further explored in chapter four, include, for example, US southern plantations, generally recognised for their associations with slave history. In these cases, scholars have questioned to what extent these histories should be re-enacted, or if instead, they should be informed by traditional guides and static signs (Van Dijk et al., 2012). This discourse has however led to calls for further research into the effectiveness of live interpretation on visitor experience outcomes, as well as how re-enactments compare to other interpretation methods, such as AR techniques (Van Dijk et al., 2012). Additional research into tourist perceptions of re-enactment interpretation (Bryon, 2012), and the role of actors in the design of the script and/or overall interpretive experience (Potter, 2016) is further required to advance understanding of the use and effectiveness of re-enactments at HVAs.

### Guided tours

Encompassing elements of signage and live interpretation, guided tours offer visitors face-to-face interaction with tour guides, which has been found effective for cognitive and aesthetic needs (Xu et al., 2013). Next to museums and visitor centres, guided tours are one of the most traditional methods for interpretation, particularly for in-situ and natural HVAs (Ababneh, 2018). Guided tours are generally perceived beneficial as they not only offer visitors physical orientation, but also opportunities for tour guides to answer visitor questions and adapt the interpretation as needed to meet changing visitor needs and interests (Moscardo, 1996b; Xu et al., 2013). Given their visitor-centred approach, guided tours have become an essential part of tourism and HVA production and consumption (Ababneh, 2018).

The success of guided tours, however, depends heavily on the performance of tour guides, who often interpret content and adapt narratives to suit their individuality (Ababneh, 2018). Tour guides are responsible for leading visitors on land or water, using non-motorised travel (e.g. walking, canoe, raft, bicycle, horseback), or by motorised travel (e.g. bus, boat, motorbike, car) while

providing descriptive information about the theme of the tour or HVA (Ham & Weiler, 2012). As either re-enactment characters or non-costumed staff, guides are charged with the responsibility of delivering the interpretive content and engaging with visitors through edutainment techniques (Levy, 2002). Subsequently, for some HVAs, guides are one of the most important factors in creating meaningful heritage experiences (Ababneh, 2018).

### ***3.3.3 Interpretation agendas – Education and Edutainment***

The selection of interpretation methods is largely influenced by the intended agenda of the HVA (e.g. education; entertainment; edutainment). Whether through a formal or informal learning strategy, the primary role of interpretation in the visitor experience is to promote learning and appreciation for heritage (Timothy, 2016). Traditionally, HVA interpretation has been accomplished through educational agendas, which are largely rooted in general theories of education and museum philosophies (Grenier, 2008). Through educational agendas, HVAs traditionally use non-personal methods, such as signage and exhibitions, to display artefacts, relics, commemorative artworks, photographic imagery, and text panels (Seaton, 2009). However, scholars have come to understand that when it comes to education, visitors seek to learn something new through experiences involving active engagement (Kempiak, et al., 2017). As a result, a widespread recognition has developed among HVA management that learning can be engaging and fun, subsequently revealing entertainment as a second primary role for interpretation (Timothy, 2016).

The appreciation that entertaining interpretation can have an educational value has led to the development of the concept and practice, 'edutainment', which as a hybrid term, combines education and entertainment values and activities (Timothy, 2016). Edutainment was formally recognised in the 1990s as an innovative way to connect heritage and visitors (Southall & Robinson, 2011). HVAs now widely promote edutainment agendas, using both personal and non-personal methods, to create interesting, memorable, and novel experiences that satisfy an increasingly fragmented post-modern consumer demand (Hertzman, Anderson, & Rowley, 2008; Richards, 2002).

Edutainment has become popular among HVAs as it creates both structured experiences that are high in entertainment value, and experiences that are culturally and historically significant, meaningful, and informative (Hertzman et al., 2008). Through edutainment, humour has been found to be an effective method for retaining visitors' attention and increasing learning opportunities through a more appealing experience (Timothy, 2016). While edutainment is most often identified at HVAs that offer themed environments, storytelling, and guided tours (Ron & Timothy, 2013), technological advancements have allowed most HVAs the opportunity to enhance their educational agendas and broaden their interpretation offerings (Southall & Robinson, 2011).

Despite its popularity, edutainment is imbued with challenges relating to its entertainment nature and commercial appeal (Hertzman et al., 2008). More recent criticisms of edutainment stem from within dark tourism, where more fun-centric DVAs, such as the Dungeons Experience, are often criticised for creating trivialised and inauthentic products (Stone, 2006). This issue appears largely associated with research that compares edutainment-based LDVAs to commemorative and education-based DVAs, which has led scholars to criticise edutainment as being exploitative and immoral (Isaac & Cakmak, 2013; Dalton, 2015). Thus, HVA (and DVA) management must take care to ensure that the entertainment value does not intentionally subjugate facts and accuracies needed for authentic and effective interpretation (Timothy, 2016). However, specifically referencing the edutainment-based London Dungeon Experience, for example, Ivanova and Light (2017) argue that visitors are overwhelming in favour of mixing education and fun. Such discourse has led scholars to argue that the criticisms of edutainment are often bias, stemming from 'high-culture' institutional thinking, which has stereotyped many HVAs (and DVAs) as insignificant, frivolous amusements (Hertzman et al., 2008). Thus, recommendations have been made for future research to explore the use and effectiveness of edutainment for creating meaningful and memorable heritage experiences (Hertzman et al., 2008).

### **3.4 Interpretation design**

HVAs now, more often than not, move beyond strictly non-personal static exhibitions to include more complex, open-minded agendas that actively respond to the needs and interests of varied audiences (Bridal, 2013). Interpretation has thus become more visitor-focused in its design efforts, aimed at attracting, engaging, and provoking visitors, largely through edutainment agendas (Forrest & Roberts, 2014). Key to interpretation, and subsequently the overall visitor experience, is the interpretation design (Roberts, 2014), which communicates interpretive plans into tangible form (Woodward, 2009).

#### ***3.4.1 Development and the meaning of interpretation design***

Informed by theory from the fields of interpretation, education, and museum studies (Woodward, 2009), interpretation design applies the principles and philosophy of heritage interpretation through diverse media and methods (Roberts, 2014). Interpretation design understanding stems from early-21<sup>st</sup> century interpretation research (see Barnes, 2000; Kocsis & Barnes, 2008; Woodward, 2003, 2005), and is rooted at the intersection of interpretation and design. It is a hybrid term of spoken and visual communication (Woodward, 2009), that serves as a practice situated between art, architecture, and communication (Bertron, Schwarz, & Frey, 2011). Originating from the juxtaposition of oral storytelling and text- and image-based labelling, interpretation design blurs the boundaries of exhibition, object display, and the visitor environment, resulting in an immersive and multisensory experience (Roberts, 2015; Woodward, 2009).

Interpretation design research is still in its infancy. However, it is currently understood as ‘the strategic application of one of more design forms to shape visitor experiences that communicate specific ideas, values, and messages (Roberts, 2014, p. 205). It has also been described as ‘the planned creation of environments that communicates ideas, supports visitor understanding of object displays, and contributes to meaningful visitor experiences’ (Roberts, 2015, p. 379). In this thesis, interpretation design is defined as the underpinning tool for interpretation development, integrating the intellectual and

physical elements of interpretation for the creation of holistic visitor experiences.

### ***3.4.2 The role of design for interpretation***

As a means to create holistic, human-centred, visitor experiences (Woodward, 2009), interpretation design has become a key management tool for interpretation and achieving desired visitor outcomes (Ababneh, 2017; Roberts, 2015). While interpretation is perceived as the foundation of the visitor experience, design is the underpinning effort that physically creates the experience. Drawing on interdisciplinary practices (e.g. graphics; interiors; exhibitions; textiles; production; education; performance; music; technology; art; architecture; communication (Boyle, 2016), interpretation design communicates content to shape the visitor experience (Roberts, 2014). Through this effort, it seeks to 'engage visitors through cognitive, affective and physical means, in which visitors co-create their individual experiences through prior knowledge, motivations, and actions to learn and make meaning over time' (Roberts, 2014, p. 205).

As a visitor-focused approach, interpretation design requires a human-centred perspective that takes precedence over aesthetics and presentation styles (Woodward, 2009). Subsequently, design is fundamentally based on audience development research (further explored in section 3.5.2), which helps to identify potential audiences and any unwanted behaviour and/or attitudes towards heritage and HVAs (Woodward, 2009). This can inform a designer, who will need to consider behaviour modification requirements for the design. In similar style, the design also supports conservation management, as the designer will need to acknowledge conservation concerns, in order to mitigate negative impacts on heritage assets after the design is delivered to the public.

Despite its significance for interpretation and subsequently HVA management, understanding about interpretation design practice within heritage tourism remains under-developed. Scholarly attention has largely focused on interpretation as a tool for enhancing visitor experiences, managing visitors and conservation concerns (Bhati & Pearce, 2017; Moscardo & Ballantyne, 2008;

Mustafa & Tayeh, 2011) and identifying specific types of interpretation methods used at HVAs (Han, et al., 2014; Kossmann, et al., 2012; Van Dijk et al., 2012). Thus, more research is needed into how interpretation for HVAs is developed and applied practically, in addition to discovering the influences underpinning decisions that impact the outcome of interpretation designs. Section 3.5 looks at the practical process of planning, designing, and managing interpretation for an HVA visitor experience.

### **3.5 The interpretation process**

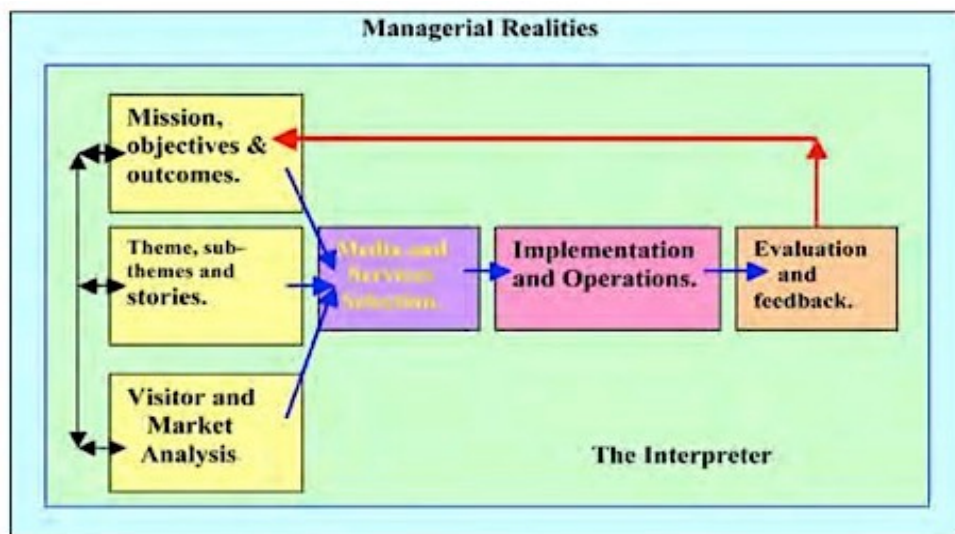
Literature suggests the effectiveness and success of managing interpretation is dependent on its careful and thorough planning and design (Cater et al., 2015; Moscardo & Ballantyne, 2008). Interpretation often requires resolution of seemingly contradictory thought processes: creativity and logic; innovation and pragmatism; intuition and analysis; listening and talking; identifying problems and resolving problems; progress and control; technical and strategic thought (Boyle, 2016, p. 3). Interpretation, therefore, requires a range of communication skills between diverse collaborators (e.g. HVA managers; consultants and/or specialists; creative designers; marketing teams; construction consultants; staff and/or guides) (Wells et al., 2016).

An interpretation design must not only express visually an HVA's uniqueness and purpose, but also add value to its business over a prolonged period of time (Boyle, 2016). It is influenced by a variety of factors, particularly the involvement, and therefore communication and collaboration, of the numerous interpretation stakeholders who bring with them individual experience, knowledge and preferences that influence the design (Roberts, 2014). Adding to this, these influences on interpretation design can include the management challenges discussed in chapter two, including conservation concerns; access and spatial restrictions; relevance of information; stakeholder preferences for education, leisure, and entertainment activities; the availability of resources; budgets and financial implications; the time-budget, referring to the management of time allocated for projects; approval processes; audience development research; and the local community's consultation (Garrod & Fyall, 2000; Woodward, 2009).

Considering the complexity of influences, the literature argues interpretation practice requires strategic planning and design for the production of effective visitor experiences (Wells et al., 2016). In practice, it appears that interpretation does not have a holistic, universally accepted model that dictates specifically how to plan, design, and manage an interpretation design (Brochu, 2003; Roberts, 2015).

Some scholars have discussed essential elements of interpretive planning (see e.g. Brochu, 2003; Jones, 2007; Veverka, 1994, 2011a) and necessary considerations for interpretation designing (see e.g. Forrest & Roberts, 2014; Roberts, 2014). Fewer scholars, including Brochu (2003) and Veverka (2011a), have proposed guidance models for interpretation design practice. However, these models appear to outline the overall interpretation process (see e.g. Figure 3.6), as opposed to producing step-by-step guidance for interpretive planning, designing, and management.

**Figure 3.6. Interpretation communication process**


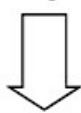




(Veverka, 2011a, p. 17)

In an effort to advance understanding of the design process, Boyle (2016) produced a model (see Figure 3.7), which outlines design in the broadest sense. This particular model may be applied to all design disciplines. However, it does not provide step-by-step guidance for actually planning and producing interpretive designs for HVAs, which, as unique institutions, are underpinned by

varying management challenges that can influence the outcome of interpretation designs (Moscardo, 2001a; Weidenfeld & Leask, 2013).

**Figure 3.7. Context for the interpretation process**

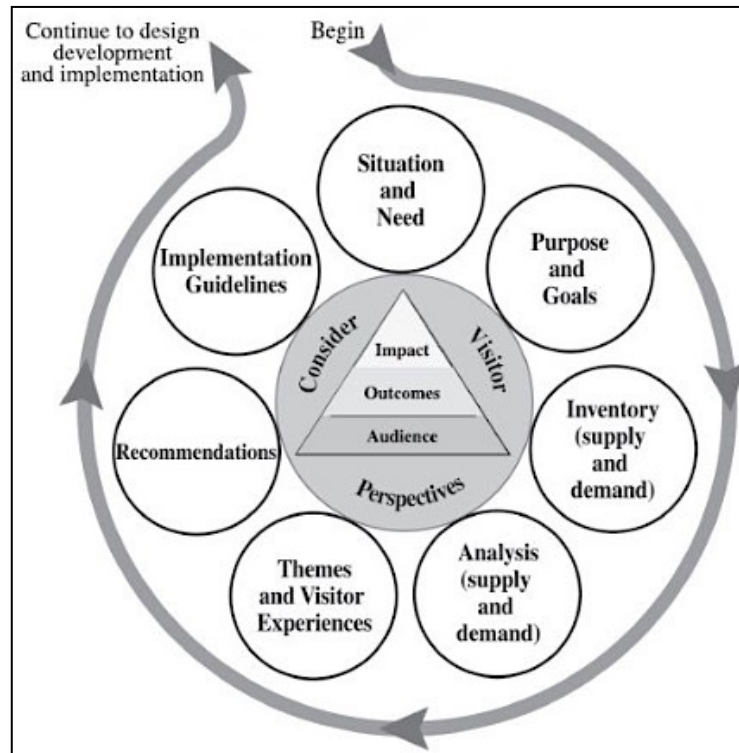
Business process stages		Design process stages
Initiation	Identifying the need	 The design brief 
	Idea generation (brainstorming)	
	Accurate problem identification – sets 'context' – key to successful design	
	Problem-solving	
Design and construction process	Design and construction process	Design and construction process
	Completion	 Design solution in use 
Operation and maintenance		
Completion		

(Boyle, 2016, p. 4)

Few scholars, including Boyle (2016), Wells et al. (2016), and Woodward (2009), have provided step-by-step guides for interpretation processes. Wells et al. (2016) model, as reflected in Figure 3.8, specifically maintains visitor perspectives at its core to ensure the interpretation outcome meets visitor expectations. The inclusion of visitor perspectives in planning developments is argued throughout the literature as a means to ensure the interpretation outcome meets visitor expectations (see e.g. Black, 2005; Forrest & Roberts, 2014; Visocky-O'Grady & Visocky-O'Grady, 2017). This model was initially designed for museum exhibition development. However, it is adaptable for other types of visitor experiences. Still, it separates planning measures from design and delivery measures, and therefore does not provide complete guidance for interpretation design projects from concept development through to on-going management.



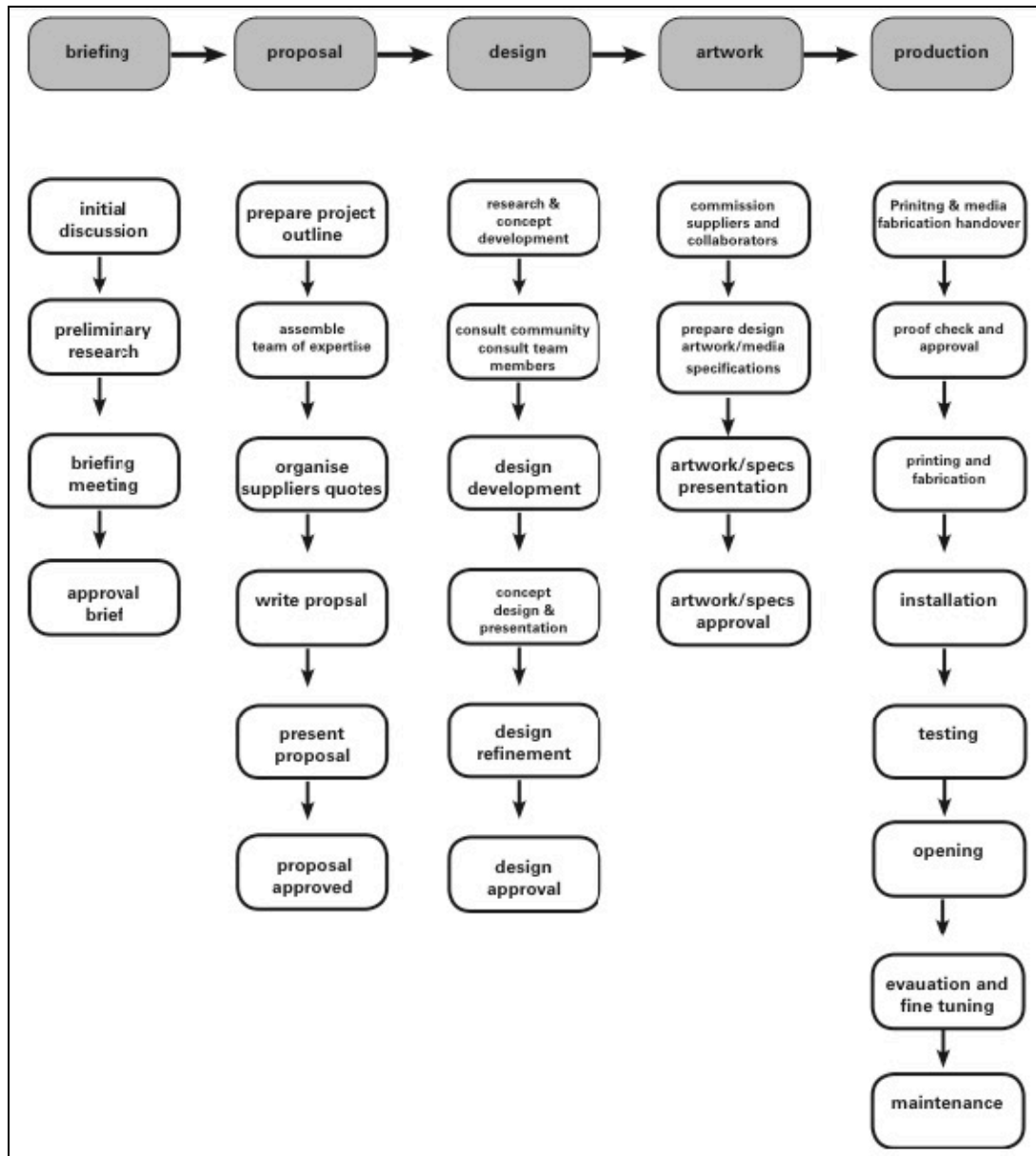
**Figure 3.8. Systematic interpretive planning**



(Wells et al., 2016, p. 46)

Woodward's (2009) model, as reflected in Figure 3.9, also provides guidance for the design and delivery processes for interpretation design projects. While this model was originally developed for natural tourism environments, it is also adaptable for other visitor experiences. While this model does refer to the briefing steps discussed in Wells et al. (2016) model, it does not provide steps relating to the on-going management of an interpretation design once it is delivered. Thus, similar to Wells et al. (2016) model, it does not provide complete guidance for interpretation design projects from concept development through on-going management.

**Figure 3.9. Interpretation design process**

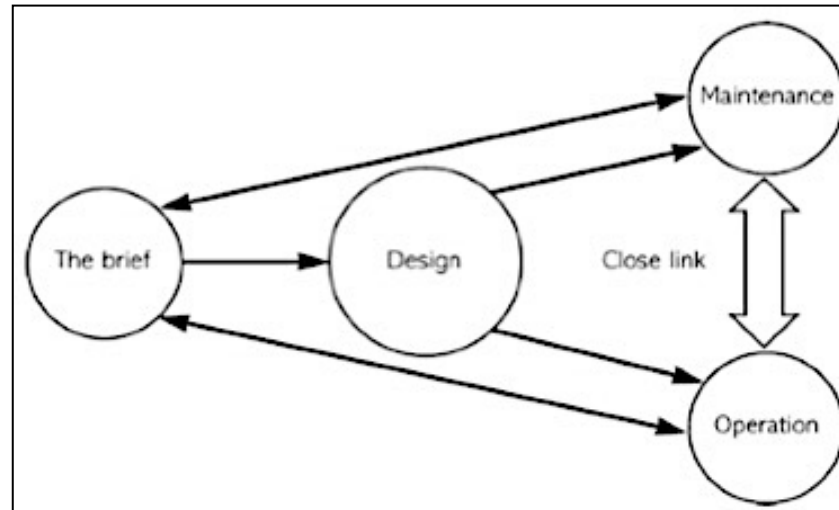


(Woodward, 2009, p. 80)

Boyle (2016) also produced a model, as reflected in Figure 3.10, which focuses on the on-going management of design projects. Boyle's (2016) model does not necessarily provide guiding steps for on-going management of an interpretation design. However, it proposes there is a relationship between design and management, occurring between the on-going measures of maintenance and operations and based on the notion that there is no point in designing something that cannot be adequately maintained over time. As found with Wells et al. (2016), and Woodward's (2009) models, this model was not created for HVA interpretation design, but for the creative design industry. Yet,

it is adaptable and applicable to all forms of design, including interpretation design for heritage visitor experiences.

**Figure 3.10. Interpretation design management process**



(Boyle, 2016, p. 168)

Scholars, such as Robb (2009), Wight and Lennon (2007), and Yuill (2004), have helped to advance understanding relating to management processes for interpretation designs. However, these efforts are largely focused on the management activities of HVA issues, such as conservation. Consequently, other scholars, including Boyle (2016) and Walhimer (2012), have suggested knowledge relating to the on-going management of completed designs remains under-developed. Walhimer (2012) argues that because designs are often specific to the needs of individual institutions, no generic publications on evaluation procedures and management outcomes – which could be significant for understanding – have been produced.

Existing literature has provided a breadth of knowledge on HVA interpretation and its design processes. However, there is no agreement concerning best practices for interpretation design (Brochu, 2003; Jones, 2007; Knudson et al., 1995; Woodward, 2009). Because of this, much of the interpretation literature suggests interpretation design is underpinned with the notion of 'it depends' (Black, 2005). This implies interpretation designs will depend on the varying external and internal factors that can influence the final product, further considering interpretation as being delivered on a case-by-case basis. In

consequence, clearly there is no standard approach to developing interpretation (Brochu, 2003). Thus, Black (2005) argues interpretation does not always result in a complete and final product, but rather is an on-going process of recorded decisions and evaluations of factors that influence planning and design processes. Given the absence of a holistic model for HVA interpretation design, the following sub-sections discuss the interpretation processes of planning, design, and management through the models proposed by Boyle (2016), Wells et al. (2016), and Woodward (2009).

### ***3.5.1 Planning interpretation designs***

Many scholars including Boyle (2016) and Wells, et al., (2016) describe interpretation design in a linear fashion, but argue that it is iterative, requiring reflection and the ability to adapt ideas as the process evolves. Subsequently, while there is no standard direction for undertaking interpretation projects, many scholars (e.g. Bogle, 2013; Brochu, 2003; Wells, et al., 2016) argue interpretation should commence with planning. As such, planning provides the foundation for following a strategic, intentional, and integrated approach to discussing and making decisions about the interpretation design (Wells, et al., 2016). It is 'a decision-making process that blends management needs and resource considerations with visitor needs and preferences to determine the most effective way to communicate a message to audiences' (Brochu, 2003, p. 3). Interpretive planning not only provides detailed strategies for the interpretation of heritage, but also a philosophical framework for managing heritage assets (Woodward, 2009).

Interpretation planning also supports HVA management by connecting the mission and heritage assets with the needs and expectations of audiences, providing clarity and direction for interpretation and addressing priorities in line with budget and time-budget issues (Wells et al., 2016, p. 39). It also ensures the relevance, appeal and accessibility of selected stories and themes and recommends realistic interpretation methods for delivery for effective interpretation designs (Wells et al., 2016, p. 39).

In planning successful and effective interpretation designs, the literature suggests planning should be visitor focused and dependent on audience development research (Black, 2005; Visocky-O'Grady & Visocky-O'Grady, 2017). With this in mind, Wells et al. (2016) suggest interpretation planning is underscored with the importance of integrating visitor perspectives, which, although iterative, requires systematic, logical decision-making (Wells et al., 2016). This systematic, logical decision-making is made possible through the development of an interpretation planning team (Lord & Lord, 2009). This team has been identified in the literature as being influenced by varying factors, including HVA ownership, the physical nature of a site, and budget (Heritage Council, 2015). Thus, the development of a planning team is often determined on a case-by-case basis (Lord & Lord, 2009).

While planning teams are often dependent on a variety of factors, the literature contends that they should not be insular, as stakeholder interests may be affected by the outcome of the interpretation (Pryor, 2015). The literature thus argues interpretation teams should compose relevant internal and external stakeholders that include, but are not limited to, the HVA's management, interpretive designers, staff, representatives of the local community and external consultants as needed (e.g. historians; archaeologists; visitor studies consult; content specialists; educators; curators; architects; archaeologists; researchers; construction teams) (Jones, 2007; Park, 2014; Wells et al., 2016). While Wells et al. (2016) have suggested that planning teams may comprise five to ten people, fundamental planning work is often shared by only two or three people, and then vetted among other relevant team members. Of these stakeholders, the designer, as a person generally educated and trained in exhibition and/or interpretation design, and the HVA's management, are crucial (Roberts, 2015).

As essential contributors to planning teams, designers are trained to recognise unrealistic plans or potential ideas that may be hindered by constraints of time, space, limited resources, or budget (Black, 2005; Lawson, 2006; Roberts, 2015). It is the designer's role to create the visitor experience through emotionally, sensory, and educationally effective interpretation (Ettema, 1997;

Gürer, Özkar, & Çağdaş, 2014; Roberts, 2014). This requires them to have two main concerns: the needs of the client (curator and/or HVA management) who will review and approve design work, and the needs of the audience for which the design is intended (Roberts, 2015). Designers are further responsible for selecting media and methods according to their suitability for the intended visitor experience (Roberts, 2015). This includes making use of text, multimedia, art, spatial layouts, theatrical and sensory techniques presented in narrative, and thematic arrangements to interpret the intended message to visitors (Roberts, 2014). In doing so, designers must consider a variety of factors that can impact the overall visitor experience. This can include structural features; access limitations; location of toilets; location of food and drink services; location of the entrance and exit; time and distance between exhibitions; air conditioning and heating; acoustics; and lighting (Kossmann et al., 2012; Mclean, 1999; Moser, 2010).

Given this significance, Bogle (2013) has gone as far to argue that designers should be considered the project managers who oversee the entire interpretation from planning through design and delivery. However, while some larger HVAs may have the budget to maintain on-site design teams, the literature reveals designer inclusion is not often considered a priority. Rather, designers are more often included after planning and instead given a brief (i.e. executive summary) to work from as an external consultant (Roberts, 2015). Merriman (2005) has also argued that designers are generally only hired during periods of budget growth and are often the first to be fired during tough fiscal times due to an assumption that interpretation design is a non-essential service, disconnected from resource management. This indicates that HVA management teams generally control the development of interpretation, which, in some cases, can create challenges. For example, as Roberts (2015) notes, managers are often untrained specifically in interpretive design, consequently resulting in unrealistic ideas that require later adjustment by the designer.

#### Step one: Defining the HVA's situation and need

According to Wells et al. (2016), following the development of a planning team, the first step in interpretive planning is to determine the situation and need.

Lord (2001) suggests this is best achieved through a SWOT analysis, outlining how the interpretation will contribute to the organisation's strengths and weaknesses, as well as present opportunities or threats. Additional influences for determining a design's situation and need can include the history and ethos of the HVA; the value and uniqueness of heritage asset(s); political, social or economic impetus; budget and timeframe; nature of the proposed space; the purpose and goals for the intended interpretation; and how the design will impact the local community (Black, 2005; Wells et al., 2016).

The literature advises this step should outline the need for the interpretation, whether that is the HVA's desire to fulfil an aspect of the mission, respond to emergent needs or interests of visitors, or that new information or objects have been uncovered about the heritage assets (Lord et al., 2012). The literature advises that new projects are often undertaken to enhance a specific area of an attraction or collection; improve preservation efforts; expand access for increased visitor capacity; adapt to changing needs in the market; or increase revenue (Lord, 2001). Boyle (2016) also notes that commercialisation is influential, as new designs often arise from their functional, commercial and added value for an organisation.

#### Step two: Outlining the HVA's purpose and goals

Once the context for the interpretive plan is set, Wells et al. (2016) model advises the planning team should identify the design's purpose and goals. Not to be confused with the desired visitor outcomes, these are statements of intention and should align with the HVA's strategic plan (Wells et al., 2016). Referring to these as filters, Merritt (2007) suggests the purpose and goals should outline the 'big picture', which should support the HVA's core values. These goals may act as service aims, focused on, for example, increasing family attendance, responding to the cultural diversity within the local community, or building partnerships with local school to enhance curriculum-based experiences (Black, 2005).

### Step three: Conducting an inventory of the supply and demand

Following, Wells et al. (2016) model recommends inventory of both the supply and demand should be conducted. This should review what currently exists within the HVA, including the heritage assets and all that is within the collection; the budget; available building materials; staffing; and other plans or policies that may influence the interpretive planning (Wells et al., 2016). It is during this step that the scope and nature of the heritage assets is addressed. This includes its uniqueness, any conservation concerns that may be impacted by the intended interpretation (e.g. required demolition; repair; electrical wiring; general maintenance), and if there are any stipulations that may inhibit displaying particular artefacts, images, or art (Wells et al., 2016). The inventory should help to define the elements most likely to provoke a response from visitors (Black, 2005).

In addition, an inventory of the demand, or rather audience development research, should be conducted (Black, 2005). This refers to what is already known about the current or intended audiences, what can still be learned, and why they have this demand (Wells et al., 2016). Black (2005) and Jones (2007) stress the importance of audience research for the identification of the target audience. This should in turn identify existing visitors, non-visitors, and core visitors. Audience development research, through experience-driven interactions, can help to better understand visitor needs and determine how an intended design might be received, or if it could cause visitor confusion, frustration, or alienation (Black, 2005; Lord et al., 2012; Visocky-O'Grady & Visocky-O'Grady, 2017; Wells et al., 2016). Audience development research can be completed through a variety of front-end evaluation measures (e.g. focus groups; questionnaires; ethnographic research; observation; semi-structured interviews; card sorting; A/B testing; eye tracking) and hence inform design decisions (Visocky-O'Grady & Visocky-O'Grady, 2017).

### Step four: Conducting an analysis of the supply and demand inventory

Inventory analysis is perhaps one of the more important steps for interpretive planning, as it provides the proactive rationale for interpretive decision-making, demonstrating the management's ability to make realistic decisions that link the



inventory with the interpretive goals (Wells et al., 2016). In terms of the supply, Wells et al. (2016) suggests the planning team will need to address what ramifications the inventory has on the interpretation goals, such as how the budget will impact ideas, or if staff will have to take on additional responsibilities if specialists are not contracted. Adding to this, Visocky-O'Grady and Visocky-O'Grady (2017) suggest analysing all communication media and competition to identify how the HVA's image relates to the intended design and how the HVA will compare in the market. With reference to the demand, audience development research should indicate whether the project ideas resonate with the intended audience (Wells et al., 2016).

#### Step five: Identifying key themes and visitor experiences

Themes are typically a driving influence for interpretation, and therefore are often one of the first considerations to be addressed in interpretive planning (Wells et al., 2016). These recurring subjects underpin interpretation and should support an HVA's image and mission (Bogle, 2013). Themes are generally based on what makes HVAs distinctive or unique amongst its competition and are therefore often self-evident, compelling stories that help to focus an HVA's interpretation (Wells et al., 2016). Uniting themes, however, are the design's purpose and goals (Black, 2005).

Utilising themes, visitor experience opportunities reflect the HVA's vision, which describes the desired visitor experience and expected outcomes (Black, 2005). For example, the vision may be that through the experience opportunities, visitors will be able to explain part of the story that they value, or recount part of the experience that they found most meaningful (Wells et al., 2016). Thus, experience opportunities should provide visitor access, engagement, involvement, enjoyment, inclusion, life-long learning, and understanding (Black, 2005). Given Wells et al. (2016) model was intended for museum interpretation development, it is during this step that the researcher finds the selection of interpretation methods would take place for HVA design developments.

### Step six: Recommendations

In instances where designers are not included in the planning stages, the final step for planning is focused on recommendations. Wells et al. (2016) model suggests this step specifically engages the inventory, preliminary ideas for the designer regarding exhibitions, educational programs and activities, and interpretive media to develop recommendations for designing an experience (Wells et al., 2016). Recommendations should also detail the impact of design delivery, including management priorities, revenue implications, and the effects on staff structure and conservation concerns (Black, 2005).

### Step seven: Setting implementation guidelines

As a summary of interpretive planning, Wells et al. (2016) model argues an outline is needed regarding the required funding, staffing, resources, time, approvals, and visitor perspectives in order to implement a final plan. This outline should conclude with implementation guidelines, which Black (2005) suggests, explains *how* the interpretation might be developed in accordance to the *what*, *why*, and *who*, information gathered in the previous steps.

### **3.5.2 Designing interpretation**

Drawing on the planning outcomes, the design process for interpretation applies the principles and philosophy of heritage interpretation through diverse methods and media in order to shape the visitor experience (Roberts, 2014). Given the variety of potential stakeholders involved in interpretive planning, Jones (2007, p. 29) argues the design process helps to identify manageable and measurable objectives with careful sequencing of phases to produce an interpretation result that starts and finishes on time and within set budget, and is also consistent with the HVA's purpose, goals, and objectives.

As found with interpretive planning, there is no standard process for design (Reid, 2011). Yet, the literature reveals an overlap of the proposed planning and design processes. Many scholars (e.g. Bogle, 2013; Lin, 2008; Mason, 2018; Roberts, 2015) suggest the design process commences with developing a brief. The brief outlines the management team's intentions for a design, as well as a proposal, which outlines the designer's plan for a design. However,

the brief and proposal development processes, as described by Australian Graphic Design Association (AGDA), Lin (2008), and Woodward (2009), are shown to encompass the same steps proposed in Wells et al. (2016) planning model.

Accordingly, AGDA (1996) suggests brief and proposal development is rooted in the communication between a client (HVA management) and a designer. Prior to any design developments, AGDA (1996) suggests clients and their designer should meet to have an initial discussion of broad design objectives, and the anticipated budget of funding and time for completion. Following Wells et al. (2016) planning model, both parties are advised to conduct preliminary research in preparation for the final briefing meeting. This research is a process that includes inventory, inventory analysis, and theme and visitor experience developments. Following this research, a briefing meeting is held, whereby the client and designer discuss the intended project, leading to a written proposal (Woodward, 2009).

Crucial to project commencement, the proposal allows the designer to reflect their own values and philosophy while demonstrating their understanding of not only the needs and desired outcomes for the project, but also the HVA's management challenges that can influence the outcome of a design (e.g. sustainable practices; conservation requirements; cultural sensitivities; representation challenges) (Woodward, 2009). While the proposal may include preliminary drawings for the intended design (Lin, 2008), it will outline what the designer requires of the HVA's management. This includes terms and conditions of engagement (e.g. communication and treatment); a realistic timeframe for project completion; production fees; and sub-contractor or supplier quotes (e.g. photography, illustrating, copywriting, researchers, fabricators, architects) (AGDA, 1996; Woodward, 2009). The proposal is generally compared to the initial brief, which after client approval, the designer is able to commence design work (AGDA, 1996).

Woodward's (2009) model not only echoes AGDA's (1996) graphic design map, but envisages the stages for interpretation design by incorporating diverse

media and methods. While this model suggests briefing is the first step of the design process, the overlap with Wells et al. (2016) planning model reveals that the design process actually commences in the third step of Woodward's (2009) design model.

#### Step one: The design

According to Woodward's (2009) design model, following the development and approval of a brief and proposal, the first step in physically creating the interpretation design is to develop a design concept. This presents the designer's rationale and visual representations of the design. The design concept should be developed through consultation of external consultants to ensure ideas are realistic within the allocated constraints (e.g. space; funding; time); the local community for their support and inclusion as a stakeholder; and the intended audience to ensure the proposed plans will fulfil visitor expectations (Woodward, 2009).

The design concept generally encompasses storyboards; texts; graphics; and the detailed specifications of mechanical, electrical and technology requirements (AGDA, 1996; Lin, 2008). Through this, Lin (2008) argues the designer creates a scheme design drawing, which outlines interpretation options (e.g. colour palate; text fonts and size; methods, etc.) by situating exhibit elements, object placement, and potential spatial arrangements. Once completed, the design concept is presented, discussed in relation to the proposal and feasibility, and approved by HVA management, to allow for the start of art preparation (AGDA, 1996; Lin, 2008).

#### Step two: Artwork

Leading up to fabrication and installation, the designer must prepare relevant artwork and media specifications for HVA management to approve. This will be used to guide external suppliers and contractors commissioned to produce the physical design. Lin (2008) suggests this is often completed using computer aided drawing (CAD) technologies, which present details of how individual components of a design will fit together. It is during this process that the literature advises formative evaluations occur, which allow management to

obtain feedback about how well a design communicates the intended message (Spencer, 2007; Walhimer, 2012). These evaluations are generally conducted through the consultation of specialists and focus groups with staff and visitors (Walhimer, 2012).

### Step three: Production

Woodward's (2009) model suggests the final step in designing interpretation begins with handover to sub-contractors. Here, the designer will deliver the approved art files, proofs, and related materials with the print specifications to the commissioned sub-contractors (e.g. graphic designers; photographers; illustrators) (AGDA, 1996). Specifications for building exhibition spaces or installing fabrics, graphics, woodwork, and multimedia also need to be delivered to commissioned sub-contractors (e.g. construction team; architects) (Taxén, 2003). Following this, the designer will supervise production progress through proofing and evaluations in order to mitigate any discrepancies between the concept design and final outcome (AGDA, 1996).

Although Woodward's (2009) model does not discuss a step for creating performances for HVAs, such as guided tours or live acting, the research suggests performance development would occur at this stage. This finding is based on Malloy's (2015) suggestion that performance development requires elements of theatrical design, encompassing the production of scenery, costumes, lighting, sound, and multimedia. The designer may seek to commission theatre design consultants (e.g. designers; lighting specialists; sound designers; projection specialists; acting coaches; scene designers) to help bring the performance space to life (Malloy, 2015).

Performances and guided tours also require the development of scripts or narratives, which the literature indicates are generally written by HVA management (Bryon, 2012; McCabe & Foster, 2006; Modlin, Alderman, & Gentry, 2011; Potter, 2016). However, Reid (2011) advises effective narratives rely on the collaboration of the designer, the actors (e.g. guides, staff), and a trained scriptwriter. The inclusion of actors or guides is particularly important, given they are charged with the responsibility of delivering the interpretation

through script and performance (Potter, 2016). Moreover, as discussed in chapter two, Bryon (2012) argues the inclusion of guides will help to mitigate management challenges relating to feelings of disempowerment due to the structural hierarchy of HVA management.

Once the fabrication and installation has been completed, HVA management teams are advised to test the design through remedial evaluations (e.g. pilot tests) to obtain visitor feedback and determine if the design is on track and in line with visitor needs and expectations (Bogle, 2013; Danks, Goodchild, Rodriguez-Echavarria, Arnold, & Griffiths, 2007). Remedial evaluations are generally conducted for troubleshooting and to address problems that could not be foreseen during the planning and design stages (Spencer, 2007; Walhimer, 2012). Through this effort, Walhimer (2012) suggests designers are able to identify areas for possible improvements and develop guidelines for on-going management activities that will be required for long-term effectiveness. After necessary adjustments are made in accordance with the feedback, management can deliver the design to the public and assume responsibility for the design and its on-going management, consulting with the designer in the future, as needed. On remedial evaluations, Walhimer (2012) argues they are beneficial for producing guidelines for on-going management activities, which are basic, standard practices (e.g. security; building fabric; electrical maintenance; cleaning; appropriate reinvestment) (Walhimer, 2012). These guidelines can help to inform both the design's management and daily operation after opening (Boyle, 2016).

### ***3.5.3 On-going management of interpretation designs***

Literature concerning on-going management activities of interpretation is limited when compared to planning and designing interpretation. Boyle (2016) has however produced a comprehensive overview of design management, which has helped to advance its understanding. Accordingly, Boyle (2016) argues there is an obvious relationship between design and on-going management activities, similar to that of planning and design. Thus, in the same way that design guidelines are established in the planning process, guidelines for on-going management activities must be established and rooted in the design

process. This is most often completed following remedial evaluations, which allows the designer to consider varying factors of the HVA's management that may influence the long-term effectiveness of the design (Boyle, 2016).

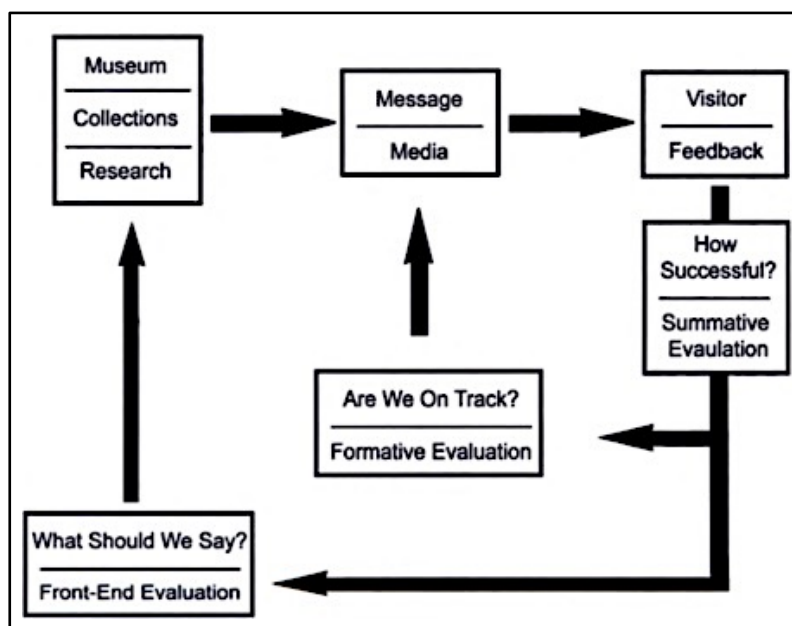
According to Boyle (2016), on-going management activities must be concerned with management challenges that can influence the delivery of a design. These include security; building fabric; mechanical and electrical issues; cleaning and refurbishment issues; sourcing additional funding; and staffing issues. Subsequently, Boyle (2016) argues management must maintain a design on an on-going operational basis. The literature suggests this effort is best achieved through summative evaluations, which help to advise HVA management on how a design is working practically over time (Boyle, 2016; Walhimer, 2012).

Generally used to improve future activities and adjustments, summative evaluations can require the observation of visitors during their visitor experience, collecting visitor feedback through media and questionnaires, and discussing the effectiveness of the design with staff (Boyle, 2016; Walhimer, 2012). Through these efforts, summative evaluations and guidelines for on-going management activities can not only help to maintain a design, but also determine how effective the design is over time and in relation to social, cultural, and political changes (Visocky-O'Grady & Visocky-O'Grady, 2017; Walhimer, 2012).

### **3.6 Interpretation management challenges**

HVAs employ a range of different media and methods to convey interpretation designs, which, as suggested in the literature, can lead to numerous management challenges (Roberts, 2015; Spencer, 2007; Timothy & Boyd, 2003). Thus, the literature has advised not only the early inclusion of a trained designer (Bogle, 2013; Roberts, 2015), but as reflected in Figure 3.11, conducting a series of evaluations throughout interpretation developments (Spencer, 2007). These measures are argued to help mitigate challenges and balance the need to offer interpretive experiences that are appropriate and compatible with both attraction values and visitor needs (Jones, 2007).

**Figure 3.11. Interpretation evaluation process**



(Spencer, 2007, p. 208)

Despite these recommendations, the literature has revealed HVA management challenges, as reflected in chapter two, are influential on the design and management of interpretation. The literature suggests the impact of stakeholder roles, managing authenticity, selecting the most appropriate interpretation methods and budget restrictions are the core challenges related to interpretation design developments (Jones, 2007; Roberts, 2015; Sliverman, 2011; Timothy & Boyd, 2003; Van Dijk et al., 2012). Additionally, managing varying stakeholder roles, managing revenue, conservation concerns, access limitations, time constraints and managing the complex relationship between interpretation and authenticity for the visitor experience have been identified as being influential on design management (Ababneh, 2017; Pedersen, 2002). Many of these challenges are often identified as resulting from a lack of agreement concerning best practices for interpretation design (Brochu, 2003; Jones, 2007; Knudson et al., 1995; Woodward, 2009).

### **3.6.1 The impact of stakeholder roles on interpretation design**

Interpretation is often dependent on the management of varying stakeholder roles, their experience, and knowledge of essential processes in interpretation development (Brochu, 2003; Jones, 2007; Knudson et al., 1995; Woodward, 2009). Stakeholders, who comprise the interpretation design team, can include



but are not limited to: HVA management; interpretive designers; staff and/or interpretive guides; education consultants; curators or collection specialists; subject experts (e.g. historians, archaeologists, visitor studies consult, content specialists); architects; facilities specialists; audience development researchers; and representatives of the local community (Jones, 2007; Park, 2014; Wells et al., 2016). Together, these stakeholders offer a range of skills including the ability to apply planning and design principles and procedures; good and creative ideas; research capabilities; story development abilities; writing talents; a knack for design, fabrication and presentation; and evaluation competences (Jones, 2007).

Stakeholders can greatly impact HVA management, as well as the interpretation design. The literature highlights that in many instances, HVA management often lacks the necessary experience and/or expertise to design interpretation (Jones, 2007; Roberts, 2015), usually resulting in unrealistic ideas with ineffective interpretation outcomes (Roberts, 2014). Under these circumstances, interpretation designers are often challenged by either having to adjust the interpretive plans by educating HVA management on design requirements or conform to uninformed and unrealistic project plans (Roberts, 2015). This lack of design experience often results in HVA management relying on the designer's knowledge of general audience behaviour, needs, and expectations, as opposed to conducting audience research (Roberts, 2015).

As a result, designers are often included too late in the interpretation design process (Roberts, 2015) and this late inclusion limits the designer's strategic and creative input. This can hinder realistic plans for functional, spatial, and conceptual aspects of the interpretation (Roberts, 2015). Moreover, it creates a one-way dialogue based on managers directing designers, as opposed to a relationship or collaboration built between the two (Kossmann et al., 2012; McLean, 1999; Moser, 2010). On this issue, some scholars argue that it is a matter of communication, or lack thereof, between the designer and the HVA's management (Kossmann et al., 2012). However, Kossmann et al. (2012) argue that this issue has caused the design process to become widely viewed as a final step in the interpretation process, resulting in the entire interpretation

project becoming fragmented into sequential stages with independent objectives, culminating in mismanaged and unsatisfactory visitor experiences.

Late designer inclusion is also linked with the structure of the interpretation management team; poorly defined roles; unrealistic project aims and objectives (Roberts, 2015); and communication gaps between designers and HVA management (Woodward, 2009). In addition, minimal research into interpretation design has limited sufficient understanding among practitioners of the designer's role and significance in the interpretation process (Roberts, 2014). The literature therefore recommends that HVA management establish communication with designers first and engage them in the initial planning, which will help guide the later design process (Mclean, 1999; Roberts, 2015). In doing so, HVA management may better understand how to align the interpretation's mission, goals, and objectives through the selected methods and media in order to deliver an effective visitor experience (Merriman, 2005).

Stakeholder roles further challenge interpretation design management, as they are not always treated equally, as reflected upon in chapter two. The literature has recognised that decision-making power is not often distributed amongst all participants (Evans, 2002), often due to a hierarchical structure in decision-making processes (Pedersen, 2002). Interpretation decisions, specifically concerning theming, narratives, and their delivery, are therefore generally controlled by HVA management (Pedersen, 2002). As a result of this hierarchical structure, some stakeholders, including guides, staff, visitors and the local community (Bryon, 2012; Waligo, Clarke, & Hawkins, 2013), have become passive participants or playing no part in interpretation development (Potter, 2016). This lack of inclusion can lead to feelings of being overlooked or ignored, despite having potentially useful ideas and concerns for the interpretation (Potter, 2016). As a mitigating factor, there is usually an opportunity for knowledge exchange between all relevant stakeholders, including guides and visitors, which is necessary for the development of successful experiences for visitors (Alazaizeh et al., 2016).

As discussed in studies concerning visitor experiences and preferences for HVAs (Kocsis & Barnes, 2008; Forrest & Roberts, 2014; Poria et al., 2009), discussions with visitors before, during and after their experience while on-site is essential to understanding visitor expectations and perceptions of the interpretation. Roberts (2015) argues that it is, therefore, important to communicate with visitors before, during, and after planning and design, in order to better inform an interpretation project and assist management in understanding their audience so that future projects can be effectively tailored. Incorporating the views of visitors and the local community is best achieved through audience research. This leads in turn to greater stakeholder involvement (Black, 2005), addresses visitor needs and expectations and leads to more a successful interpretation design (Black, 2005).

Cohen (1985) argues non-management staff and guides possess a unique role in contributing to a successful design. Guides, in particular, are arguably the mediators of meaning and the interface between an HVA and its visitors, as they are charged with the responsibility of promoting visitor learning and understanding (Bryon, 2012). They are constantly making judgements about how the interpretation design is working for audiences, and therefore they understand how to adapt it to meet the needs of varying audiences (Potter, 2016). Despite this, they are often passive participants in design development, as their narratives are generally controlled by management and design teams (Potter, 2016). In circumstances where audience development research is not readily available, guides and non-management staff can provide HVA management with first-hand perspectives on how interpretation methods are working for the visitor experience. These perspectives can be applied before, during and after the design process (Bryon, 2012). Thus, in an attempt to create a more effective tour or experience, Potter (2016) argues for greater communication between guides, management, and designers.

### ***3.6.2 The complex relationship of interpretation and authenticity***

In addition to managing stakeholder roles, the literature has reflected concerns about authenticity and ensuring an authentic visitor experience further challenges interpretation design effort. This challenge is underpinned by

several factors, including conflicting demands of conservation; limited funding (Dewhurst & Thwaites, 2014); the nature and treatment of the heritage on display (Prideaux & Timothy, 2008; Timothy & Boyd, 2003); and the selection of appropriate interpretive methods (Silverman, 2011).

The literature suggests inauthenticity most often occurs when HVAs are purposefully created as replicas of original sites or as fictitious accounts of history, and when HVAs sanitise or omit versions of the past to present a more idealised version (Silverman, 2011; Timothy & Boyd, 2003). However, authenticity is also of concern when it becomes relative, as the meaning of heritage may differ from person to person, or when ethnic heritage places are interpreted and managed by non-ethnic people (Timothy & Boyd, 2003).

Authenticity is of particular concern for DVAs, as the content is generally focused on histories of state collapse, war, ethnic conflict, tyranny, oppression, crime and punishments, outbreaks of disease, and poverty (Bajc, 2006). As places of memory (Bajc, 2006), DVA management is often challenged by interpretation designs and questions concerning authenticity. This includes the appropriateness of preserving such memory, whose right it is to interpret it, and how truthful should the interpretation be (Bajc, 2006). In many cases, DVAs are criticised for purposefully distorting tragic histories by softening narratives to create a more palatable version for audiences (Silverman, 2011b; Van Dijk et al., 2012).

This notion of softening narratives to create more palatable versions for audiences is often a matter of continuous negotiations among stakeholders involved in interpretation design and management (Silverman & Ruggles, 2009). Underpinning these negotiations is often the question of whether or not certain aspects of history should be recognised and packaged as a tourism product (Weaver, 2011). In many cases, the literature argues DVA management tend to soften historical truths in order to avoid PR issues and conflict for the institution's brand or identity (Cossons, 1989).

On this matter, while the perception of authenticity can be subjective, scholars including Cossons (1989) and Staiff (2014) have argued that no historical account can reconstruct the totality of past events, as the totality of history is infinite. Thus, Staiff (2014) argues the whole and complete story is not necessarily needed to produce knowledge. However, Park (2014) argues that distorting the past, specifically by softening truths through incomplete reconstructions, can skew the way in which historic events and heritage are understood. Moreover, scholars, (e.g. Fowler, 1989; Hanks, 2011; Sliverman, 2011) have suggested that as narratives move so far beyond facts, history's meaning and value becomes altered, causing history itself to become unrecognisable and eventually forgotten.

The issue of authenticity is concerned with how the past is presented through touristic activities and the impact of that presentation on the overall visitor experience (Goulding, 1999). As a result of this challenge, Goulding (1999) calls for more critical awareness of how the past is treated in the present, most specifically on narrative development. Moreover, the literature suggests there is a need to better understand the relationship between authenticity and the interpretation process; how the perception of authenticity impacts the perception of quality interpretation (Carnegie & McCabe, 2008); and how to define a truly authentic experience (Chhabra et al., 2003).

### ***3.6.3 Selecting interpretation methods***

The complex relationship of interpretation and authenticity has led to further discourse relating to concerns for selecting interpretation methods and developing narratives. This is arguably linked to the wide range of interpretation methods available, and selecting the most appropriate methods to represent a heritage relating to an HVA's purpose, goals, and themes (Timothy & Boyd, 2003). Understandably, the selection of methods is dictated by a variety of factors. These include the HVA's ownership, nature, purpose, themes, planning outcome and the inclusion of a designer trained to foresee the most effective way of communicating information to diverse audiences (Cater et al., 2015; Goulding, 1999; Price, 2006).

Selecting the most appropriate methods is often challenged by the need to enhance visitor experiences with some form of entertainment or interactive activity, such as AR experiences or live re-enactments. This issue is of great concern for DVAs. Potter (2016) and Sliverman (2011) have argued that many DVAs, such as the US southern plantations reflective of slave history, are heavily scripted, poorly designed, and provide faulty information through over-acted or dull performances. In these instances, re-enactments are criticised for creating idealistic versions of tragic events and manipulating truth into more acceptable and appealing versions of history (Best, 2010; Jovicic, 2016). Thus, the selection of interpretive methods, especially for DVAs, is inherently linked to concerns for authenticity and whether a narrative is truthful (Carnegie & McCabe, 2008; Poria, 2010).

The selection of interpretation methods is also challenged when dealing with spaces that promote accessible interpretation through autistic-friendly and disabled-friendly environments. Increasing accessibility is a pressing challenge for HVA management and it is continuing to grow in importance (Langa et al., 2013). Given that autism, specifically, can cause significant social, communication, and behavioural challenges (Langa et al., 2013), incorporating specialists and educators with expertise in autism and developmental disabilities in the design process is ideal for the successful development of user-friendly interpretation services (Langa et al., 2013). In these cases, Pryor (2015) argues some interpretive methods, such as innovative technologies with flashing lights and loud noises, may not be suitable as they intensify other external factors, such as large crowds, which cause an over-stimulated and overwhelming experience, often resulting in anxiety or panic for visitors with autism and developmental challenges.

On considering the challenges of selecting appropriate designs, scholars, including Biran, et al. (2011) and Calver and Page (2013), have recommended more research is needed into customisable interpretation, as well as ambitious and innovative interpretation methods that can help designers to delve below the surface-level of history. Through such research, a greater understanding may be developed on how the selection of certain interpretation methods

impacts varying visitor experiences across the wide spectrum of HVAs (Carnegie & McCabe, 2008).

#### **3.6.4 Managing budget restrictions**

Selecting the most appropriate interpretation methods and ensuring a balanced relationship between interpretation and authenticity is heavily underpinned by management challenges relating to budget restrictions. As noted in chapter two, HVA management requires an enormous budget and they are under constant pressure to improve business and meet or exceed competition, whilst ensuring conservation efforts are upheld and the visitor experience is not diminished (Carnegie & McCabe, 2008; Timothy, 2016). These goals are often challenged by restricted budgets and limited funding sources.

In developing interpretation designs, Roberts (2014) explains restrictive budgets often lead to challenges. These include problems with completion, where projects are forced to go on hold until more funding is acquired; required changes for planned material or methods are not implemented; and relevant and needed specialists, including designers are not affordable. Some scholars have also commented on the impact restrictive budgets have on on-going management activities. This can include maintaining costumes for re-enactment guides (Malcolm-Davies, 2004); the implementation of new techniques, including more advanced technology (Malcolm-Davies, 2004); and post-installation improvements, particularly following evaluations (Mitsche et al., 2013). Restrictive budgets have been recognised as the reason for the disbanding of interpretation teams and dissolution of interpretation programs, as often interpretation design is perceived as a discretionary service in comparison to other HVA management concerns, such as conservation and marketing (Crawford, 2016).

Recognising the impact budget restrictions can have on interpretation developments, scholars have highlighted trends on how HVAs are seeking out alternative sources for funding. While traditionally, HVAs have been found to charge admissions fees to increase revenue, as described in chapter two (Leask, et al., 2002; Timothy, 2016), alternative funding sources have been

recently been identified, such as crowd-funding and business affiliations (van Lakerveld, et al., 2017).

### **3.7 Progress in interpretation research**

Interpretation is clearly a complex, multi-faceted subject governed by a variety of meanings and applications and further affected by a series of management challenges (Bacher et al., 2007). As a continually evolving field of study, interpretation has developed a multi-disciplinary base with theoretical input from the fields of education, psychology, sociology, and tourism studies (Bacher et al., 2007). Much of current understanding concerning interpretation design has advanced over the last decade. However, interpretation, in general, has existed through a plethora of examples from the development of the museums, the grand tour, and other forms of heritage tourism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Woodward, 2009).

Much of early interpretation understanding is attributed to work from museums and natural heritage sectors (Woodward, 2009), and the mid-to-late 20<sup>th</sup> century research that aimed to reveal how heritage management coped with growing visitor numbers and its impact on issues of preservation and sustainability, specifically within natural heritage tourism (Cater et al., 2015; Tubb, 2003). Specifically, scholars (e.g. Benton, 2009; Hooper-Greenhill, 1992; Staiff, 2014) have highlighted museum contributions from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as these institutions were central to knowledge formation about the collection, documentation, conservation, and presentation of material culture. Stemming from these efforts, it is evident that education strategies employed through interpretation, are beneficial for extending knowledge and understanding of heritage assets and their preservation among a variety of audiences.

Reviews of early interpretation research suggest interpretation practice developed as an effective method to not only stimulate and enhance audience understanding, but also to create empathy among visitors towards the heritage conservation and to promote acceptable visitor behaviour within heritage environments (Newsome, et al, 2002). This perspective highlights the manner in which early research began to encompass both concerns for conservation



and knowledge development. Newsome, Moore, and Dowling (2002) suggest this shift in research reflects the recognition that interpretation and exhibition are inherently interlinked, despite being separate parts of the same function.

As discussed in chapter two, the late-20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed a rise of public interest in history and growing developments of heritage tourism (Page & Connell, 2006). While academic interest continued to reflect the importance of sustainable considerations and methods for visitor management, interpretation research began to explore emergent areas of interpretation understanding. This included the conceptual development and foundational principles of interpretation (Page & Connell, 2006; Benton, 2009); developments in interpretation planning and management (Kohl & Eubanks, 2008; Rigby, 2009); and guiding and storytelling (Bryon, 2012; Potter, 2016). In addition, research also explored interpretation quality and authenticity (Goulding, 2000; McIntosh & Prentice, 1999); managing the visitor experience through interpretation (de Rojas & Camarero, 2008; Poria, et al., 2009); and interpretation methods and strategies (e.g. thematic development; affective messaging approaches) (Skibins et al., 2012).

The advancement of interpretation research created strong criticism on how the past was being presented and the impact interpretation has on the overall visitor experience, including visitors' understanding of the past (Skibins et al., 2012). For example, in discussing tourism of historic battlefields, Goulding, (1999) argues interpreters must realise that the visitor experience may foster knowledge and understanding, but may not always provide a fun day out. Therefore, as Uzzell (1989c) argues, interpretation may not only offer an interesting and informative experience, but may also shock or provoke in creating understanding and appreciation. The concern for how interpretation is presented was a significant turning point in research. It pointed out the shift in how scholars began to look at the boundaries and possibilities of interpretation in relation to its role within the context of heritage tourism, rather than simply viewing interpretation as a means for sustainability and visitor management (Goulding, 1999).

As interests in interpretation research evolved in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, a significant focus for investigation was placed on best practices and the treatment of heritage. Much of the discourse became aligned with practice-based activities. This subsequently reflected practice-led knowledge in research (Goulding, 1999). Through this focus, scholars began to explore the relationship between interpretation and visitors, including visitor preferences (Moscardo, 2001; Poria et al., 2009); how interpretation can be used for visitor management (Garrod, 2008; Moscardo, 2003); and identity formation (Howard, 2003). This work led to an understanding that interpretation not only creates the visitor experiences, but is also a management tool supporting sustainability efforts through visitor management (Moscardo & Ballantyne, 2008).

As the 21<sup>st</sup> century advanced, academic interests further explored the role of interpretation in managing authenticity. More specifically, research emphasised the impact of interpretive methods on authenticity, including the use of selective narratives (Wight & Lennon, 2007); narrative softening and development (Silverman, 2011); performance and re-enactments (Carnegie & McCabe, 2008); and interactive vs. static exhibits (Carnegie & McCabe, 2008). Additionally, digital media and smart technology at HVAs has been focus for scholarly discussions (Fullerton, McGettigan, & Stephens, 2010). Summarising these changes, Carman and Sørensen (2009) suggest attention shifted away from product emphasis and the 'how' of interpretation to focus more on development processes and the 'why' for interpretation. Much of this work has provided an analysis of interpretation methods through qualitative case studies, which has helped to establish recurring themes at HVAs, leading to research that identifies methods most associated with successful visitor experiences (Moscardo & Ballantyne, 2008).

More recently, interpretation research has reached a stage in its development where scholars are exploring interpretation processes. This includes its stages of planning (Wells et al., 2016), design (Wells et al., 2016) and management (Holston, 2011; Pucillo & Cascini, 2014). Research has also started to explore the impact these processes have on the overall visitor experience (Holston,

2011; Pucillo & Cascini, 2014), and how the processes are influenced by management principles and stakeholder characteristics (Benton, 2009).

From these developments, and drawing on theory from exhibition design, interpretation design has emerged as a fresh focus for interpretation and heritage tourism research (Benton, 2009). However, research into interpretation design is still in its infancy, with much of its foundational understanding stemming from museum studies and natural tourism research (Forrest & Roberts, 2014; Roberts, 2014; Woodward, 2009). As a result, recommendations have been made for further investigations into the influences on the design process (Forlizzi & Ford, 2000); external and internal factors that influence the design process (Forlizzi & Ford, 2000); impact of design on the overall experience (Pearce, 2004); and the designer's role within the interpretation project (Benton, 2009). Moreover, Roberts (2014) argues there is a great need for more empirical research into interpretation design in order to develop theoretical frameworks and tools to promote greater understanding and an improved practice.

On this matter, scholars argue the oversight concerning interpretation design is largely attributed to the fact that the literature does not examine the role of design in achieving preferred visitor experience outcomes. Rather, design is only mentioned and not deeply investigated (Roberts, 2014). Recommendations have since been made for future research to explore interpretation design (Woodward, 2009); how a design achieves certain user experiences (Forlizzi & Ford, 2000); and stakeholder attitudes concerning design roles, appearance, and the treatment of the topics on display with relation to the design (Forlizzi & Ford, 2000). Also, more empirical studies are clearly needed to substantiate interpretation design's significance for heritage interpretation and heritage tourism research (Pearce, 2004).

### **3.8 Conclusions**

This chapter has provided a review of the current literature surrounding the topics of heritage interpretation and its design. It has also provided an analysis of interpretation management issues and challenges at HVAs. This analysis not

only identified challenges with the interpretation process itself, but also the management of varying stakeholder roles, selecting appropriate and effective interpretation methods and ensuring authenticity is upheld in the design.

The expansion of the theoretical foundations and applications in heritage tourism, along with conservation programs and practical interpretation developments, has helped to advance interpretation research and understanding (Skibins et al., 2012). The advancements in both interpretation and interpretation design research has further allowed for a greater understanding of interpretation management and challenges in creating visitor experiences. Scholars have, however, argued gaps still exist, and heritage interpretation research as a whole, including its design and characteristics, remains under-developed (Skibins et al., 2012; Poria et al., 2009; Roberts, 2014).

Interpretation research does remain under-developed in comparison to other research interests within heritage tourism, such as sustainability, visitor motivations and heritage classification frameworks. There remains a need for more empirical studies that test proposed interpretation practices (Chew, 2009; Leshem, 2013), a need for more research that produces evaluations to better assess the effectiveness of interpretive programs (Poria et al., 2009); as well as the influence of interpretation on different audiences; and post-implementation evaluations (Skibins et al., 2012). Research concerning evaluations is recommended, specifically, to help to identify successful interpretive programs that provide different levels of information to meet visitor needs, while still maintaining conservation efforts (Pinter, 2005). More importantly, interpretation design, as an emergent research topic, requires much greater investigation to continue its development and understanding within heritage tourism. This research is further required in heritage tourism's emergent themes of film-induced tourism, sports heritage tourism and dark tourism. Thus, to contribute to a greater understanding of interpretation design, the following chapter explores its practice as it is applied within dark tourism – a particular travel activity within the wider context of heritage tourism.

## CHAPTER 4: DARK TOURISM, DVAS, AND DVA MANAGEMENT

### 4.1 Introduction

Interest in HVAs associated with macabre events has grown exponentially since the emergence of dark tourism – a phenomenon that has developed into an expansive field for academic study across schools of tourism management (Pinter, 2005). As a form of heritage tourism, dark tourism is a field with many ethical and management challenges due to the perceived exploitation and trivialisation of macabre histories at DVAs (Foley & Lennon, 1996a; Dalton, 2015). DVAs can offer heritage audiences the opportunity to connect with more difficult episodes in the past through experiential approaches and empathetic provocation (Biran & Poria, 2012; Knudsen, 2011). These contradictory perspectives echo heritage tourism discourses concerning interpretation, authenticity, and the visitor experience, as discussed in chapters two and three. Despite advancements in academic interest, both research and understanding are limited on edutainment experiences, interpretation design, and interpretation management at DVAs, specifically LDVAs – those considered fun-centric, with a higher commercial infrastructure and representative of events in the more distant past.

This chapter is essential for this study as it critically examines the use and interpretation of dark heritage for dark tourism practice, with a particular focus on DVAs, their interpretation, and management challenges. It commences with an introduction on dark heritage, exploring its development and use as a packaged product for dark tourism and continues with dark tourism development and its role within academia as a field for study. An analysis of academic discourse relating to DVAs follows; helping to establish an understanding of the wide range of DVAs, based on varying classification frameworks. Finally, this chapter explores interpretation practice, as discussed in chapter three, within the context of dark tourism. By drawing on the contextual understanding of HVA management challenges discussed in chapter one, this discussion evaluates current interpretation practice at DVAs and its underpinning management challenges.

## **4.2 Dark heritage**

Dark heritage, which underpins the field of dark tourism and its associated DVAs, has become an increasingly popular subject for academic interest over the past two decades. Dark heritage stems from literature on contested heritage (Uzzell & Ballantyne, 1998). It has become the representation of heritage fragmented by conflicts due to social divisions (e.g. ethnicity; religion; ideology; class; gender) and further challenged by matters of dissonance, disinheritance, trivialisation, and omission (Tunbridge, Jones, & Shaw, 1996). Thus, as the representative product of inherited suffering and tragedy (Du Bois, 1903/1994), dark heritage has become a post-modern concept (Lennon & Foley, 2000) that draws on interdisciplinary expertise (Hooper, 2017).

### ***4.2.1 The changing role, value, and meaning of dark heritage***

Dark heritage results from situations involving historic death and atrocity and is further represented by surviving artefacts that provide evidence of past atrocities (Macdonald, 2006). Developed from early publications within sociological history, dark heritage was coined by American historian W.E.B. DuBois to describe the inherited past of suffering and tragedy resulting from slavery in colonial America (Macdonald, 2006). From this, much of interdisciplinary heritage literature during the mid-to-late 20<sup>th</sup> century continued to associate the term dark heritage to the inherited history of Otherness and slavery (see e.g. Franklin, 1976; Nash, 1964; Robinson, 1963; Yarmolinsky, 1941). More recently, the term dark heritage has been attributed to the memory of war, as well as natural and technological disasters that have caused society to grapple with some of the most callous and unspeakable moments in history (Bowman & Pezzullo, 2010).

While the concept of dark heritage has been present since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, it has not always been specified in these terms. Its variants include contested or dissonant heritage (Bowman & Pezzullo, 2010); hot heritage (Uzzell & Ballantyne, 1998); undesirable heritage; difficult heritage (Macdonald, 2009); and uncomfortable heritage (Logan & Reeves, 2009). Collectively, these terms are underpinned by the notion that heritage can cause grief, confusion, or feelings of marginalisation through emotional memories of painful or

problematic pasts that the majority of the population would prefer to forget (Pendlebury, Wang, & Law, 2018). Despite its emotional or painful undercurrents, dark heritage is still considered meaningful for public reconciliation (Koskinen-Koivisto & Thomas, 2017; Macdonald, 2009; Teye & Timothy, 2004). More specifically, dark heritage has become a tool and product, found beneficial for the understanding of more controversial histories and societal progress (Hartmann, 2013).

#### ***4.2.2 Developments in dark heritage research***

Generally underpinned by issues related to social divisions (Dunkley, 2017), dark heritage has not only become an increasingly popular subject for study, but is also a driving framework for applied research across a wide range of interdisciplinary fields (Silverman, 2011). As such, literature on dark heritage from the early-to-mid 20<sup>th</sup> century is largely found in ethnographic and sociological studies on historical Otherness and oppression (see e.g. Silverman, 2011b). This rhetoric continued into the mid-to-late 20<sup>th</sup> century, as references to dark heritage became interwoven with discussions of human rights and the contested heritage of post-colonialism, war, and foreign affairs (see e.g. Hinden, 1968; Okoth, 1983; Sulzberger, 1977).

As previously discussed in chapter two, alongside the social changes of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century in which society became more nostalgic for the past, heritage scholars, including Taylor (1983), Tunbridge (1984), and Uzzell (1989), investigated the representation of dark heritage as a tourism product. As a result, these research developments led heritage scholars to not only explore the relationship between dark heritage and identity-making through national memory (see e.g. Ashworth & Graham, 1997; Light & Dumbraveanu-Andone, 1997), but also the emergence of dark heritage for tourism purposes (see e.g. Anson, 1999; Hoelscher, 1998; Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996).

There is a growing interest in dark heritage at national and international levels (Logan & Reeves, 2009). This has resulted in heritage scholars of the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century responding to not only the continuously growing relationship between dark heritage and society's nostalgic demand, but also the

exploitation of that relationship through media and commercialisation (Logan & Reeves, 2009). Acknowledging this exploitation, a rise in death-related travel developed through society actively seeking out authentic representations and staged spectacles of dark heritage (Dann, 1994). Subsequently, an emergent form of heritage tourism was identified, which, referred to as dark tourism, has since developed into a highly complex and multidimensional field for study (Hooper, 2017).

### **4.3 Dark tourism**

Dark tourism is a highly complex and multidimensional phenomenon involving visits to real and recreated places associated with death, suffering, misfortune, or the seemingly macabre (Fonseca, Seabra, & Silva, 2016). Based on the juxtaposition between death education and heritage tourism, dark tourism has grown exponentially over the last twenty-five years (Roberts & Stone, 2014). As a result, it has become more diverse and widespread in both practice and research (Stone & Sharpley, 2008). It is continually evolving across an array of interdisciplinary fields (e.g. history, sociology, psychology, tourism) that focus on society's relationship with death, cultural representations of mortality, and societal interests in dark travel (Stone, 2013). Dark tourism has therefore become an increasingly significant component of the wider heritage tourism industry. It contributes not only to scholarly dialogue and debate, but is a catalyst for emotional values, knowledge enrichment, community revitalisation, and economic regeneration (Biran, Poria, & Oren, 2011; Kim & Butler, 2015).

#### ***4.3.1 The nature and phenomenon of dark tourism***

As the representation of death-related travel, dark tourism is inherently rooted in much older practices, existing since ancient Roman gladiatorial games (Stone & Sharpley, 2008). The concept of dark tourism, as it is understood today, developed from the academic discourse of the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, which emerged as a result of growing societal interests in death-related events (Becker, 1973/2011; Kellehear, 1984). With advancements in technology, television, and filtered news reports, society had not only become fascinated with historic deaths, but were motivated to seek out death-related visitor attractions (Foley & Lennon, 1996b). This resulted in the emergence of



dark tourism. Capitalising on the commercial benefits of death-related travel, dark tourism offers profitable products through the commodification of tragedy at infamous sites for visitors who maintained a 'thank God, that's not me' mentality (Dann, 1998; Foley & Lennon, 1996b).

The proliferation of packaged heritage in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, including dark heritage, led to a mass demand for commoditised representations of history (Best, 2010; Jovicic, 2016; Uzzell, 1996). As a consequence of modernity, barriers, which once stood between sacred places of solemnity and the world of commerce and spectacle, were fragmented, thereby allowing visitors to become camera-wielding tourists (Tarlow, 2005). Consequently, dark tourism links death-related events to the historical niche in heritage tourism marketing (Tarlow, 2005). This has been made possible through the rapid developments of DVAs, produced by an increasing number of people, who, through the commercialisation of dark heritage, became keen to exploit the macabre for profit (Tarlow, 2005). The locations of tragic and death-related events were developed into DVAs, recognised as icons for economic productivity and creating historic, spiritual, and national meaning (Tarlow, 2005).

The continued growth and deepening diversification of dark tourism has led it to become one of the fastest growing forms of niche tourism for not only the global tourism industry, but also heritage tourism debate and research (Tarlow, 2005; Johnston & Mandelartz, 2015; Wight & Lennon, 2007). Such expansion has signified a fundamental shift in the way that death-related events have become valued, interpreted, and packaged for tourism experiences (Bowman & Pezzullo, 2010). More specifically, dark tourism has become a transformative product and service, allowing for instances of social reconciliation and urban regeneration (Bowman & Pezzullo, 2010). It also provides benefits of emotional and psychological healing, knowledge enrichment, and leisure (Causevic & Lynch, 2008).

#### ***4.3.2 Development and the meaning of dark tourism***

Stemming from academic discourse relating to society's growing fascination with death-related travel, the term dark tourism was coined by Foley and

Lennon (1996b), who through a study of visitor motivations to the Sixth Floor JFK museum and Arlington National Cemetery, proposed postmodern society had become stimulated by media-induced images and/or by personal associations with tragic events. This consequently led to an increased demand of death-related constructed experiences that may not always highlight gravity or reverence (Foley & Lennon, 1996b). Through a consumer lens, Foley and Lennon (1996b) defined dark tourism as a 'phenomenon, which encompasses the presentation and consumption (by visitors) of real and commoditised death and disaster sites'. Reinforcing the relationship between death and its representation in news and film media, Foley and Lennon (1997, p. 155) later redefined dark tourism as 'the visitation to any site associated with death, disaster and tragedy, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, for remembrance, education or entertainment'.

The emphasis of postmodernity has been challenged, with scholars, including Seaton (1999), arguing that death-related travel is not a postmodern construction. Rather, Seaton (1996) argued that dark tourism is undoubtedly rooted in medieval thanatopic travel traditions motivated by the desire for actual or symbolic encounters with death. If dark tourism is to be considered an intimation of postmodern circumstances, then it is not a new concept, but rather another form of death-related travel under the umbrella of 'thanatourism' (Seaton, 1996).

Such death-related travel is argued to have existed since the ancient Roman gladiatorial games (Stone & Sharpley, 2008). Other publications have identified early forms of dark tourism through studies concerning travel in the 17<sup>th</sup> century to witness and observe public executions (Evans, 1996; McGlynn, 2008); travel in the 18<sup>th</sup> century to observe prison inmates at work (Schama, 2004); travel in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to witness London crime scenes (Schama, 2004) and the Waterloo battlefield (Wallis, 2012). In response to the discourse concerning postmodernity, Lennon and Foley (2000) argue that while death-related travel has existed for centuries, it has changed since the end of WWI. Thus, they argue dark tourism is 'an intimation of post-modernity [...] one that is a product of modern circumstances [...] and signifies a fundamental shift in the way death

is handled by those who offer associated tourism products' (Lennon & Foley, 2000, p. 3).

Circumventing the matter of postmodernity, other scholars have defined dark tourism based on its supply and demand. For example, Stone (2005, p. 2) proposed dark tourism is any 'visit, intentional or otherwise, to purposeful and non-purposeful sites which offer a presentation of death or suffering as the reason for being'. However, he later refined this to suggest dark tourism is 'the act of travel to sites associated with death, suffering, and the seemingly macabre' (Stone, 2006, p. 146). Dark tourism has further been described as the visitation to places associated with tragedies or noteworthy deaths that continue to impact society (Tarlow, 2005). Also, it has been described as travel that enlightens visitors with positive benefits of remembrance, commemoration, spiritual experiences, identity construction, education and/or understanding (Tarlow, 2005). More recently, Miles (2014) defined it as a function of visitors' attitudes that have been exploited by the efforts of death-related tourism attractions. For the purposes of this research, dark tourism is considered to be a subset of heritage tourism and is defined as a form of heritage tourism based on the packaged representation of past tragedy, death, or the seemingly macabre.

Dark tourism discourse on its meaning has further led scholars to debate its terminology. Specifically the word 'dark' is argued to unintentionally link all forms of dark tourism to negative emotions of fear, horror, sadness, depression, vengeance (Krakover, 2005; Miles, 2002), anxiety, moral panic, rage, and/or discomfort (Montes & Butler, 2008; Biran & Poria, 2012). Bowman and Pezzullo (2010) argue that such connotations have not only led to academic oversight relating to certain forms of dark tourism (e.g. fun-centric experiences), but it also marginalises dark tourism in comparison to other forms of heritage tourism. A review of Foley and Lennon's (1996b) publication, in which dark tourism was introduced, reveals that they were unconcerned with semantics and sought to use dark tourism as a label that would both describe the travel phenomenon and help to classify places associated with death from other types of VAs.

Drawing on the discourse concerning death-related travel, alternative terms have been proposed. For example, 'tragic' tourism' has been proposed, which Lippard (1999) uses to describe a form of travel to contemplate mortality, pay homage, and to become educated about a tragic event. In addition, 'morbid tourism' has been used to describe death-related travel associated with accidents or violent deaths (Blom, 2000). Although these variants help to stimulate scholarly discourse, they omit specific reference to dark tourism and Foley and Lennon (1996b). This further exacerbates the issues relating to dark tourism's definitional and conceptual developments (Bowman & Pezzullo, 2010). Moreover, Bowman and Pezzullo (2010) argue these alternatives are not strictly interchangeable, as they each represent slightly different forms of death-related travel. Thus, consequently, these terms may be situated under the umbrella of dark tourism for organisational clarity.

At present, there does not appear to be an alternative term that adequately encompasses the entirety of dark tourism experiences and understanding. Consequently, scholars have been led to question what dark tourism actually encompasses (Roberts & Stone, 2014), and also explore the complexity and multitude of dark tourism experiences. It may be the case that dark tourism continues to serve as an umbrella term lacking a universally accepted definition. However, the discourse concerning it has led to an explosion of typologies describing varying experiences that now constitute much of dark tourism literature (Dalton, 2015; Miller & Gonzalez, 2013; Turner, 2016).

#### ***4.3.3 Classifying dark tourism experiences***

The challenge in arriving at universal agreement on the nomenclature and connotations of dark tourism appears largely driven by discourse relating to the range and diversity of experiences that it comprises (Roberts & Stone, 2014). While there is no universally accepted typology for dark tourism experiences (Dalton, 2015; Miller & Gonzalez, 2013), scholars have produced a series of publications focused on explaining them as a consequence of travel motivations to witness specific death-related spectacles (Dann, 1998; Seaton, 1996; Tarlow, 2005). As a result, dark tourism became understood as a behavioural phenomenon, defined by tourist motivations, as opposed to the

particular characteristics of an attraction (Sharpley, 2005). Yet, Dann (1998) proposed dark tourism experiences might still be identified through a series of supply-based themes which, as reflected in Table 4.1, emphasise the content and physical nature of an attraction.

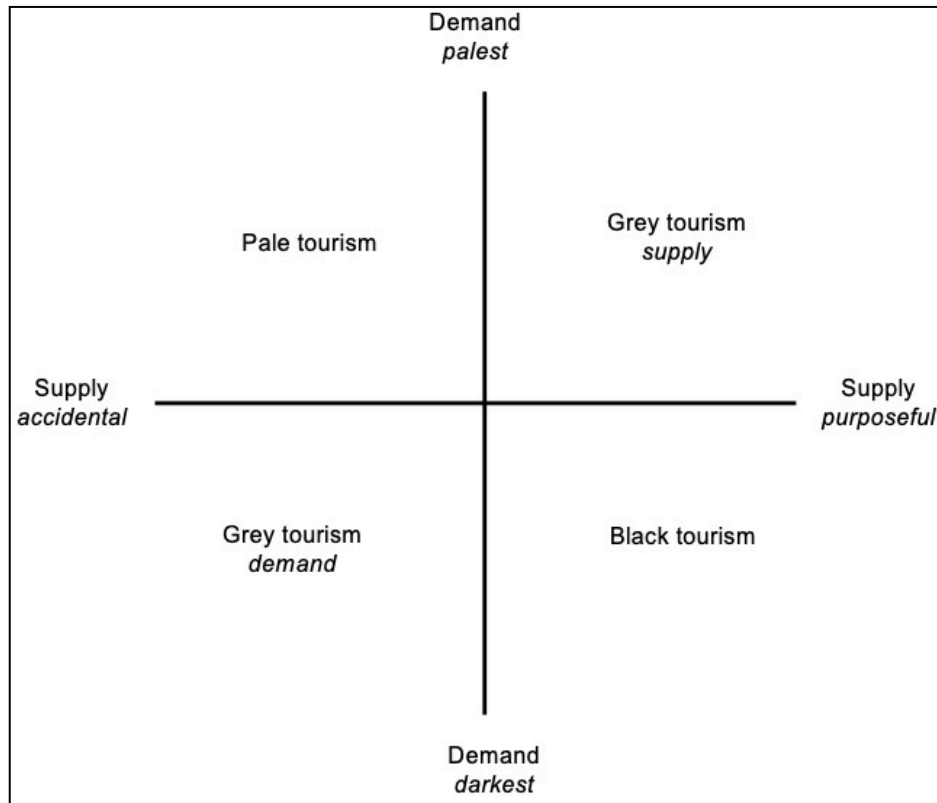
**Table 4.1. Classifying dark tourism experiences**

<b>Division of the dark</b>	
Perilous places	Towns of terror from the past as well as dangerous destinations of the present. <i>Example: Tombstone, Arizona; Afghanistan; Rio de Janeiro</i>
Houses of horror	Buildings associated with violent ends, also includes dungeons of death of heinous hotels. <i>Example: O.J. Simpson's house; Alcatraz</i>
Fields of fatality	Tracts of land devoted to the commemoration of fear, fame or infamy, as well as battlefields, concentration or internment camps, and cemeteries. <i>Example: Pearl Harbour; Gettysburg; Auschwitz</i>
Tours of torment	Group visitations to dark attractions, includes trips to sites of mayhem, murder and notorious. <i>Example: Hollywood Grave Line Tours; New York's Gate of Heaven Tour</i>
Themed thanatos	Relates to the various collections that have been constructed around life and death, including museums and monuments. <i>Example: Madam Tussaud's Chamber of Horrors; Berlin's Gestapo Museum</i>

(Dann, 1998, p. 3)

Sharpley (2005) then suggested that dark tourism experiences are situated within a continuum of intensity, reflecting the extent of visitor interest in death-related events as a main motivational factor for travel. He proposed that dark tourism experiences exist within 'shades of darkness', guided by both travel motivations and the physical characteristics of attractions. Drawing on Holt's (1995) typology of consumption practices, he developed a guiding framework, which, as reflected in Figure 4.2, was not only a significant contribution to dark tourism understanding, but also provided a foundation for future dark tourism research in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Figure 4.2. Sharpley's shades of darkness**



(Sharpley, 2005, p. 225)

Using radian measure, Sharpley's (2005) framework introduces 'shades of darkness', which identifies dark tourism experiences by the intensities of its supply and demand. This framework proposed that dark tourism experiences exist through differing modes of consumption practices underpinned by varying forms of cultural meaning applied to death-related events (Sharpley, 2005). This contribution was a monumental shift for dark tourism understanding, as it brought the relationship between supply and demand to the forefront of dark tourism research. It also indicated that these experiences may be classified through a range of intensities pertaining to consumption practices. While still largely dependent on motivational theory, Sharpley's (2005) framework prompted greater academic debate concerning the supply of dark tourism experiences, resulting in a series of themes, as reflected in Table 4.3, that have continued to emerge into the present day.

**Table 4.3. Heritage-driven dark tourism**

Source	Theme	Description
Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996)	Horror tourism	Travel to places associated with murder, torture, and infamous crime. <i>Example: London Dungeon; Jack the Ripper tours</i>
Seaton (1999)	Battlefield tourism	Travel to places of wartime experiences and bereavement, motivated by personal interests, commemoration, and identity building. <i>Example: Waterloo; Gettysburg; Flanders</i>
Seaton (2001)	Slavery tourism	Travel to places associated with slavery (e.g. ancient, colonial, modern), motivated by commemoration, identity building, and personal interests. <i>Example: Colonial Williamsburg; Magdalene laundries; Elmina Castle</i>
Strange and Kempa (2003)	Prison tourism	Travel to places associated with the intentional state-sanctioned infliction of punishment or incarceration, motivated by personal interests, commemoration, and identity building. <i>Example: Alcatraz; Robben Island; Karosta prison hotel</i>
Ashworth (2004)	Atrocity heritage tourism	Travel to places of deliberate and collective physical violence on others, motivated by curiosity and identity building. <i>Example: Auschwitz; US Southern plantations</i>
Bristow and Newman (2004)	Fright tourism	Travel to places representative of sinister histories or undertones, motivated by personal interests and a sense of shock and thrill. <i>Example: London Dungeon; Jack the Ripper tours</i>
Clark (2006)	Trauma tourism	Travel to places of atrocity, motivated by commemoration and self-reflection. <i>Example: JeJu Memorial Peace Park; Apartheid Museum</i>
Causevic and Lynch (2008)	Phoenix tourism	Travel to places in a state of rebuilding or repair from civil or political unrest. <i>Example: Belfast</i>
Sharpley (2012)	Genocide tourism	Travel to places directly associated with genocide and mass deaths, motivated by commemoration, self-reflection, identity building, and personal interests. <i>Example: Rwanda; Choeung Ek</i>
Holloway (2012)	Legend-tripping tourism	Travel to places representative of sinister histories through oral storytelling, motivated by personal interests and a sense of shock and thrill. <i>Example: Ghost tours; Underground tours</i>
Kidron (2013)	Holocaust tourism	Travel to places directly associated with the Holocaust, motivated by commemoration, self-reflection, identity building, and personal interests. <i>Example: Auschwitz; US Holocaust Museum</i>
Sion (2014)	Death tourism	Travel to places of extreme inhuman, violent acts of death, motivated by the desire to pay homage. <i>Example: Auschwitz; Choeung Ek; 9/11 Memorial</i>

Traditionally, these themes have been identified as heritage-centric, given that they are largely based on the representation of specific forms of dark heritage (Dann, 1994). Heritage-centric themes are prompted by the interpretation and re-creation of dark heritage events (Roberts & Stone, 2014). However, they are often underpinned with criticisms concerning the perceived exploitation of dark heritage through society's nostalgic demand for authentic representations of death and suffering (Dann, 1994). Yet, as heritage and tragedy are not mutually exclusive (Bowman & Pezzullo, 2010), these themes, specifically of wartimes past, account for the majority of HVAs, and therefore DVAs (Bowman & Pezzullo, 2010).

Additional themes have been identified, which are not heritage-centric. Prompted by visitor motivations and their confrontation with grief and mortality (Miller & Gonzalez, 2013), these themes appear largely based on society's need to pay homage and commemorate the dead (Stone & Sharpley, 2008). As reflected in Table 4.4, these non-heritage specific themes reflect dark tourism experiences in locations reflective of death, disparity, or dystopia, and unrelated to dark heritage specifically.



**Table 4.4. Non-heritage-driven dark tourism**

Source	Theme	Description
O'Neill (2002)	Grief tourism	Travel to places of death, motivated by the desire to pay homage or commemorate someone's death. <i>Example: Soham; Kurt Cobain memorial park; Graceland</i>
Miller (2008)	Disaster tourism	Travel to places devastated from natural or man-made events, motivated by self-reflection and curiosity. <i>Example: New Orleans; Chernobyl; Haiti</i>
Venbrux (2010)	Burial tourism	Travel to cemeteries, graveyards, or ossuary, motivated by commemoration or curiosity. <i>Example: Arlington National Cemetery; Paris Catacombs</i>
Meschkank (2011)	Slum tourism	Travel to areas of poverty, disparity, and suffering, motivated by personal interests or curiosities. <i>Example: Mumbai; Rio de Janeiro; Johannesburg</i>
Miller and Gonzalez (2013)	Suicide tourism	Travel to places known for assisted suicide and/or voluntary death, motivated by personal interests and suffering. <i>Example: Aokigahara suicide forest; SF Golden Gate Bridge</i>
Podoshen, et al (2015)	Dystopian tourism	Travel to places that depict images of dystopia, motivated by interests in the imagined suffering of society from events of totalitarianism, post-apocalypse or injustices. <i>Example: H.R. Giger Museum; Museum of Death, Hollywood</i>
Podoshen, et al (2018)	Black-metal tourism	Travel to music festivals involving abjection, violence, blood, and material traces of death, motivated by extreme interests and curiosities. <i>Example: Inferno festival; Incineration fest; Hellfest</i>

These thematic developments not only highlight the growth of dark tourism as a field for study, but also signify the departure from viewing death-related travel as an occurrence purely prompted by travel interests. Moreover, it is clear from these developments that scholarly discourse has come to embrace a wide range of dark tourism experiences (Light, 2016). Despite this progress, Stone and Sharpley (2008) have argued that the eclectic range of themes has led to a lack in clarity and increased dilution of dark tourism research. Yet Ross (2012) affirms this issue is not a consequence of thematic developments. Rather, dark tourism research has become dominated by selective case studies that focus on darker experiences and promoted by specific types of DVAs. In

consequence, this has prevented opportunities for comparative analyses, and consequently failing to provide a comprehensive understanding of dark tourism (Ross, 2012).

#### **4.4 Dark visitor attraction (DVAs)**

The discourse concerning dark tourism themes has led to the acknowledgement of a wide range of DVAs. Often rendering ideological agendas that are intertwined with interpretation and meaning (Stone, 2018), DVAs expose particularities of social histories that can provoke feelings of anxiety, remorse, empathy, or fear. Yet, as potential mediators for the cultural conditions of society (Stone, 2018), DVAs still encourage appreciation and understanding among audiences for dark heritage through created experiences where learning and engagement can occur (Rojek, 1993). In addition, in many instances they can endorse feelings of shock, thrill, and enjoyment through edutainment agendas.

##### ***4.4.1 The meaning and classification of DVAs***

As the physical manifestations of death and tragedy, DVAs are inherently complex. Although many DVAs are accidental and not purposefully created for tourism activities, they have collectively become part of the wider heritage tourism industry (Isaac & Cakmak, 2014; Stone, 2011). However, their diverse, polysemic nature requires a distinct understanding that is separate from other HVAs (Stone, 2018). As reflected in Table 4.5, scholarly efforts have been made to confirm the meaning of a DVA and establish a classification. However, there has been little agreement, thereby causing this topic to become an academic conundrum (Hooper & Lennon, 2017).

**Table 4.5. Definitions of DVAs**

Source	Definition– Dark visitor attractions:
Stone (2006, p. 148)	Sites, attractions, or exhibitions that interpret or recreate events or acts associated with death and the macabre.
Sharpley (2009, p. 7)	Places where individuals or numbers of people met their death, by whatever means.
Niemela (2010, p. 11)	Sites, purpose built or otherwise, which have real or simulated death, pain, or suffering as the main theme.
Wilson (2011, p. 566)	The embodiment of the manifold narratives of suffering of those who originally experienced it.
Powell and Kennell (2016, p. 304)	Sites that offer the opportunity to capture and conserve the dark memory of humanity and make it available, through domestic and international tourism, to the wider public.

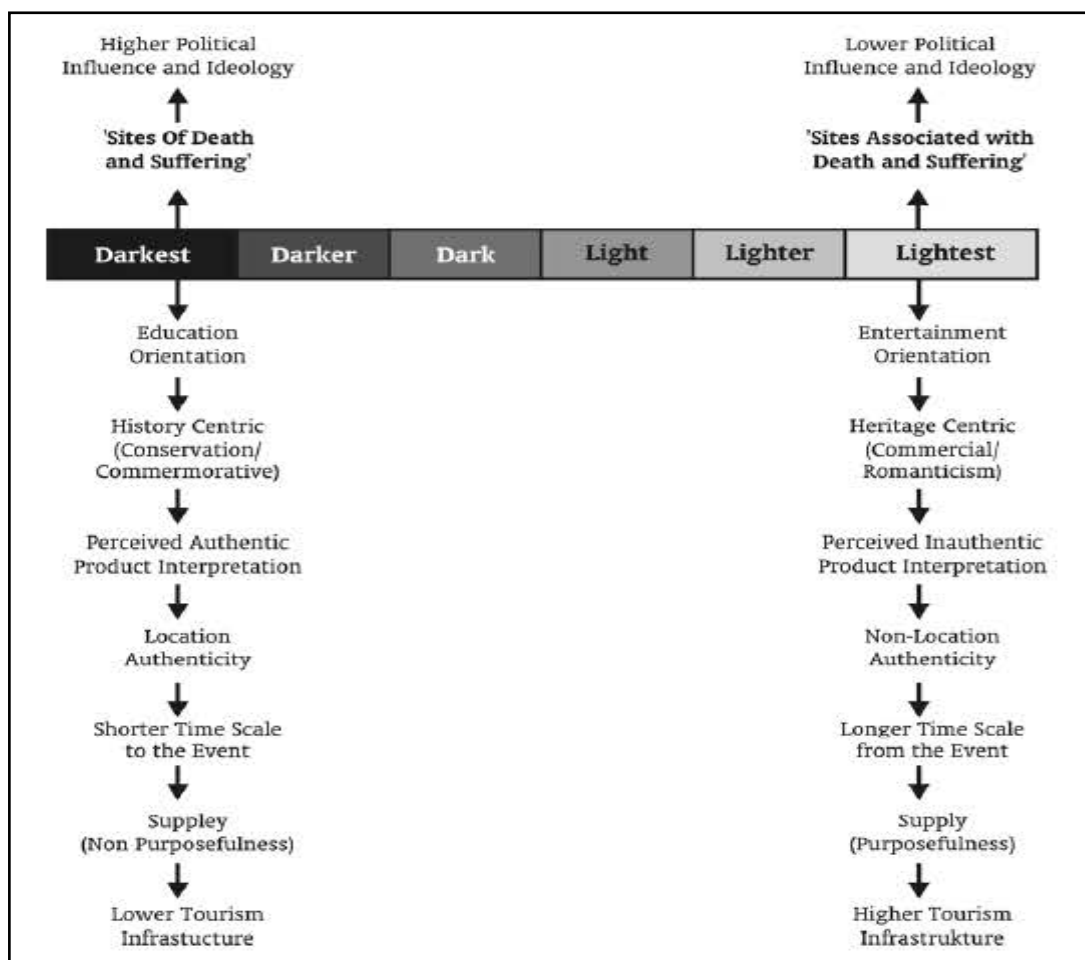
Reviewing these examples and dark tourism literature, it is clear that the challenge in arriving at a universally accepted definition for DVAs is, in part, due to the range and diversity of experiences that dark tourism comprises (Roberts & Stone, 2014). Thus, for the purposes of this research, the researcher defines DVAs as places associated with and representative of past tragedies, death, and macabre events, which provide cathartic, educational, and/or enjoyable visitor experiences through varying interpretation agendas for heritage tourism purposes.

The diversity of DVAs has led many scholars to identify them by their conceptual groupings (Miles, 2014). For example, most recently, DVAs relating specifically to disasters have been recognised as ‘the consequences of sudden, unpredictable, and extreme events’ (Wright & Sharpley, 2018, p. 1570). Because of this emphasis placed on DVA individuality, the literature reveals greater attention has been placed on the development of identification and classification parameters, as opposed to the development of a universally accepted definition for DVAs. Such efforts to identify and classify DVAs is argued to have begun with Dann's (1998) division of the dark (Biran et al., 2011), introduced in section 4.3.3. However, Dann's (1998) divisions do not necessarily set out distinct considerations for DVA identification. Rather, they emphasise different types of dark tourism experiences through the identification of places that are representative of varying death-related events. Dann's (1998) contribution does however address location authenticity, which

implies subsequent research may be able to identify DVAs based on certain individual characteristics.

DVA classification is reflected in the literature as having gained serious academic attention following the development of Stone's (2006) 'darkness spectrum'. Guided by Dann's (1998) division of the dark and Sharpley's (2005) shades of darkness, the darkness spectrum, as reflected in Figure 4.6, highlights varying inherent and operational characteristics by which a DVA may be identified and further classified.

**Figure 4.6. Stone's darkness spectrum**



(Stone, 2006, p. 151)

The darkness spectrum was instrumental in the progress of dark tourism understanding as it drew academic attention to the supply of dark tourism experiences. Whereas earlier contributions focused on travel motivations and specific types of death-related events, Stone (2006) recognised greater

attention was needed to the nuances of dark tourism suppliers. Echoing Sharpley (2005), Stone (2006) suggested DVAs may be identified by the level of darkness they exude, which is measured on a fluid spectrum of darkness intensity, dependent on defining characteristics, perceptions and product features.

The darkness spectrum places primary emphasis on whether a DVA is an original location where death or suffering actually took place, or if it is purposefully constructed, and therefore only associated with a dark heritage. As reflected in Table 4.7, DVAs either come into existence accidentally through selection, acquisition, and development, or they are constructed for a defined purpose by specific stakeholders (e.g. owners, investors) (Seaton, 2009). Consideration for the originality of DVAs is crucial to DVA understanding, as this factor is a primary influence in their management and interpretation, which are discussed later in this chapter.

**Table 4.7. Originality of DVA locations**

<b>DVA type</b>	<b>Description</b>
In-situ (Natural)	A naturally developed original location; No human group responsible for the origins of the location (e.g. major atrocities and/or disasters); Media-induced visitor interest. <i>Example: Aokigahara suicide forest; Pompeii; Ground Zero</i>
In-situ (Functional)	A defunct location; Originally constructed with non-tourism intentions (e.g. military buildings, catacombs, prisons); Re-launched with tourism intent. <i>Example: Alcatraz; Auschwitz; Paris catacombs</i>
Created (In-situ)	An entrepreneurial development within an original location. <i>Example: Jack the Ripper tours; Ghost tours; Old Savannah tours</i>
Created (Purposeful)	A purposefully constructed location with tourism intent; Constructed within a historic or newly built space. <i>Example: London Dungeon; Madame Tussaud's</i>

(Seaton, 2009)

The darkness spectrum also highlights DVA characteristics, which include identifiable perceptions, inherent and operational characteristics, and product traits that emphasise a DVA's purpose, level of political influence and ideology, representation, and temporal distance (Stone, 2006). Yet, Stone (2006) argues

DVAs may transition within the darkness spectrum. This is because changes can occur over time within the parameters, including adjustments to interpretive techniques, altered visitor perceptions of death, and growing temporal distance from an original event. Consequently, although exclusivity is desired in academic discourse, it is clear that DVA identification by shades of darkness is not definite, causing greater potential for classification overlap.

Despite the significance of the darkness spectrum, Stone (2006) insists it is still rather limited, as it does not consider the demand perspective. Moreover, it does not consider the balance between spontaneous visits and predetermined visits (Stone, 2006). Still, the darkness spectrum, in addition to its predecessors, makes evident that the supply of dark tourism experiences is highly complex and multifaceted.

#### ***4.4.2 The individuality of DVAs – Dark suppliers***

The progress of DVA understanding through classification efforts, including Dann's (1998) division of the dark and Stone's (2006) darkness spectrum, has produced a diverse range of examples in which death, destruction, and the macabre can be promoted and demonstrate commercial success (Ryan & Kohli, 2006). One of the more cited examples of DVA typologies is Stone's (2006) dark suppliers, which, as reflected in Table 4.8, encompasses a diverse range of DVAs identified by their perceived level of darkness as featured in the darkness spectrum, based on inherent and organisational characteristics.

**Table 4.8. Stone's dark suppliers**

<b>Dark Suppliers</b>	<b>Description</b>
Dark fun factories	Purposeful location; entertainment focused; fun-centric; commercial ethic; high degree of tourism infrastructure; presentation of real or fictional death and macabre events; less authentic representations; sensationalised. <i>Example: London Dungeons; Jack the Ripper Tours; Dracula Park</i>
Dark exhibitions	Purposeful and non-purposeful elements; entertainment and/or commercial focused; educational and/or commemorative opportunities; moderate degree of tourism infrastructure; controversial ethic; somewhat authentic representations; provoking. <i>Example: Body Worlds; Smithsonian's September 11: Bearing witness to history</i>
Dark dungeons	Non-purposeful location; combination of entertainment and educational opportunities; commercial ethic; moderate degree of tourism infrastructure; representation of bygone penal and justice codes; and political influence and ideology. <i>Example: Robben Island; Alcatraz; Old Melbourne Gaol</i>
Dark resting places	Non-purposeful location; history-centric; conservational; commemorative; lower tourism infrastructure; representation of graveyards and cemeteries; romanticised. <i>Example: Weaste Cemetery; Hollywood's Dearly Departed Tours</i>
Dark shrines	Non-purposeful location; formal or informal construction; short time period to event; higher level of political awareness and influence; controversial ethic; lower tourism infrastructure; and commemorative agenda. <i>Example: Althorp House; Ground Zero; Soham</i>
Dark conflict sites	Non-purposeful location; educational and/or commemorative focus; representation of war and battlefields; history-centric; commercial ethic; increasing tourism infrastructure. <i>Example: Western Front Battlefield Tours; Gettysburg; Battle of Bosworth Re-enactment</i>
Dark camps of genocide	Non-purposeful location; educational and/or commemorative focus; representation of genocide and extreme atrocity; history-centric; high degree of political ideology; increasing tourism infrastructure. <i>Example: Auschwitz; Rwanda; Choeung Ek</i>

(Stone, 2006)

According to this list, the darkest forms of DVAs include dark camps of genocide and atrocity, such as Auschwitz or Choeung Ek. These DVAs are understood as being directly associated death-related events that are temporally closer to the present day (Stone, 2006). They are also generally the ultimate cathartic experience whereby visitors engage with death through commemorative and educational agendas at the actual location of a death-

event (Keil, 2005; Stone, 2006). Despite their contentious nature, Kidron (2013) suggests these DVAs allow visitors to connect with victims and experience a wide range of emotional modalities, including catharsis or sorrow.

Other DVAs identified as inherently darker than others include conflict sites or battlefields, such as Gettysburg or the Belfast wall. These DVAs are understood as being directly associated with civil or political conflicts that may have resulted in death-related events, which may be either temporally closer or more distant to the present day (Stone, 2006). Yet these DVAs are considered darker than other forms, as the conflicts underpinning their existence are often still very much a part of an area's heritage (Causevic & Lynch, 2008). Still, given their generally history-centric focus, these DVAs can become less intense in terms of their darkness because of the growing temporal distance between wartime events and the present day (Stone, 2006). This allows for a less serious interpretation and greater edutainment interpretive methods. For example, Gettysburg and Eden Camp both use re-enactment techniques through edutainment based interpretive agendas to educate audiences about social conflicts and wartime pasts, thereby increasing their commercial tourism infrastructure.

Other forms of DVAs often serve as mediators between the darkest and lightest forms. These include dark shrines or memorials to the deceased, such as the James Dean Memorial or the JeJu Memorial Peace Park, as well as dark resting places or cemeteries, such as Highgate Cemetery or the Paris Catacombs. These types of DVAs generally promote commemorative agendas, underpinned by social divisions or tragic circumstances that influenced death (Kang et al., 2012). While these DVAs offer visitors the opportunity to pay homage and respects to the deceased, they are generally constructed around a conservational and commemorative ethic (Stone, 2006). Yet, in some instances, such as Hollywood's Dearly Departed Tours and Dallas' JFK assassination bus tour, these DVAs can involve edutainment agendas, thereby promoting a higher commercial tourism infrastructure.



DVAs much paler in nature include dark dungeons, which are generally defunct penal institutions, former prisons, and courthouses. In many instances, these DVAs, such as Alcatraz, Robben Island, and the Nuremberg Trials Courthouse, are considered moderately dark, as they often represent relatively recent historical content through commemorative or educational agendas. However, some of these DVAs, such as Nottingham's Museum of Justice, can also provide lighter, didactic experiences through edutainment agendas that use re-enactment techniques to educate visitors on prison heritage and fulfil curiosity about historic crimes and punishment (Stone, 2006; Welch, 2012).

DVAs in the form of dark exhibitions are considered reasonably light due to their higher tourism infrastructure. These DVAs, such as the Body Worlds exhibition, Madame Tussaud's Chamber of Horrors, and Hollywood's Museum of Death, push conventional boundaries between reality and illusion through redolent images of death or circumstances that have led to death (Stone, 2011). Despite their higher tourism infrastructure, these DVAs are generally more serious in nature, promoting educational agendas involving the representation of death, suffering and the macabre (Stone, 2006).

In comparison to all other DVAs, dark fun factories are recognised as the lightest form of DVAs (LDVAs), given, their higher tourism infrastructure and general promotion of edutainment agendas. Generally representative of death-related events of the more distant past, LDVAs are often argued to be less concerned with authenticity. This is due to their perceived trivialisation and often-sanitised interpretations of past horrors, including torture, incarceration, crime, poverty, and disease (Stone, 2006). LDVAs, which include Dungeon Experiences, Jack the Ripper tours, ghost walk tours, and haunted houses, generally promote entertaining and thrilling experiences. Yet, they still require ethical consideration and respect, given that they explicitly depict death, dying, and suffering.

Taking account of the range of dark tourism suppliers, it is clear that DVAs are complex, multidimensional representations of dark heritage and unpleasant pasts. They offer audiences a wide range of experiences, underpinned by

commemorative, educational, and/or edutainment agendas. The classification of DVAs is based on their perceived level of darkness. However, this darkness is identified by their inherent and operational characteristics, which can change over time. This perception of darkness has sparked academic debate, which, discussed later in this chapter, has led some scholars to question the relevance of dark tourism since most heritage may be considered dark to some degree (Tunbridge & Ashworth, 2017). However, as Tarlow (2005) notes, DVAs develop as a consequence of transforming past tragedies and dark memories into economic productivity through touristic experiences. Thus, as reflected in chapter three, it is interpretation that provides the basis for those touristic experiences. Therefore, to better understand DVA experiences, it is essential to next explore interpretation practice as it is applied at DVAs, as well as the management challenges that emerge from transforming past tragedies into touristic experiences.

#### **4.5 DVA interpretation**

As reflected in chapter two, interpretation is recognised as an essential tool for HVA management, linking understanding between a site and its visitors (Ababneh, 2017). Consequently, interpretation has become a focus of scholarly interest and analysis within the wider heritage tourism industry (Ababneh, 2017; Veverka, 2011). For dark tourism specifically, interpretation is pivotal for both creating the visitor experience and managing visitor behaviour. However, due to the nature of DVAs, interpretation is inherently complex and beset with challenges in terms of how it is designed and managed (Lennon & Weber, 2017). Despite this apparent significance and need for understanding, literature concerning the design and management of DVA interpretation is limited. Rather, it appears focused on the types of interpretive methods employed at different DVAs.

Whether in-situ or purposefully constructed, DVAs often occur as a result of the intentional exploitation of dark heritage through tourism activities underpinned by a strategically designed interpretation (Tarlow, 2005). Yet some DVAs have come to exist accidentally without tourism promotion (e.g. Aokigahara suicide forest; slums). Despite variations, DVAs have become the most visited

attractions in some cities throughout the world (Tarlow, 2005). Thus, the success of the majority of these dark experiences relies heavily on the design and management of their interpretation and the passion of an interpretation team for the history, and their commitment to selling that history through commemorative, educational, and/or edutainment agendas (Fallon & Robinson, 2017; Minic, 2012; Powell & Iankova, 2016; Timothy, 2018).

#### **4.5.1 Commemorative interpretation agendas**

DVAs have been long considered significant resources to promote commemorative agendas and help society to progress beyond past tragedies (Dunkley, 2017). In producing commemorative experiences, interpretation designs generally encompass a space for quiet reflection, as found, for example, with the Garden of Remembrance for the 1988 Lockerbie air disaster. As reflected in Figure 4.9, the garden consists of park benches and flowers that form two semi-circles, which are set in front of a memorial stone surrounded by individual memorial plates built into the traditional stone wall of the local cemetery (Frew, 2017). The memorial stone lists the names of the victims in alphabetical order, making it easy for visitors to identify them and commemorate their memory (Frew, 2017).

**Figure 4.9. Lockerbie Garden of Remembrance**



(Undiscovered Scotland, 2019)

Other DVAs, including museums and war-remembering locations, offer similar places for commemoration and reflection. For example, the April 3 Peace Park commemorates the victims of the politically charged JeJu conflict and

massacre. Here, a memorial hall was erected displaying in chronological order the events before, during, and after the massacre, allowing visitors to develop their own explanation for the incident (Kang, et al, 2012). The displays include graphic descriptions of various massacres in the mountainous regions of JeJu, supported by films of survivor testimonies, as well as staged exhibitions of artefacts to provide insight into the villagers' living conditions during this time (Kang et al., 2012).

DVAs that serve to commemorate and memorialise a tragedy are generally developed through the collaboration of survivors and relevant experts on the event (Kang et al., 2012; Lennon & Weber, 2017). In many instances, there are areas for learning and understanding using information boards and/or small static displays of exhibited artefacts. Yet, as temporal distance grows between death-related events and the present day, DVAs often undergo fundamental changes that lead to the inclusion of greater educational programmes and visitor centres. This has however been criticised by some as the reason for increased tourism activities at places for commemoration, thus leading to greater exploitation of dark heritage (Virgili, Delacour, Bornarel, & Liarte, 2018).

#### ***4.5.2 Educational interpretation agendas***

DVAs frequently profess a social mission of educating audiences on dark heritage through interpretation (Dunkley, 2017). Educational agendas are argued to produce altruistic experiences that allow visitors to self-transform through encounters with authentic recreations that teach valuable lessons with the aim to avoid future horrors (Ashworth & Tunbridge, 2017; Virgili, et al., 2018). As such, many DVAs have been designed as educational sensation sites, utilising static exhibition displays with photographic and filmic imagery designed to stimulate empathy and understanding (Ashworth & Tunbridge, 2017; Lennon & Weber, 2017). Such interpretation encourages a state of vigilance, if not direct action to prevent recurrences of such horrific acts (Dunkley, 2017).

In many instances, educational agendas promote temporary exhibitions in the style of 'high-end' institutions, such as museums and art galleries, using

thematic choices to display artefacts, relics, commemorative artworks, photographic imagery, and text panels (Seaton, 2009). For example, the Eyam Museum consists primarily of exhibition displays depicting text and graphics, along with roped off staged scenes of period-inspired props to illustrate the suffering of the plague victims (Skipalis, 2012). This is a widely accepted interpretation approach, as discussed in chapter three. However, as reflected in Figure 4.10, the Eyam Museum provokes audiences by incorporating mannequins dressed in period attire and artistically designed to reflect suffering and symptoms of the plague (Skipalis, 2012).

**Figure 4.10. Eyam plague exhibit**



(Skipalis, 2012)

The use of mannequins is a controversial method for dark tourism as it provides hyper-real depictions of an event, often provoking feelings of shock and/or remorse (Skipalis, 2012). However, rooted in the developments of DVAs like Madame Tussaud's Chamber of Horrors, the use of mannequins has become a standard approach for exhibitions displaying scenes of dark heritage. For example, as reflected in Figure 4.11, Dachau's current museum displays a photograph of an exhibit from its initial opening in 1953, which used mannequins to display a prisoner being beaten by an SS soldier. While this particular exhibit was removed before the 1965 re-opening of the renovated museum, other DVAs, including the Jack the Ripper Museum in London and the Salem Witch Museum in the United States, continue to use mannequins in their interpretation and depiction of past death and suffering.

**Figure 4.11. Dachau 1945-50 exhibit**



(Author's photo, 2018)

Other interpretive methods discussed in literature include the use of technology, such as hand-held audio devices and touch screen technologies. For example, in the 1990s, Dachau underwent fundamental changes to encourage visitation by younger generations. This included the development of a planned visitor tour retracing the prisoners' path from entrance to crematorium (Skipalis, 2012). This tour now utilises hand-held audio devices that allow visitors to hear testimonies of survivors and liberators as they relate to different areas of Dachau. Other DVAs, including Alcatraz prison in San Francisco have embraced hand-held audio devices that lead audiences on an educational journey (Skipalis, 2012; Strange & Kempa, 2003). Similarly, the Oklahoma City Bombing Memorial and Museum uses technology to promote an interactive learning environment by which sound and lighting effects, and touch screen technologies, are used to provide a more engaging experience (Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum, 2019).

While educational interpretation methods may vary between DVAs, tensions are often found between educational programmes and memorialisation, specifically concerning the authentic representation of death-related events. This is most reflected at sites associated with wartimes past and slavery. For example, the decision to implement a planned path with audio-guides at Dachau was met with concerns for the site's original function as a memorial (Lennon & Weber, 2017). In another instance, Colonial Williamsburg, which is

considered the flagship for colonial heritage and often recognised for its associations to slave history (Seaton, 2001), underwent fundamental changes in the 1990s in response to criticisms that the settlement had sanitised its associations with slavery and whitewashed the real history through repetitive restoration (Sliverman, 2011). Some of these changes attempted to promote authentic representations of colonial times through re-enactments, for example, the history of slave auctions, as reflected in Figure 4.12. However these efforts were met with an intense public backlash pertaining to the appropriateness of such spectacles (Silverman, 2011). This production has since undergone changes in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with the involvement of a new interpretation team, which has included philanthropic celebrities, including Jesse Williams, and a local theatre company (Silverman, 2011). Some of these changes were to include a debriefing after the performance to allow visitors to ask questions and encourage discussion and learning about this history.

**Figure 4.12. Slave auction re-enactments**



(Carson, 1998)

Finally, educational programmes have also been identified using support talks through storytelling sessions, guided tours, and panel discussions (Colonial Williamsburg, 2010). While support talks through storytelling sessions and guided tours can cross into edutainment agendas, they are inherently designed to educate audiences on DVA content. Moreover, these sessions allow for greater audience engagement, as visitors are able to ask questions about content and its display. As identified in the case of Colonial Williamsburg, re-



enactments and storytelling can lead to heated debates concerning the appropriateness of such interpretive methods.

While educational dimensions in interpretation can spark shock and controversy, Bloom (2013) argues it still helps to distinguish meaning within an experience and encourage visitors to be more mindful. Adding to this, Dunkley (2017) suggests DVAs are significant in raising awareness among audiences, specifically younger generations who have no lived experiences of past horrors. Subsequently, educational interpretation methods help to create a mass conscience that will remember and progress (Dunkley, 2017).

#### ***4.5.3 Edutainment interpretation agendas***

Stemming from developments in educational interpretation, many DVAs have become associated with, and actively promote, edutainment agendas. Often considered lighter in terms of darkness intensities, these DVAs, or rather, LDVAs (lighter dark visitor attractions) are often found to use one of two edutainment approaches – to educate and create appreciation through more interactive and entertainment-based methods, or to shock and thrill audiences through more fun-centric and innovative methods. In both of these instances, LDVAs use interpretive methods that include provocative staged scenes of mannequins and period-inspired props to depict dark heritage, as well as live acting in first, second, or third person re-enactment techniques, as described in chapter three. These interpretive methods are often coupled with the manipulation of costuming, props, speech, behaviour, lighting, and sound effects, as well as graphic imagery and smell pods, which are all rooted in performance theory (Bowman & Pezzullo, 2010). Examples of LDVAs that use these types of interpretive methods include Eden Camp – a living history museum of wartime Britain, Tallin Legends – an interactive and theatrical museum of medieval Estonia, and the London Dungeon – an interactive and theatrical tour of London’s dark history. Each of these experiences is considered an edutainment representation as they rely heavily on live acting and staged sets.



In addition to the above, other entertainment-driven interpretive methods are employed through advanced technologies and interaction. For example, at the Battle of Bannockburn Memorial and Museum in Scotland, visitors engage with wartimes past through AR and simulation technologies (Bowman & Pezzullo, 2010). Similarly, the Titanic Museum in Branson, Missouri (MO), utilises AR and simulation technologies to provide visitors with a personal, yet fun-centric, experience of the Titanic tragedy (Bowman & Pezzullo, 2010). Here, visitors are assigned an identity of a passenger and engage with costumed crew members, as well as the fictional character of Rose from the 1997 *Titanic* film (Gillespie, 2014). In addition, visitors are also made to feel as though they are experiencing the infamous sinking through sensation provoking technologies, including manipulated exhibits, as reflected in Figure 4.13, which reflect different stages of the ship sinking (Reeves-DeArmond, 2012).

**Figure 4.13. Titanic exhibit, Branson, MO**



(Reeves-DeArmond, 2012)

While LDVAs may appear shocking and tasteless to some, there is a deep connection between death and play in many cultures, which can be seen in New Orleans jazz funerals and Dia de los Muertos celebration (Branson Shows, 2019). Adding to this, the portrayal of horror, once managed and contained, has long been a staple of heritage and folk stories, and even recently a popular theme in film and television (Harlan, 2015). As a result, through media and cultural connections, postmodern society has become desensitised in many ways to the presentation of death (Bowman & Pezzullo,

2010). It is thus clear that LDVAs are often promoted within their local communities, and largely prompted by increased visitor interests in opportunities to re-live and engage with dark heritage (Hodgkinson, 2015).

While LDVAs maintain more frightening, thrilling, or innovative objectives to create a fun-centric experience, they are still promoting historically based content that visitors can learn from. Consequently, the production of an authentic and quality LDVA experience requires thorough research with a historical approach towards the interpretation process (Hodgkinson, 2015). Such recognition has led to academic debate relating to whether LDVAs are required to offer spaces for quiet reflection and commemoration, or if educational and/or edutainment agendas are a sufficient and/or appropriate experience (Dunkley, 2017; Hooper, 2017).

#### **4.6 DVA management challenges**

Evidently, there are distinct qualitative differences between DVAs, not only due to their varying inherent and organisational characteristics outlined by the darkness spectrum, but also their varying interpretation agendas. Despite this, DVAs share a commonality based on their dependence on society's fascination with death and the seemingly macabre (Ashworth & Tunbridge, 2017), as well as their management challenges relating to their inherently controversial nature (Hartmann, 2014).

DVA management is a complex and challenging practice, particularly considering there is no standard approach (Hartmann, 2014). This lack is largely due to the fact that DVAs by their very nature are prone to challenges concerning their content, given the complex tensions between commemorating dark heritage and exploitative agendas for tourism activities (Seaton, 2001). As a result, concerns about the commercialisation of dark heritage is not only reflected in literature, but also in practice. Some dark heritage practitioners censor commercialisation on moral grounds, as it represents profiteering from places that promote commemoration. However, in more capitalistic economies driven by market forces, the commercialisation of such places is necessary

(Seaton, 2009). Thus, an overarching debate relating to DVA management challenges is concerned with how DVAs should be managed.

Given that DVAs are a form of HVAs, they face similar management challenges that can also impact their interpretation outcomes. As discussed in chapter two, these management challenges can include managing access; maintenance and conservation concerns (Krisjanous, 2016); visitor management (Yuill, 2003); managing stakeholder roles and operational structures; and limited budgets (Dale & Robinson, 2011). However, due to their controversial nature, DVA interpretation is also challenged by tensions between ethical concerns and commercial needs (Heidelberg, 2014), balancing the complex relationship between authenticity and interpretation (Rodriguez-Garcia, 2012), and the selection and framing of particular versions of history (Magee & Gilmore, 2015). The literature suggests interpretation challenges are largely influenced by issues relating to the management of stakeholder roles, stakeholder interpretations of history, their interests relating to the content, and their underpinning ideologies that can impact interpretation outcomes (Bright, Alderman & Butler, 2016; Isaac & Cakmak, 2014).

#### ***4.6.1 The impact of stakeholder roles on interpretation management***

When developing interpretation designs DVA management teams are greatly influenced by the structure and inclusion of stakeholders. As discussed in chapter two relating to HVAs, stakeholders can include an array of interested parties, including: owners; attraction managers; the local community; tourists; specialists and consultants; attraction staff; and investors (Timothy & Boyd, 2006; Weidenfeld & Leask, 2013). Given that inequities are often reflected in stakeholder structures, a challenge discussed in chapter two, DVA management must be able to control the relationships between stakeholders in a way that each perspective is reflected in the interpretation design outcome (Seaton, 2009). Thus, the task becomes identifying relevant stakeholders and acknowledging their individual interests and perspectives. As outlined in chapter three, this may be done through consultation, before commencing plans for design, in an attempt to reconcile their positions from inception through to implementation and maintenance.

Identified in chapter two relating to HVA stakeholder structures, a DVA's owner (e.g. private, profit, government) is generally in control of its operational management (Butler, 2001). The literature has revealed that ownership is a significant influence on DVA interpretation and operational management (Butler, 2001). For example, privately owned DVAs do not generally retain the same bureaucratic limitations that can inhibit interpretation change and/or narrative alterations as found with government owned DVAs (Bright, et al., 2016). In many cases, a DVA's owner or management will facilitate and/or dictate the image of the site through interpretive decisions (Bright, et al., 2016), which will be intended to align with the image developed in private sector marketing (Seaton, 2009). However, as indicated in chapter three, there is a need to establish an interpretation management team of relevant stakeholders, thereby ensuring the reconciliation of all stakeholder interests.

Reconciling stakeholder interests is crucial for DVAs. This is particularly true for those reflecting content underpinned by social divisions, such as US southern plantations, whose interpretations could benefit from the consultation of representative subject groups for the assurance that the intended interpretation will be authentically appropriate and equally representative (Seaton, 2009). Similarly, Magee and Gilmore (2015) have commented on the benefits of reconciliation, suggesting some victims of past horrors are actually survivors, whose testimonies and power of influence can be highly beneficial for educational and commemorative agendas. More recently, Lennon and Weber (2017) discussed the inclusion of survivors and liberators in the development of narratives and the new design for Dachau, which likely allowed for a discussion of how the content should be represented in a morally and ethically appropriate way. In addition, reconciliation with the host community is crucial. While specific stakeholders (e.g. owners, investors) may have the best intentions in creating a space that promotes a commemorative or educational mission, the local community may not welcome the idea of their area being associated with spectacles of death and dark heritage, as identified with Soham, for example (Sengupta, 2002).

Adding to this, as discussed in chapters two and three, the literature advises that DVA management must consider their intended audience when developing interpretation. Given that DVAs are polysemic entities, they may appeal differently to different audiences who bring with them varying perspectives or personal connections to the content (Stone, 2018). Thus, DVA management is advised to conduct surveys and evaluative measures prior to, during, and after the visitor experience is designed (Seaton, 2009).

#### ***4.6.2 Managing ethical concerns and commercial operations***

In addition to managing stakeholder roles, the intrinsic nature of exploiting dark heritage through commercialisation, often challenges DVA management teams with the task of establishing a balance between remaining ethically sound and running a commercially viable operation (Sharpley & Stone, 2009). This is of particular concern given that interpreting dark heritage is a laborious task, encompassing the suffering of real people. Consequently, some argue that such stories should not be used for touristic purposes (Rodriguez Garcia, 2012).

Ethical concerns largely relate to the nature and purpose of a DVA and how content is interpreted in narratives and physical displays (Rodriguez-Garcia, 2012). These concerns are largely attributed to in-situ DVAs, which are often encumbered with matters of visitor access given they are original places of death and atrocity, thus requiring appropriate visitor management for the conservation of a site's physical integrity (Rodriguez-Garcia, 2012). Such concerns are further related to the conceptual integrity of a site. This raises questions regarding the appropriateness of visitor centres and dining areas, if visitors should be allowed to take photographs and record videos, and if visitors should refrain from laughing or smiling while on site (Lennon & Weber, 2017).

While many ethical concerns are directly related to visitor management issues at in-situ DVAs, a large proportion of them are related to their commercial tourism infrastructure promoted through touristic activities. In order to promote revenue generation, DVA management must employ contemporary tourism activities, as well as media solicitation and marketing campaigns (Seaton, 1996). In many instances, these commercialisation efforts are perceived as

immoral and a trivialisation of dark heritage. For example, the Titanic Museum in Branson, MO, while intended to educate audiences, does so through an entertainment agenda. Consequently, this experience may be perceived as immoral and contested, given the alleged looting of artefacts for display and the shorter temporal distance of the Titanic's sinking from the present day (Greshko, 2018). Similarly, the Tsunami Memorial in Thailand's Khao Lak Lamu National Park, has been highly controversial, due to arguments relating to the immorality of enabling of voyeuristic casual visitors to stand among those in mourning (Greshko, 2018).

What is more, DVA management is further challenged by the complex relationship between ethical concerns and commercial needs as it relates to coping with increasing competition within the wider tourism market. DVAs must employ unique experiences, which must work to stand out amongst competitors with similar themes, storylines, purposes, and nature (Greshko, 2018). In some instances, DVAs, such as the Yad Vashem Museum and the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, are using a triangulation of interpretation techniques through theming method of storytelling, thematic utilisation of architecture, innovative technologies, interactive engagement, and exhibition design in order to appeal to a vast array of visitors (Oren & Shani, 2012; Stone, 2005). Such interpretive strategies have been criticised in relation to their perceived trivialisation and 'Disneyfication' of dark heritage (Heidelberg, 2014). Heidelberg (2014) suggests theming and newer technologies can help to keep visitors from becoming overwhelmed with information. However, there are growing concerns relating to the use of sensory stimulation and overly-didactic interpretation within certain DVAs, as these strategies may be preventing meaning-making among audiences (Heidelberg, 2014).

#### ***4.6.3 Managing interpretation and authenticity***

In association with ethical concerns, when developing interpretation designs, DVA management teams must ensure a high level of authenticity and appropriateness, particularly when dealing with the histories of oppression and atrocity that have befallen a group of people, such as slavery and the Holocaust (Heidelberg, 2014). This is often a challenge as DVAs have been widely criticised for their management of interpretation and authenticity.

Highlighted in chapter two, interpretation is both the information conveyed and the methods used to present the information. However, for DVAs, interpretation takes on extra dimensions of emotive and provocative representations (Stone, 2011a). Thus, a key question for DVA interpretation management is related to what the particular responsibilities are in dealing with dark heritage for tourism purposes (Stone, 2011a).

DVA management is considerably challenged by the task of remaining accurate with the interpretation and presentation of certain content, as interpretation can lead to distortion (Austin, 2002). Such distortions, or dilution of historic truths, have been revealed as efforts to spare visitors from the strongest horrors of history (Alderman et al., 2016). For example, Colonial Williamsburg has been criticised for whitewashing the physical spaces through recurrent restoration projects and sanitising the narratives for more palatable versions of history, thereby advocating a Disney-inspired commercially aesthetic experience (Alderman et al., 2016). However, while some visitors may desire palatable versions of history, the literature suggests most visitors seek out more authentic representations (Mensah, 2015). Confirming this, Mensah's (2015) study of visitor perspectives of interpretation at Auschwitz, reveals that visitors are actually overwhelmingly interested in witnessing raw and authentic representations of past atrocities as an opportunity for identity building, catharsis, and reflection.

Given the ability to write or rewrite the history of people's lives and deaths (Sharpley, 2009), the literature suggests DVA management must find a socially acceptable way to link descriptions of horror to tourism activities without diminishing the truth (Ashworth, 2002). In doing so, DVA management must face the unpleasant nature of dark heritage and fully understand the underlying social divisions that continue to exist with reference to the event (Dwyer & Alderman, 2008). They must consider varying perceptions of the content held by relevant stakeholders (Dwyer & Alderman, 2008). They should also consider the benefits and dis-benefits of creating transformative experiences through either non-sensational or sensational interpretation designs (Frew, 2011; Rodriguez-Garcia, 2012).

While it is impossible and arguably unwise to recreate full characterisations of dark heritage, particularly within circumstances of shorter temporal distance, there is a greater pressure for DVA management to deal more directly with authentic representations (Alderman et al., 2016). Thus, more recently, DVA narratives are beginning to reveal the horrific truths within touristic retellings (Dwyer & Alderman, 2008). Yet, despite these efforts, authentic representations are often still contested and perceived as dissonant constructions that beg the question of how much of the truth is appropriate for recreations (Alderman et al., 2016). With this in mind, DVA management must acknowledge that the perception of authenticity will vary among audiences, and therefore should be viewed as a measurable quality based on the relationship between visitor needs and the nature of the DVA, which is then applied to a particular experience (Alderman et al., 2016).

Challenges in managing interpretation and authenticity are often further met with tension between commemoration and edutainment agendas, both of which promote some form of educational experience (Alderman et al., 2016). This challenge stems from the issue that DVA management has become tasked with delivering an experience that is both educational and entertaining, informative without being boring, and authentic without misrepresentation (Rodriguez-Garcia, 2012). Thus, many DVAs are finding it more challenging to sustain a profitable attraction without succumbing to the use of advanced technologies, re-enactment, and even capitalising on film associations (Oren & Shani, 2012).

DVA management is further challenged by the complex relationship between interpretation and authenticity as it relates to the originality of locations. For in-situ DVAs specifically, there is a challenge to conserve the authentic substance of the locations, with their original parts, objects, and natural settings, in order to preserve the evidence of past horrors and serve as a testament to overcoming and survival (Bowman & Pezzullo, 2010; Mathews, 2018; Oren & Shani, 2012). However, these locations are generally subject to change, as the identity of the original place will transform over time with growing temporal distance and the increasing commercial tourism infrastructure (Magee & Gilmore, 2015). For example, after ceasing in its original operations, Alcatraz



prison was later chosen, acquired, and developed for tourism purposes. It currently operates under an educational agenda with modest exhibitions and hand-held audio-guide technology. However, it has received criticisms for the overshadowing effect of commercial and entertainment values, which are argued to satisfy film-induced tourists, as opposed to presenting an authentic and accurate narrative of the site's significance (Sharpley, 2009).

Evidently, DVAs are greatly challenged by concerns about interpretation and how dark heritage is to be interpreted. While dealing with past horrors is a complicated task, the literature argues that the real issue underpinning challenges for managing interpretation and authenticity is misplaced management attention, which is focused on entertaining customers and providing a product that accommodates all audiences, as opposed to delivering accurate history (Rodriguez-Garcia, 2012).

#### **4.7 Progress in dark tourism research**

As is evident from this review, dark tourism is a phenomenon that, over the past century, has become widespread and diverse in both academia and practice (Rodriguez-Garcia, 2012). Emerging from late 20<sup>th</sup> century literature, dark tourism has developed into a distinct category within the tourism industry, where it is used as an analytical tool to promote academic discussion and test theory and interpretation in an effort to develop new ideas and tourism opportunities (Hooper, 2017).

As a distinct area of research (Hooper, 2017), dark tourism is conceptually rooted in contributions from an array of interdisciplinary fields (e.g. history, sociology, psychology, tourism) that have focused on society's relationship with death, cultural representations of mortality, and societal interests in dark travel (Stone, 2013). Dark tourism scholarship is thus characterised by differing perspectives on the social and cultural realities of dark tourism and presenting death and tragedy to audiences (Stone, 2013). Yet Jamal and Lelo (2011) have argued that the range of interdisciplinary contributions and paradigmatic divisions have caused research challenges and barriers to theory building in dark tourism.

Underpinning dark tourism research is a division between scholarly interests relating to supply and demand. Farmaki (2013) argues this division has impacted the development of a more holistic understanding for dark tourism experiences. As such, following Foley and Lennon's (1996b) conceptual development, the first decade of dark tourism research was focused on definitional progress (Foley & Lennon, 1997; Lennon & Foley, 2000) and producing guiding principles for DVA identification and classification (Dann, 1998; Seaton, 1996; Sharpley, 2005; Stone, 2006). However, the lack of agreement concerning these foundational issues led to scholarly criticisms that dark tourism research had become largely descriptive with a narrow perspective that focused on the diverse manifestations of DVAs, consequently avoiding necessary questions concerning dark tourism consumption and the management of DVA experiences (Biran & Hyde, 2013; Stone & Sharpley, 2008).

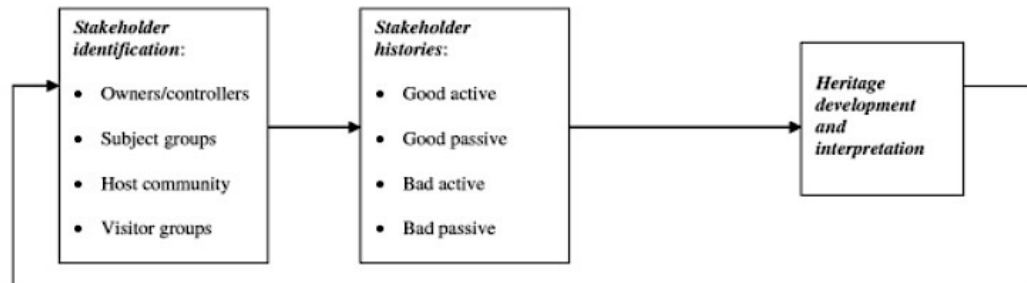
In an effort to move beyond foundational issues many scholars of the mid-2000s shifted their attention towards demand-driven research, with a heavy concentration on visitor motivations and interests for death-related travel (Light, 2000; Lisle, 2004; Preece & Price, 2005; Stone, 2005; Yuill, 2003). Much of this research was underpinned by Dann (1977) and Crompton's (1979) motivational theories, which, promoting a push/pull concept, suggested travel motivations are either pushed by psychological, internal needs or desires, or they are pulled by cultural or external influences relating to the VA. Drawing on these theories, dark tourism scholars identified DVA visitor motivations relating to *schadenfreude* (i.e. the pleasure of seeing others' misfortune); thanatopsis (i.e. the contemplation of death) (Seaton & Lennon, 2004); repentance; identity-building; understanding; enlightenment; (Dann, 2005); compassion; empathy; self-discovery; morbid curiosity; validation; special interest; and serendipitous excursions (Dunkley, 2007). Other motivations identified include emotional needs; empathy; social relationships; the recommendations of family or friends; personal or heritage connections with the event; group itineraries; and because the site is considered a 'must-see' attraction (Hughes, 2008; Thurnell-Read, 2009).

Much of the research in the mid-2000s reflects a partiality for developing dark tourism understanding through explorations of the darkest sites. These include, for example, Auschwitz (Miles, 2002; Tarlow, 2005; Thurnell-Read, 2009); Holocaust memorials (Ashworth, 2002; Clark, 2009); Rwanda (Robb, 2009) and Choeung Ek (Hughes, 2008; Williams, 2004). While few efforts had been made to explore LDVAs (see e.g. Bristow & Newman, 2004; Stone, 2009), the predominant focus on the darkest sites provided substantial information about visitor motivations, preferences and interests relating specifically to commemorative DVAs. However, what remained lacking were not only greater insight into LDVA experiences, but also how visitors engaged with LDVAs while on site. Thus, as dark tourism research progressed into the twenty-tens, scholars began exploring nuances in the visitor experience, including what visitors do, think, and feel during a DVA visit (Light, 2017a). However, this led some scholars to argue that dark tourism research had developed a good understanding of visitor motivations, preferences, and interests, and therefore it required greater attention on more detailed supply issues, including management, interpretation, presentation challenges, and operational structures of DVAs (Carter, 2016; Podoshen, 2013; Rodriguez-Garcia, 2012).

By this time, dark tourism research had already developed a solid foundation for supply research to progress, as scholars had already explored specific management problems of individual DVAs, including managing conservation and authenticity (Ashworth & Hartmann, 2005; Miles, 2002); visitor management (Ashworth, 2004; Shackley, 2001); and challenges in managing sensitive content (Seaton, 2009; Strange & Kempa, 2003). Additionally, some scholars explored the implications of commercialisation for authenticity (Sharpley & Stone, 2009); and ethical considerations for postmodern events (Wight, 2009). Emerging from this work, Sharpley (2009) noted the inequities of stakeholder roles in DVA management, specifically relating to narrative development, and subsequently developed a model of governance. As reflected in Figure 4.14, Sharpley's (2009) model, which was based on the continual, sequential process of stakeholder inclusion, negotiation and cooperation, suggested that in order to promote a more effective narrative

writing process, DVA management must recognise all relevant stakeholder feelings (good and bad).

**Figure 4.14. Sharpley's model of governance**



(Sharpley, 2009, p. 163)

This model was significant for the progress of research relating to DVA management, as it introduced a conversation concerning stakeholder characteristics and their influences on areas of DVA management relating to interpretation. While this model is built specifically for narrative writing, it may be used as the foundation for future developments that holistically guide interpretation management.

Dark tourism research of the mid-to-late twenty-tens expanded to enhance DVA understanding through more directed research into specific challenges of DVA management. This included challenges in managing and operating specific types of DVAs, such as ghost tours (Keller, 2010; Rodriguez-Garcia, 2012); managing varying stakeholder roles and needs (Heidelberg, 2014; Magee & Gilmore, 2015); retailing dark heritage (Brown, 2013; McKenzie, 2018); and marketing and promotion challenges for DVAs (Farmaki, 2013). From these efforts, a strong focus developed on the presentation of dark heritage and DVA interpretation. This included explorations into the relationship between visitor motivations and niche dark tourism experiences, such as film-induced DVAs (Mathews, 2018; Thurnell-Read, 2009). Additionally, scholars have explored the link between interpretation and society's fascination with horrific images (Clark, 2009; Minic, 2012; Vullings, 2015); and how interpretation allows for memorialisation, education and/or enjoyment, while providing a safe and socially sanctioned space to consume macabre topics (Stone, 2012).

In addition, scholars have also directed their attention to challenges related to the selection and development of specific interpretation methods. However, these appear largely focused on narrative development and the use of technology. For example, script writing and narrative delivery through guided tours or re-enactment performances (Alderman et al., 2016; Carter, 2016); myth-making through narrative development (Silverman, 2011; Spaul & Wilbert, 2017); and the use of advanced technologies and innovative approaches for interpretation (see Durao & Joao Carneiro, 2017; Han, Jung, & Gibson, 2014; Korstanje & George, 2018) have recently been featured in dark tourism literature. More recently, explorations have been made into how historical accuracy is turned into spectacle and sensation through interpretation (Cullen, 2017); how examples of fright tourism can be used to promote historical and cultural interests (Hovi, 2014; Ivanova & Light, 2017); and how commemoration is possible through storytelling and performance (Roberts, 2018).

Some of these more recent efforts have stemmed from studies undertaken at LDVAs (see e.g. Ivanova & Light, 2017; Emma McEvoy, 2016; Rodriguez Garcia, 2012). However, much of the research developed since the start of the twenty-tens has continued to give attention to the darkest DVAs. Reinforcing this, Ivanova and Light (2017a) have recently noted research still appears to overlook issues of fun, pleasure, and play within lighter dark tourism experiences. The reasoning underpinning this lack remains unclear. Yet, Ivanova and Light (2017a) suggest it may be that scholars perceive the darkest DVAs as more deserving of academic scrutiny, as they raise broader questions relating to commodification and authenticity when compared to edutainment based LDVAs.

#### **4.8 Conclusion**

Reflecting on the aforementioned, this chapter has provided a critical review of current literature relating to dark heritage, dark tourism, and DVAs. Through this, this chapter has explored the development and progress of dark heritage and dark tourism, which allowed for the proliferation and identification of themes relating to varying dark tourism experiences. This provided the necessary foundation to explore the vast realm of DVAs, including their role

and nature within dark tourism and the wider heritage tourism industry, allowing for a critical review of their interpretation, and of the management challenges that influence their interpretation developments. Finally, this chapter reviewed the progress of dark tourism research, which provided an analysis of scholarly recommendations for future research directions in the field.

From this review, it is evident that dark tourism and its associated DVAs are multifaceted subjects for study, both diverse in nature and complex in design and purpose. Because of this complexity, research and understanding has rapidly grown over a relatively short amount of time when compared to the larger field of heritage tourism. Yet, despite this progress and growth, DVA understanding, specially related to interpretation still appears lacking, with specific reference to the design of interpretation and the influences on interpretation developments and management at DVAs.

Only a few studies have explored topics related to DVA interpretation development. These include, for example: stakeholder participation in interpretation developments (Burström & Gelderblom, 2011); decisions for object placement (Bavidge, 2012); how managers perceive interpretation (Rodriguez-Garcia, 2012); how visitors can use technology to create a co-constructed experience (Staiff, 2014); and inclusion of guides in narrative developments (Benjamin & Alderman, 2017; Potter, 2016). However, there is still a need for greater exploration into the intentions, agendas, and interactions of DVA stakeholders involved with developing DVAs. This includes what challenges managers face in presenting and interpreting dark heritage, and how varying stakeholders are engaged during interpretation developments (Light, 2017).

Some scholars have attributed this lack to scholarly efforts that appear to have given greater attention to interpretive methods using individual case studies (Frost, 2017). However, Light (2017a) has argued this is more of an issue with researchers becoming reluctant to directly engage with DVA management and staff. Consequently, dark tourism research has become heavily reliant on observational methods for data collection relating to management and

operations understanding (Light, 2017a). Thus, there is a greater need for not only research into the nuances of developing interpretation, but also a need for new and innovative research approaches.

What is more, while the progress in dark tourism research has been significant, this review has shown that there is an inherent concern about edutainment agendas, and consequently LDVAs, which has resulted in on-going criticism of these experiences. However, the literature has suggested that LDVAs do promote some form of educational experience (Rodriguez-Garcia, 2012), despite their entertaining nature. Adding to this, as reflected in chapter three, edutainment agendas have been found to be an effective method for retaining visitors' attention and increasing learning opportunities through a more appealing experience (Timothy, 2016).

Since dark tourism research does appear to give preference to the darkest DVAs (Ivanova & Light, 2017), there is a clear need to advance the under-developed understanding of LDVAs. This need is even greater as, hitherto, LDVAs have been largely supported by research into ghost tours (see Gentry, 2007; Holloway, 2010; Rodriguez Garcia, 2012), the London Dungeons (see Ivanova & Light, 2017; McEvoy, 2016; Powell & Iankova, 2016a), and Jack the Ripper Tours (see Gray, 2018; Wilbert, 2016). By exploring LDVAs, dark tourism research can expand understanding relating to visitor interests in, the interpretation of, and management challenges associated with death-related events from the more distant past.

To conclude this chapter, the researcher argues that the progress of dark tourism research requires greater insight into DVA interpretation, specifically at LDVAs, and with an emphasis placed on the underpinning factors that influence interpretation design and management. Moreover, to break with research traditions of observation through singular case studies, the researcher argues that this insight would be best developed through an exploratory study of multiple LDVAs, utilising new and innovative interpretive data collection methods. Finally, through an evaluation of the literature, which lacks a standard approach for DVA interpretation management (Hartmann, 2013), the

researcher argues that a new framework is possible for DVA interpretation management by applying the interpretation models discussed in chapter three to DVA experiences in relation to their darkness intensities, as identified by Sharpley (2005) and Stone (2006).



## **CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The preceding chapters have reflected a gap in heritage tourism and dark tourism research relating to applied topics, such as interpretation design and management at LDVAs. Thus, for the purposes of this research, which explores the value-laden practice of interpretation design as it is applied within the social phenomenon of dark tourism, a qualitative research design was adopted for the primary fieldwork. This decision was arrived at through a review of methodologies and methods involving a triangulation of studies within heritage tourism, dark tourism, and interpretation research. This revealed that an interpretive, qualitative methodology, supported by qualitative methods was essential for fieldwork and the development of a theoretical understanding and knowledge of interpretation design, its significance, and practice within dark tourism.

This chapter provides a holistic framework of the overall research design that was used for the primary research conducted for this study, including its theoretical underpinning and the methods employed for data collection and analysis. The research design is then outlined, followed by a discussion of the metaphorically 'soft' research methods used to answer 'how' and 'why' questions relating to interpretation design and management at LDVAs, in order to better understand the influences associated with its design and management. The sampling process used to select both the LDVAs where data was collected and the interviewed participants is also reviewed, followed by a discussion of the methods selected for data collection and analysis. Finally, the limitations and challenges relating to the methodology and methods employed for this study are considered, including the measures taken to overcome them.

### **5.2 Philosophical perspectives**

The commencement of any study is based upon the determination of a researcher's ontological and epistemological perspectives. These help to establish a researcher's beliefs about reality, truth, and knowledge (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Referring to a researcher's view on the nature of reality (Guba &

Lincoln, 1994), the ontological perspective exists in either a singular 'real' form, or in multiple 'relative' realities based on social, cultural, institutional, and personal influences (Honderich, 2005). The epistemological perspective, however, refers to a researcher's belief of what counts as knowledge (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Killam, 2013) and the way of explaining how we know what we know (Crotty, 1998).

When discussing philosophical assumptions within heritage tourism and its varying forms, Jamal and Hill (2002) suggest reality is generally relative and based on a form of time. They argue within heritage tourism there exists a 'real historic time' supported by hard evidence, dates, and artefacts; a 'heritage time' that is socially constructed to produce something that promotes meaning; and a 'visitor time' based on the views of visitors having interpretive encounters (Jamal & Hill, 2002; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1997). Within these realities, knowledge and truth about heritage and heritage tourism are constructed through social circumstances and individual interpretations of those circumstances.

In the case of dark tourism, both concepts of dark heritage and death-related travel are socially mediated and manufactured. Since dark tourism allows visitors to experience death-related events without directly engaging with madness, criminality, sexuality, nature, and/or actual death, there is a clear connection between the reality of death consumption and the socio-cultural underpinnings of fear (Stone, 2010). This paradoxically explains why death-related travel has become so attractive (Korstanje, 2018; Stone, 2009). Thus, as a resource for identity building and meaning making, and further promoted by individual visitor needs and desires, knowledge and truth about dark heritage and dark tourism are also constructed through social circumstances and individual interpretations of those circumstances.

It is evident that dark tourism is a value-laden subject that exists in multiple forms and is open to individual interpretation. Reflected in chapter four, the interpretation of dark heritage and DVA interpretation practices are socially constructed, requiring the inclusion, negotiation, and cooperation of varying

stakeholders (Sharpley, 2009). This understanding is further supported in chapter three, where scholars have suggested the process in developing effective interpretation is socially negotiated, requiring the careful management of stakeholder roles and audience development (Black, 2005; Visocky-O'Grady & Visocky-O'Grady, 2017; Wells et al., 2016; Woodward, 2009). Thus, it is reasonable to argue under these circumstances and for the exploration of interpretation at LDVAs, this study is best supported philosophical perspectives that advocate reality exists in multiple forms and that knowledge about this reality is possible through individual interpretations of socially mediated and manufactured circumstances.

Yet, in order to assert the researcher's philosophical assumptions for this study, it must be noted that there appears to be a lack of universal agreement in literature concerning epistemological labels. For example, some scholars, including Constantino (2008) and Guba and Lincoln (1994) refer to epistemological perspectives as either objective (i.e. knowledge built through observation and experimentation), or subjective (i.e. knowledge created by people imposing meaning on objects). However, Crotty (1998) and Gray (2014) suggest epistemology may also be constructed (i.e. knowledge constructed from the subjective experience people have with the world and other people). Stemming from this, Blaikie (2007) and Maxwell (2011) have suggested a constructed perspective may take on one of two forms: constructivist (i.e. knowledge developed from an individual's cognitive process of applying meaning to something), or social constructionist (i.e. knowledge shared and collectively built between people).

Reflecting on these epistemological discussions, Maxwell (2011) provides some clarification, suggesting the various labels exist as a result of the paradigm wars in the 1980s in which researchers became paradigmatically divided as a result epistemological changes in the social sciences. With this in mind, and in consideration of the varying ways in which reality and truth exist within the context of heritage and dark tourism, the researcher maintains an ontological stance that assumes multiple realities exist because of varying social influences. Epistemologically, the researcher maintains a constructivist

perspective that assumes knowledge about reality is constructed individually through subjective experiences with the world and other people in it.

### **5.3 Selecting a theoretical perspective – Interpretivism**

Together, the philosophical perspectives underpin the nature of knowledge and the development of that knowledge within the perceived view of reality. These in turn influence the selection of a research paradigm (Wahyuni, 2012), which provides a framework for observation and understanding to construct a theoretical perspective of reality and knowledge (Babbie, 2008). There are four core paradigms most often cited in heritage tourism and dark tourism studies (e.g. positivism, post-positivism, critical theory, interpretivism).

Each of these core paradigms has contributed to the topics that underpin this study. However, positivism, through its scientific lens, has traditionally dominated heritage tourism studies, specifically that which is associated with research into migration trends and revenue generation (Decrop 1999; Riley & Love, 2000). This is because positivism relies on rigid, numerically based ‘quantitative’ measures that use mathematical and statistical analysis and hypotheses driven experimentation (Creswell, 2014) to produce objective, value-free generalisations that are the result of cause and effect situations (Crotty, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Drawing on positivist research agendas, post-positivism also appears frequent within tourism studies due to its quantitative measures for identifying patterns and establishing laws to explain events (Moon & Blackman, 2014). However, post-positivism differs from positivism along the lines of probability (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Although post-positivism recognises objectivity is ideal, it acknowledges that objectivity may not be fully possible given the value of context and human connection between researchers and participants (Ryan, 2006). This perspective helped to promote the advancement of more qualitative perspectives, including critical theory and interpretivism, which generally rely subjective, value-laden information (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

Unlike positivism and its scientific grounding, critical theory does not commit itself to any single form of research. Rather, it is more concerned with

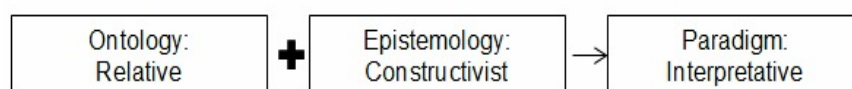
understanding and explaining why reality is the way it is by investigating causal relationships (Mingers, 2004). Anti-foundational and grounded in the notion of cause and effect (Crotty, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 1994), critical theory aims to unify facts and values through subjective historical realism, in which world truths are linked to societal ideologies (Scotland, 2012). Thus, critical theorists and their participants are interactively linked through the social circumstances that influence their lives (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Ormston et al., 2014). Therefore, for critical realists, reality and knowledge about reality are subjective and value-mediated.

This emphasis on subjective understanding is further identified with interpretivism. Under interpretivism, objectivity is not fully possible and knowledge is socially constructed and value-laden (Ryan, 2006; Schwandt, 2000). For interpretivists, reality is relative as it may differ from group to group, culture to culture, and generation to generation, depending on external variables and agencies, including time, location, politics, culture, and society (Holloway, Wheeler, & Holloway, 2002; Portac, Jones, & Nelson, 2014). Knowledge about this reality is built through personal interpretations of objects and situations (Matta, 2015). Thus, interpretivism fundamentally rejects the belief that reality and the social world can be examined and understood only through objective, scientific testing (Portac et al., 2014).

Interpretivism is generally supported by flexible, social based 'qualitative' techniques (Creswell, 2014) that yield insight and understanding of human behaviours and social situations (Scotland, 2012). It seeks to understand the context and uniqueness of social circumstances by observing experiences and interpreting the reasons or meanings within those experiences (Kelliher, 2011; Ormston et al, 2014). It has the ability to emphasise emotional aspects of heritage and culture, which in symbolic form, includes value-laden actions, meaning, experience, perceptions, beliefs and physical artefacts (MacCarthy & Willson, 2015). It is for this value-laden reason that interpretivism has become preferred within heritage and dark tourism studies.

For clarity, it should be noted that interpretivism is often used interchangeably with constructivism, which appears to stem from the lacking universal agreement of epistemological labels. Schwandt (1998) has suggested this issue arises from earlier efforts (e.g. Guba & Lincoln, 1994) that have blended interpretivism with constructivist epistemological insights. Maxwell (2011) suggests this issue is further exacerbated by the fact that epistemology is commonly used in a broader sense as a theoretical approach, as opposed to an underpinning philosophical assumption. Consequently, this issue has led some scholars to promote a constructivist/interpretative approach (see Hollinshead, 2006; Pernecky, 2012). On this matter, Schwandt (1998) suggests that while both interpretivism and constructivism encourage subjective first-person experiences, they are different ways of thinking, specifically because interpretivism seeks to objectify the experience through empirical analysis. Yet, Crotty (1998) suggests these two are not different ways of thinking, but rather constructivism is the epistemological perspective underpinning interpretivism. Under these circumstances and given the researcher's philosophical assumptions it was decided that, as reflected in Figure 5.1, an interpretative theoretical perspective is most appropriate to underpin this study.

**Figure 5.1. Theoretical perspective**



Interpretivism is best suited for this study, given its focus on the social activity of interpretation design and management within dark tourism experiences, which as reflected in chapter four, exist in multiple forms. Interpretivism will help to produce rich and value-laden information concerning influences on interpretation design and management at LDVAs. An interpretative perspective is further strengthened by the inability of post/positivist research to produce value-laden information required to formulate theory, given its scientific grounding. The need for value-laden information in dark tourism research has been recognised, as it predominantly explores visitor feelings, emotions and reflections relating to locations of death-related events, as well as the development of such experiences (Stone & Sharpley, 2008). Dark tourism

research requires an understanding of emotional human experiences underpinned by elements of human psychology (e.g. behaviours, emotions, interests, motivations) (Stone & Sharpley, 2008). Thus, scholars have suggested the future of dark tourism requires more research underpinned by interpretivism (Podoshen, et al., 2015).

Interpretative researchers seek to understand social situations by exploring their underlying context and reasons or meanings (Ormston, et al., 2014), which may be influenced by personal interpretations or political, cultural, and/or social factors (Matta, 2015; Portac et al., 2014). Such research requires a methodological perspective that allows for the clarification of concepts and real-life context (Valerie & Ritter, 2007). Thus, the following section discusses the methodological perspective that underpins this study.

#### **5.4 Qualitative methodological framework**

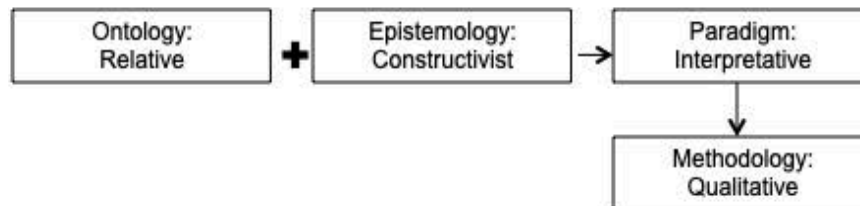
A theoretical perspective allows for the development of a methodological framework. Guided by a specific approach and supported by an orientation and purpose, the methodological framework is the logical structure for employing methods for data collection and analysis (Bryman, 2016; De Vaus, 2001).

Underpinning the methodological framework is a research approach. Whether quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods, a research approach is generally determined by the theoretical perspective. More scientific-based perspectives, such as positivism, require quantitative approaches that are dependent on large-scale sampling and science and/or mathematical-based data collecting methods to examine statistical information. However, more value-laden perspectives, such as interpretivism, require qualitative approaches that depend on language-based data collecting methods to empirically explore and interpret context-specific experiences. Yet, for some studies, such as those supported by critical realism, a mixed-method approach is required to use both quantitative and qualitative techniques.

Given the production of rich, value-laden data, interpretivist research is generally guided by a qualitative methodological framework. This involves

language-based data collection methods to empirically explore and interpret context-specific experiences (Ponterotto, 2005). As qualitative research generally aims to understand meanings which people attach to social actions, beliefs and values (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003), it is clear that this study, as reflected in Figure 5.2, is qualitative in nature.

**Figure 5.2. Methodological perspective**

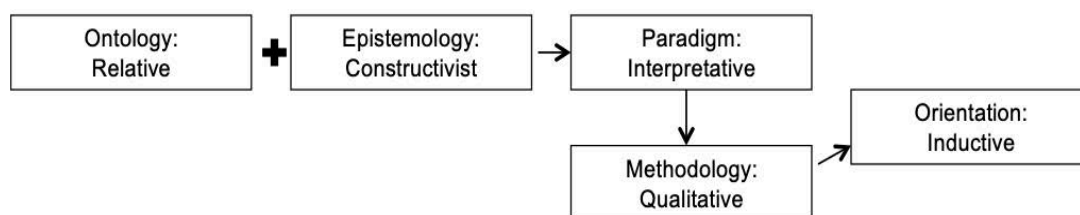


The key to developing a methodological framework is orientation. Quantitative research generally uses a deductive orientation to establish theory confirmation or rejection through controlled experiments (Morgan, 2014; Lew, 2011). However, qualitative research is generally an inductive, reflective process (Imenda, 2014; McAbee, Landis & Burke, 2017) that aims for theory generation and discovery through observation (Morgan, 2014; Lew, 2011). While both orientations are reflected in tourism literature, Rowlands (2005) suggests, qualitative interpretive research is generally guided by an inductive orientation.

An inductive orientation, as reflected in Figure 5.3, is believed key to this study. This is because inductive research disregards preconceived ideas, allowing the researcher to be more open to what is happening within the study, thereby becoming closer to the information collected and uncover facts for theory development (Connell & Lowe, 1997). This is of particular importance given this study aims to better understand the influences on interpretation design and management by exploring LDVA interpretation processes as they relate to the recommended planning and design steps discussed in chapter three (see Wells et al., 2016; Woodward, 2009).



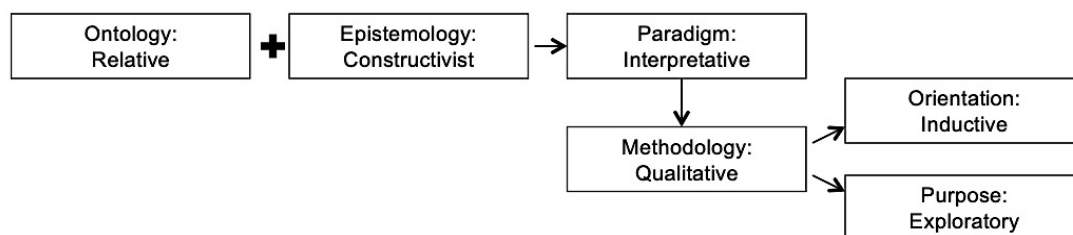
**Figure 5.3. Methodological orientation**



Developing a methodological framework for a study requires the identification of its research purpose, including how the research will be carried out (Shirish, 2013; Trochim, Donnelly, & Arora, 2016). A research purpose is used to help explore, describe, or explain a topic for the purpose of understanding it in depth (Nardi, 2014). Quantitative approaches are generally supported by an explanatory purpose, which seeks to explain causal relationships and predict future outcomes through sampling and statistical testing. However, qualitative interpretative research is generally supported by an exploratory purpose. Exploratory research does not seek to confirm or reject theory, but rather provide a foundation for further research based on revelations of the initial findings (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2007). An exploratory purpose is indicated for research areas, such as dark tourism, that lack sufficient information and understanding about a particular phenomenon, such as interpretation design practice (Gray, 2014).

The use of the exploratory research, which is characterised by its flexibility (Yin, 2014), has become increasingly advocated within the social sciences, particularly in new research areas of tourism (Mason et al., 2010) and heritage interpretation (Best & Phulgence, 2013; Chronis, 2012; Wight & Lennon, 2007). While exploratory research appears frequently in dark tourism literature of tourist behaviour, it rarely appears in the context of management and operations. Reflecting on this, an exploratory approach is used in this study to advance its use within dark tourism studies. An exploratory purpose will also allow for learning to take place about the influences on interpretation design and management within dark tourism without any explicit expectations.

**Figure 5.4. Methodological purpose**



An exploratory purpose is useful for this study as it will help to facilitate the understanding of the participants' roles within interpretation development, what meanings these participants give to their role and actions, and what interpretation issues might concern them (Engel & Schutt, 2014). Finally, an exploratory approach allows for the identification of how the models proposed by Wells et al. (2016), Woodward (2009) and Boyle's (2016), as discussed in chapter three, are applied within LDVA practice, establishing an understanding for how future research may apply design theory to dark tourism interpretation.

To this point, this chapter has outlined the methodological framework that underpins this study. Exploratory and inherently qualitative, this study is underpinned by an interpretative theoretical perspective that requires qualitative research methods for fieldwork, commencing with a sampling procedure. Thus, the following subsections will discuss the research methods selected to conduct the qualitative research through data collection and analysis.

### **5.5 Commencing research methods – Qualitative sampling**

Qualitative research methods for fieldwork identified as appropriate for this study, need a sampling procedure as it is rarely practical, efficient or ethical to study whole populations (Marshall, 1996). Given that this study is qualitative in nature, the LDVAs and participants were selected through a non-probability sampling method, which aims to deepen knowledge about samples by using characteristics of a sample population as the basis for selection (Riley, et al, 2014; Uprichard, 2013).

In qualitative research there are a variety of non-probability sampling strategies (e.g. random, stratified, cell, quota, theoretical), and several sourcing strategies (e.g. self-selection, snowballing, study advertising). These strategies are found within either purposive or convenience sampling approaches. Purposive sampling focuses on specific characteristics of the sample population. It aims to ensure that the relevant characteristics of the sample population are represented in the final sample. However, convenience sampling focuses on how convenient and readily available the sample is (Salkind, 2010). This includes accessibility, geographic proximity, availability, and willingness to participate (Etikan, et al, 2016).

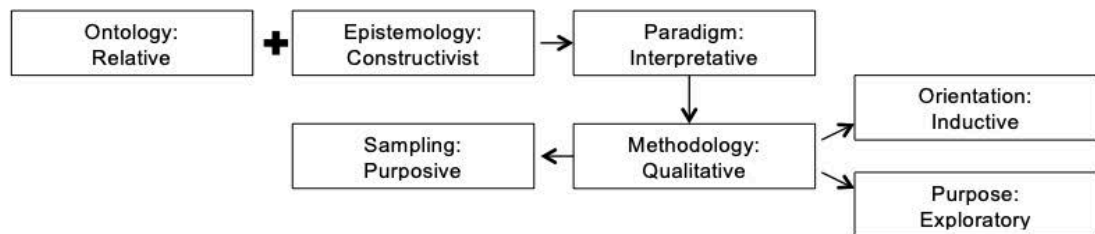
While both sampling processes contribute to qualitative research, purposive sampling is most often used in exploratory tourism research (Mason, et al, 2009; Williams & Soutar, 2000), and dark tourism research (Biran, et al, 2014; Yan, Kloeppel and Li, 2017). This preference is largely based on the fact that purposive sampling allows researchers to focus on exploring analytical concepts or themes (Smith, 2010). It is also a practical method for producing a wide range of rich-information through dense descriptions about a topic for study (Decrop, 2004; Patton, 2014).

Purposive sampling is further preferred in qualitative research because unlike probability sampling found in quantitative research, purposive sampling relies on the adequacy of data saturation, as opposed to sample sizes (Bowen, 2008; Guest, et al, 2006). Purposive sampling therefore ensures two principle aims: that all key and relevant aspects of the subject matter are covered; and enough diversity is included so the impact of the selection criteria can be fully explored (Ritchie, et al, 2014). These aims are guaranteed by knowledge of the study topic (Robinson, 2014), with only the most relevant criteria chosen, but also the ability to determine the extent to which additional samples are needed for increased transferability opportunities (Coyne, 1997; Etikan, et al, 2016; Patton, 2014).

With this in mind, purposive sampling, as reflected in Figure 5.5, is chosen as most appropriate for this study, allowing for greater diversity of potential LDVAs

for exploration of interpretation processes and aiding the identification of participants who are directly associated with interpretation design experience under investigation (Biran et al., 2014; Yan, Kloeppel, & Li, 2017).

**Figure 5.5. Sampling method**



### **5.5.1 Purposive sampling**

Often labelled ‘judgement sampling’ or ‘criteria-based sampling’, purposive sampling is a non-random method for ensuring that particular criteria of cases/participants within a sampling universe are represented in the final sample of a study (Robinson, 2014). It occurs in two phases: case selection and sourcing samples. In the first phase of case selection, purposive sampling is applied through one of four strategies: stratified, cell, quota, or theoretical. Stratified, cell, and quota strategies are each dependent on a required sample size, which is equally divided into distinct categories based on a set of criteria (Robinson, 2014). Unlike these, theoretical sampling is much more flexible as it involves the identification of cases based on criteria, which are then reviewed and supplemented with additional cases, as needed, to create a more adequate sample (Robinson, 2014).

Once cases have been identified, purposive sampling requires phase two, in which participants are sources for data collection. This is done through one of four sourcing strategies: self-selection, snowballing, study advertising, or incentive-driven. While snowballing comprises participant referrals of other potential participants, study advertising relies on print and media marketing for recruitment (Robinson, 2014). Both strategies are often paired with incentive-based sampling, which recruits participants through motivational rewards (Robinson, 2014). Unlike these strategies, self-selection sampling requires the

researcher to seek out participants based on a certain set of criteria (Robinson, 2014).

Purposive sampling is thought to be best applied in this research through a theoretical strategy for LDVA identification and self-selection sourcing for participant identification. This decision is largely because the selection of LDVAs was not dependent on a sample size required for data gathering but based on how adequately they represented the research gaps found in chapter four. The use of self-selection sourcing was based on this type of research, which requires the participation of specific individuals within each LDVA's organisational structure. As such, the selection of LDVAs and sourcing of participants are discussed in the following paragraphs.

### ***5.5.2 LDVA selection***

It was important that the purposive sampling criteria reflected LDVAs representation of historical tragedies from the more distant past; edutainment agendas; and the use of multiple interpretation methods, including re-enactment. These criteria help to address the research gaps identified in chapter four relating to LDVAs, their themes of tragedies in the more distant past, and edutainment agendas as an effective approach for promoting education and enjoyable experiences. Under the guidance of these criteria, numerous potential attractions were identified through Internet searches and reference to the literature review.

Reflecting on practical issues (e.g. time, funding, feasibility), it was decided to focus on attractions within the United Kingdom and Ireland. Following this, a short list of ten potential attractions was created. Each attraction was contacted by phone to determine who the point of contact would be to discuss the possibility of conducting primary research. Once a point of contact for each attraction was identified, an email was sent to that individual, introducing the researcher and presenting the enquiry, which outlined the nature of the study and what participation would entail. From this initial list, only two LDVAs agreed to participate: The Real Mary King's Close (RMKC) in Edinburgh, Scotland, and the Sick to Death Museum (S2D) in Chester, England.

Initially, the researcher found RMKC and S2D to have provided sufficient information to commence data analysis. However, upon initial reflection of the data collected, it was evident that the information obtained from RMKC was much more substantial than that of S2D due to the LDVAs' differences in size and time in operation. RMKC had been in operation under the ownership of Continuum Attractions since 2003, employing approximately sixty employees on average. However, S2D had only been in operation under the ownership of Big Heritage since 2016, employing six employees, four of which are of management level. It was decided that at least one more attraction was needed to not only obtain information that was more balanced, but also to produce a more adequate sample.

A second phase of purposive sampling using the previously set criteria was conducted to find a third attraction. However, a theme identified at both RMKC and S2D was added as a necessary criterion. This theme was of the plague – a biological disaster that swept across Europe from the mid-14<sup>th</sup> to the late-17<sup>th</sup> century (Platt, 2014). Dubbed 'the great mortality', this event is claimed to have killed more people than any other single known historical event (Beaumont, 2014). This disaster amounted to over 50 million people in the first few months of its 14<sup>th</sup> century arrival (Benedictow, 2005) and continued into the 17<sup>th</sup> century. With an estimated 50-65% morbidity rate and nearly 40% mortality rate (Byrne, 2012), the plague is exceeded only by WWII in terms of devastation, human suffering and loss of life (Kelly, 2006). Having identified the plague as a shared theme for these LDVAs, the researcher realised the plague is a vastly under-researched and overlooked topic in dark tourism literature when compared to other historical tragedies.

The researcher also realised that the imbalance of information between RMKC and S2D was due to their time in operation. Therefore, it was decided that the third LDVA needed to also reflect a criterion relating to its time in operation. A short list of five attractions was created and following initial contact, one attraction agreed to participate: The Gravedigger Ghost Tour (GGT) in Dublin, Ireland, which opened in 2012 under the dual ownership of Hidden Dublin Walks and Extreme Ireland. The following sub-sections will highlight the

contextual information for these three attractions, including how each attraction demonstrates the purposive criteria, and thus representing a range of LDVAs.

#### The Real Mary King's Close (RMKC)

RMKC is owned and operated under the banner of Continuum Attractions, a themed attraction enterprise established in 1984 from the merger of Heritage Projects, Ltd. – a heritage attraction company, and Past Forward – a heritage design business. Opened in 2003, RMKC is situated underneath the City Chambers adjacent the Royal Mile in Edinburgh, Scotland. Given its location, the physical site of RMKC is owned by the City Council and leased to Continuum Attractions for its operation as an HVA.

As an in-situ location, this LDVA, through an edutainment agenda, represents the social history of Edinburgh, specifically focusing on the harsh realities of life in Edinburgh's Closes in the 16<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Evident in the tour narrative and marketing campaigns, there is a particular focus on events surrounding the plague, which devastated Edinburgh in 1645. Within this storyline, groups of visitors are led on a guided tour by a period-inspired costumed actor. They are taken through a maze of Closes (i.e. narrow streets), houses, and workshops, which, once open to the sky, are now hidden, serving as the foundation for the new City Chambers and Royal Exchange buildings. On this tour, visitors learn about life on a Close, including the horrific truths of life with the plague, unpleasant living and sanitary conditions, murder, and political unrest. Here, visitors are educated and entertained by their character guide, set dressings and mannequins, animated portraits and aesthetic lighting.

#### Sick to Death (S2D)

S2D is owned and operated under the banner of Big Heritage, a heritage social enterprise that was established in 2011 with a focus on engaging museums, schools and communities with the past. Opened in 2016 as a pilot project, S2D is situated within the 14<sup>th</sup> century Water Tower Walls of Chester. Given its location, the physical site of S2D is owned by the City Council and leased to Big Heritage for its operation as an HVA. Since its opening, Big Heritage has been granted additional funding to expand this pilot project into a permanent

museum within a new and larger space owned by the City Council. This expansion (S2D2) is scheduled to open in 2019.

As a purposefully constructed attraction within a historic location, this LDVA represents the harsh realities of medieval life through an edutainment agenda in the style of a traditional museum. Visitors to this museum are self-guided through a two-story medieval tower, staged with static learning stations, period inspired props, text panels, and sensory stimulating exhibits. Here, visitors can engage with the history of the plague, disease, the body, medieval sanitation, and medicinal cures. On occasion, staff will engage with visitors by dressing as a plague doctor or monk while leading activities about medicinal cures for medieval illnesses. The expansion for S2D is expected to continue reflecting the harsh realities of medieval life in the form of a static museum exhibition. However, there will be a larger emphasis on human mortality and the concept of death, including changes in grieving and burial processes throughout history as they relate to Chester.

#### Gravedigger Ghost Tour (GGT)

GGT is owned and operated under the banner of Hidden Dublin Tours, a themed tour enterprise established in 2009 from the union of Hidden Dublin Walks– a walking heritage and ghost tour company, and Extreme Ireland– an excursion bus tour company. Started in 2012, GGT is a mobile bus tour that takes visitors to three notorious heritage sites in Dublin: St. Audeons Church, Kilmainham Jail and Bullys Acre, and Glasnevin Cemetery. While these locations are independently owned, they maintain an agreement with Hidden Dublin Tours for GGT to use them as a backdrop for storytelling.

As a purposefully constructed visitor attraction, this LDVA is formed around the concept of a mobile bus tour that promotes an edutainment agenda. Led by a costumed actor representing an anonymous plague victim, visitors are taken to notorious places around Dublin, where they are entertained by live performances and educated on macabre histories now turned to myth and legend, such as the Dolocher at Black Dog Prison and grave-robbers at the Glasnevin Cemetery. While on the bus traveling to each stop, visitors are



entertained and educated about the history of the plague, disease, and brutal public executions that took place in Dublin's 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Here, visitors are immersed in theatrical effects of set dressings, props, special effects, and lighting techniques, which contribute to the ghoulish, yet entertaining, atmosphere.

#### In summary

While the following chapter will discuss the design and management of interpretation at each of these LDVAs, it is clear that they each reflect the unique and relevant criteria identified in the sampling process. These attractions represent three distinct types of LDVAs: a character-led guided tour, a self-guided static museum, and a mobile bus tour. Despite this difference in tour design, they each share storylines and themes that discuss the harsh realities of medieval life and life with the plague in the 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. In addition, each attraction aims to educate and entertain visitors through an edutainment agenda, using a variety of interpretive methods. However, despite their shared characteristics, these attractions differ by their ownership type, location, purpose and selected interpretation methods.

The selection of these three LDVAs is beneficial for this research as they provide an opportunity for comparative considerations. This helps to expand the breadth of LDVA (and DVA) understanding, and responds to criticisms that dark tourism research is largely conducted through singular case study approaches (Frost, 2017). Moreover, as discussed in chapter four, there is a clear oversight of LDVAs in dark tourism research. This is especially true for LDVAs that depict dark heritage outwith London Dungeon, ghost tours, and Jack the Ripper Tours. As such, the use of RMKC, S2D, and GGT help to shed light on LDVAs and reminds the heritage and dark tourism academic community of historic tragedies that have hitherto been overlooked.

#### **5.5.3 Participant selection**

Participants were chosen through purposive sampling. For this study, it was decided that the participants needed to be directly involved with the design and management of interpretation, including planning, implementation and

maintenance. As the literature suggests (see Boyle, 2016; Potter, 2016; Roberts, 2015; Wells et al., 2016), interpretation developments are largely controlled by management or owners. Thus, the researcher decided the LDVAs' owners and managers involved with the interpretation designs were essential for this study. This included those involved with the planning and design developments, as well as those now responsible for the design's on-going management.

As reflected in Figure 5.6, the researcher determined managers were primarily responsible for each LDVAs' designs. Only RMKC and GGT involved designers, which the researcher also included. Moreover, as the literature advises that tour guides are charged with the responsibility of delivering interpretation designs and creating meaning for the visitor experience, the researcher further decided it was necessary to include the guides and/or staff of the LDVAs. The decision to focus on management and staff for data collection is a useful contribution to the literature, as scholars, including Frost (2017) and Light, (2017a) have argued that dark tourism research has become heavily reliant on observational methods for data collection due to a reluctance in directly engaging with DVA management and staff.

**Table 5.6. Participant sourcing**

<b>Site</b>	<b>Manager</b>	<b>Designer</b>	<b>Staff</b>
RMKC	5	1	10
S2D	3	0	2
GGT	1	2	3

At RMKC, five managers were identified as relevant participants given their role within development and on-going management of the interpretation. Three of these managers were involved with the initial planning and design for the interpretation, while the other two are now responsible for its on-going management. Additionally, the researcher identified and included the designer responsible for the development of the initial design. Similarly, at S2D, three managers were included as relevant participants. Two were responsible for the planning and design of the interpretation, while the third manager interviewed is now responsible the expansion project (S2D2). Unlike RMKC and S2D, GGT's

interpretation was planned and designed by one manager, who is also currently a designer and actor for the tour. The researcher also identified and included a second designer, who is also an actor for the tour. In addition, a third actor was included in the data collection for more insight into staff perspectives of the interpretation design.

The decision to include staff perspectives of the LDVAs' interpretation's design and management was found necessary upon reflection of the literature review, specifically evaluative processes of interpretation (see e.g. Potter, 2016; Waligo et al., 2013). This would enable the researcher to identify underlying issues with the design, as well as how those delivering the design perceive the management of it. It was earlier noted that RMKC is larger in size compared to S2D and GGT. Therefore, ten guides were included from RMKC, five of whom have been employed for more than two years and five under two years. The purpose of acknowledging time in employment was to ensure diversity and information adequacy. GGT actors and S2D staff were also included in the data collection. However, due to their smaller operations, S2D was only able to produce two staff members, while GGT, was able to produce three actors, two of which were also the creative designers. The methods employed to collect information from these participants are discussed in the following paragraphs.

## **5.6 Qualitative data collection methods**

Qualitative research generally requires soft, unstructured visual and verbal methods of data collection (Creswell, 2014; Mason, et al, 2010). Visual methods, sometimes referred to as 'textual data', relies on observation, written narratives, documents, film, photography, field-notes (Creswell, 2014; Cheia, 2010; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Flick, 2009; Richards & Munsters, 2010). These methods, which are generally applied in qualitative narratives or auto/ethnographic studies (Creswell, 2014), allow researchers to study the lives and experiences of individuals through materials produced by those individuals, such as written narratives, artwork, and artefacts (Flick, 2014). Verbal data collection methods, on the other hand, rely mainly on the spoken word (Flick, 2014), seeking to understand, at great depth, motivations, behaviour, and participant viewpoints (Cheia, 2010), or social processes of creating

knowledge, values, and opinions (Wyss et al., 2014). These methods, which include interviews, focus groups, or verbal narratives, are generally applied within the wider realm of qualitative research, specifically that which is underpinned by interpretivism (Guzman, 2012). Interviews and focus groups are usually the preferred data collection methods in heritage tourism (Ballantyne & Uzzell, 1999) and dark tourism research (Korstanje, 2017; Light, 2017; Wight, 2006).

Interviews are conducted in one of three formats: structured (i.e. participants are asked the same pre-determined questions in precisely the same manner); semi-structured (i.e. participants are asked the same questions with room for conversation and elaboration); or unstructured (i.e. participants are asked unplanned questions) (Johnston, 2010). Structured interviews assume an objective perspective with limited reflexive opportunities. However, both semi-structured and unstructured interviews assume a subjective perspective with more reflexivity (Jennings, 2005), allowing the researcher to elaborate on specific themes if necessary (Cheia, 2010) and develop rich descriptions.

Stemming from interviews, focus groups are based on a mediated discussion about a particular question or topic amongst a group of individuals (Flick, 2014). During focus groups, individuals are required to engage, listen to other viewpoints and reflect these views, resulting in individual responses becoming sharpened and refined on a deeper level (Finch, Lewis, & Turley, 2014). This method suggests researchers should refrain as much as possible from interjecting so as to avoid interruption and potential influence on the relayed information (Flick, 2014). In doing so, the aim of conducting focus groups is to allow researchers access to perceptions of a target population through a strategically designed series of discussions (Krueger and Casey, 2015; Pierce, 2015). This allows researchers to better explore complex social situations and human behaviour (Pierce, 2015).

Reflecting on the above and with consideration of this study's aim and objectives, verbal methods were thought to be most appropriate for data collection since verbal methods provide directed, reflective accounts of

participants (Patton, 2002). This allows participants to articulate meanings for the development of rich, in-depth information (Podoshen, Yan, Andrzejewski, Wallin, & Venkatesh, 2018).

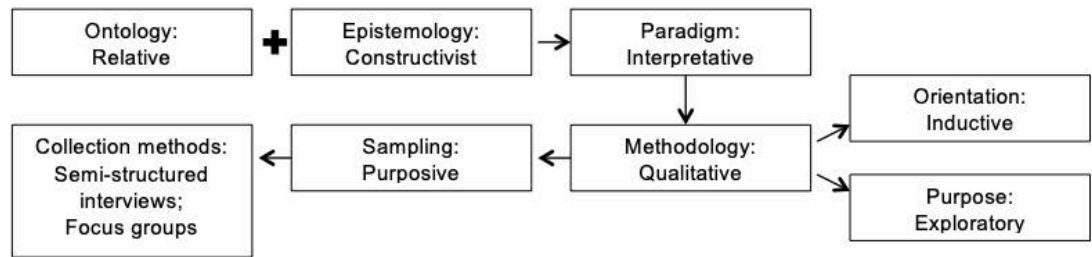
The interviews for this study were thought to be best applied using a semi-structured approach. This utilises a pre-determined set of questions, which can offer opportunities for replication, thus strengthening the reliability of findings (Cheia, 2010). In addition, semi-structured interviews are flexible, as new questions may develop from the interview process. This allows the researcher to explore emergent topics to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' meanings and reinforcing the validity of findings through rich, compelling data (Cheia, 2010).

As stated previously, recommendations for future dark tourism research have suggested utilising alternative forms of qualitative methods in order to shed new light on emergent topics within research (Light, 2017). Consequently, it was decided to explore different approaches to conducting focus groups, specifically 'soft system methodology' (SSM)– an organised, yet flexible, seven-step process of action research, dealing with situations that call for action to improve problems, particularly in social situations (Checkland & Poulter, 2006).

As this study is not a form of action research and did not seek to identify and define problems for resolution, it was recognised that the full SSM process was not suitable for this study. However, a key aspect of SSM is its use of 'rich picture building' (RPB), a data gathering method used in focus group sessions. RPB is useful for tapping into the subconscious of focus group participants (Kim-Keung Ho, 2015) through simplistic pictorial representations (as reflected in Figure 5.7) of situations within a structure as perceived by the participants. Using rich pictures (RPs) as a means to aid the thinking process is argued in the literature as a useful method to help participants express emotion, perceptions, and conflicted understandings about a topic through the belief that a picture is worth a thousand words (Bell & Morse, 2013; Kim-Keung Ho, 2015). As situation summaries, rich pictures are used to reveal feelings and opinions about real situations of issues, relationships, influences, causal



**Figure 5.8. Data Collection Methods**



### **5.6.1 Ethical considerations**

Once interviews and focus groups were chosen for data collection, ethical considerations had to be set out and cleared before fieldwork could take place. In accordance with Edinburgh Napier University's policies and procedures that govern research processes, the researcher observed the standards and code of practice for research integrity. Prior to commencing data collection, the researcher submitted an ethics application in June 2017, which was approved. Adhering to this application, the researcher was solely responsible for the collection and analysis of data (notes, audio recordings, transcriptions), which was in turn securely stored on the researcher's personal computer which is password protected.

Reviewing the ethical considerations for the participants, there were no identified vulnerability concerns, as the participant selection did not include school children, elderly, or disabled, nor did it include students or staff of Edinburgh Napier University in the research process. Moreover, confidentiality for all face-to-face interviews and focus groups was ensured as each were conducted on-site of the LDVAs and in closed-door offices. Three management participants requested Skype interviews due to scheduling conflicts, which were conducted and audio-recorded in a closed-door room of the researcher's home. Due to the nature of GGT as a mobile tour, interviews and the focus group were conducted at a local café, chosen by the participants. To ensure both noise management and confidentiality in this instance, the researcher requested a table positioned in a secluded area of the café.

Finally, all interview participants were given the interview questions prior to each interview for their preparation. Focus group participants were given an

explanation of the prompt to be used and intended procedure of RPB prior to the session. Prior to all interviews and focus groups, each participant was required to sign a consent form (see Appendix C) that stipulated what the study entails, what their participation would encompass (e.g. their rights as a participant to withdraw, request anonymity, retract statements, or defer answers). From this, participants were reassured anonymity through pseudonym application<sup>1</sup>. Through these measures, the researcher was able to ensure there was no possibility of harm to participants during the study or negative consequence of their participation, and thus was able to carry on with data collection and analysis.

### **5.6.2 Semi-structured interviews**

Through a semi-structured approach, the researcher interviewed the LDVAs' managers and designers using questions that were derived from the literature. Semi-structured interviews are considered beneficial as they allow researchers the ability to elaborate on the pre-defined questions with supplementary questions as needed on relevant topics or themes that emerge during the interview (Cheia, 2010). As reflected in Appendix D, these questions were based on the management challenges and issues that were identified in the literature review as an influence on interpretation and the visitor experience.

The main themes of the interview questions with managers and designers aimed to reveal:

- If and how stakeholder roles, experience and/or preferences influenced the LDVAs' interpretation designs and outcome
- If and how general management challenges influenced the interpretation planning and design
- How the theme or nature of the content influenced, if at all, the interpretation design
- Development of the design through production and installation
- Evaluation and on-going management measures to ensure the long-term effectiveness of the design
- Manager perceptions of LDVAs and the wider realm of dark tourism

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<sup>1</sup> Permission was given to use job titles at each LDVA.



The first set of questions was based on evidence from the literature review, that suggests stakeholders are impactful on attraction management and interpretation development. Relating specifically to managers and designers, such impacts include stakeholder roles (Todd et al., 2017); inclusion for interpretation developments (Potter, 2016; Waligo et al., 2013); personal interests (Pryor, 2015; Seaton, 2009); skills and expertise (Boyle, 2016; Wells et al., 2016); and experience designing interpretation (Roberts, 2015). Thus, the participants were asked questions relating to these impacts.

The second set of questions related to the planning process of the LDVAs' interpretation, which, as reflected in chapter three, is first necessary before design efforts can commence (see Wells et al., 2016). These questions were related to discussions within the literature review relating to considerations for attraction management and interpretation development. As reflected in chapters two and four, these considerations include budget limitations (Garrod & Fyall, 2000); conservation concerns (Pedersen, 2002); access limitations (Kossmann & de Jong, 2010); and visitor management issues (Moscardo, 2003; Moscardo & Ballantyne, 2008). In addition, as the literature suggests, theme and topic development (Wells et al., 2016), the intended message (Brochu, 2003), and the interpretation agenda (Timothy, 2018) also impact interpretation. Thus, the participants were asked to discuss these considerations in relation to their impact on the designs.

The planning related questions required further understanding for how the content impacted the interpretation. As the literature review revealed, managing authenticity (Magee & Gilmore, 2015) and ethical concerns can impact the outcome of interpretation efforts, specifically for LDVAs, which are often challenged with the task of establishing a balance between remaining ethically sound and running a commercially viable operation (Sharpley & Stone, 2009). Moreover, as reflected in chapter four, the literature has shown that interpretation can be impacted by the nature of the physical location (Leask, 2016); the nature of the content (Lennon & Weber, 2017); and selective decisions to alter sensitive information (Silverman, 2011). Thus, the third set of

questions was related to these concerns, which then allowed for greater discussion relating to the production of the planned design.

The fourth set of questions were related to the methods selected for delivering the interpretation. This included the production of aesthetic features, tour route, and narrative development, which are all considerations that have been discussed in chapters two and four, as being impactful on the interpretation outcome and visitor experience (see e.g. Mensah, 2015; Skipalis, 2012; Timothy, 2016; Weaver, 2011).

As the literature review has revealed that research relating to the on-going management of interpretation is under-developed, the fifth set of questions related to evaluation procedures, reinvestment, and any completed or planned expansions or adjustments for the design. These considerations are reflected in chapter three as vital for the long-term success and effectiveness of interpretation designs (Boyle, 2016; Reid, 2011; Wells et al., 2016).

In discussing the on-going management of the LDVAs' designs, the researcher was able to conclude the interviews with a final set of questions relating to the participants' perceptions of their LDVA as a form of dark tourism and how their attraction compares to similar attractions within the realm of dark tourism. These questions were asked in response to discussions in chapter four (see e.g. Tunbridge & Ashworth, 2017) concerning the relevance of dark tourism since most heritage may be considered dark to some degree. This allowed the researcher to better understand the perception of dark tourism among practitioners within the field and if that perception has impacted the overall interpretation design.

#### Interviews – Data gathering process

Data gathering through semi-structured interviews commenced in August 2017 and concluded in January 2018. As reflected in the above sampling section, participant numbers were not a focus for the researcher. Rather, the focus related to the participants' relevance in the design process, adequacy of

possible information, and acknowledgement of each DVA's size and time in existence.

Each interview with managers and designers lasted approximately 1 hour, with 15 minutes +/- in difference. Each interview was recorded on audio, which was then transcribed by the researcher for data analysis. In addition, the researcher took notes during the interview, highlighting key terms, names, or topics that the participants spoke about. Note taking is beneficial for both data gathering and analysis, as it helps researchers to formulate thoughts and new questions during interviews. This helps to provide early insight prior to transcriptions and offers easy reference to significant statements (Patton, 2002). At the end of each interview, the researcher gave the participants the opportunity to ask any questions, elaborate on anything discussed, or speak on any topic that was not covered. There were no questions asked, however, a few of the managers reiterated points they believed significant with regards to the design and purpose of their attraction.

As mentioned in the above, the use of multiple data gathering methods helps to support the reliability of findings. Accordingly, these interviews were supported by a series of focus group sessions at each LDVA. This allowed staff members who are actively involved in the delivery of the design to include their perceptions of the design and management of the interpretation. The following section therefore outlines the nature of focus groups in qualitative research and how this method was employed for this study.

### ***5.6.3 Focus groups – Rich picture building***

Focus groups with non-management staff were used in the data gathering process of this study, as this method also allows for rich descriptions. As reflected in chapters two and three, staff inclusion is essential for interpretation designs and their management. This is because staff, specifically guides, are the mediators of meaning and the interface between the attraction and its visitors, charged with the responsibility of promoting the interpretation (Bryon, 2012). Thus, the participation of these individuals was identified as both

relevant and necessary for a holistic understanding of the design and management of interpretation at LDVAs.

The focus groups commenced in September 2017 and concluded in January 2018. Similar to the semi-structured interviews, participant numbers for each focus group was not key; rather, it was adequacy of possible information and consideration for number of staff employed at each attraction. Accordingly, the researcher was able to conduct two focus groups at RMKC and one focus group at both S2D and GGT. Due to the size of each LDVA and the number of employees available, both focus groups at RMKC comprised five guides, while at S2D, the focus group consisted of two staff members and the GGT focus group consisted of three staff members, two of which are also the designers. Each focus group was structured in two steps: 1) RPB, and 2) a traditional focus group discussion, which together occurred within an approximate 1 – 1.5 hour scheduled timeframe.

#### Focus group step 1: Rich picture building

In the first step of each focus group session, the participants, who will remain anonymous, were given an introduction to RPB and examples of rich pictures (RPs) for familiarisation with the concept. Once comfortable with the RPB process, the groups were given practice sheets of A4 paper, coloured markers, and asked to individually consider the prompt: *What is your perception of the design and management of interpretation at your attraction?* The prompt was derived from the literature review, as reflected in chapter three, which has suggested that guides are constantly making judgments about how the interpretation design is working for audiences, and therefore they understand how to adapt it to meet the needs of varying audiences (Potter, 2016). Thus, they are able to provide first-hand perspectives on how interpretation methods are working for the visitor experience (Bryon, 2012).

Using the practice A4 paper and coloured markers, the participants were given 10 minutes to consider the prompt and then individually draw, in pictorial form, their personal perspectives and opinions about their attraction's interpretation design, how it is managed, challenges they feel are the result of the design,

and any solutions for overcoming those challenges. Following this, the participants were asked to come together as a group and were given 45 minutes to combine their individual drawings into a collaborative effort on A5 poster-sized paper using coloured markers. The researcher placed an audio recorder in the middle of the table to capture the verbal conversations of the group discussions. During this time, the participants discussed what they had individually drawn on their practice sheets and elected participant(s) with the better drawing abilities to capture their drawings collectively on the A5 poster paper. During this time, discussions about their individual drawings led to additional ideas and discussions that further contributed to the pictorial representations.

During this time, the researcher refrained from interrupting, to avoid influencing the discussion. At times, the group discussion of the drawings became off topic and no longer focused on the prompt, which required the researcher to ask: *How does this discussion contribute to the prompt?* Consequently, participants referred to the prompt and were either able to justify off-topic discussions or quickly change their discussion. During this time, the researcher also took notes of the conversations, highlighting key terms, names or topics, as well as observing body language, to help interpret non-verbal cues and potential meaning.

#### Focus group step 2: Discussion

The second step of the focus group was completed with a traditional focus group session where the researcher asked the participants what each drawing on the A5 poster paper represented and to discuss each drawing in relation to the prompt. As the literature suggests, providing the participants time to describe and discuss what they have drawn allows them to put forward their perspective of situations in a non-threatening way (Bell & Morse, 2013). These traditional focus group discussions occurred directly after the RPB sessions and lasted approximately 20 minutes. This allowed the participants to elaborate on what they drew as a group in reference to the prompt. The discussions of their drawing developed new ideas and topics, which were then added to the poster. As with the semi-structured interviews with the managers and

designers, the researcher transcribed the recorded focus group discussions for data analysis purposes, which, along with the pictorial representations and RPB observation notes, were analysed through thematic analysis, as reflected in the following.

### **5.7 Qualitative data analysis**

Data analysis involves the interpretation of information. This requires the researcher to make sense of what participants have said, looking for patterns and discrepancies in the responses and integrating responses of what others have said (Patton, 2002). It allows researchers to turn the rich and descriptive collected data into understandable and insightful knowledge (Liamputtong, 2009). In doing so, it is necessary to move toward a clear understanding of the study topic, determine what the appropriate data is and develop ideas about the significant findings in order to produce conceptual tools (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). However, in coming to this understanding and conceptual development, the data analysis process can be an iterative and time-consuming endeavour, as it is guided by a theoretical framework that evolves throughout a study (Suter, 2012). In support of this, Waters (2017) suggests a data analysis method is often emergent, following the nature of the data collected.

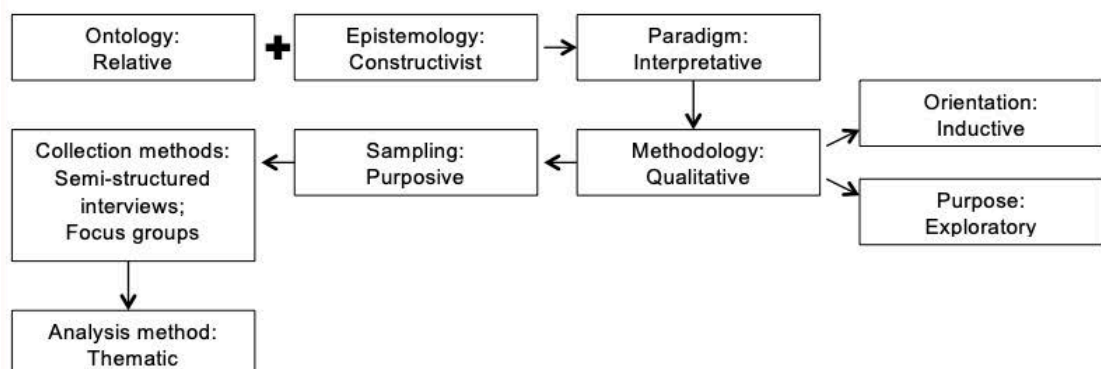
There are multiple data analysis methods that may be applied in qualitative research (e.g. content, thematic, semiotic, grounded theory, narrative, causal, Delphi) (Brotherton, 2008; Sandelowski, 2000). However, this research requires rich, descriptive data, which in turn requires an extraction of meaning, generally derived from coding or the creation of themes through words, symbols and metaphors (Suter, 2012). This type of analysis is referred to as thematic analysis (TA), which as an inductive set of procedures, moves beyond counting words and phrases (Guest, et al, 2012) to identify, analyse and interpret themes within collected qualitative data, in order to capture relevant and significant meaning in the data (Clarke & Braun, 2017).

Unlike other analysis methods that seek to generate theory, explain the actions of individuals, or require a form of statistical measures aligned with positivist thinking, TA is much more flexible, following an inductive, interpretative approach that allows for the interpretation of meaning from both transcribed

and visual data (Walters, 2016). TA's ability to uncover meaning from text is significant, particularly for studies with heritage and cultural themes (Hannam & Knox, 2005). While Walters (2016) suggests the use of TA in tourism studies is most often applied in an 'ad-hoc style', it can also be applied to visual text and in situations with linguistic ambiguity or subject to variations in representation, allowing for greater understanding of underpinning meanings.

TA, as reflected in Figure 5.9, was chosen for the data analysis this study, as it allows for open-coding with the aim to identify emergent themes (Hannam & Knox, 2005). It also allows for the analysis of both the recorded transcripts from the interviews and focus groups, as well as the RPs. Because TA does not prescribe theoretical assumptions of research questions, it is useful for a wide range of theoretical frameworks and can be used to address most qualitative research questions (Clarke & Braun, 2017). As such, TA has become a standard method for analysis in qualitative research (Walters, 2016), and is often preferred in tourism studies due to its reliance on interview transcripts (Ghaderi & Henderson, 2012; Mura & Sharif, 2017). Since the development of interpretation designs are understood to occur through the notion of 'it depends' (Black, 2005), the researcher further believed that TA would better allow for the discovery of meaning and reason underpinning the wide range of decisions and social contexts that influence an interpretation outcome.

**Figure 5.9. Data analysis method**



### **5.7.1 Thematic analysis**

Using TA, the steps are first to read and re-read transcribed recordings, taking notes and making initial observations about the data and potential avenues for

future research (Clarke & Braun, 2017). Then codes are generated for significant features deemed relevant to the more broad research topic guiding the study (Clarke & Braun, 2013). Finally these codes are clustered by patterns of semantic meaning or underlying concepts research (Clarke & Braun, 2017). As TA is a flexible and interpretative method (Walters, 2016), this process can be completed either manually, using highlighters and coloured markers, or by using a computer software program, such as NVIVO (Cain, 2017). This process leads to the identification of themes, which are then reviewed to check if they are justified by the data and can help to build theory (Clarke & Braun, 2013). Finally, researchers write up a narrative or descriptive report of the data in order to relay the thematic findings to the reader and contextualise the data in relation to the literature (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

In this study the researcher first transcribed the interview and focus group recordings, as reflected in Appendix E and F. The analysis of these transcriptions was carried out manually by analysing the transcriptions in relation to their corresponding LDVA. This decision to analyse the data by LDVA as opposed to the whole collection was due to the fact that each LDVA maintains a distinct purpose, thereby employing different methods for interpretation.

The decision to manually code for analysis was based on the attempted experience with the NVIVO software programme, which did not allow for the interpretation of meaning within the text. In addition, the researcher felt more comfortable with manual coding, despite its potential challenges of becoming tedious and time-consuming. Through manual coding, the researcher used coloured markers and highlighters to review the transcriptions from both the interviews and the focus group discussions line-by-line, breaking the data down to produce in-vivo codes from the wording that the participants used in the interviews and focus groups. Using line-by-line coding, the researcher was able to look for patterns by annotating key extracts, which were in turn used to build concepts and categories that reflected themes drawn from the literature review. As each interview participant was asked the same questions and the focus groups were given the same prompt, the researcher could identify comparable



information, contradictions, and discrepancies that were then considered in the analysis review. While the data collected at each LDVA was analysed separately, the researcher was able to identify high-level themes across the entire data set.

The subsequent analysis of the RPs from the focus group sessions followed Bell and Morse's (2013) suggestion in applying Carney's (1994) seven-step process for critiquing art, as reflected in Appendix G. This allowed for the exploration and interpretation of the content and context of the RPs, to develop a better understanding of the staff perceptions of their attraction's interpretation design and management. To start this process, the researcher first noted the context of each RP and then the content, including the colours, shapes and symbols used throughout each poster. The posters were then each split into four quadrants, allowing for a more detailed analysis of the descriptive features within each quadrant of each poster. The dominant features of each poster were identified by their larger size or bolder colours in comparison to other pictures on the posters. These dominant features were significant as they were generally tied to key concerns of the group relating to their LDVA's interpretation.

In terms of the overall content of the RPs, the researcher analysed the meaning of the pictures by interpreting the pictures in basic form. This analysis revealed that the RPs were not narrowly focused, but rather each encompassed numerous topics within the LDVA's businesses that impact or are impacted by the interpretation design and its management. These topics included, for example, visitor services, staff morale, cleaning and upkeep, and facilities. Drawing on this analysis, the researcher then reviewed the RPs through high-level interpretation, which helped to identify specific points being made by the groups, such as communication issues, frustrations, and ideas for resolving specific interpretation issues. Finally, the RP analysis was concluded with a final review of each poster and the overall sense of its value and quality for drawing out rich information for this study. It was concluded that the posters provided the focus groups with a way to express their personal and collaborative opinions and feelings of their LDVA's interpretation design and

management, which in turn resulted in ideas for improvements. Following the RP analysis, the researcher cross-examined the findings, as reflected in Appendix H, for example, with the transcription analysis of the discussions to ensure the researcher's RP analysis was precise.

### **5.8 Challenges and limitations**

This chapter has thus far discussed the theoretical and methodological perspectives that underpin the procedures for data collection and analysis methods, and the methods for data collection and analysis that were used for this study. It has been established that this study is an exploratory interpretative study, and as such employs qualitative methods for data collection and analysis. The limitations and challenges of this study's research design and methods need to be considered, as well as the actions taken to manage these concerns.

There are many views on the value of qualitative versus quantitative research. First, qualitative research, although widely accepted in the social sciences, is still hampered by positivists who argue it lacks scientific rigour and short-hand techniques, and is limited to the presentation of personal accounts (Brüggemann & Parpinelli, 2008). However, qualitative research is valuable as it produces insight into the underpinning influences for actions, problems or processes within a social context, of which the statistical nature of quantitative research is not capable of producing (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). Similarly inductive, exploratory research has been criticised for producing work that cannot be deductively or conclusively confirmed, and is therefore argued unpredictable and unguaranteed for pure knowledge (Bendassolli, 2013). However, Eisenhardt, Graebner and Sonenshein (2016) suggest this type of research is necessary for complex social situations that are difficult to measure, as it helps to examine and draw understanding to grand challenges.

Qualitative exploratory research that is guided by interpretivism is also often challenged by criticisms that claim it suffers from its priority to personal and social elements over the natural world (Osborne, 1996) and its denial that reality is not just perceived and interpreted, but also lived and physically

experienced (Rickly-Boyd, 2012). Yet, interpretivists affirm that knowledge is an adaptive process, in which individuals make sense of the world cognitively through their own personal and subjective experiences or interpretations (Karagiorgi & Symeou, 2005).

Adding to this, purposive sampling has been criticised for producing samples that are not randomly selected and that as the selection criteria may not apply to the whole population, generalisations from the data are much less reliable (Riley, et al, 2000). Purposive sampling can also be limited by the differing perceptions between researchers of what criteria ought to be considered important, resulting in it being used most often for small sample sizes and bounded within a particular geographic region (Lavrakas, 2008). However, as Decrop (2004) suggests, purposive sampling enables transferability through the dense descriptions composed from the data collected, which allows other researchers to appraise the findings and transfer them to other settings. Thus, while generalisations may not be possible in each instance of non-probability sampling, transferability is possible, which further enhances the study's credibility and validity of findings (Hannam & Knox, 2005).

In employing purposive sampling for this study, numerous sample representatives were identified, including attractions in Estonia, Italy, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States. However, due to funding, time, and geographic location, the initial list of possible sites, as earlier mentioned, was limited specifically to the United Kingdom and Ireland. While this challenge may be perceived as a limitation, it has provided evidence of other LDVAs within the purposive sampling criteria that may be beneficial for future research.

Also semi-structured interviews, while able to produce rich, descriptive information, are acknowledged to be time consuming for arranging, conducting, and transcribing interviews (Deery, Jago, & Fredline, 2012) and it is important for researchers to be aware of challenges that can arise during interviews. For example, the atmosphere and characteristics of the interviews may unintentionally influence participant responses; participants may answer questions in an irrelevant manner; or participants may not share the same

meaning of terms used by the researcher (Bryman & Bell, 2015). These challenges can be countered with reflexivity and adaptability. In this instance for this study, unclear questions were revised to allow for the interviewee's understanding. Bryman and Bell (2015) further suggest that to avoid interview challenges, researchers should avoid ambiguous and technical terms, avoid double-barrelled questions that actually ask two questions and ensure questions are specific and not leading.

The usefulness of focus groups can also be limited by the controlled number of questions that can be addressed, taking notes during the session while mediating, time and arrangement of the focus group session and the uncertainty of participant dynamics (Flick, 2014). In general, to overcome challenges, Flick (2014) suggests researchers should remain objective, mediating the group discussion with a sense of flexibility, empathy, persuasiveness and good listening. In doing so, researchers should have the ability to probe for fuller responses, acknowledge non-verbal language, address not force exploration into an emergent issue or topic brought up in the discussion that could be illuminated (Finch et al., 2014). Drawing on this, and as earlier mentioned, the researcher did not interrupt during the focus group sessions in order not to bias the discussion, except in instances where the discussion no longer focused on the given prompt.

The use of RPB can be challenging if participants struggle with drawing their views in pictorial form and become reluctant to fully participate. It is the role of the researcher, as moderator, to reassure the participants that the drawings are only representations of their perspectives and are not reflective of their artistic ability (Lewis, 1992). Where verbal discussions overshadowed drawing, the researcher asked the participants: *How might you draw this discussion in pictorial form?* It was observed that while this often led to a tangential discussion about how to draw the specific discussion, it also provided a platform for emergent thoughts concerning the initial discussion to emerge. The traditional focus group discussion of the RPs that ended the session allowed the participants to describe what each symbol and picture meant.

Finally, the pursuit to uncover rich, in-depth information, through thematic data analysis can be challenging. It can be labour intensive with frequent data overload, and it is often challenged by time demands, the adequacy of sampling, as well as the generalisation and credibility of the findings (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). When compared to other data analysis techniques, TA is often found more time consuming due to the coding procedures of rich, in-depth data (Hannam & Knox, 2005). However, the validity and credibility of this method is found within the reflexivity of the researcher and ability to make the analysis as transparent as possible (Hannam & Knox, 2005).

Upon reflection of the challenges and limitations relating to the methodology and methods for this study, and reviewing the recommendations for managing these issues, the necessary steps were taken to ensure the validity of this study through measures that ensure credibility, dependability, transferability (CDT) were met. This was done by ensuring the interpretation of the information adequately reflected the participants' original views (Anney, 2014). Also the research questions, interpretations, and findings are all rooted in the study's context, which are traceable to their sources (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Sufficient contextual information about the cases used in the study was provided to enable the reader the opportunity to transfer inferences (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Shenton, 2004). Finally, the data collection process was sufficiently transparent to ensure the interpretation of the findings and research recommendations are supported by the information obtained from participants (Anney, 2014).

In achieving CDT, the researcher employed reflexivity, which is an important tool in qualitative research. Reflexive journals were used to document the research process, including ideas, reminders, notes, and plans, allowing for assessment of bias introduced into the research process. In addition, as Anney (2014) recommends, all raw data was kept for audit purposes, including the original audio recordings and transcriptions, notes, documents collected, and rich picture drawings, all of which are further discussed in the following chapter.

Triangulation of the data was also used (i.e. cross-examination measures taken to verify findings), made possible by using different research methods including semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and rich picture building. Moreover, the researcher was able to use different sources for information to further aid the triangulation of data, which included varying levels of staff and management at each site. Purposive sampling ensured the selection of sites adequately reflected the study's purposes and the participants were particularly knowledgeable of the topic under investigation (Anney, 2014). In doing so, this sampling method allowed the researcher to justify the choices made for site selection and participant inclusion, allowing for the provision of rich findings. These methods and participants will be further discussed in the following chapter.

Finally, the researcher engaged in peer debriefing, which provided an opportunity to test ideas and become exposed to new questions (Anney, 2014). Through the participation of relevant conferences, supervisory meetings and cohort discussions, the researcher was able to gain feedback on developing insights to improve the quality of the study and findings. Through these interactions, the progress of the study was discussed with field experts and doctoral students conducting qualitative research, which provided alternative perspectives and contributed to the researcher's reflexivity.

## **5.9 Conclusions**

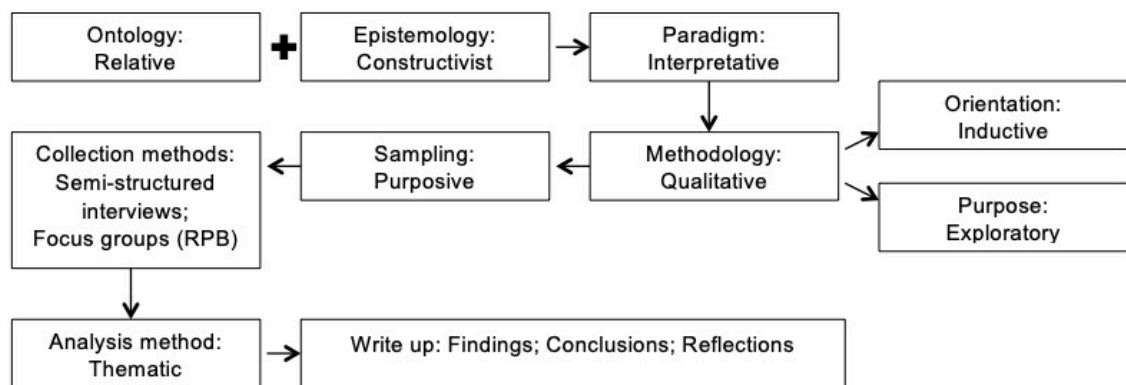
This chapter has introduced interpretivism as the theoretical perspective that guides this study, in turn leading to qualitative data collection. Justification for the methodological framework was also provided.

The research design was outlined as an inductive, exploratory study. Given the experiential nature of dark tourism and the lack of research relating to interpretation design, the exploratory purpose is deemed necessary for developing research in this area. The limitations and challenges of the approach have been acknowledged and countered with arguments and recommendations, as supported by the literature. The usefulness and value of qualitative research employed through an inductive, exploratory study that is guided by interpretivism and underpinned by relative and constructive

assumptions in developing rich data and understanding of heritage tourism subjects, including interpretation and dark tourism has been discussed.

The selected methods for data collection and analysis in a staged process have been described and the preparation, development, and review phases undertaken to complete the fieldwork for this study have been outlined. As reflected in Figure 5.10, these phases have been applied to the research design framework in order to provide a whole and complete framework for this study.

**Figure 5.10. Research design**



Given the exploratory nature of this study and the lack of research concerning the criteria identified from the literature review, the methods chosen and discussed in this chapter are best suited for producing rich, in-depth information about the influences on the design and management of interpretation at different, but inherently similar LDVAs. While the limitations and challenges purported for each of the methods discussed have been acknowledged, the researcher has provided resolution measures for each as recommended in the literature. Subsequently, this chapter has demonstrated the usefulness and value of the selected methods for sampling, data collection, and analysis, by which they collectively offer interpretative inductive research that has produced knowledge and understanding of influences on interpretation design and management at LDVAs, thereby enhancing the wider realm of dark tourism, and subsequently, heritage tourism, studies. To conclude, the following chapter discusses the findings derived from these methods, as they have been employed through the methodological approach discussed in this chapter.

## CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter helps to support the aim of this thesis, which is to critically evaluate the influences on interpretation design and management at LDVAs. In doing so, this chapter addresses the second and third objectives of this research, which were related to the primary research:

- Empirically evaluate the influences on interpretation design and management through a comparison of management challenges at LDVAs
- Explore and identify relationships between the influences on interpretation design and develop an understanding of their impact on interpretation design and management at LDVAs

This chapter, through a presentation and discussion of the findings, provides a greater understanding of the influences on interpretation design and management at LDVAs, as they relate to HVA and DVA management challenges and issues discussed in the literature review. It also discusses the relationships between those influences, and how those relationships impact LDVA interpretation design and management.

The findings discussed in this chapter reveal a number of influences on LDVA interpretation design and management, both general and related to the controversial nature of dark tourism, with core influences relating to: the management of stakeholder roles; experience developing interpretation designs; budget restrictions; access, spatial limitations, and conservation issues; edutainment and selecting interpretation methods; and managing ethical concerns and authenticity. This chapter also discusses conflicting interests and communication issues between stakeholders, which have been revealed as underpinning issues of each management challenge, further influencing the design and management of interpretation at the LDVAs.

The findings also point to the influence of dark heritage and its perceived degree of darkness on the LDVAs' interpretation designs and management,



particularly related to ethical concerns and authenticity in packaging dark heritage for tourism purposes. Still, the LDVAs are each privately owned, and therefore require revenue generation for long-term sustainability. Thus, they each referred to commercial interests as a key influence on their interpretation designs.

However, the predominant feeling expressed by the LDVAs' staff was concern relating to the importance given to commercial interests, and consequently, the adverse impact on the quality of the interpretation through the on-going management activities. The typical comments made by the staff highlighted an importance for reinvestment to improve underdeveloped or dilapidated areas of the tours. However, the findings revealed varying influences that have prevented reinvestment opportunities for the LDVAs, including limitations of funding and time, as well as the perceived need for design changes. These findings further revealed communication issues between the LDVAs' management and staff, not only indicating feelings of disempowerment and frustrations among staff, but also revealing operational issues underpinning the management of the LDVAs. Nevertheless, as discussed in the literature review, the findings showed that staff could play an important role in interpretation management through their critical assessments of the interpretation and its effectiveness for the visitor experience.

## **6.2 Management challenges influencing LDVA designs**

HVA and DVA management challenges were revealed in the findings as significant influences on the design and management of the LDVAs' interpretations. This finding supports the literature, which, explored in chapters two and four, revealed a number of challenges that have the ability to influence the design and management of interpretation. These include: managing stakeholder roles; experience developing interpretation designs; revenue generation and budget restrictions; access and conservation concerns; and managing the complex relationship between interpretation and authenticity for the visitor experience (Kennedy & Sawyer, 2005; Pedersen, 2002). However, the findings also revealed stakeholder inclusion and experience in designing interpretation influenced the LDVAs' interpretation design and management, which further supports Potter (2016) and Roberts' (2015) arguments discussed

in chapter three. In addition, the findings revealed that the selection of interpretation agendas and methods were highly influential on the outcome of the LDVAs' interpretation designs. This also supports discussions of Carnegie and McCabe (2008), Silverman (2011) and Timothy and Boyd (2003), in chapter three, about how the selection of interpretation agendas are often challenged by concerns for appropriateness and authenticity.

Finally, the findings revealed that evaluation procedures are minimally conducted, and communication issues exist between the LDVAs' management and staff, which, because of conflicting interests, influences the on-going management of interpretation designs. This supports the literature, which, as reflected in chapter two and three (see Bright, et al., 2016; Isaac & Cakmak, 2014; Leask, et al., 2002; Wells, et al., 2016), suggests conflicting interests among stakeholders often underpin management challenges relating to interpretation design. In order to gain a better understanding of the influences that impact LDVA interpretation design and management, the findings on the management challenges and how they influenced the LDVAs' interpretation are discussed in the following sub-sections.

### ***6.2.1 Managing stakeholder roles and inclusion issues***

The stakeholders considered here are owners/managers, designers, staff and visitors. The findings revealed that the LDVAs' designs are largely controlled by their management. For example, RMKC's interpretation was largely planned and designed by CA's executive team (e.g. CEO, Director of Attractions, IT Manager), while the interpretation's on-going management is currently controlled by the General Manager and Guiding Manager. Similarly, in terms of design, S2D's interpretation was designed and is also currently managed by BH's Director and Head of Operations, while its expansion project (S2D2), has been designed and managed by BH's Project Manager. In contrast, GGT is unique, as the Tour Manager was primarily responsible for the design development. However, he is also one of actors on the tour. The findings also revealed that two other actors, who participated in the focus group, were also involved in the design development. Thus, GGT's design could be considered as a combination of manager-led and staff-led.

Management control over interpretation designs has been reflected in chapter three, where Roberts (2015) has argued that interpretation developments are largely controlled by HVA and DVA management. Yet Roberts (2015) goes on to suggest that manager-led interpretation design projects can result in ineffective visitor experiences due to management's, often, inexperience with designing interpretation. However, the findings did not expose the LDVAs' as having ineffective visitor experiences because of their manager-led designs. Rather, the findings revealed each LDVA has been operating successfully since their openings. Still, a series of management challenges were revealed because of the LDVAs' management control, which, as discussed in the following sub-sections, are largely concerned with conflicting stakeholder interests and communications issues.

The findings also revealed designer inclusion as an influence on the LDVAs' designs. Designer inclusion was revealed at both RMKC and GGT, which had a positive impact on both designs. For GGT specifically, the Tour Manager was also the designer. S2D, however, did not include a designer due to budget restrictions, as discussed in section 6.2.3. Consequently, S2D's interpretation was designed and managed by BH's Head of Operations. Because of lacking designer input, the findings revealed S2D faced several challenges relating to their interpretation development, which could perhaps have been prevented if they had access to an interpretation design model to guide the interpretation process. As a result, these findings support the arguments made in chapter three by Black (2005) and Roberts (2015) that designers are essential for interpretation development, as they are trained to recognise unrealistic plans or potential ideas that may be hindered by constraints of time, space, limited resources, or budget.

The interviews with BH's managers revealed that because of the absence of a trained designer, S2D did not follow the recommended steps outlined in Wells et al., (2016) and Woodward's (2009) models discussed in chapter three. Rather, the Head of Operations explained:

We are a very small team, so we tend to do things that a) we are not trained to do, and b) we have never done before. That doesn't mean that we don't do them well, it just means that we do things in a non-traditional way. So, things land on my table and it's like 'have a go' and hopefully it will work.

(S2D, Head of Operations, 2017)

Yet the findings revealed that while both RMKC and GGT had designers within their interpretation developments, neither LDVA followed the recommended steps outlined in Wells, et al., (2016) and Woodward's (2009) models. Rather, they both appear to have undertaken an ad-hoc approach to designing their interpretation. This reinforces Black (2005) and Reid's (2011) arguments from chapter three that interpretation design is largely based on the notion of 'it depends', as there is no standard approach to interpretation design.

The interviews with the LDVAs' managers further revealed that additional stakeholders were involved in design developments as specialists. Specialist inclusion was revealed to have been influenced by a variety of factors, including relevance and budget, which, as discussed in chapter three, Boyle (2016), Pryor (2015) and Wells et al. (2016) have suggested. For both RMKC and GGT, which promote theatrical elements, lighting and special effect companies were consulted for stage theatrics, as well as IT specialists for technological installations. While a dramaturge was hired for RMKC to advise on performance spaces and train guides as actors, GGT's Tour Manager was already theatre trained and therefore able to advise on theatrical elements for the tour. However, the findings revealed that two of the actors of the focus group were also hired during the design development to help with scriptwriting and some of the creative decisions for the bus.

The findings also showed both RMKC and S2D, which operate within historic spaces, consulted architects to help assess the structural integrity of their sites, specifically concerning how the sites might be impacted by increased visitation. In addition, RMKC consulted an archaeologist to identify areas of human activity within the site that could then be used as part of the tour's narrative. Finally, as the LDVAs' narratives reflect life with the plague, the findings showed that RMKC and S2D consulted content specialists to ensure

information accuracy, while GGT conducted independent research of plague history.

The specialists who were involved were reflected in the findings as having been highly influential for the LDVAs' designs. While each played an important role for the LDVAs, RMKC's design was greatly influenced by the inclusion of architects and archaeologists. This is because their greatest challenge, as reflected in section 6.2.4, was managing the access and conservation concerns of their physical location. S2D's design was more impacted by the inclusion of a content specialist, who was not only an expert in plague history, but also had experience as a paleo-demographer working with medieval and plague burial sites. This knowledge and experience helped her to write the majority of S2D's content relating to the plague and the pathology lab. GGT's design, however, was greatly influenced by the Tour Manager who had experience in theatre design and was therefore able to advise on both stage design for the bus and the theatrical performances of the actors.

In relation to the inclusion of relevant specialists, Bryon (2012) and Potter (2016) have argued for staff inclusion, specifically tour guides, considering their relevance in creating meaning and mediating visitor experiences. Thus, as reflected in chapter three, the inclusion of staff is essential, and is, according to Potter (2016), of particular importance for the management of designs. This is because guides are constantly making judgments about how a design is working for audiences, and therefore they understand how it might need to be adapted to meet varying visitors' needs. Staff inclusion was not an issue for GGT considering the actors who currently operate the tours were also responsible for developing the design. However, the findings revealed that RMKC and S2D did not consult any staff for the initial design developments because they had not yet hired any.

The findings also revealed that, while GGT includes the actors' feedback relating to the interpretation through informal discussions, neither RMKC nor S2D consult staff pertaining to their interpretation or on-going management activities of the designs. Because of this, the focus group discussions and RPs

indicate frustrations among the staff, which were clear from their critical and arguably negative perspective towards the designs and their on-going management. This supports Bryon's (2012) argument, reflected in chapter three, which suggests instances of non-inclusion can lead to feelings of disempowerment. Related to this issue, the findings also revealed management challenges in form of communication issues between the LDVAs' management and staff. Despite staff inclusion, communication issues between the staff and owner were also revealed at GGT concerning reinvestment. These issues and challenges are further discussed in the following sub-sections.

Finally, as discussed in chapter three, scholars, including Black (2005), Visocky-O'Grady and Visocky-O'Grady (2017), and Wells et al. (2016) have argued visitors should be considered as relevant stakeholders for interpretation. This is because their input, through audience research, helps to design an interpretation that best meets their needs and expectations. Yet the findings revealed that, apart from the S2D2 expansion project, none of the LDVAs consulted visitors due to time restrictions. In discussing audience research, RMKC's designer, for example, explained:

In all honesty, at that time we didn't do any evaluations with focus groups or anything from what I can recall. We do in some projects, but in Mary Kings, we just didn't have time to do anything.

(RMKC, Designer, 2017)

The managers acknowledged visitor inclusion could be impactful. However, visitor inclusion was revealed as being perceived to be unnecessary, as opinions were established prior to planning concerning who the market was and what visitors would want. For example, CA's IT manager stated that at the time, Edinburgh's tourism market was mostly adults 35-65 years, and given RMKC's darker undertones, they assumed their audience would be primarily older. Similarly, BH's Director stated he knew Chester's market was traditionally older, retired people with disposable income, and given that S2D was intended to be provoking, he wanted to target non-traditional audiences.

Reflecting on this, the interviews revealed that the lack of audience research created some management challenges for the LDVAs. For example, BH's Head of Operations indicated that their design process was challenged by their lacking both audience research and an identified target market. She explained:

Because we didn't have a specific group in mind, [...] the message is a little bit mixed in my opinion. That is just learning though, and with a little bit more time, we could have narrowed that down.

(BH, Head of Operations, 2017)

While this comment is in relation to visitor inclusion through audience development research, it points out an issue relating to experience and time constraints. As proposed by Wells et al., (2016), this finding indicates a relationship between design experience and time-budget issues, which can influence management's ability to complete recommended planning tasks. This finding therefore supports Bogle (2013) and Roberts' (2015) arguments that suggest designer inclusion is essential, as they are generally trained to adequately manage time limitations, whilst delivering a quality, effective visitor experience.

### **6.2.2 Experience with interpretation design**

In terms of stakeholder inclusion, the findings revealed that the extent of design experience, as well as the inclusion of managers and designers for RMKC and GGT, was influential in the interpretation design. This supports the arguments of Ettema (1997), Gürer, Özkar, and Çağdaş (2014) and Roberts (2014), which, discussed in chapter three, suggest design experience is a crucial factor in designing interpretation, as it requires an understanding of how to orchestrate the design into emotionally, sensory, and educationally effective interpretation. Additionally, Brohman (1996) and Roberts (2015) have suggested that managers, who are generally in control of interpretation, often lack the necessary design experience and/or expertise. Consequently, as Roberts (2014) has argued designs often result in unrealistic ideas with ineffective interpretation outcomes. However, the findings showed that inexperience was only an issue for S2D, as BH had not previously acquired experience with either interpretation design or managing visitor attractions.

Although each member of CA's executive team had background experiences in fields outwith interpretation design (e.g. journalism, computer technology, leisure centres), their time working for CA had provided them the necessary knowledge for developing and managing new HVAs. This is because CA's premise, since its origins, has been to take diverse and complex subjects, and present them in a way that is easily accessible to a much wider popular market. According to the CEO, CA's concern when undertaking new projects is not focused on the specific history, but rather, on whether they can create an authentic, marketable story. She commented:

The topic and period of history does not matter. It is whether we can take that complex subject and present it as a popular visitor destination.

(CA, CEO, 2017)

Adding to this, the findings revealed that RMKC's design benefitted from CA's longer time in operation, where over the past nineteen years, CA has been able to grow in both size and budget, thereby allowing for the development of an in-house interpretation team, led by a designer who had previous experience creating audio-visual exhibitions for museums. The Designer's inclusion proved highly beneficial for RMKC's development, as she had the knowledge and experience in designing interpretation for heritage spaces. Interestingly however, the findings revealed that her previous experience in creating museum exhibitions conflicts with current design understanding as guided by Wells et al. (2016) and Woodward's (2009) models. This conflict pertains to the process of conducting an inventory, where Wells et al. (2016) recommends inventory should occur before any planning or theme and storyline development, in order to help to establish what resources are available and what the market wants from interpretation. However, RMKC's Designer stated that normally a project would start with story development, followed by an inventory to determine what resources are most appropriate to support the storyline. Reflecting on this, the researcher considers this difference may be influenced by the Designer's experience in creating heritage spaces under the guidance of older, prescriptive exhibition design standards. This reinforces the need for a holistic design model for HVAs and DVAs, as discussed in chapter three. Still, this finding supports Black's (2005) notion of 'it depends', as clearly,



there is no standard approach for interpretation design.

CA's time in operation was an influence on its size and budget, which further influenced RMKC's design. This is an important finding, as the literature does not appear to have specifically explored the topic of business longevity as a core influence on design. Rather, as reflected in chapter three, scholars, including Leask (2010), Richards and Munsters (2010), and Roberts (2015) have commented about the impact that an HVA's size can have on how an attraction is managed. Specifically, Leask (2010) notes larger HVAs, for example, are generally found to have a greater budget due to their ability to accommodate larger visitor numbers, which can help to create advanced interpretation projects. Reflecting on this, the findings revealed that CA's longer time in business, specifically within the heritage tourism industry, allowed the company to grow both in size and budget, which provided greater opportunities to expand their experience in developing HVAs and their interpretation.

In comparison, HDT had only been operating for 3 years, which, predictably, had an impact on their size and budget. However, this time in operation was within the heritage tourism industry, creating fun-centric, ghost themed tours. Because of this time, while short, HDT's Owner gained the necessary knowledge to develop GGT, including recognising the need to hire a trained designer. The Tour Manager explained that he was hired initially as the Creative Designer for GGT, but has subsequently become the Tour Manager for GGT, as well as HDT's other bus tours. GGT benefitted from the Tour Manager's previous theatre design experience, which was in creating site-specific productions. As a concept, site-specific design became an integral part of GGT's design. In discussing his experience, the Tour Manager commented:

In a way I have been trained to create this kind of work, just not realising it was tourism that I was coming into. It was straight from the theatrical point of view. [...] We created live theatre pieces in-situ for tours going around [a site]. [...] So, it was very much tourism because it was a heritage site.

(GGT, Tour Manager, 2018)

Unlike CA and HDT however, BH was not established within the heritage tourism industry prior to developing S2D. Rather, BH had been operating for 5 years as an archaeological consultancy through workshops for local schools. This influenced S2D's interpretation in two ways. First, BH's size and budget was impacted by their shorter time in operation, which, as discussed in section 6.2.3, hindered certain elements of their interpretation, such as method selection. Second, given their focus on archaeology consulting, BH had never developed a VA or designed an interpretation project for a VA. Consequently, as revealed in the interview with BH's Head of Operations, the company's background did not foster the needed experience for creating S2D's interpretation. On this matter and referencing herself, the Head of Operations commented 'we are a little bit unusual in that all of [the design] came from one person, and this one person is not trained in design'. Due to this lack of experience, as well as lack of designer input, the findings revealed that BH made unnecessary purchases because of premature and unrealistic ideas, which are further discussed in section 6.2.3. This finding reinforces Roberts' (2014) argument that designer inclusion is essential, as their experience can help to prevent unrealistic plans and ideas, and subsequently unnecessary purchases.

The above findings relating to experience have indicated correlations between varying ownership factors, which are each a direct influence on interpretation design and management. First, there is a relationship between organisation factors of business longevity and size and budget. This suggests the longer an organisation is in business, the greater opportunities they have to develop experience developing attractions, and subsequently, designing interpretation. Second, there is a relationship between an organisation's industry experience and designing interpretation. This suggests experience within the heritage tourism industry helps to foster the necessary knowledge for designing interpretation for HVAs and DVAs. Third, there is a relationship between interpretation design experience and budget management for interpretation projects. Further explored in section 6.2.3, this relationship not only impacts interpretation design outcomes, but also confirms the necessity for a designer's inclusion. Considering these findings, the researcher finds it appropriate to

argue that access to a holistic design model for LDVAs, as well as HVAs and DVAs, particularly in instances lacking inhouse designer expertise, is perhaps needed in order to guide the completion of necessary planning tasks that can influence interpretation design and management.

### **6.2.3 Budget issues– Managing funding and time**

Budget restrictions relating to funding was also revealed as an influence on the design and management of the LDVAs' interpretation. This issue specifically influenced S2D's absence of a trained designer, as well as the hiring of a minimum of specialists for both S2D and GGT. Further, limited funding was reflected to have impacted all three LDVAs' use of certain interpretive methods, including advanced technologies. These findings support Malcolm-Davies (2004) and Roberts' (2014) suggestions, as reflected in chapter three, that funding restrictions can not only impact the development of interpretation teams, but also the use of certain materials or methods to deliver interpretation, and on-going management activities. However, the findings also showed that time-budget issues were an influence on the LDVAs' designs, which is reflected in chapter three, where Wells et al. (2016) identify this as being a key influence on interpretation design

Concerning the issue of limited funding, unlike HDT and BH, which had only been operating for three and five years respectively, CA had been successfully operating within the heritage tourism industry for nineteen years, which allowed CA to grow both in size and budget. Because of this, as described in section 6.2.2, they developed an in-house interpretation team, which meant that the majority of the project's own funding could be allocated to the production of RMKC's interpretation design and creating a safe and accessible tour space, as opposed to hiring specialists. This supports Leask (2010) and Roberts' (2015) arguments that larger, more established attractions generally have a greater budget for interpretation efforts. On this matter, CA's Director of Attractions commented:

In essence [the City Council] gave us about a half a million pounds to create the experience, and in this day and age half a million pounds isn't a lot of money anyways considering a lot of that had to be spent on structural surveys and securing up certain areas to make sure that it was a safe space to operate. So, I suppose we were in a different position back then because we had our own design team.

(CA, Director of Attractions, 2017)

In contrast, GGT's Tour Manager explained that GGT was HDT's first tour bus; therefore, he wasn't allocated a great budget for the full interpretation. Rather, the funding he was given was put towards hiring the graphics and set design specialists (Twisted Image) for the production of the bus, leaving little funding for the development of actors, costumes, and props. In essence, the Tour Manager explained GGT 'was scraped together very cheaply'.

Similarly, S2D's Head of Operations explained that as BH had never managed a static attraction before, the Wellcome Trust, who funded S2D, only provided trial money, as it was to operate as a pilot for the planned S2D2 expansion project. Elaborating on this, she stated:

[The Wellcome Trust] wanted to see a proof of concept because we had never managed a static attraction before. [...] So basically, they gave us some trial money, half of which was to put in place Sick to Death as it is now [...] and the other 50% of the funding was to do a feasibility study, which was used to facilitate the bigger application.

(BH, Head of Operations, 2017)

This minimal funding limited S2D's design's use of certain interpretive methods, such as advanced technologies, which would have required a greater budget to maintain over time. However, the budget was also impacted by unnecessary purchases made by BH's Director, which the findings revealed was a direct result of unrealistic design ideas that developed because of the lack of designer inclusion and limited design experience. Commenting on this issue, BH's Head of Operations explained:

[BH's director] ordered some stuff that he wanted to use [...] For example, he went and bought a thirty lb. pumping heart and I thought, 'that is not going to last two minutes in [the museum]. He bought 3-D headsets as well, but in terms of hygiene and maintaining them, it wasn't going to work.

(S2D, Head of Operations, 2017)

These unnecessary purchases likely impacted the budget for S2D's interpretation. However, by including a trained designer, as Roberts' (2014) recommends, BH may have been able to prevent this problem and instead put the funding towards other design needs. Thus, the findings support Roberts (2015) and Wells et al. (2016) by showing that an experienced designer is clearly essential for design developments, as they are trained to produce more realistic plans under an anticipated budget, thereby achieving greater value for money and augmenting plans as needed for pricing purposes.

Reflecting on the above, and as indicated in section 6.2.2, the findings have identified a relationship between design experience and budget management, which, together, impact interpretation design and management. Furthermore, the findings reaffirm the influence of business longevity on designs, as, for example, both GGT and S2D were limited in funding due to their shorter time in operation. However, since operating their tours successfully, the managers' interviews revealed that they have been able to request more funding, as needed, to enhance their designs. As a result, S2D, for example, has been able to move forward with their expansion project (S2D2).

While the findings have indicated limited funding is an influence on the LDVAs' interpretation designs, time-budget issues have also been identified as a key influence, which, as Woodward (2009) has argued, is concerned with the management of time allocated for a project. The interviews with the LDVAs' managers and designers revealed that due to time limitations, they were unable to perform certain design steps, which, as recommended in Wells et al. (2016) and Woodward's (2009) models, specifically relate to briefing processes, audience research, and preliminary evaluations. Time-budget issues were also revealed as a challenge for completing summative evaluations and

refurbishments, which, as discussed in section 6.3, has led to challenges for the on-going management of the designs.

In discussing time-budget issues, BH's Head of Operations stressed they had had seven weeks from start to finish, which was impactful on their design. This short timeframe was a consequence of BH's goal to open S2D in the summer of 2016 in order to evaluate how the attraction would perform during the high season. This goal was however impacted by the fact that S2D did not receive funding until March 2016, nor the City Council's approval to use the 14<sup>th</sup> century Medieval towers until late-May 2016. BH's Head of Operations explained:

Personally, I would have wanted three months to have really done [S2D] justice. Really [the time] is reflected in what you see there. It was just the timing of when we got the funding and when the building became available. We didn't want to open in say mid-November or anything like that when everything is closing down for off-peak season.

(BH, Head of Operations, 2017)

Due to this short time frame, S2D did not develop any formal briefs relating to the intended design. Rather, BH's Head of Operations explained that there were multiple conversations between her and BH's Director about what was envisioned for the tour. As a result of this, and their inexperience in developing a VA, she stated that she found the design process 'disparate and in need of a coherent structure'. This statement further emphasises the need for a guiding model that could perhaps aid inexperienced management in designing interpretation. Although S2D was limited by a restrictive budget, the Head of Operations' comment relating to BH's inexperience in developing a VA further exposes the need for a trained designer. It also suggests that hiring a designer should perhaps have taken precedence in decisions concerning funding allocation, as Black (2005) and Roberts (2015) have argued, a designer is trained to create effective visitor experiences for attractions despite constraints of time, space, limited resources, or budget.

For GGT, the findings showed that HDT's short design timeframe of six weeks was also the underpinning influence for the absence of a formal brief between them and their sub-contractor, Twisted Image. On this matter, and referring to his discussions with Twisted Image, he commented:

[The brief] would have been more general. We would have popped in all the time because it was done over the course of a few weeks [...] coming in and out talking about ideas and what we liked and didn't. [...] It would have very much been just chatting [and] discussing what will go in one section of the bus and that will go over there and then visualise it.

(GGT, Tour Manager, 2018)

Issues with time were also found to have impacted the LDVAs' ability to conduct audience research, which, as discussed in section 6.2.1, influenced the lack of visitor inclusion as a stakeholder in the interpretation developments. Additionally, time-budget issues were found to have influenced the LDVAs' ability to conduct formative or remedial evaluations. As reflected in chapter three, Boyle (2016) and Spencer (2007) argue these evaluations are used to help determine if the intended design is on track to meeting visitor needs and expectations, and to troubleshoot areas for improvement to maximise the visitor experience. These evaluations are also generally conducted through focus groups, consultation with visitors and staff, pilot tests, and/or soft-openings, which Bogle (2013) and Danks et al. (2007) have suggested allows management to obtain feedback and adjust designs as necessary before the formal delivery to the public. However, due to time limitations none of the LDVAs were able to conduct such evaluations. Rather, GGT conducted dress rehearsals in front of friends and family, while RMKC conducted a VIP press event for the media, staff, and family. S2D did not conduct any evaluations. In discussing time limitations in relation to remedial evaluations, CA's Director of Attractions explained:

I suppose [the VIP night] was our soft opening, but then two days after that, we opened to the public. It is always the most nerve-racking time because the guides feel they hadn't had enough time to prepare and it's time to sink or swim.

(CA, Director of Attractions, 2017)

The Director of Attractions' comment indicates that RMKC's VIP night might be considered a remedial evaluation. However, it is clear that this was not the intent, given the attraction opened only two days after, leaving little time to make any adjustments, if needed.

Despite the LDVAs' inability to progress through the recommended steps of briefing procedures, audience research, and evaluations measures, as outlined in Wells et al. (2016) Woodward's (2009) models, the findings revealed that interpretation design is still possible without these formalities. Woodward (2009) suggests briefing procedures help to produce discussions between management and designers concerning specific necessities and limitations for designs. However, the findings show formal briefs are not necessarily required in instances where regular conversations are held concerning design progress. Further, Black (2005) has argued audience research is arguably beneficial for determining visitor needs and expectations, and Bogle (2013) has demonstrated evaluation measures are useful for ensuring the design will effectively meet those needs and expectations. However, the findings show that neither of these steps are compulsory for the completion of designs. Yet, as reflected in the interview with BH's Head of Operations, the absence of these formalities created several design challenges, including the development of a coherent message. This finding consequently reinforces scholars, including Black (2005), Lord et al. (2012), Visocky-O'Grady and Visocky-O'Grady (2017), and Wells et al. (2016), who have suggested that bypassing such formalities could lead to design challenges and ineffective visitor experiences that can cause visitor confusion, frustration, or alienation.

#### **6.2.4 Access, spatial limitations, and conservation concerns**

The findings also revealed that management challenges relating to access, spatial limitations, and conservation concerns were also influential on the LDVAs' designs. Specifically, while access issues and spatial limitations influenced all of the LDVAs designs, RMKC and S2D were particularly influenced by conservation concerns. These findings further support assertions of Black (2005), Kennedy and Sawyer (2005), Wells et al. (2016), and Woodward (2009), which, as discussed in chapter three, found these



management challenges as core influences on interpretation design and management.

Access was revealed as a key influence on each of the LDVAs' designs. For S2D, access was a challenge for design development, given that the attraction is set within a two-story 14<sup>th</sup> century medieval tower accessible only by stairs. Because of this access challenge, full visitor access to the attraction is limited. This correlates with the findings by Roza et al. (2018) discussed in chapter two, which suggested access challenges, specifically for in-situ attractions, are often concerned with balancing access for better visitor experiences and conservation for the sustainability of heritage assets. Access influenced S2D's design as BH's Head of Operations essentially had to develop a coherent storyline for two visitor experiences: one that would take place on the bottom floor for visitors who could not access the top floor, and another that would flow from the bottom floor to the top floor. At least in part because of this challenge, she commented that the design process was 'very ad-hoc' and she found the message 'became a bit mixed.'

Similarly, RMKC was challenged with access limitations in which the Designer explained that before drafting storylines, they had first to determine how they would get visitors safely down onto the Close. She explained:

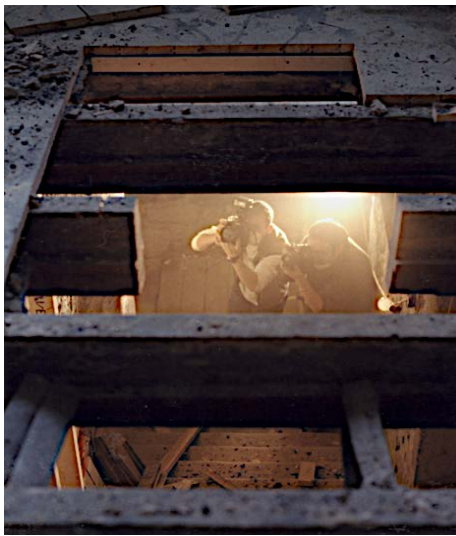
At the time we started the current access didn't exist [...] it was completely floored over, and no one had thought about how to get people down there. [...] It meant ripping up the floor because the steps that you currently take people down simply ended and no one had looked at them in a very long time. So, we spent a lot of time working out the logistics of how to take people around.

(RMKC, Designer, 2017)

The need to first establish a tour route allowed RMKC's Designer to create an inventory of the site. This reinforces the recommendations in Wells et al. (2016) model that inventory should be conducted before storylines or theme development, in order to identify the available resources. Given RMKC is located underneath the City Chambers building, access was only possible by removing floorboards in the vacant Licensing Offices, as reflected in Figure 6.1,

and a stairway created as shown in Figure 6.2. This effort required the consultation of a fire officer for general health and safety, an architect to assess the structural integrity of the building, and an archaeologist to assess the human value of the site. Through these efforts, the Designer was able to determine the site's strengths and weaknesses (e.g. structural integrity; conservation concerns), which, Black (2005), McKercher et al. (2004), and Timothy (2016) have argued, impacts an interpretation's design, specifically for in-situ attractions.

**Figure 6.1. RMKC flooring**



(CA, 2003a)

**Figure 6.2. RMKC stairway**



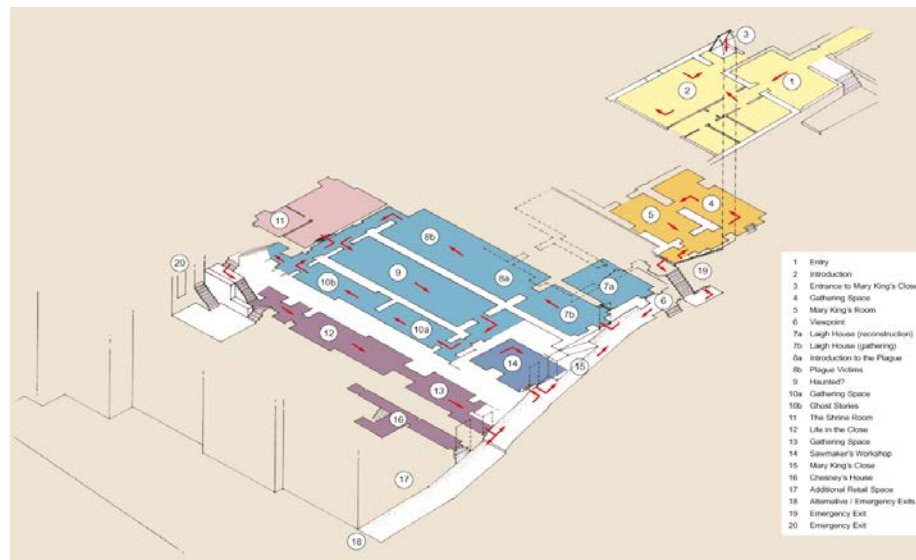
(CA, 2003b)

One of the weaknesses identified is related to conservation concerns, which was also revealed in the findings as an influence on both RMKC and S2D's designs. Due to the structural integrity of the sites, neither RMKC nor S2D were able to install a ramp or lift to allow access for visitors with physical disabilities. Despite this access limitation, RMKC established a tour route based on the rooms uncovered underneath the City Chambers. This allowed the Designer to conduct research on those spaces and identify a tour route, as reflected in Figure 6.3. Only after doing this, was the Designer able to establish a storyline, which included: accounts of the plague; quarantine; social class divisions; poverty; murder; and sanitation conditions, all of which underpinned the central theme of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century life on Edinburgh's Closes. On this topic, the Designer explained:

We spent a lot of time working out the logistics of how to take people around. [...] It was only once we did that, that we asked, how do we make the story work? [...] We took the story components, and we worked out a route that made sense in narrative terms.

(RMKC, Designer, 2017)

**Figure 6.3. RMKC tour route (2003)**



(CA, 2003c)

Similarly, GGT's design, which as a mobile attraction, was heavily influenced by access issues and the need first to create a tour route before storylines could be developed. The Tour Manager explained designing the experience was very much about juggling the tour route with the stories that would work best. He explained:

The bus has to get from A to B. [...] So, physically if we go there, we can't go there, just to come back over here. So, we had to do it in a concise way. [...] It was mixing what stories we wanted to tell with what locations we wanted to go to and then practically [working out] how to do that.

(GGT, Manager, 2018)

In determining the tour route and stops, the findings show that consideration was also given not only to the stories associated with each potential stop, but also the aesthetic look and feel of each location, and how accessible each location was. For example, the Tour Manager's interview revealed that St.

Mary's Chapel of Ease, dubbed the 'Black Church' for its association with superstitions pertaining to the devil, was originally selected for the tour because of its story. However, because the church is centrally located within a residential area, the Tour Manager decided it would be too difficult to access without residential interruption.

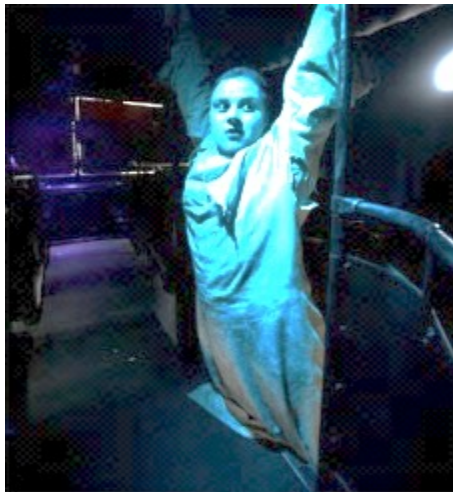
Adding to this, the findings also showed that GGT's Tour Manager was challenged by access issues unique to mobile attractions, including traffic, road closures, street grids, and pedestrian crossings. The Tour Manager explained that, when designing the tour, they knew they would have to deal with these challenges through crowd control and improvisation. However, they benefited from the fact that their drivers were ex-bus drivers and ex-fire-fighters who knew the city streets well and were therefore able to navigate alternate routes if necessary. Also, in times where access was limited due to road closures or city events, the Tour Manager explained that they were generally given advance notice and could therefore discuss how they would manage the day prior to any scheduled tours. Still, these challenges are shown to impact the delivery of the design, as the Tour Manager explained the actors have worked out their timing perfectly to the turns of the normal tour route, which is impressive given that they are performing backwards on a moving bus with blacked-out windows— a feature that is discussed in section 6.2.4. Consequently, any detour or traffic issues will disrupt this timing and subsequently the overall experience, forcing the actors to rely on improvisation to fill or condense time in between the tour stops.

These findings concerning RMKC and GGT's tour routes not only show how access issues can influence design developments, but they also indicate a relationship between inventory activities and storyline developments. This supports the literature, in which Wells et al. (2016) has argued that storyline and thematic developments should be grounded in the availability of resources and space identified in the inventory process.

In addition, the LDVAs' designs were further influenced by challenges with spatial limitations. GGT's design was significantly impacted by the limited

performance space of the bus. Given that GGT was intended to serve as a ‘theatre on wheels’, the bus required the installation of not only a performance space in the top deck, as reflected in Figures 6.4 and 6.5, but also a backstage in the lower deck, where costume changes and special effects would be managed. This required, GGT’s sub-contractor, Twisted Image, to cut the lower level of the bus in half, gutting the entire area of its original features, including seating and hand rails. In doing this, Twisted Image created the front area as the entry point for the audience, while the back area housed the electrical and special effects equipment, as well as an area for costume changes.

**Figure 6.4. GGT front stage**



(GGT, 2012a)

**Figure 6.5 GGT performance space**

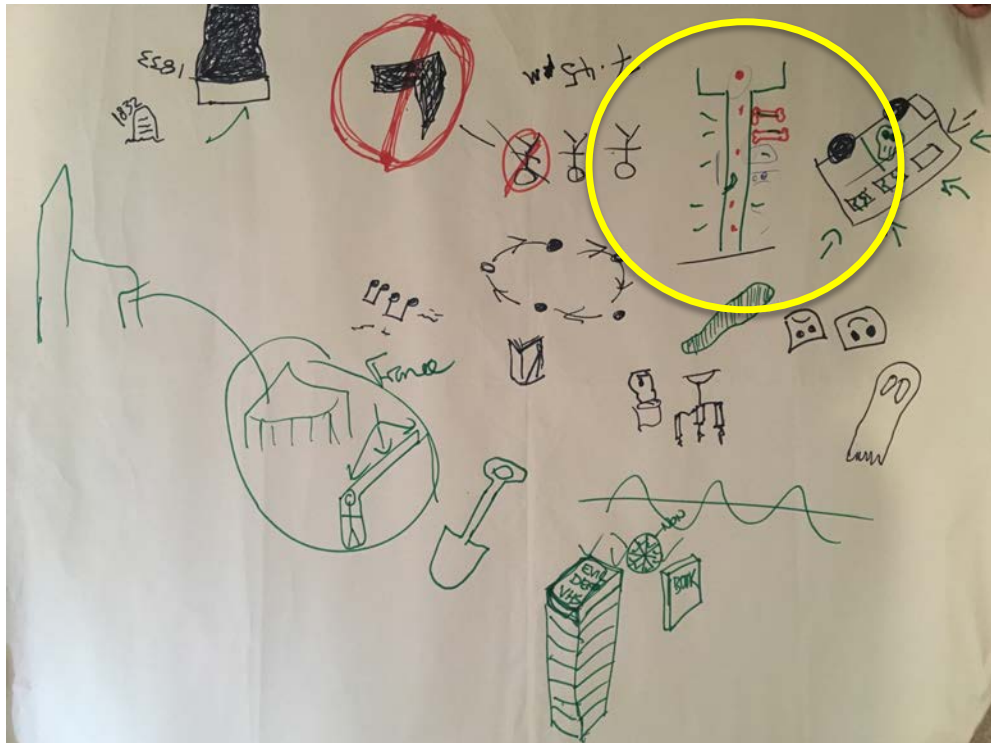


(GGT, 2012b)

As is evident in Figures 6.4 and 6.5, GGT’s performance space is greatly impacted by spatial limitations. This further limited the amount of set dressings and stage props that could be used in the design, forcing the tour instead to rely on the narrative and the actors’ abilities to improvise and bring the story to life. In speaking of how the spatial limitations have impacted the design, GGT’s RPB session and focus group discussion indicated frustrations among the staff. Reflected in Figure 6.6 by the green bus image with arrows pointing, one actor explained that the majority of the tour occurs in the top part of the bus. However, as reflected by the green ‘I’ shaped image, used to represent the performance space, the actor explained that, because the tour takes place in the top part, the performance space is confined, which further limits the use of additional props, technologies, and actors. In addition, as reflected in this

image, the actor used red colouring to draw attention to the bones installed on the backs of the seats for theming and aesthetics. Through this image, he explains the bones often cause injuries when he runs through the aisle for dramatic effect, as he often bumps his hips into the edges of the seats.

**Figure 6.6. GGT focus group rich picture**



The findings relating to GGT's spatial limitations contribute to the literature, which, until now, has primarily referred to spatial limitations as a challenge particularly for built and in-situ HVAs, as their historic intent did not consider social or physical carrying capacity (see e.g. McKercher et al., 2004). However, it is clear from this research that spatial limitations are just as challenging for mobile attractions, as their original intent as transportation services did not consider the need to provide a theatrical performance space.

Additionally, S2D's design was also impacted by spatial limitations, as BH's Head of Operations explained that because the exhibition spaces were so small, she found it difficult to create a coherent storyline. As reflected in Figures 6.7 and 6.8, BH's Head of Operations was tasked with fitting numerous topics and themes within two small spaces, whilst making their interpretation

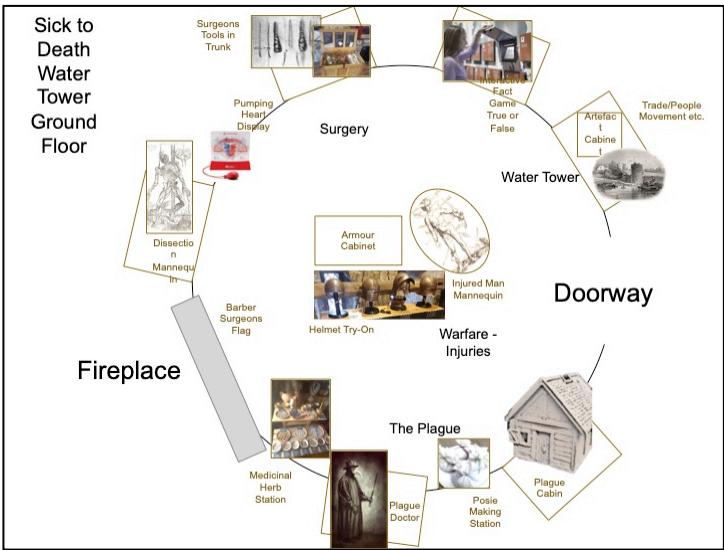


appropriate for all audiences. As such, the findings revealed that this issue of spatial limitations was further impacted by the fact that they had not determined a target audience. On this matter, BH's Head of Operations stated:

[BH's Director] wanted it to be appropriate for children, but also appropriate for adults; but because the space was so small, you couldn't have a space where children could go, and adults could go to another. So, it is sort of trying to fit everybody in this very small space.

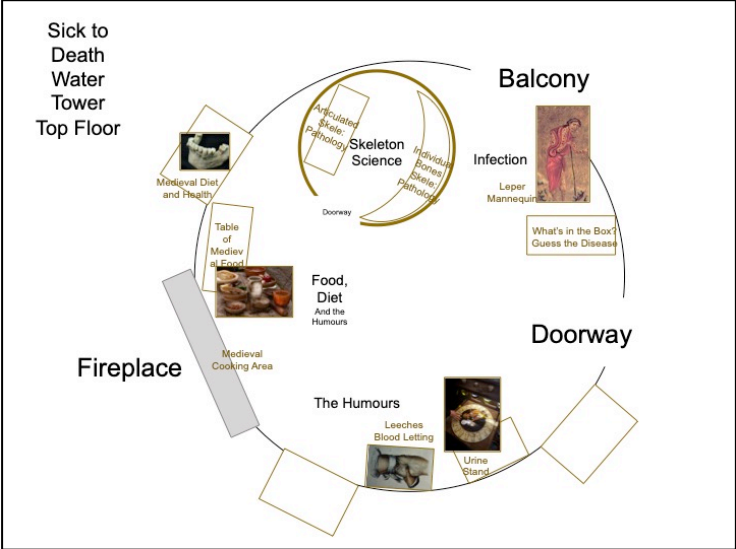
(BH, Head of Operations, 2017)

Figure 6.7. S2D ground floor



(BH, 2016a)

Figure 6.8. S2D top floor



(BH, 2016b)

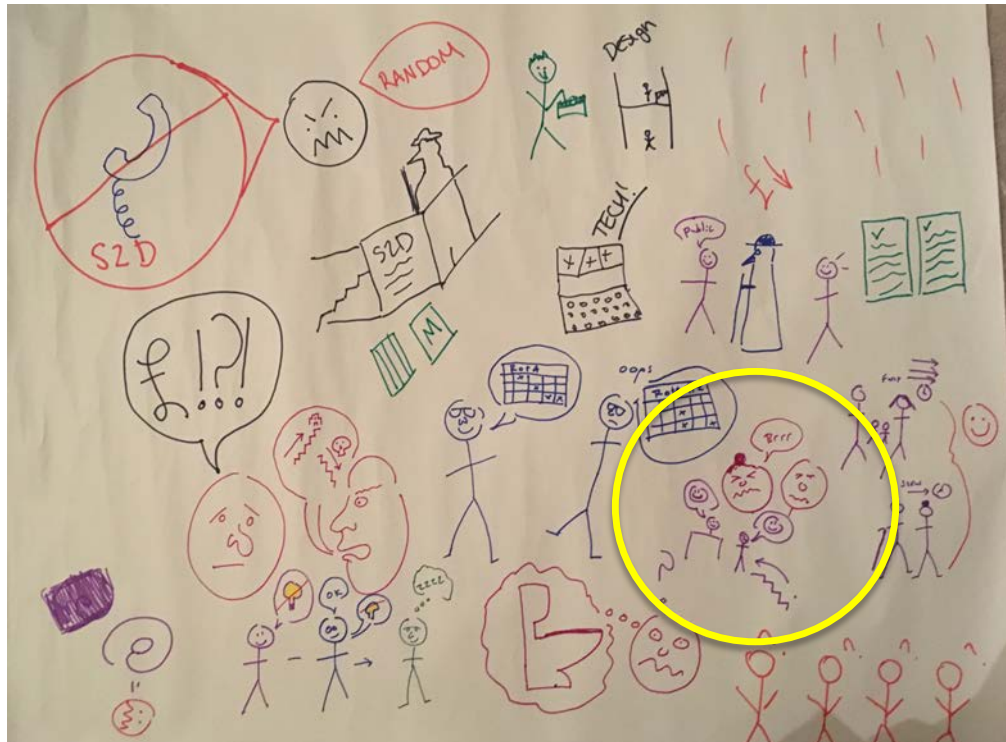
BH's design challenges indicate a relationship between managing spatial limitations and the need to conduct audience research in order to understand visitor needs, which is a matter that was recognised by S2D's staff in their focus group. Yet the researcher finds BH may have been less challenged in managing the spatial limitations had they included a trained designer or conducted audience research to identify a target market. Moreover, the absence of audience research has exposed a challenge in meeting visitor needs and expectations, which Black (2005) and Wells et al. (2016) have argued, as reflected in chapter three. This issue appears to have created further visitor frustrations, as the staff explained they often got visitor complaints about how small the museum was and how short their visit was. Thus, the staff have become focused on ensuring visitors know what they are paying to see. In speaking of how the spatial limitations have impacted the design, S2D's RPB session and focus group discussion indicated visitor frustrations and staff concerns. Reflected in Figure 6.9, one staff member drew herself sitting behind the admissions desk while talking to a happy customer, which makes her happy. Then adding to this image, she drew an arrow pointing up an image of stairs with two angry faces, drawn with red colouring to reflect their negative attitude. She explained that, often, visitors become frustrated with not only having to climb stairs since there is no lift, but also the size and design of the museum. Further commenting on this issue, she explained:

The biggest issue I have is people coming in thinking they are going into some sort of dungeon, and I'm like 'it is a museum.' They go in and then in like ten minutes they come out, so then I think 'you haven't read anything because you didn't think it was a museum even though I told you.'

(S2D focus group, Participant 2, 2017)



**Figure 6.9. S2D focus group rich picture**



However, commenting on the spatial limitations during the focus group discussion, S2D's staff acknowledged that certain issues were unavoidable due to the age of the building. This discussion reinforces findings from the interview with BH's Head of Operations, where, in commenting on spatial limitations, she explained:

I couldn't attach anything to the walls because of it being a historic site. So, I was constantly challenged by how to fit all of these elements in.

(BH, Head of Operations, 2017)

Because of their conservation issues, as well as budget restrictions, the findings revealed that S2D was forced to use minimal sound effect technologies and static exhibition displays, which BH's Director commented have issues of condition quality. On this, the Head of Operations explained that many of the displays are hands-on, where for example, as reflected in Figure 6.10, visitors can put their hand in a box to feel diseases of the flesh and determine what diseases they are. Consequently, the design has become worn from visitors constantly touching things, as reflected in Figure 6.11. This comment reinforces the discussion of Mustafa and Tayeh (2011), referred to in chapter two, where it

is explained that the high volumes of visitors touching heritage assets and displays often creates conservation and sustainability challenges.

**Figure 6.10. S2D disease exhibit**



(Author's photo 2016)

**Figure 6.11. S2D diseased hand**

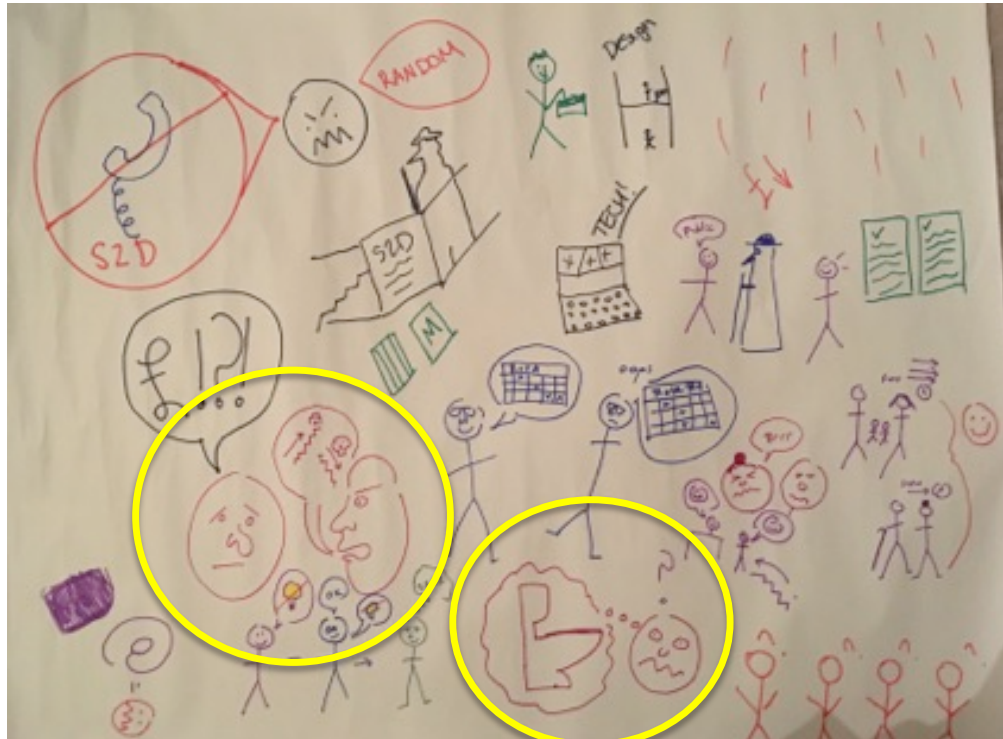


(Author's photo, 2016)

Interestingly, conservation issues were also identified in relation to the electrical system at S2D, which not only impacted the interpretation design and visitor experience, but also the daily operations. Due to the age of the building, the City Council prevented BH from installing a new electrical system for the exhibitions spaces, as well as toilet facilities. This was, as reflected in Figure 6.12, an issue that the staff expressed frustrations with. In one image, one staff member drew himself being yelled at by a visitor who was upset with climbing stairs to the top floor and having to come back down to the admissions area to complain that the lights were not working in the museum. The image depicts the staff member distressed, as he knows the lighting system is faulty, but there is nothing he can do to fix it. Adding to this, the staff member included an image of three stick figures with word bubbles depicting images of light bulbs crossed out and the word 'ok'. This image refers to his explanation that he often tells management that the lights do not work, which they say they will get it fixed, but it is not fixed, and he is left with managing angry customers. This finding indicates not only a communication issue between the staff and management, but also underlying operational issues relating to the management of the

attraction and how the interpretation design is impacted by the structural limitations.

**Figure 6.12. S2D focus group rich picture**



On this topic, one staff member commented that they had had visitor complaints relating to the poor quality of lighting in the museum. However, because the lights are automatic, another staff member explained:

[The lights] do go off sometimes, so if you are in there for say 15 minutes the lights will stay on, but if you stay in there for 30 minutes then you do have to jump around a bit to turn them back on.

(S2D focus group, Participant 1, 2017)

In addition to the issues with the lighting system, the staff drew an image of a toilet within a thought bubble of a perplexed looking face. This image was explained in the group discussion to represent the fact that they do not have facilities on site for the staff or visitors due to the structural and conservation limitations on installing facilities. One staff member explained that it is often the case he will need to close the museum for a few minutes so that he can run down to the local pub to use their facilities. This finding indicates that both staff

and visitors are impacted by the lack of facilities, which can in turn impact operations when the museum must be closed for staff relief.

Similarly, as an in-situ location, RMKC's design was greatly challenged by conservation concerns. The Designer explained that because the site was so fragile, certain design features were required in order to preserve the original material from being impacted by increased visitation. For example, in discussing the flooring, she explained:

At that time, we were working without any flooring. Initially we were going to leave them as that, but then the number of visitors going through was just raising dust and wearing the floors, which was unacceptable in terms of caring for the preservation of the place. So, we put in the floating timber floors to help keep the dust down and help keep the material.

(RMKC, Designer, 2017)

Adding to this, the findings revealed that since the site is over 400 years old, RMKC's design was limited to minimal technology, such as animate lighting and gobo lighting. As reflected in Figure 6.13, gobo lighting is a type of projection technology that was used to display the characters Mary King and Dr. Arnett on a wall. However, this technology suffered continual damage from the accumulation of dust, resulting in its later replacement.

**Figure 6.13. RMKC gobo lighting**



(VisitBritain, 2006)



The General Manager's interview revealed that RMKC's design became very much about balancing conservation efforts with meeting visitor needs and the perceived expectations of modern tourism experiences. He commented:

We are in a historical building. We are not going to be slapping plasma screens on a 400-year old wall because that's what people expect in modern society. [Conservation] does affect us because we have to look after the location as well and bring the story to life. So, it is trying to get the balance.

(RMKC, General Manager, 2017)

Yet, interestingly, the findings revealed that the gobo lighting effect was replaced with animated portraits, which, as reflected in Figure 6.14, are similar to those seen in the *Harry Potter* movies. However, as further discussed in section 6.2.5, the installation of these portraits has become a source for frustrations among RMKC's staff, which, reflected in the findings from their RPB session and focus group discussion, relates not only to their impact on the authenticity of the site, but also to their continual malfunction.

**Figure 6.14. RMKC gallery room**



(CA, 2017d)

Still, the General Manager's comment regarding the site as a historic building reinforces Roza et al. (2018), who have argued management challenges are often associated with balancing public access and conservation concerns, whilst ensuring the visitor experience is not diminished.

It is clear from the above that the LDVAs' interpretation designs were greatly influenced by challenges relating to access, spatial limitations, and conservation concerns. While the findings show that each LDVA was impacted by these challenges, it is clear that the physical nature of the attractions was a key influence on the extent in which these challenges impacted the designs. Moreover, the findings revealed several relationships between the identified influences, including a relationship between tour route development and the process of creating storylines and themes, which Wells et al. (2016) suggests should be rooted in the processes of inventory and inventory analysis.

#### ***6.2.5 Edutainment and selecting interpretation methods***

Further influencing the design and management of the LDVAs interpretation was their decision to promote edutainment agendas. Given that Wells et al. (2016) and Woodward's (2009) models were developed to guide museum exhibitions, they do not discuss the process for selecting interpretation agendas or methods for HVAs and DVAs. However, scholars, including Cater et al. (2015), Goulding (1999), and Price (2006), have suggested this process is often influenced by a series of factors including: ownership; the nature of an attraction; the intended purpose; themes; the planning outcome; and the inclusion of a designer. For this research, ownership and the intended purpose were revealed as key influences on the selection of an edutainment agenda for each of the LDVAs. Predictably, budget concerns and the nature of the physical attraction were also shown to have influenced the selection of methods. However, the findings also revealed that after selecting interpretation methods, the delivery of these methods were influenced by several factors that are only rarely discussed in the literature, including film, popular media, and the competition of similar attractions.

In discussing the decision to promote an edutainment agenda, the manager interviews of the LDVAs revealed that education was critical, but that enjoyment was essential, because as CA's Director of Attractions explained, 'people will learn more when they are enjoying their experience'. This perspective reinforces Timothy's (2018) argument that edutainment agendas

have been found to be an effective method for retaining visitor attention and increasing learning opportunities through more appealing experiences.

For RMKC specifically, the findings show that it was never intended to be strictly educational. According to CA's executive managers, the company motto is to 'have fun, make money'. Therefore, in all of their attractions, the goal is to create enjoyable experiences where education is a backdrop. This finding reveals commercial interests as an influence on some of their interpretation decisions. On this point, CA's Director of Attractions also commented that, when they create experiences, they generally do not aim to give people too much information. Rather, he stated:

If we can send people out with five facts, that is all we are really bothered about. We could go overboard with the education, but then nothing [is learned]. I think fun is a critical part of the experience we want to deliver.

(CA, Director of Attractions, 2017)

This comment indicates that in some experiences too much information can overwhelm visitors. This correlates with Oren and Shani's (2012) suggestion that more innovative interpretive strategies can help to keep visitors from becoming overwhelmed with information.

Similarly, the findings showed that S2D's design, through an edutainment agenda, was to educate and entertain. According to BH's Head of Operations, the educational aspects of the design were based on the national curriculum. However, BH is recognised for provoking reactions and attracting non-traditional audiences. Therefore, in designing S2D's interpretation, BH's Head of Operations explained:

Big Heritage tries to attract non-traditional audiences. So, people that wouldn't normally go to a museum, might want to come to Sick to Death because it has that kind of gruesome, ghoulish factor or perceived to be kind of quirky maybe dark heritage type vibe to it.

(BH, Head of Operations, 2017)

Adding to this, the findings revealed that BH's decision to use an edutainment agenda for S2D was further influenced by the personal preferences of BH's Director, who explained his goal was to push boundaries of the traditional museum culture by provoking reactions and encouraging morbid curiosity. He commented:

Morbid curiosity is just as good as any curiosity or even better [...] If someone comes to Sick to Death because they are really interested in learning about surgery or whatever, and another has come to gawk at blood and guts and stuff like that, I don't care to be honest. They are both valid reasons. [...] We should start encouraging museums to stop being so prissy and frightened about it.

(Big Heritage, Director, 2017)

Company and personal preferences, as well as the aim to provoke reactions was also revealed in the findings as influences on GGT's decision to promote an edutainment agenda. According to the Tour Manager, the Owner wanted to create something that was entertainment driven and rooted in the macabre history of Dublin, so he made the decision for GGT to promote an edutainment agenda. While the history that underpins the tour is horrific and could have been delivered in a very serious tone, the Tour Manager explains they had always intended to keep it more comedic. Considering this agenda, the findings revealed that the relative intensity of entertainment over education depends on the actors delivering the performance. The Tour Manager explained:

Different guides do it differently [...] There's history, there's entertainment, and there's some horror. So, it completely depends on the audience because no two tours are ever the same. So, you can have a tour that is more grounded in history than a tour that is much more grounded in the stupid jokes.

(GGT, Tour Manager, 2018)

It is clear from the findings that the decision to promote edutainment agendas is based on company and/or personal preferences, as well as the LDVAs' intended purposes to both educate and entertain. However, these findings revealed that, particularly for S2D and GGT, the nature of the content is also a key influence on LDVA interpretation design.



In terms of method selection and delivery of an edutainment agenda, much of the findings showed, as discussed in section 6.2.3, that budget limitations, relating to both funding and time, were influential. Additionally, the findings discussed in section 6.2.4 have shown the physical nature of the attractions relating to conservation concerns and spatial limitations have influenced method selection. In delivering the selected methods however, the findings revealed the LDVAs' designs were influenced by a variety of factors including the nature of the content, film, popular media, and competing and/or similar attractions. This is an important finding, as these influences have not been extensively discussed in the literature.

Given HDT's budget and spatial limitations, which significantly impacted their ability to use elaborate interpretive features and methods, GGT employs guided tours through character re-enactment and minimal stage design, including set dressings and audio and lighting techniques. In discussing the set dressing, the Tour Manager explained that they initially struggled with creating the right atmosphere since the Dublin cityscape is brightly lit with city lights. Because of this, they chose to use blackout curtains and coloured lighting effects, as shown in Figures 6.15 and 6.16, to create the needed atmosphere for the tour.

**Figure 6.15. GGT curtains**



(GGT, 2012c)

**Figure 6.16 GGT lighting**



(GGT, 2012d)

Added to this, the findings showed that the content influenced the bus design as its perceived darker nature allowed the design to incorporate macabre features, such as bones lining the backs of the bus seats, as well as a crypt in the lower level (see Figures 6.17 and 6.18) where visitors enter and exit. This

installation was thought to promote a specific atmosphere that would help to prepare visitors for what they could expect on the upper level.

**Figure 6.17. GGT crypt construction**



(GGT, 2012e)

**Figure 6.18. GGT crypt delivered**



(GGT, 2012f)

Delivering the tour's interpretation, however, is an actor, who, according to the Tour Manager, portrays a nameless plague victim. Using theatrical training, voice inflection, improvisation, and props (e.g. candles, Ouija boards, chains), the plague victim's performance is a key feature for the tour. The decision to have a plague victim leading the tour was influenced by the fact that the plague is the main talking point for the tour. The Tour Manager explained it is 50% or more of the tour's content. The findings further showed that the intent behind leaving the character nameless was to remove any onus or obligation for seriousness from the interpretation. However, this in turn created challenges for the costume design, as the Tour Manager explained it became difficult to locate a specific look for a phenomenon that endured over hundreds of years. He further commented:

We researched what a kind of costumes people would have worn, but because it wasn't specific to a period, we weren't dealing with a specific character or a specific time, it opened it up to be whatever we wanted. We went with something that was both practical for a two-hour show and that helped to set the scene.

(GGT, Tour Manager, 2018)

In discussing the plague character, the findings also revealed that the narrative is predominantly focused on the history of the plague in Dublin. Supporting the core storyline, the tour also highlights the history of grave-robbing, medieval

crime and punishment, and superstitions developed from myths and urban legends. While the Owner had predetermined some of the stories, the Tour Manager explained, as discussed in section 6.2.3, that the tour route dictated which stories they would be able to tell.

Reflecting on GGT's design, the findings revealed that film and popular media, coupled with the nature of the content, was influential on the development and delivery of both GGT's methods and design. The findings revealed that while GGT's narrative was inspired by the book series *Horrible Histories*, which describes unpleasant history in a fun and gross way, the bus's design was largely inspired by horror movies of the 1980s. While films like *Evil Dead* inspired some of the aesthetic features, *Jaws*, with its iconic, tension-building music, inspired the sound design. The Tour Manager explained:

We wanted to create something like the horror films that we liked, where you might get the occasional scare, but you're laughing most of the time, so it was very much on the entertainment, but grounded in the macabre history of Dublin. [...] It's done in a fun gross way. It's *Horrible Histories*.

(GGT, Tour Manager, 2018)

Similar influences were also revealed in the findings for S2D, where BH's Director explained the interpretation of history concerning medieval sickness and death related events needed to reflect a mix of *Horrible Histories*, science, and medicine. However, given their budget and spatial limitations, as well as conservation concerns, the findings show that S2D was only able to use static exhibition displays, minimal lighting, and sound technologies to deliver this interpretation. Provocation was possible, however, through the graphic details in the exhibits. For example, as reflected in Figure 6.19, one exhibit featuring medieval sanitation displays a mannequin using a stone latrine, which is situated with a smell pod emitting pungent smells and audio depictions of severe abdominal distress. In another example, as reflected in Figure 6.20, the first exhibit visitors see upon entering the tower is the Vitruvian man, designed to not only visually stimulate visitors, but engage them by picking up and holding dissected replica organs.

**Figure 6.19. S2D Medieval sanitation**



(Author's photo, 2017)

**Figure 6.20. S2D Vitruvian man**



(Author's photo, 2017)

S2D also includes exhibits of, for example, a blood stand to show the process of bloodletting; a urine stand to explain Galen's four humours; the plague, with a life-size plague doctor; and a pathology pod that allows visitors to see and feel different types of skin diseases. However, in creating these exhibits, the findings revealed that BH's Head of Operations modelled their design after exhibits in some of York's medieval attractions, including Barley Hall and the Richard III museum. Visocky-O'Grady and Visocky-O'Grady (2017) have suggested design development should concern itself with competition to determine how the design will compare to the market. However, the researcher finds S2D's modelling may be in part due to BH's lack of design experience. On this matter, BH's Head of Operations commented:

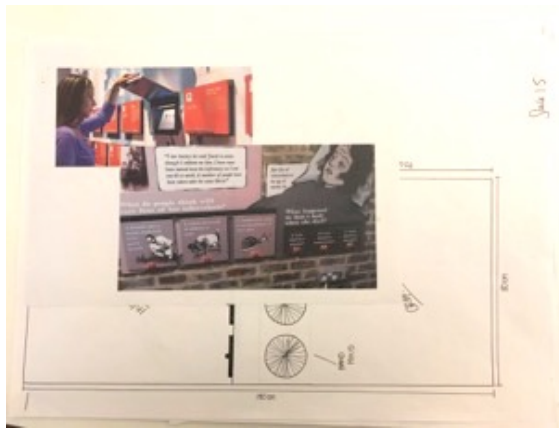
We borrowed things from York. [...] We have the blood stand where there is bloodletting going on and we have a urine stand- an idea stolen from York. Ours looks different, but it's the same idea. [...] There are elements that are similar to other places, such as the towers in York, but we just try to amalgamate them.

(BH, Head of Operations, 2017)

As reflected in Figures 6.21 - 6.24, S2D's design is clearly derived from the designs of York's Richard III Experience and Barley Hall. Interestingly, these attractions, which are now operated by the Jorvik Group, are all inherently grounded in the design of the Jorvik Viking Centre, the first attraction that CA

developed in 1984 in association with the York Archaeological Trust. Thus, the findings indicate CA's initial work with Jorvik was an influence on BH's design for S2D.

**Figure 6.21. Richard III display**



(BH, 2016a)

**Figure 6.22. S2D T/F display**



(Author's photo, 2017)

**Figure 6.23. Richard III humours**



(BH, 2016b)

**Figure 6.24. S2D humours**



(Author's photo, 2017)

On some of the exhibitions, the staff explained in their focus group discussion that they sometimes have issues with engaging children, as the exhibits can be perceived as text-heavy. Because of this, they argued that the museum needs more hands-on exhibits.



Unlike GGT and RMKC, S2D does not regularly use character re-enactment. However, the findings showed that for special events or private tours, the staff would volunteer to dress up as period inspired characters, as reflected in Figures 6.25 and 6.26. More recently, to increase the museum's visibility within the local market, the findings showed that a staff member dressed as the plague doctor and silently stalked the streets of Chester, causing a viral media sensation that proposed the plague had resurfaced in Chester.

**Figure 6.25. S2D monk**



(VisitChester, 2016)

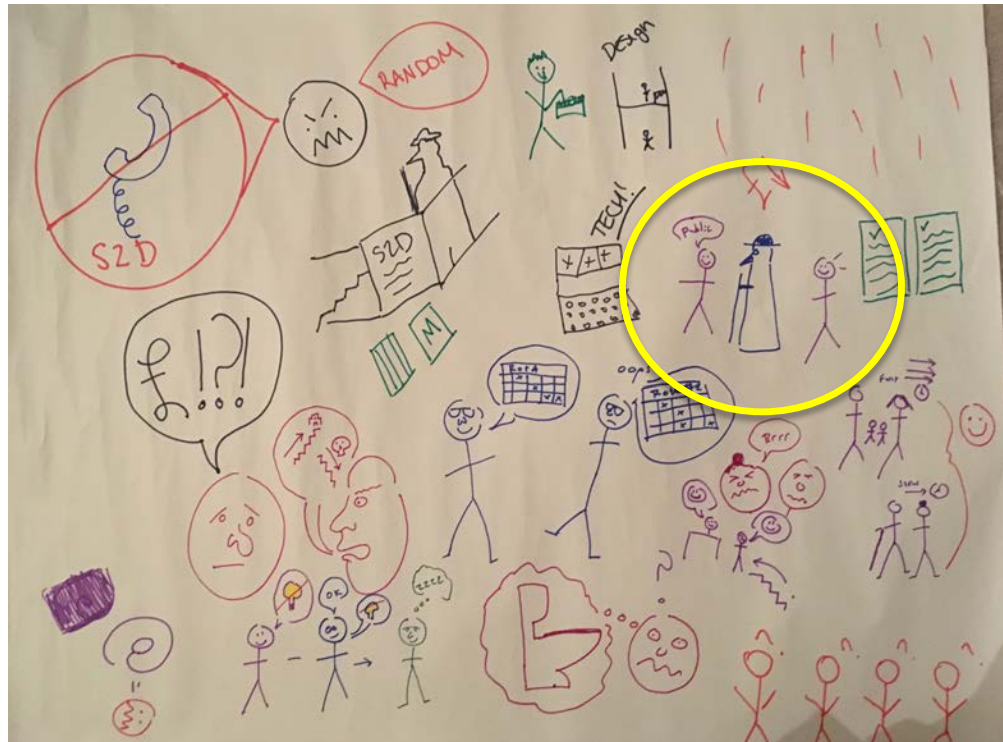
**Figure 6.26. S2D doctor**



(TripAdvisor, 2017)

Interestingly, while the findings show that S2D does not regularly use re-enactments, the focus group discussion revealed that the staff are interested in having more acting opportunities, as one staff member commented 'the museum seems to be bare bones all the time'. On the topic of character actors, and as reflected in Figure 6.27, the staff drew an image in their RP of a plague doctor next to two other people with the word 'public'. They explained in the discussion that they are willing to dress in costume since it appears to attract visitors.

**Figure 6.27. S2D focus group rich picture**



Commenting on the use of character actors, one staff member explained:

If there happens to be at least two of us, one might dress up as the plague doctor and stand in the place of the statue, wait for people to come up and take a picture, and then move to get a good response. That tends to get people inside because then they are quite intrigued.

(S2D focus group, Participant 1, 2017)

This statement indicates the staff are making judgements about what forms of interpretive methods work in attracting visitors, which reinforces Bryon (2012) and Potter's (2016) arguments that staff, as mediators for visitor experiences, can provide management with valuable information relating to how a design is or is not effectively meeting visitor needs and expectations.

Reflecting on the delivery of the selected methods, the interview with BH's Director revealed that the initial idea was to develop S2D as a replica of the London Dungeon Experience, underpinned by dark and macabre history, but with grounding that is more academic. This is an interesting finding given that the Dungeon Experience, as reflected in chapter four, is generally most cited in

dark tourism literature in reference to LDVAs. Moreover, this correlates with Visocky-O'Grady and Visocky-O'Grady (2017) comments, in which they suggest the review of competitor designs can be influential in design development. In speaking of this vision, BH's Head of Operations commented:

We were trying to marry two elements, the kind of Dungeons experience and the kind of interactive with narratives and stories about people and just having a good time, and then a more traditional kind of historic building setting. [...] It has a Dungeons vibe and I think if we had, more guides or staff dressed up as actors then it would feel a lot more like that, but then there is kind of the museum interactive vibe as well.

(BH, Head of Operations, 2017)

Yet, because of this vision, S2D's staff revealed in their focus group discussion that the museum could be perceived as misleading, as it really is a museum, but the marketing material makes it seem like it is more of a Dungeons Experience. One guide commented:

[Visitors] see the pictures, like of the hanging man, and they automatically think it is like a Dungeons Experience. They think there will be a lot of jump scares like at the York Dungeons and filled with gore. There is gore, but more in the context of medicine, therefore it is not done in this sort of shock value.

(S2D Focus Group, Participant 1, 2017)

This finding indicates an issue with either the interpretation's design, or the intended message. This is perhaps a consequence of the absence of a designer who, as Bogle (2013) and Wells et al. (2016) agree, is trained so that the interpretation delivers an effective experience that meets the needs and expectations of visitors

While the S2D's method selection was found largely based on an amalgamation of designs from similar attractions, the findings revealed that the RMKC's method selection was also based on the designs of other attractions. In choosing to promote edutainment, RMKC's Designer explained that there were several initial discussions relating to what the best approach would be to conduct the tour. She explained:



We considered if visitors should be given a headlamp as a way of lighting the whole thing. We thought about whether the guide should just be someone anonymous and telling a narrative story in third person, but fairly-quickly we came down to using characters that exist in the story.

(RMKC, Designer, 2017)

However, the interviews with CA's executive managers revealed the decision for guided character re-enactment tours was due to CA's previous experience operating the successful attractions. These include Jorvik Viking Village, Canterbury Tales, and the Oxford Story, which promote edutainment agendas, using costumed guides and theatrical elements. Thus, in determining what would work for RMKC, CA's Director of Attractions explained their philosophy was to replicate and adapt. He commented:

I think it became a no-brainer. When you have something that has been well received, don't reinvent the wheel, just replicate it, and work it around the different storyline.

(CA, Director of Attractions, 2017)

Yet, as reflected in chapter four, Stone (2006) suggests LDVAs are often criticised for their use of edutainment agendas. Consequently, given CA's reputation for delivering marketable HVAs through edutainment agendas, the findings revealed that they received media criticism that argued they would likely turn RMKC into a Disney or Dungeon style attraction. CA's CEO acknowledged that these criticisms were due to their success with Jorvik Viking Centre, which, now operated by Jorvik Group, was originally designed with a ride and animated scenes. However, from procurement to the grand opening, the findings showed that CA maintained RMKC would not have a ride, nor would they use such technologies that would liken RMKC to Disney theme parks.

In order to bring the history to life, as CA's Director of Attractions explains, character re-enactment was believed best suited for the tour. This decision was made, however, without conducting audience development research, which could have provided greater insight into what visitors might want or expect from the tour. According to the Designer, the selection of characters, as reflected in

Figure 6.28, was based on their relevance to the storyline and the site, and their costumes were developed because of the character choices.

**Figure 6.28. RMKC characters**



(CA, 2017e)

In developing the narrative, which is focused on the harsh realities of life on Edinburgh's Closes, the findings revealed discussions occurred amongst the managers concerning how the guides should perform as characters (i.e. first, second, third-person). The findings further revealed the guides of CA's other attractions were not consulted for ideas on this matter, which could have provided insight into what might work for the intended storyline and themes. Despite this, CA's Director of Attractions explained they realised they needed to give the general public credit that they would not be 'so taken into a story that they actually feel they are in that timespan'. Thus, the decision was made to use second-person characters, allowing the guides to reference modern day technologies and, as the IT Manager commented, 'put humour in the script, and pick on people a little to build a relationship between person to person.'

The findings also showed, as reflected in Figures 6.29 and 6.30, that RMKC uses set dressings, staged exhibits, and minimal technology as a consequence of conservation concerns. As discussed in section 6.2.3, these inclusions were originally gobo lighting, animate lighting, and ambient sounds. In addition, smell pods were also used to stimulate visitor senses, for example, the plague room was initially set up with a smell pod to emit the smell of vomit. The decision to

use minimal technology was in part due to the fragile nature of the site. However, CA's IT Manager explained that they also did not want to fill the tour with screens and high-end technologies, as the feeling was 'to not do too much', but rather just 'enhance the story that these small, dark places were not pleasant to live in'.

**Figure 6.29. RMKC murder room**



(CA, 2017f)

**Figure 6.30. RMKC plague room**



(CA, 2017g)

Yet the findings revealed that since opening, as reflected in Figure 6.31, coloured lighting effects have been installed, and as discussed in section 6.2.3, the gobo lighting technology was replaced with animated portraits.

**Figure 6.31. RMKC green lighting**



(CA, 2017h)

The decision to install more advanced technologies, specifically the animated portraits, have been revealed as being influenced by both the gobo's malfunction as a result of dust accumulation, and also CA's use of animated

portraits at another attraction. Further, the General Manager's background experience in cinema was also shown to have influenced the decision to add animated portraits. He commented:

I actually went to the Chocolate Story down in York. One of their interactive rooms has television screens of all the families. That room was my initial inspiration for Gallery. I just wanted the room to come to life. My background is in cinema, so I looked around to see what we could do.

(RMKC, General Manager, 2017)

Animated portraits have become a popular method for HVAs, as through personal travels, the researcher has identified their use in multiple attractions, including the Chocolate Story in York, both the Jamieson Whisky Distillery and Irish Whisky Museum in Dublin, and the Whisky Experience in Edinburgh. This further reinforces Timothy's (2018) arguments that edutainment based interpretative programs are effective for enjoyable, learning experiences.

#### **6.2.6 Managing ethical concerns and authenticity**

The findings also revealed that the interpretation designs were further influenced by challenges of managing ethical concerns and authenticity without diminishing the intended edutainment experience. This finding supports the literature, where scholars, including Silverman (2011), Weaver (2011), and Weidenfeld and Leask (2013), have suggested these issues are not only influences on interpretation, but also generally exist when a marketable historic past is altered due to complications or disagreements concerning what histories to include in the narrative and the appropriateness of the selected interpretation methods. Because of these issues, Stone (2006) has commented that LDVAs are often criticised for their frequent softening of narratives and trivialisation of past tragedies. However, as Alderman et al. (2016) argues, the perception of authenticity will vary among audiences and between individuals.

The findings revealed that, in terms of the nature and delivery of the content. the LDVAs' designs were scarcely influenced by ethical issues. When asked about such concerns, the managers responded impartially to the nature of the content. RMKC's Designer explained:

It is just history. I think we are completely de-sensitised, but then I don't think we could survive [or] cope if we weren't de-sensitised to a certain extent.

(RMKC, Designer, 2017)

This perspective does appear shared among the other LDVA managers. On this matter, GGT's Tour Manager provides a better insight into why society has perhaps become de-sensitised to such content, thus allowing tourism to use it as a medium for edutainment experiences. In discussing the plague specifically, he stated:

[Plague] is a shared tragedy and it happened absolutely everywhere. To be honest, most people's ways of dealing with something horrific is to joke about it. [...] We will always make light of the dark as a coping mechanism and I think everyone does that. Sometimes the only way you can engage people is to disguise it as entertainment, so people learn stuff without realising they've learned something.

(GGT, Tour Manager, 2018)

Similarly, BH's Director referred to the significance in discussing the plague, describing it as 'a mass depopulating event that still impacts the world today.' However, in discussing it as a medium for tourism purposes, he explained that it must be historically accurate and grounded in academic text or artefacts. Although this perspective is also shared among the LDVAs' managers, the findings have revealed that commercial interests for producing marketable products have influenced the delivery of this content. CA's CEO, for example, explained:

Don't forget we are a commercial business. We are not a museum. We are not supported by external funding. Therefore, we do have to have an eye on the marketing, and we would use terms like 'deep beneath the streets' or 'deep beneath your feet.' We do use marketing phrases that are emotionally engaging to try to get people to come in.

(CA, CEO, 2017)

Similarly, BH's Director commented on the fact that S2D is a commercial business that is not tax-funded, and therefore, the findings have reflected that

he is unconcerned with how some visitors may feel about the nature of the tour. He explained:

You know it's called Sick to Death. If you are squeamish or not happy with this sort of thing then just don't come in. I don't want to segregate things off because of [visitor] sensitivities. It is what it is.

(BH, Director, 2017)

It is clear from these perspectives that commercial interests have been influential on the designs. In addition, the findings show that the initial intent to create the LDVAs was influenced by the opportunity to fill market gaps and expand business. For example, BH's Director commented:

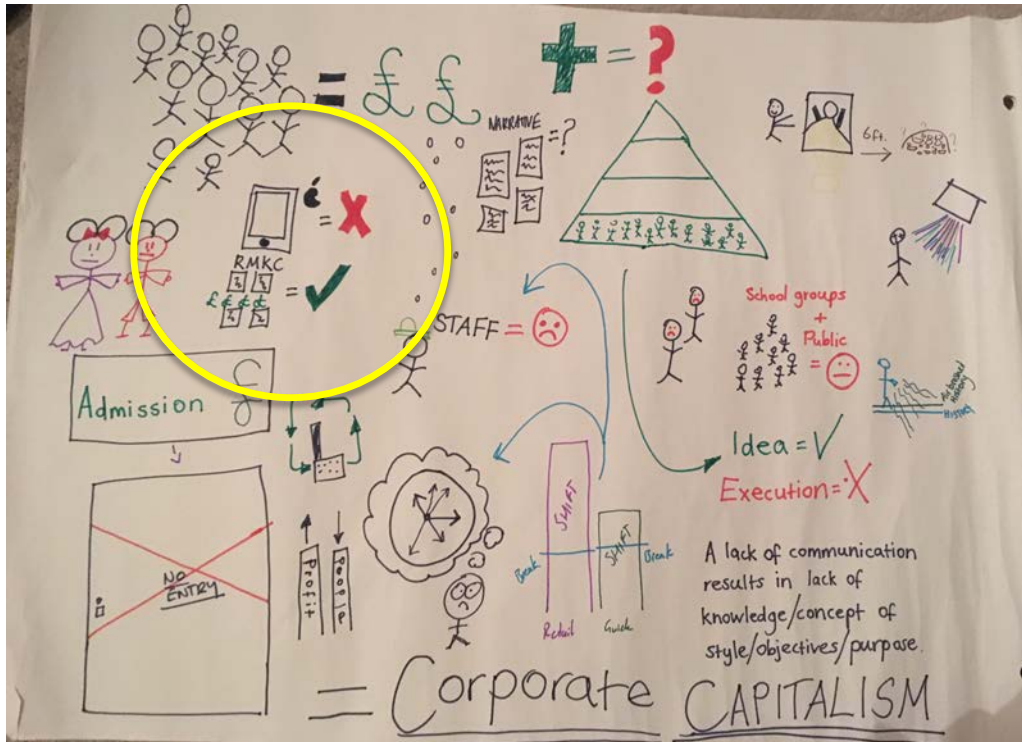
I realised there was some gaps to be able to communicate with the public some very high brow academic stuff and put it in a way that's more accessible and use in a kind of tourism angle to be able to do that.

(BH, Director, 2017)

Similarly, conversations with RMKC's management revealed that CA sought to fill a gap in Edinburgh's market, which had become saturated with scare tactics and ghost tours. In doing so, CA's CEO explained that RMKC was always meant to create a self-sustaining attraction that had not yet entered Edinburgh's tourism market.

Yet, on this topic, and as reflected in RMKC's RP, the staff have revealed reservations concerning this commercial ethic and some of the commercial aesthetics of the attraction. As reflected in Figure 6.32, the staff drew images of Disney-looking characters, an image of an iPhone with a red 'X' next to it, and four squares with the name 'RMKC' above it and a green checkmark next to it.

Figure 6.32. RMKC focus group A rich picture



The images in this RP reflect the commercial ethic of the attraction. Referencing the iPhone drawing, one guide explains the use of the red X is to indicate that visitors are not allowed to take photos with their personal devices. The four squares with RMKC above represent the photos RMKC offers to take and sell to visitors. These are then situated in the RP next to a green checkmark, which this is both a commercial activity and perceive good by the company because of it is profitable. However, reflecting on this issue, the staff argued in their discussion that photos RMKC offers are poor quality for a high price, which in turn compromises the historical integrity and ambiance of the site. In addition, with reference to the RP of Disney-looking characters, the guides discussed the use of costumed characters, arguing they have a feeling of Disney, which they further argued is exploiting the authenticity of the site. Yet, in saying this, they recognise that most visitors likely expect a theatrical element when going to any tourist attraction.

The guides further argue the purpose of presenting an authentic experience is tarnished by the commercial endeavours. This argument is acknowledged by Lennon and Weber (2017), who have raised concerns regarding the

commercialisation of DVAs, and more specifically, the appropriateness of allowing photography at DVAs. Seaton (1996) has discussed these concerns as a consequence of the larger commercial tourism infrastructure. However, these findings show that LDVAs, such as RMKC, remain challenged by the need to generate greater revenue in a postmodern society that demands more engaging and innovative experiences. This finding supports Oren and Shani's (2012) argument that DVAs are finding it more challenging to sustain a profitable attraction without succumbing to advanced technologies, re-enactment, and capitalising on film associations.

The findings further revealed that the managers' perspectives regarding their commercial interests and the nature of their attractions have allowed the LDVAs to become less concerned with visitor sensitivities in promoting graphic and provocative displays of death and suffering as a result of medieval hardships, including the plague, murder, and crime. In light of these findings, it is clear that none of the LDVAs omit or sanitise the history. Rather, the findings show that in playing on visitor empathies using re-enactments and sensation technologies, such as smell pods and ambient sounds, the LDVAs actually enhance the rawness of the history. For example, CA's Director of Attractions commented:

Everything we scripted originally was true to real life and not sanitised in any shape or form. Plague room is a prime example of that. That [room] can be quite graphic when [the guides] are going on about lancing buboes and things like that. [...] There was nothing done to dumb anything down or present it in a slightly different way.

(CA, Director of Attractions, 2017)

This perspective supports arguments made by Dwyer and Alderman (2008) discussed in chapter four, who suggest LDVAs are beginning to reveal the horrific truths within touristic retellings (Dwyer & Alderman, 2008). Therefore as Magee and Gilmore (2015) suggest, LDVAs are catering to wider visitor needs of raw and authentic representations of past horrors.

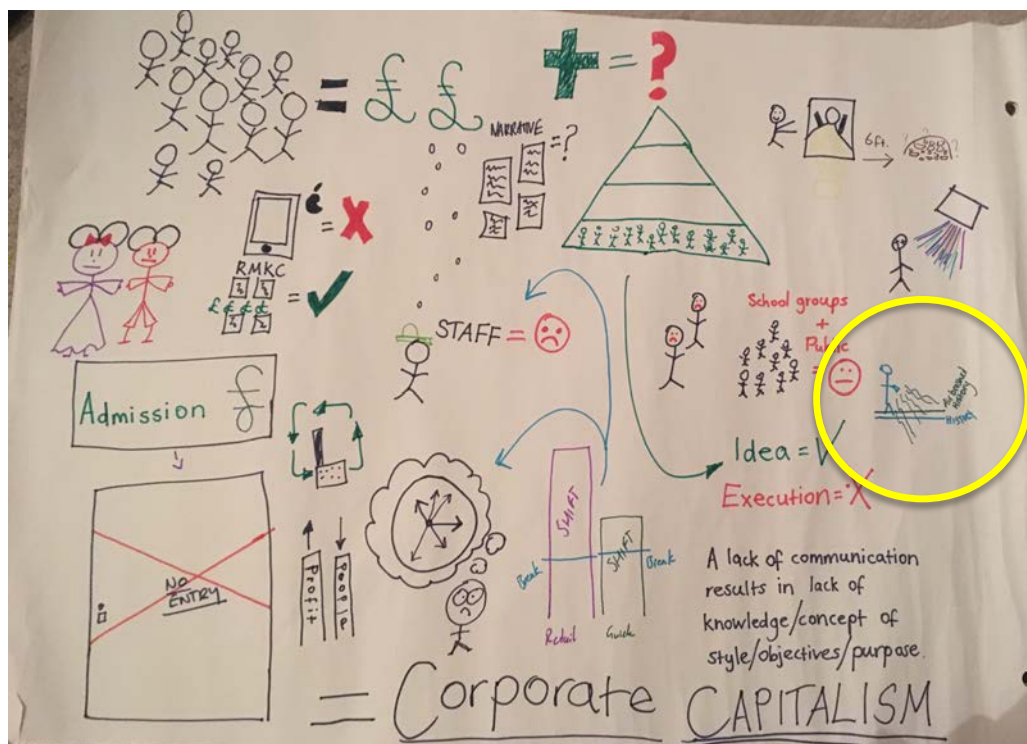


Yet, in discussing the narrative and the notion of softening truths, RMKC's focus group discussions revealed that they feel the narrative does not reveal the whole truth and that the history is 'air brushed'. As reflected in Figure 6.33, the staff drew an image of a person spraying something on the ground, with the words 'airbrushed history' next to it. This image was used to reflect the physical effort in changing the history that is told to visitors in order to appease what the company feels visitors want to hear. In discussing the meaning of this image, one guide commented:

I feel like the core history and what is down there and what happened, the company just put a wee airbrush over it to put on what sounds nice. I just think the company needs to realise the potential of what this site has and then build up from there instead of saying 'oh it's a wee bit grim at this point and maybe the tourists wouldn't like that so much, so we will dumb that down at some points.'

(RMKC focus group A, Participant 3, 2017)

**Figure 6.33. RMKC focus group A rich picture**



In discussing their RP and this issue, the findings revealed that the guides believe visitors' want the narrative to be even darker and to produce a sense of

shock. However, the guides suggest that this does not occur because CA does not think visitors want the full truth. Rather, they argue that the narrative is a 'dumbed down version' and 'incredibly speculative.' This is an interesting finding, as the guides' perceptions of how the narrative is received by visitors could provide necessary feedback to the management for how the design is currently working. This supports Potter's (2016) argument that staff input to design management should be significant, as they are constantly judging how a design is working practically over time. Yet, as revealed in the above, RMKC, nor S2D, included their staff in design decisions, and it appears that the ongoing management activities, discussed in section 6.3, also lack staff inclusion.

In discussing narratives and the issue of softening truths, BH's Director explained they have tried not to sanitise anything, and where things may be omitted is actually due to budget and spatial limitations. Indeed, the findings show that BH intends to push the envelope further with the S2D2 expansion as they have a greater budget for more technology. On this topic, the Director stated they 'will go really bloody and hard' where possible. This was, however, revealed in the findings as a matter of conflicting interests, as he explained some of BH's other managers have expressed concerns relating to the extent to which S2D tries to provoke reactions. BH's Head of Operations commented that some of the ideas discussed for the design were not age appropriate, as they did not want to scare children with displays of blood and guts.

The findings also revealed there were concerns among BH's managers regarding the display of human remains and how some visitors could perceive that negatively. Thus, as a means to mitigate this particular issue, BH's Head of Operations explained they enclosed the remains in a pathology pod, as reflected in Figures 6.34 and 6.35, so that visitors had the choice to enter and engage with them.

**Figure 6.34. S2D pathology lab**



(Author's photo, 2017)

**Figure 6.35. S2D skulls**



(Author's photo, 2017)

Still, in delivering an interpretation that enhances the rawness of history, the findings show none of the LDVAs sought to create gore for the sake of gore. Rather, they sought to remain historically accurate, which as GGT's Tour Manager explains, 'can be horrific without horrifically describing things'. In discussing the balance of provocation and historical accuracy, BH's Director commented that anything gory in S2D should be related to science and history in some way.

Similarly, while referring to GGT's delivery of the content as 'terrible toilet humour', the Tour Manager explained that not everyone scares easily, and not everyone likes to be scared. Thus, the findings showed that LDVAs sought to establish a balance between the history and the entertainment. Referring to the story of the Dolocher, which, according to GGT, is a story about violent attacks on women by a man wearing the hollowed-out flesh and skull of a pig, the Tour Manager explained some of their content is quite horrific. Yet, rather than embellishing the historical content, they let the history speak for itself and instead embellish their theatrical performances.

In discussing content embellishment and historical accuracies, CA's CEO explained that RMKC's design needed to correct the myths concerning people being bricked up and left to die after contracting the plague, which developed under the ownership of another tour company. On this point, the CEO explained:

There are people who come [to RMKC] because it is ghostly. There are people who come because of the horror of plague and death. What we try to present is a story that talks about facts, but also debunks some of the myths as well.

(CA, CEO, 2017)

The CEO's statement touches on the issue of myth-making, which, as Silverman (2011) explains, and as discussed in chapter four, is another management challenge for interpretation. This challenge is not only underpinned by ethical concerns and related to concerns for authenticity, but also a key influence on interpretation design and management. Yet, despite this concern for correcting established myths, the findings revealed that RMKC's narrative still incorporates ghost stories as a commercial means for appealing to the wider mass market. CA's Director of Attractions explained:

We knew that we would be fools not to do something around the haunted element with Annie and the Japanese psychic. A lot of the stories were there anyways, and it was just sort of making sure that they were told in the right manner.

(CA, Director of Attractions, 2017)

While this perspective is understandable, given RMKC is a commercial business, it has revealed an issue of conflicting interests. For example, the Designer had stated in her interview that she was less concerned about ghost stories and more concerned about the uniqueness and fragility of the spaces. Additionally, the focus group sessions revealed distaste among the staff for the ghost stories. During the focus group, one guide commented:

I think there is too much emphasis on ghosts, because it is an easy thing to sell. You don't have to spend money on it because it's all about the imagination. You might have an experience. You might see a ghost. You might see a dead child. At the end of the day though, you probably won't.

(RMKC focus group B, Participant 4, 2017)

Yet, in recognising the commercial benefit of telling ghost stories, the staff suggested that RMKC should offer two different tours that visitors can choose from— historical day tours and then ghost night tours. Through this effort, the

staff argued that this would allow them to better engage with specific audiences by delivering more directed tours, as found with the *Condemned* Halloween tour, which portrays the history of Edinburgh's witch trials that took place in and around RMKC. In discussing this tour, RMKC's Guiding Manager explains:

[Condemned] is meant to make you feel uncomfortable [...] It is ok to do every now and then, especially because it is relevant to our site, [...] It appeals to a specific niche of people rather than to the general public. [...] Those people do exist and that is why this tour always sells out.

(RMKC, Guiding Manager, 2017)

However, in discussing why CA does not run two different tours where guides can focus on either history or ghost stories, the Guiding Manager explained that interests in darker tours is much more limited when compared to interests in general heritage. While he acknowledges RMKC's tour does discuss darker stories, including death, plague, and murder, he argues that they deliver it in a way that does not seek to scare or depress visitors. Yet, RMKC did not conduct audience development research to determine if the market is in fact limited in relation to interest in this type of tour. Also, in reviewing the growing interests in dark tourism experiences and Edinburgh's range of dark tourism attractions, the researcher finds this response misguided. Moreover, the Guiding Manager's statement shows that the *Condemned* tour is profitable, given that it always sells out. As a result, this finding indicates RMKC's management appears to lack a full understanding of Edinburgh's tourism market, which may be a direct result from not having conducted audience research or formative or remedial evaluations. Further, this finding shows that RMKC is potentially missing an opportunity to not only engage a wider audience, but also enhance their commercial endeavours through added night tours.

Adding to this, while the concern for authenticity in relation to narratives has been revealed as an influence on all of the LDVAs designs, managing authenticity in relation to the physical site was identified as a key challenge for RMKC, as an in-situ location, and a consequent influence on their interpretation design and management.

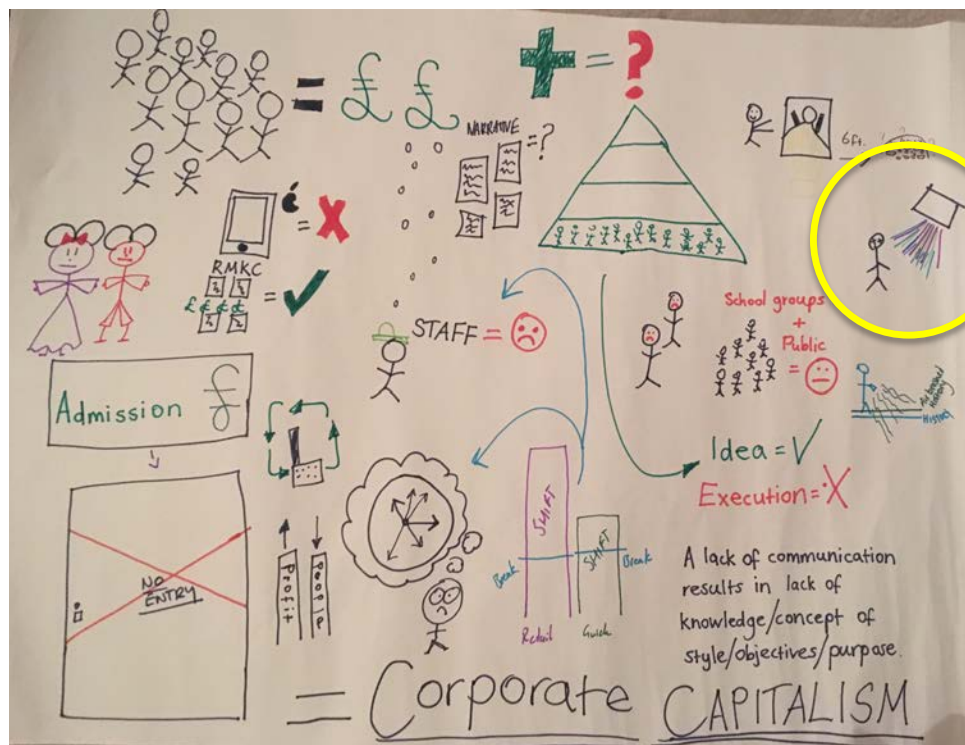
The findings revealed that both the managers and staff of RMKC are concerned about the authenticity of the site. However, because of this, several instances of conflicting interests and management challenges have been identified. Specifically referring to the addition of the animated portraits and coloured lighting effects, CA's Director of Attractions commented:

I think [the General Manager] has moved a few things from where I would like them to be, such as lighting. Should we be putting in green and blue lighting down there, for example? [...] Fundamentally, there are a few things that have changed that are not necessarily right for the experience. I think using a green light, for example, is one of those.

(CA, Director of Attractions, 2017)

In discussing the coloured lighting, RMKC's RP also revealed frustrations amongst the staff concerning its appropriateness for the site. Reflected in Figure 6.36, the staff drew an image of a person with X's for eyes and coloured lines coming from a square. This image was used to reflect the fact that the staff find visitors often have a hard time seeing the displays and focusing on the performance due to the brightly lit coloured lights in each room.

**Figure 6.36. RMKC focus group A rich picture**



Reflecting on this issue, one guide described her frustrations with the lighting in the plague room, commenting:

You have the green light on in plague, I get that, because it is not a very pleasant colour and [the plague] was this horrible disease, but at the same time, it is a historical tour and they wouldn't have had these bright, blinding green and purple lights in the 1600s. It distracts, and people are trying to listen to the stories being told, but they are too busy trying to find the right position to block their eyes from the light.

(RMKC focus group A, Participant 4, 2017)

This comment is important to highlight, as it, and many others similar to it identified in the focus group discussions, reinforces Bryon (2012) and Potter's (2016) arguments that guides are constantly making judgments about what works for a visitor experience, and should therefore be consulted in regards to a design's on-going management.

It is clear from these findings that the LDVAs' designs were scarcely influenced by ethical concerns, apart from concerns relating to S2D's pathology pod. However, S2D's decisions for managing their ethical considerations are somewhat unsupported given that they did not conduct audience research, which would have provided insight into how appropriate visitors may have perceived certain displays. This is similar to the case of the appropriateness of the added coloured lighting and animated portraits at RMKC. The findings have also revealed that concerns for historical accuracy and authenticity are a significant influence on the LDVAs' designs. This is an interesting finding considering the majority of dark tourism literature argues, as reflected in chapter four with arguments made by Stone (2006), for example, that LDVAs are generally unconcerned with matters of authenticity, as they are perceived to, more often than not, trivialise history through myth-making.

### **6.3 On-going management of LDVA designs**

This research further identified influences on the on-going management of the LDVAs' designs, which are largely concerned with issues relating to budget restrictions. However, the findings also exposed that while the LDVAs do

gather visitor feedback through online media outlets, they do not conduct on-site summative evaluations relating to their designs. This contradicts the literature, as Jones (2007) and Walhimer (2012), for example, have suggested summative evaluations should be conducted with visitors and staff to evaluate how a design is working practically over time. Rather, the findings showed RMKC focuses on site evaluations for conservation and structural integrity. Moreover, since S2D is in the current process of expanding into S2D2, BH's Director explained they are not focused on conducting any evaluations for S2D at this time.

The findings further revealed that none of the LDVAs consult their staff relating to their designs' on-going management. This has consequently resulted in challenges pertaining to conflicting interests and communication issues between the management and staff. This reinforces Bryon's (2012) argument that lacking staff inclusion often leads to feelings of disempowerment and issues relating to tension between staff and management. Despite this, the findings showed that the LDVAs' staff have made personal observations about how the designs are working practically, what design elements need reinvestment, and what their role is in managing the designs. In light of this information, the researcher finds that the focus group discussions were largely critical and at times quite negative towards the on-going management activities of their LDVAs. While much of the staff concerns could be used as constructive feedback not only for determining how the designs are practically working, but also for identifying where the designs require reinvestment, the findings exposed indications of frustrations and disempowerment, and even fear for voicing their concerns to management. These findings have consequently identified conflicting interests and communication issues between the LDVAs' staff and management, which can impact the daily operations of the LDVAs.

As revealed in the findings, S2D does not conduct any evaluations due to their on-going expansion into S2D2. However, the RP and staff focus group discussions showed there are still clear issues relating to the on-going management of S2D's design. Reflected in Figure 6.37, the staff drew images in their RP of three people and above them images of light bulbs crossed out,



the word 'ok', and 'zzzzz'. The staff described these images as being used to reflect their frustrations with the communication between them and the management team. In discussing the lighting issues, as earlier described in Section 6.2.4, the staff often relayed information to the management team about faults with the electrical system and lighting, and although they are reassured these issues will be fixed, the reality is that they are not fixed.

**Figure 6.37. S2D focus group rich picture**



Adding to the discussion surrounding this image, another staff member commented on her confusion relating to the staff's roles in designing special events and fixing design related issues on-site. The guide commented:

What really are our roles? I think that we should be able to just say 'we work here, so we think that this would come across well if we did this as an event', and then start putting it together. We have this thing that we have to go to people with ideas, who go to other people, who then go to other people, but we are there, and we do know how it works and what visitors are after.

(S2D focus group, Participant 2, 2017)

In discussing this issue, the staff revealed there are clear communication issues between them and the management, which has led to operational issues on site. While one staff member commented she is unsure who to go to when design features malfunction, another commented:

I feel that there is not enough communication between [management] and the Sick to Death staff. For example, there was filming going on the other day and I had no idea about any of it, but they said [BH's Director] was ok with it. I was just like 'ok, I don't know anything about this, but sure come in.'

(S2D Focus Group, Participant 2, 2017)

This comment is directed at S2D's operations. However, it further indicates staff frustrations with communication issues and the management's support, or lack thereof, which they argue is because of their absence from the site. It is clear from this chapter, that S2D's staff are actively making judgments about how the design is working, particularly considering that they have recognised visitor needs and expectations as a consequence of managing visitor complaints regarding the exhibitions and size of the attraction. Thus, the researcher argues it would perhaps be beneficial for the Project Manager of the S2D2 expansion to involve the staff in its design development.

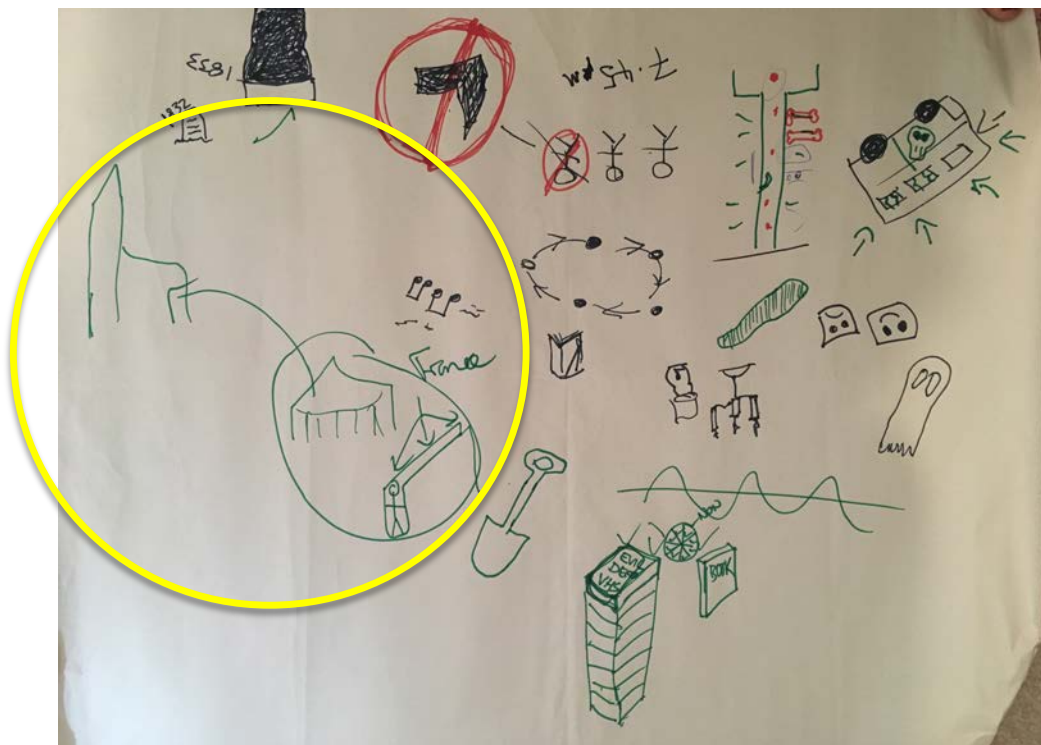
The issue of management's absence leading to staff frustrations and communication issues was also revealed at GGT. In discussing concerns with the on-going management activities of the design and attraction, the findings revealed staff frustrations relating to reinvestment issues. Collectively, the actors commented in their group discussion on how other HDT bus tours have had bigger budgets and therefore have designs that are more innovative and enhanced when compared to GGT. They explained that what they perceive to be lacking reinvestment is influenced by the fact that the owners are never on-site to see how the tour is actually working, and therefore they don't see how the tour could be enhanced. One actor explained:

You know the whole notion of being there? It is hard to draw absence. But seeing [the tour] and experiencing it is necessary.

(GGT focus group, Participant 2, 2018)

Elaborating on this issue, and further revealing conflicting interests, one actor explained that they, the actors, were the creative side, making decisions about the tour, and the owners were the business side, making decisions about finance, and because of this dichotomy the two sides did not always see things in the same way. Reflected in Figure 6.38, the staff drew an image of a tent next to a person inside an elongated shape meant to reflect a trench, with arrows point to it from the word 'France'. From this image is another arrow pointing towards an image, that they explain was to represent a building. The staff explained in their group discussion that they feel they are at the front lines and in the trenches, while the higher-level management team is elsewhere.

**Figure 6.38. GGT focus group rich picture**



Reflecting on this issue while referring to the RP, one actor stated:

This is where [the actors] are, we are at the front line. Then [the owners] are the generals, back here in their tents [...] The only difference with this, however, is that the decision making is actually happening here at the front line, it is not being made by the generals. [...] They are just money; they make no decisions.

(GGT focus group, Participant 1, 2018)

This comment indicates the staff has assessed the current state of the design and has identified a need for reinvestment. However, these needs are unfulfilled due to issues with funding. This not only reveals budget restrictions as an on-going management challenge, but also as an influence on the on-going management of interpretation designs.

Similar to S2D and GGT, the findings revealed that RMKC does not conduct summative evaluations relating to their interpretation. Rather, they regularly conduct site evaluations relating to the conservation and maintenance of the site's structural integrity. These site evaluations are generally concerned with identifying issues relating to air extraction, electrical needs, and general wear of the flooring and site. This supports Boyle's (2016) recommendations of on-going management activities. To specifically manage the accumulation of dust, which was reflected in section 6.2.4 as an influence on the use of gobo lighting, the guides' focus groups revealed once a year they conduct 'deep cleans'. However, these efforts have been exposed in the findings as non-impactful, and rather a source of frustration for the guides, as one guide argued that RMKC should hire professionals to clean the site on a regular basis. Despite these efforts, it is evident that the on-going management of RMKC's design is greatly challenged by dust and its underground location.

Through the site evaluations, RMKC's management recognised that the installation of support beams, as shown in Figure 6.39, was required to reinforce the 400-year old ceiling. In addition, site evaluations led to the one-year closure of Annie's room, which, named after the little girl who supposedly haunts the area, was due to safety and conservation concerns pertaining to the structural integrity of a supporting wall.

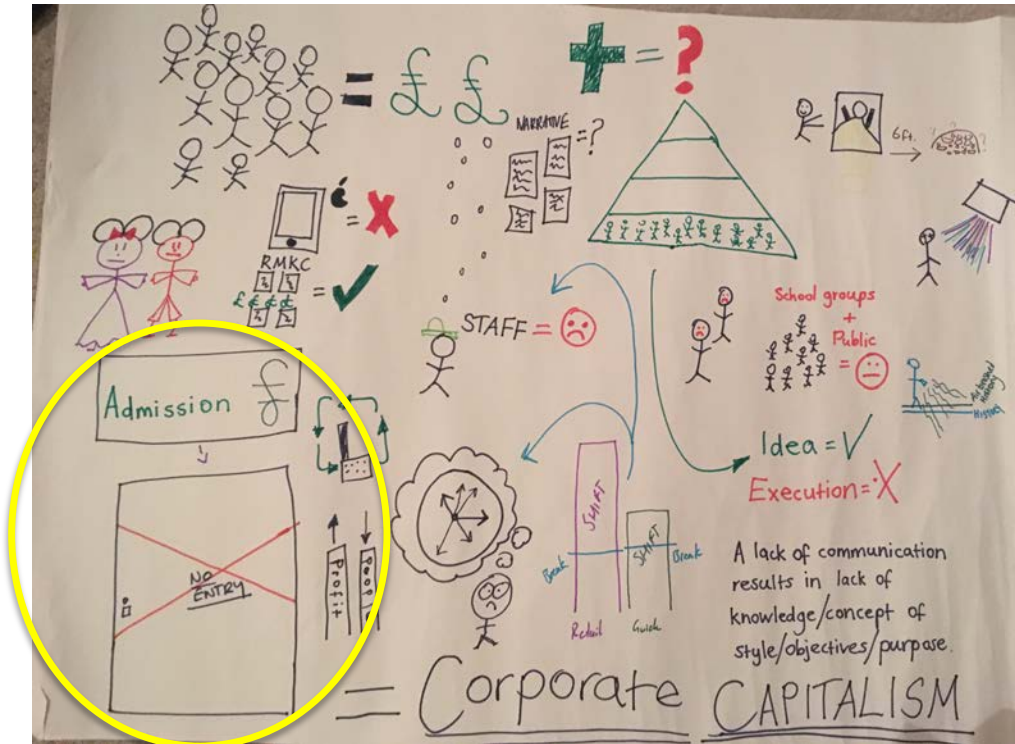
**Figure 6.39. RMKC 17<sup>th</sup> century house**



(Hinds, 2017)

The closure of Annie's room was revealed in the findings as source of frustrations among the guides. As their RP revealed, reflected in Figure 6.40, the guides drew an image of a door with a red 'X' and the phrase 'no entry' on it. This image is situated below a square with the word 'admission' and a £ symbol in it, with an arrow pointing down to the image of the door. Discussing this RP, the guides explain that visitors pay to see the site, but in reality, many of the rooms are inaccessible due to health and safety concerns. The use of the colour red is explained to draw emphasis to the closure of rooms, while the use of the colour green is to draw emphasis to the commercial aspects of the business that continue to make profits despite the site being inaccessible in some areas.

Figure 6.40. RMKC focus group A rich picture



The guides' explanation of their RP reveals concerns with not only the conservation of the site, but also the diminished visitor experience. As a resolution, they recommended closing the attraction to repair some of the dilapidated rooms, including Annie's room. One guide argued 'it's either that or risk completely losing the site forever'. The guides' recommendation to close the site for conservation and restorative work echoes Mason (2016) and McGregor (2002), who argue conservation concerns often require access restrictions or site closure for appropriate site management and maintenance.

Commenting on the need for restorative care of the site, RMKC's General Manager explained the biggest issue they face is that the site is in-situ and also located underneath a working building. Consequently, in trying to conduct needed fixings, he stated:

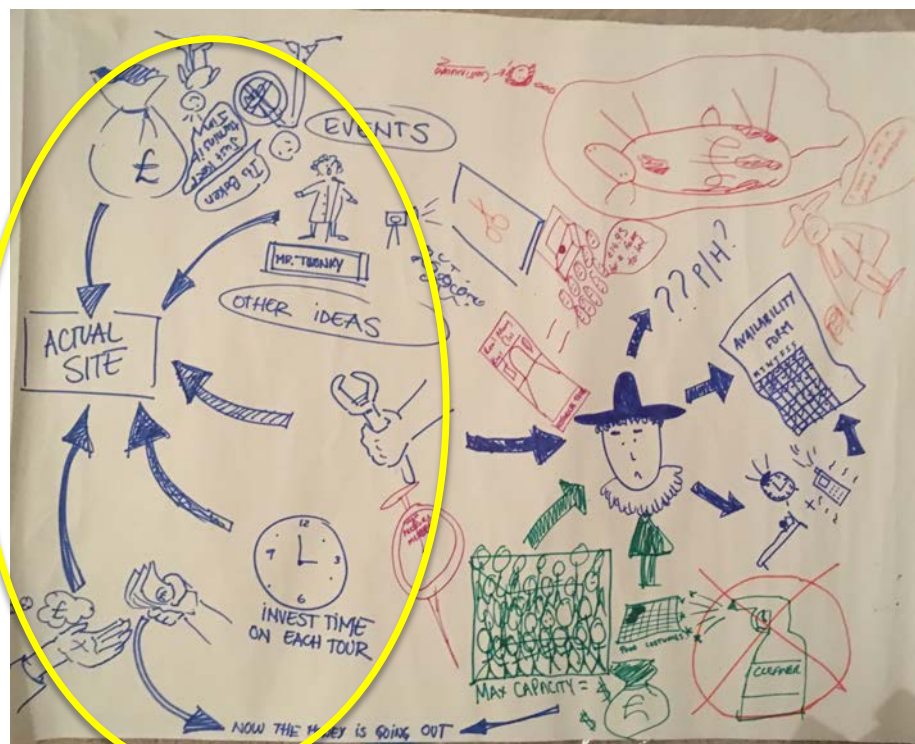


We have on-going maintenance issues, some of which may never be resolved. We just have to accept it. We have leaks in certain places that will never be fixed. But if we know we have a leak and we know it is going to rain then we can come up with a contingency plan for that area.

(RMKC, General Manager, 2017)

This comment reinforces Roza, et al. (2018) arguments that conservation concerns are a core challenge for managing interpretation in in-situ locations. Still, the findings revealed there are clear issues of conflicting interests relating to the on-going management of the site and its design. Revealed in the focus group sessions, the guides expressed frustrations relating to conservation efforts for the site. As reflected in Figure 6.41, the guides drew a square with the phrase 'actual site' in the middle and pointing to this image are five arrows that stem from other images. These images depict money being given to a hand held out, a clock with the phrase 'invest time on each tour', a hand holding a wrench, a man standing on a box with the words 'events' over it and 'other ideas' under it, and a bag with a £ symbol on it.

**Figure 6.41. RMKC focus group B rich picture**



In discussing these images, the guides explained that underpinning the site's physical degradation is what they perceive to be lacking re-investment. Through the image of money given to a hand held out, one guide stated '[CA] is not investing money into the site, but rather investing in other things to produce more money'. Referring to the image of the clock, another guide explained that the tours are not providing quality experiences because the timing does not allow visitors to engage while on-site and ask questions. Adding to this, with reference to the hand holding a wrench, the guides explain that areas of the site are deteriorating and need reinvestment, which draws on the image of the bag with the £ on it. On this topic, one guide stated:

The fundamental problem is this place does patch jobs on everything. When it breaks, it is covered up, not fixed. [...] When the 17<sup>th</sup> century wall started falling down, we just stopped going in there. [...] The 17<sup>th</sup> century room, along with the Close is one of the most historically relevant parts of this site, and what we should be protecting the most.

(RMKC focus group B, Participant 5, 2017)

Referring to the image of the man standing on the box with the words 'events' over it and 'other ideas' under it, the guides explain that RMKC's management should utilise the space for other purposes when the tours are not running in order to increase interest from external investors and the public. The guides' argument for alternative events suggests RMKC could boost revenue for reinvestment through special event sales that appeal to niche markets that would not otherwise attend an RMKC tour.

The guides' argument concerning management solutions relating to the deterioration of the site is further echoed in the focus groups relating to the management of some of the interpretive features, including the animated portraits and costumes. One guide commented in the group discussion that when the animated portraits stop working, the management's fix is to simply put a white sheet over it, however still expecting the guides to interact with the audio. Adding to this, another guide commented:



[Visitors] are not going to see what Mary King looks like because there is a sheet on [it]. Professionally I just feel awful, because I know they paid the exact same amount of money as someone who came yesterday, and this was working.

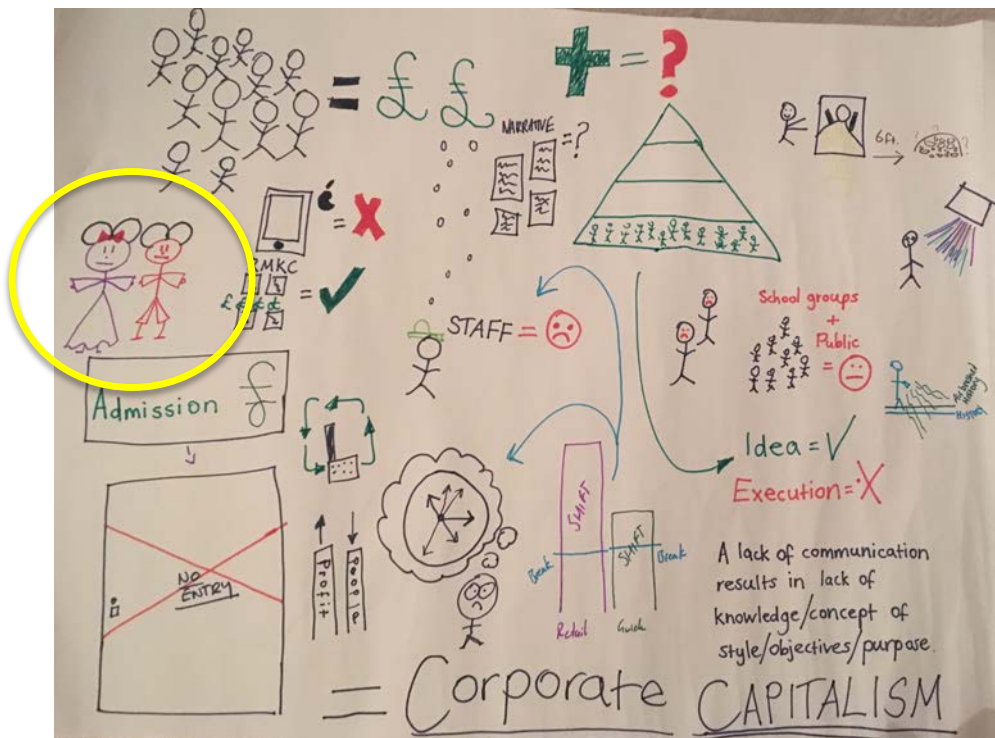
(RMKC focus group B, Participant 5, 2017)

Relating to the care and maintenance of the costumes, the guides compared RMKC to other attractions that use character re-enactment. In their RP, as discussed in Section 6.2.6 and reflected in Figure 6.42, the guides drew Disney-looking characters, on which one guide commented:

If you go to the Dungeons, they actually put money into [the costumes]. The costumes look good, they may be crappy and old, but they don't look it. Ours are old and tired. We get people all the time saying the guides smelled quite bad on the tour. It's because the costumes are rancid. You get one waistcoat to wear for how many years?

(RMKC focus group A, Participant 2, 2017)

**Figure 6.42. RMKC focus group A rich picture**



In an attempt to draw a resolution out of their frustrations relating to the costumes, the findings revealed the guides would be happy with either not wearing costumes and instead wearing standard uniforms that the admissions

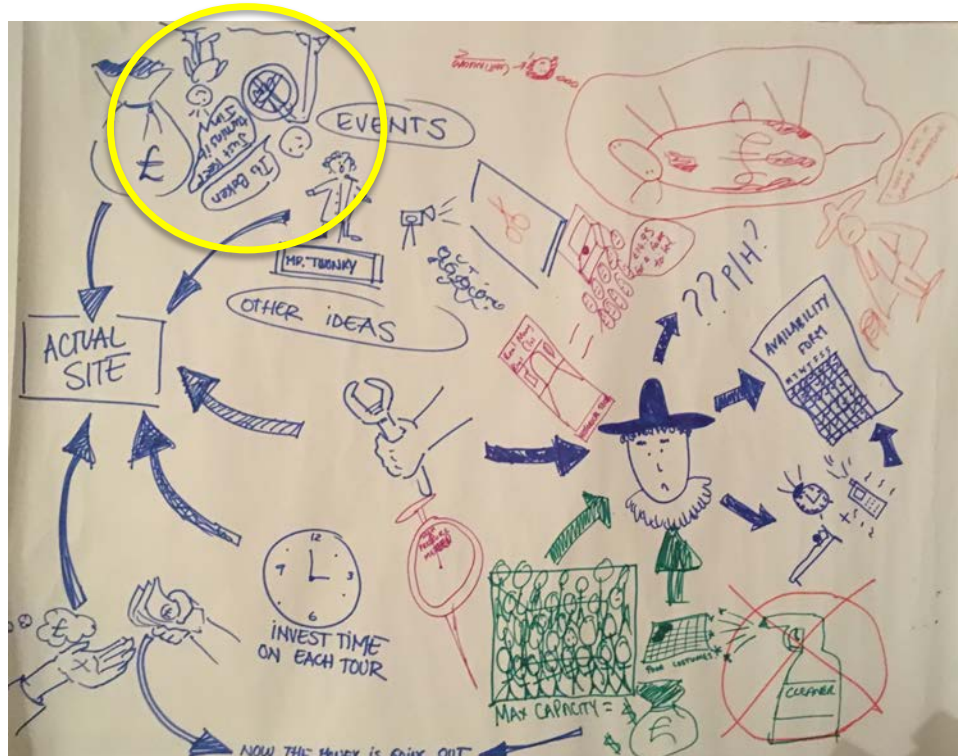
desk staff wear, or staying in costumes, but with the management being prepared to maintain them properly.

The findings further exposed that much of the guides' concerns appear to have developed from the fact that, as the Designer commented in her interview, the original tour created in 2003 is more or less the same tour (e.g. set dressings, props) currently offered, apart from some changes with the animated portraits in the gallery room. On this topic and reflected in their RP, as displayed in Figure 6.43, one guide drew a man and a wheel saying 'its' broken', with another man saying, 'just keep turning it, Jim'. This image is explained in the group discussion as a reflection of the issue that the site is falling apart, but it is forced to continue working without adequate repairs. On this issue, one guide commented:

Nothing has really changed since [2003] and it is now 2017, apart from the gallery room, which now has talking portraits. It's just been run into the ground. See, here is a wheel, and it's broken. Then you've got someone here saying, 'just keep turning it, Jim', 'but it's broken,' 'just keep turning it until it falls right off'.

(RMKC focus group, Participant 3, 2017)

**Figure 6.43. RMKC focus group B rich picture**



Commenting on the matter of reinvestment, the General Manager explained they have the funding, but time is the major issue for them. This is an interesting comment as the focus groups discussions show that the staff perceive reinvestment issues as being related to commercial priorities. Specifically concerning reinvestment and refurbishments for room changes, the General Manager commented:

The time isn't there. We need to allocate [change] as a proper project, but the problem with trying to do it in off-peak season is that we have been sold out every day. We didn't have an off-peak season. So, when you look at the resources you have, everyone is already frazzled and haven't had time to recover. I am not going to then ask, 'who wants to pull a 24-hour shift to help me do this?'

(RMKC, General Manager, 2017)

Reflecting on this information, the interview with the General Manager has shown that both the nature of the site and time are not only management challenges but are also influences on the on-going management of RMKC's design. Further, his comment relating to time correlates with findings from the Designer's interview, which indicate design changes are generally challenged by operational issues. Still, the Designer explained that sites should be refurbishing and rejuvenating fairly regularly. She explained:

That is the thing about interpretation is that it is transient. If you're an interpreter, you have to accept that. Things change, move on, and wear out and look dated.

(RMKC, Designer, 2017)

Although RMKC's Designer is no longer employed with CA and therefore unable to make necessary recommendations, the findings revealed she agreed with the guides' proposal that the site should close for a period of time to undergo necessary refurbishments. Yet, CA's Director of Attractions indicated certain refurbishments are not necessarily needed when a site is able to adapt a design through re-enactment changes. He stated:

When you're doing development, you're doing it to second-guess the drop off in numbers, but it's not happened at Mary Kings yet. [...] The joy with having the guides is that they can change the tour for every single visitor, whether that is a school group or a group of women. [...] That for me is as good as spending a half million pounds on a new set of something.

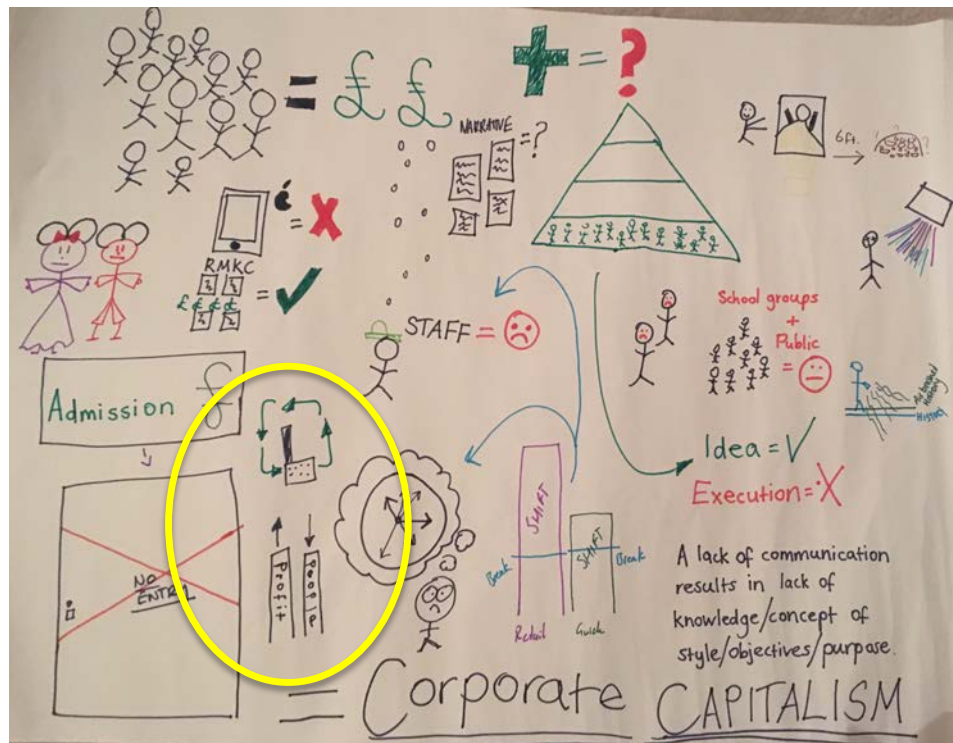
(CA, Director of Attractions, 2017)

Although challenged by both time and conservation issues, these comments made by both CA's Director of Attractions and RMKC's General Manager suggest business operations and commercial interests take precedence over, for example, closing the site to renew the interpretation design features. These comments further suggest the managers perhaps perceive the success of the business as reason for not needing to reinvest and renew the interpretation. Therefore, the researcher finds that these comments actually reinforce the guides' concerns for the site and their argument that perhaps commercial interests are leading to further degradation to the site. In consequence, this finding reinforces Rodriguez-Garcia's (2012) argument that a key challenge for interpretation and ensuring authenticity is the issue of misplaced management attention, which is too often focused on entertaining visitors and providing a commercial product, as opposed to ensuring accurate and authentic history. Further, these comments appear to reject Bramwell and Lane's (2014) argument that interpretation development actually helps to increase visitor interest, which in turn promotes greater revenue generation.

Because of these issues and adding to the issue of conflicting interests, the findings exposed, through the focus group discussions, that the guides describe RMKC as a commercially driven 'money making machine'. This perception is reflected in RMKC's RP, which as reflected in Figure 6.44, displays images of a factory with green arrows moving in a circular fashion around it, and two rectangles with the word 'profit' pointing up and the word 'people' pointing down. The guides explain in their discussion that these images, specifically the green arrows and use of the word 'profit', reflect the fact that the site is run like a factory and profits continue to rise through the increase of admission fees and guidebook costs. However, despite this economic success, they argue that the site continues to degrade, as

reinvestments are instead put towards non-tour related products, such as the café and other retail services.

**Figure 6.44. RMKC focus group A, rich picture**



In discussing the issue of reinvestment and the deterioration of the site in relation to the commercial ethic of the business, one guide commented:

Since I have been here, the price of the tour has gone consistently up, and the quality of the tour has become consistently worse because things are broken.

(RMKC focus group B, Participant 5, 2017)

The findings pertaining to RMKC's on-going management activities have reflected many of the guides' concerns could be used as constructive feedback for not only determining how the design is practically working, but also identifying where the design requires reinvestment. However, the findings exposed indications of disempowerment among the guides and fear for voicing their concerns. In discussing the management of the site, one guide commented with reference to the things not working properly that 'there is a terrified feeling whenever the CEO is around.' This indicates a sense of

apprehension between the staff and CA. Another guide stated in the group discussion that she doesn't feel like she has a voice in terms of the site or its interpretation. This is an interesting comment considering that, in his interview, the General Manager indicated his willingness to hear their opinions. He commented:

I have an open-door policy. You want to talk to me, come in, and talk to me. There may be a legitimate reason of why we can't do [refurbishments]. If you don't ask, you don't get. [...] But people don't always take that opportunity to speak to us about [issues] and then when we do put things in place there is apprehension or negativity.

(RMKC, General Manager, 2017)

These findings have exposed a clear communication issue between RMKC's management and staff, which the researcher finds is perhaps because of the management's exclusion of staff from influencing decisions on managing the DVAs. For example, the Guiding Manager stated that while the guides' opinions are always valid, their inclusion just depends on what the topic is. Additionally, in explaining a recent design change, the General Manager commented that he had included the staff by giving them a 3-4-page document that provided the basic details of his plans. This particular statement does not suggest staff were included in the plans, but rather shows they were told what the plans were after their development.

This research reaffirms Boyle (2016) and Walhimer's (2012) arguments, which, as discussed in chapter three, suggest budget issues relating to both funding and time are often an influence on the on-going management activities for interpretation designs. The findings also revealed conservation concerns and the nature of the LDVAs' locations are also an influence on the on-going management of the designs. Through these findings, communication issues between management and staff, as well as management and designers, have been identified, which, in support of Kossmann and de Jong (2010) and Roberts (2015), was revealed as a direct consequence of inclusion issues within interpretation development and management. Additionally, the findings reinforce Bryon (2012) and Potter's (2016) arguments that, because of

communication issues, staff, in particular, often become passive participants, left with feelings of disempowerment and frustration. Finally, these findings reinforce the importance of regular summative evaluations, which Boyle (2016) suggests includes the consultation of visitors and staff, which, as suggested in chapter three, can lead to more effective interpretation designs over a longer period of time.

#### **6.4 Conclusions**

This chapter has presented and discussed the findings of the research concerning influences on the design and management of interpretation, thereby contributing to existing academic research and practice. In doing so, this chapter helps to fulfil recommendations identified in the literature review that advocate a need for greater exploration into management and operational elements of LDVAs. In addition, this chapter has discussed the three individual, but characteristically similar LDVAs, that were selected through the sampling process, as discussed in chapter six, thereby not only responding to recommendations for research to move beyond singular case studies of the darkest DVAs, but also providing a foundation for potential future comparative analyses. Further, this chapter has identified not only a number of influences underpinning interpretation design and management, which were related to the management challenges discussed in the literature review but has also revealed a series of relationships between those influences that, in turn, influence interpretation developments. Finally, this chapter has exposed several management challenges as a consequence of issues relating to interpretation design and management, which appear largely underpinned by a disconnect between interpretation practitioners and their understanding of the literature's recommendations for design.

This chapter has revealed that despite their inherent differences, LDVAs share several common influences relating to interpretation designs. First, the LDVAs for this research were each influenced in their interpretation designs by the extent of their inclusion of stakeholders, which was further influenced by organisation factors of need, relevance, and budget concerns. Issues relating to stakeholder inclusion were further revealed to have impacted the LDVAs'



designs due to matters concerning experience in designing interpretation, as well as experience working within the heritage tourism industry. Through these findings, this chapter has confirmed the significance and need of a designer, who is trained to manage varying challenges and limitations whilst ensuring the delivery of an effective experience that meets visitor needs and expectations. Interestingly, the findings also revealed that business longevity was a significant influence on stakeholder inclusion and experience development. Through this it was demonstrated that the longer a company has been in business, the greater the opportunity it has to grow in size and budget, and also provide its' managers opportunities to gain design experience.

This chapter has further confirmed that budget issues, including funding and time limitations, are influences on interpretation designs and their management. In addition, the nature of the LDVAs' physical locations, including access, spatial limitations, and conservation concerns were proven significant influences on interpretation practices. Through the discussion of these findings, this chapter further revealed that the LDVAs did not operate fully in line with the recommendations of Wells et al. (2016) and Woodward (2009), but in an ad hoc manner which led to some management challenges during the design developments. This not only reinforced the literature's claim that interpretation design is currently largely based on the notion of 'it depends', further confirming Black (2005) and Reid's (2011) notion that there is so far no standard approach to interpretation design. In light of this, this chapter also demonstrated a need for a design model that is directed at LDVA, as well as HVA and DVA, interpretation, which may help to mitigate certain challenges in design developments, particularly in instances lacking inhouse designer expertise.

In addition, this chapter has demonstrated how the nature of the content influences the design and management of LDVAs. In doing so, this research argues that, in contrast to the existing dark tourism literature, in which Stone (2006), for example, refers to LDVAs as being unconcerned with matters of authenticity, these LDVAs are evidently concerned with the retelling of factual histories, even their use of edutainment as a means to engage visitors for both learning and enjoyment. Thus, LDVAs, as Ivanova and Light (2017) and Light



(2017a) argue, require even greater attention in future research for the continued progress in understanding of their operations and management.

Finally, this chapter explored the on-going management of interpretation design, which hitherto, has appeared hardly explored in dark tourism research. As a result, this chapter has uncovered several management challenges relating to conflicting interests and communication issues because of restricted stakeholder inclusion. Moreover, this chapter has revealed staff concerns relating to matters of authenticity and reinvestment, which appear to be underpinned by frustrations as a result of their lacking inclusion in on-going management activities, despite their role as mediators for the design. Stemming from this discussion, the findings discussed in this chapter reinforce Bryon (2012) and Potter's (2016) arguments concerning the significance of staff inclusion for design management.

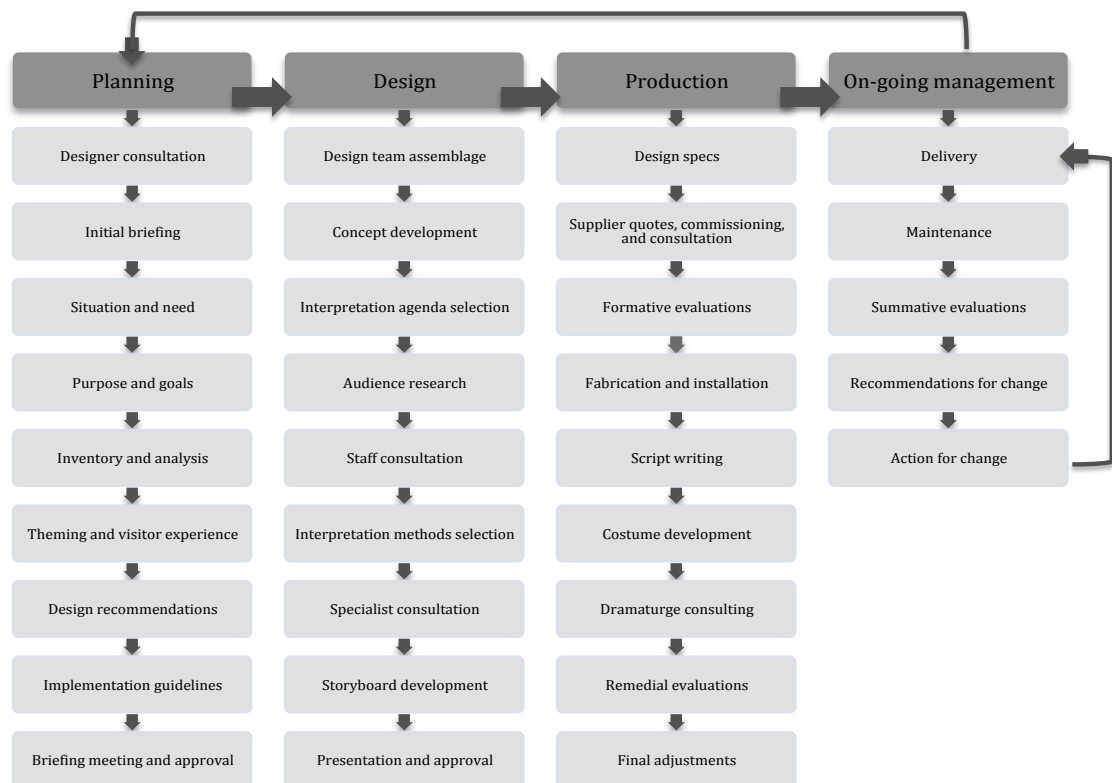
Because of this research and the findings discussed in this chapter, the researcher argues that LDVAs, and the wider HVA and DVA industries, need a model that will help guide design developments. This would be particularly beneficial for designs that lack inhouse designer expertise, as management would be able to follow a model that suggests the necessary tasks a designer might recommend in order to produce an effective experience within the confines of management challenges that have been identified as influences on interpretation design.

As discussed in chapter three, the models proposed by Wells et al. (2016) and Woodward (2009) appear to be the only guides in the literature that provide step-by-step instructions for interpretation design. However, Wells' et al. (2016) model is focused specifically on design planning, directed at museum exhibition developments. Therefore, this model overlooks planning considerations necessary for attractions that use theatrical elements and re-enactments. Woodward's (2009) model, on the other hand, is focused specifically on designing interpretation and is directed at nature-based tourism locations. However, it too overlooks necessary considerations for attractions that use theatrical elements and re-enactments, specifically producing set designs,

costumes, scriptwriting, and actor training. Additionally, Boyle's (2016) model, as discussed in chapter three, highlights the process for the on-going management of designs. However, this model is not a step-by-step guide, which presents a need for one that is more detailed.

Thus, drawing on the models proposed by Wells et al. (2016), Woodward's (2009), and Boyle (2016), the researcher proposes, as reflected in Figure 6.45, a holistic model that comprises the necessary steps for planning, designing, and on-going management of LDVA interpretation designs.

**Figure 6.45. Interpretation design model**



Through this model, the researcher suggests that interpretation design for LDVAs commences with planning, and proceeds through stages of designing and production. This not only includes steps for visitor and staff consultation, but also steps relating to producing re-enactments. Further, the inclusion of steps relating to formative and remedial evaluations is suggested as beneficial for addressing some of the concerns and design challenges identified in the findings, such as ensuring the intended vision of a design matches the design

outcome, which will help to better fulfil visitor expectations. Moreover, these evaluative measures will allow LDVA management to adequately review their interpretation of content and the appropriateness of selected interpretation methods. From this, the researcher argues that on-going management activities can occur in a recursive process that is largely dependent on summative evaluations. This confirms the argument in the literature that interpretation design does not always result in a complete and final product, but rather is an on-going process of recorded decisions and evaluations of factors that influence planning and design processes (Black, 2005). In instances where new designs are required, the model suggests the on-going management activities would defer to a new planning stage, allowing the entire design process to start over. The researcher argues that this model is not prescriptive. Rather, it is adaptable to other LDVAs, HVAs, and DVAs that might not necessarily use re-enactment. Consequently, this research and the development of a holistic model for guiding LDVA interpretation design is a significant contribution to the existing literature and to interpretation practice.

## CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

### 7.1 Introduction

As reflected throughout the foregoing chapters, the aim of this thesis was to critically evaluate the influences on interpretation design and management at LDVAs. Consequently, this research draws on a range of interdisciplinary discourses within heritage-focused fields, including heritage tourism, dark tourism, and interpretation. The theories underpinning these fields has provided the researcher with a greater understanding of interpretation practice within the context of heritage tourism and dark tourism.

Specifically, the researcher developed an understanding for how management challenges at HVAs and DVAs, including LDVAs, are similar in terms of managing stakeholder roles, access and conservation concerns, budget limitations, and managing the visitor experience. However, the difference between HVAs and DVAs is the concept of 'dark heritage', a term which this research identifies with the remembrance of past death, tragedy, and the seemingly macabre. In discussing the differences between HVAs and DVAs, this research has found that as a result of the content represented at DVAs, the interpretation design requires a level of sensitivity that will ensure a sense of authenticity and historical integrity. This is because the design may impact visitors emotionally, spiritually, mentally, or physically. However, for LDVAs, this research has shown that although management is generally concerned with maintaining a sense of authenticity and historical integrity, the temporal distance of the history, higher commercial infrastructure, and edutainment agendas have allowed for light-hearted interpretation designs that play on the style of *Horrible Histories*. Thus, although HVAs, DVAs, and LDVAs maintain a commonality with reference to management challenges, this research has shown that they differ along the lines of interpretation due to their associations with dark heritage and interpretation agendas.

Underpinned by an interpretivist paradigm, this research was based on qualitative fieldwork that included semi-structured interviews with managers and designers and focus group sessions using rich picture building with staff at three different, but inherently similar, LDVAs. The selection of the three LDVAs

provided the researcher an opportunity to explore a variety of influences on interpretation resulting from management challenges. Using a selection of 3 sites also helps to enhance the dark tourism literature, which, hitherto, has relied on single case study approaches.

This research supports the existing literature, as it has confirmed management challenges identified in the literature as influences on the design and management of interpretation at LDVAs. This research also contributes to the existing literature, as, through discussion, it has not only enhanced understanding of these influences, but also identified a series of relationships between them, which were demonstrated as, in turn, being influential on the LDVAs' interpretation developments. Additionally, several management challenges were identified due to these influences and their impact on the LDVAs' designs, including their adopted interpretation agendas and methods. Finally, this research has also identified management challenges relating to design developments due to issues with designer inclusion and design experience. Consequently, this research argues there is a need for a holistic design model that could help guide LDVAs through interpretation planning, design, and on-going management activities.

The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to conclude this thesis. In doing so, it provides a thesis summary; highlights key findings; outlines the limitations; delineates the theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions; and offers a reflective account with recommendations for future research.

## **7.2 Thesis summary**

This thesis introduces the research to the reader, outlining the study's rationale, aim and objectives, structure, and significance. As discussed in Chapter One, the issue inspiring this research was an observed lack in emphasis and understanding in dark tourism literature about interpretation design and management. As the literature notes, practitioners hold much of interpretation design understanding. Therefore, in order to increase its understanding within research and bring interpretation design to the forefront of dark tourism literature, the aim of this study was to critically evaluate the influences on

interpretation design and management at LDVAs. This aim was fulfilled through objectives, which were to:

1. Critically review existing literature regarding dark tourism in relation to influences on interpretation design and management at LDVAs.
2. Empirically evaluate the influences on the design and management of interpretation through a comparison of management challenges at LDVAs.
3. Explore and identify relationships between influences on interpretation design and develop a greater understanding of their impact on interpretation design and management at LDVAs.
4. Contribute to heritage tourism, dark tourism, and interpretation research with a greater understanding of influences on interpretation design and management to improve interpretation at LDVAs.

The literature review for this research is delivered in three separate chapters, which examine the subjects of heritage tourism, dark tourism, and interpretation. This review was essential for not only forming the aim and objectives for this research, but also for developing a greater understanding of interpretation within heritage tourism and dark tourism studies, specifically how interpretation is designed and managed at LDVAs. Subsequently, the literature review was key in providing a framework for the findings, thereby helping to contribute to research and achieving the fourth objective of this study.

While Chapter Two provided an in-depth review of heritage studies and the use of heritage in the tourism industry, it also provided the contextual background for Chapters Three and Four on interpretation and dark tourism. As such, Chapter Three provides an in-depth discussion on interpretation, its meaning, and role within the tourism industry, and the understanding of its processes among scholars. It not only outlined the theoretical underpinnings of this thesis, in relation to interpretation as it is applied to dark tourism, but it also led to a better understanding of its complexity as an essential activity for HVA and DVA management and the overall visitor experience. It argued that while interpretation has become a prominent focus of scholarly interest and analysis

within heritage tourism, it has, hitherto, not been developed sufficiently as a primary topic for knowledge building within dark tourism research.

Concluding the literature review, Chapter Four provides a discussion of dark tourism, as the activity to which interpretation theory is applied, and the development of its role as a form of heritage tourism. This chapter not only provides a greater understanding of dark tourism as a niche field of study, but also outlines its complexity as a subject. Consequently, it is suggested that the understanding of dark tourism is not only beset with ethical issues and management challenges, but also offers heritage audiences the opportunity to connect with more difficult aspects of the past through experiential approaches and empathetic provocation. This was followed by a discussion of the wide range of DVAs, and the varying classification frameworks which have contributed to the academic discourse concerning ethical issues within dark tourism studies. This chapter gave particular attention to DVA management and management challenges and issues relating to the re-creation and interpretation of historic tragedies.

Chapter Five discussed the philosophical and methodological foundations for approaching the gathering of data, as well as the practical methods used to collect and analyse data through fieldwork. First, a discussion of the researcher's philosophical perspective was provided, which gave the rationale for the interpretive, qualitative methodology that underpins this study. This was followed by a discussion of the practical methods chosen to explore the research topic, including purposive sampling, semi-structure interviews, focus groups (that included rich picture building), and thematic analysis.

Finally, Chapter Six presented the findings of the primary research at RMKC, S2D, and GGT. As such, this chapter provides a review of influences identified on interpretation design and management at three individuals, but inherently similar LDVAs. In doing so, this chapter discussed the findings in relation to the themes emerging from the literature review, and outlines identified relationships between influences, as well as management challenges, that contribute to the recommendations for future research discussed at the end of this chapter.

### **7.3 Key findings**

As reflected in Chapter One and at the start of this conclusions chapter, this research has explored influences on interpretation design and management at LDVAs. As a result, a greater understanding has been developed not only of the influences on the overall interpretation design process, but also of the management challenges and issues pertaining to interpretation design. This section therefore provides a summary of the key findings discussed in Chapter Six. While the influences identified in the findings were both generic for all VAs and related to the controversial nature of dark tourism, the core influences revealed were in direct association with the management challenges discussed in the literature review. Through this research, objectives two and three were achieved.

#### ***7.3.1 Influences on interpretation design and management at LDVAs***

In order to provide a better understanding of the influences on interpretation design and management at LDVAs, the second objective was to evaluate influences in association with management challenges at RMKC, S2D, and GGT. Although the identified influences at each site were similar, there were some variations identified because of the LDVAs' inherent differences.

The common influences on interpretation design and management identified at the LDVAs included:

- The management of stakeholder roles and inclusion issues
- Experience developing interpretation designs
- Budget restrictions, including both funding and time
- Access issues, spatial limitations, and conservation concerns
- Edutainment agendas and the selection of interpretation methods
- The management of ethical concerns and authenticity

#### **The management of stakeholder roles and inclusion issues**

Firstly, the LDVAs designs were each influenced by their approach to stakeholder (owners/managers, staff, designers, visitors) inclusion, which was further influenced by organisational factors of need, relevance, and budget concerns. RMKC and S2D's designs were manager-led. This was only



revealed as a challenge for S2D, which lacked not only designer inclusion, but also the necessary experience for designing interpretation and developing an LDVA. GGT's design was also manager-led to an extent, as the Tour Manager was also the designer, as well as an actor for the tour. Furthermore, while GGT included two other actors in its design developments to help with creative ideas and scriptwriting, neither RMKC nor S2D included staff in their design developments due to not yet having hired any. Thus, GGT's design control was unique when compared to RMKC and S2D. Additionally, while GGT had consulted staff for design feedback through informal discussions, staff were still not consulted relating to on-going management activities for either RMKC or S2D. This has exposed challenges of conflicting interests and communication issues between the management and staff for both RMKC and S2D. Moreover, none of the LDVAs conducted audience research and do not consult visitors through on-site summative evaluations. This indicates the LDVAs are perhaps missing opportunities to better understand their audiences and more effectively meet visitor needs and expectations.

#### Experience developing interpretation designs

Also influencing the LDVAs' designs were issues concerning experience with designing interpretation, and experience working within the heritage tourism industry. First, the extent of the designers' experience for RMKC and GGT was highly influential for their designs. For RMKC, the designer's experience in creating heritage exhibition spaces and audio-visual programmes for museums provided the necessary understanding of essential design tasks. Similarly, the theatre background of GGT's Tour Manager/Designer was highly influential, as his experience in creating site-specific productions led to this concept becoming an integral part of GGT's design. Adding to this, both CA and HDT (the companies owning RMKC and GGT) were established within the heritage tourism industry prior to developing their LDVAs. This time in operation was highly beneficial for RMKC specifically, as it provided CA the ability to develop an in-house interpretation team and a bigger budget for new designs. In comparison, while GGT's management had acquired experience operating LDVAs, their limited budget and size was a direct result of their shorter time in operation. In comparison, S2D's design was greatly challenged by the absence

of a trained designer because of limited funding due to BH's shorter time in operation. Additionally, design challenges occurred due to BH's inexperience in designing interpretation and developing LDVAs. Consequently, S2D's design was impacted by unnecessary purchases, unrealistic ideas, and inexperience, which led to its imitation of other designs of similar attractions.

#### Budget restrictions, including funding and time

Budget challenges relating to funding and time are also significant influences on the LDVAs' designs and management. Funding limitations not only restricted GGT and S2D's use of additional specialists, but it prevented all three LDVAs from creating more elaborate designs with, for example, innovative technologies. Funding issues are also influential on the on-going management activities for the designs, as, for GGT, reinvestment was lacking due to conflicting stakeholder interests and the cost and revenue implications of reinvestment needs. Additionally, time-budget issues were also an influence on the LDVAs' designs. Due to time restrictions, none of the LDVAs conducted audience research, formative evaluations, or remedial evaluations. Consequently, the LDVAs were not able to confirm if their designs would meet visitor needs or expectations prior to opening to the public. Furthermore, time restrictions influenced the on-going management activities for the designs. For RMKC specifically, time issues have prevented necessary refurbishments from being completed. However, perhaps a greater issue is that of effective time-management and/or commercial interests taking a priority over interpretation needs. Because of these issues, conflicting interests and communication issues between the LDVAs' staff and management concerning on-going management activities for the interpretation designs have been exposed, as well as missed opportunities for increasing visitor interest and revenue generation.

#### Access issues, spatial limitations, and conservation concerns

Access issues, spatial limitations, and conservation concerns were also influential in the LDVAs' interpretation designs and management. RMKC and GGT were both impacted by access issues as they each needed to establish a tour route before storylines could be developed. For RMKC specifically, this

required creating an entry point, which was further challenged by conservation concerns. Additionally, RMKC and S2D were both challenged by access issues, as they are both located within in-situ spaces only accessible by stairs. This prevented full visitor access, and because of conservation concerns, neither LDVA was able to install ramps or lifts to allow greater visitor access. Because of the conservation concerns, both RMKC and S2D were further limited in their use of technology and other interpretive media that could damage the structural integrity of the sites, such as wall mounted plasma screens. Finally, GGT and S2D's designs were impacted by spatial limitations, which not only limited their ability to create elaborate designs, but also their selection of interpretation methods.

#### Edutainment agendas and the selection of interpretation methods

The LDVAs' edutainment agendas were also highly influential in their design outcomes. While issues relating to budget restrictions and conservation concerns were influences on the selection of interpretation methods, the decision to promote edutainment agendas was also a key influence. By promoting edutainment agendas, the LDVAs were able to use interpretation methods, such as character re-enactment, animated technologies, sensory technologies, and special effects to create engaging experiences that are both educational and entertaining. Varying factors, including the nature of the content, film, popular media, and competing and/or similar attractions, further influenced the selection and development of the interpretation methods. The content of the LDVAs also influenced the designs' aesthetics to reflect darker undertones, and further influenced the narratives to emphasise the unpleasant and often horrific conditions of pre-modern life with the plague, murder, and poverty. The designs for both S2D and GGT were further influenced by the book series *Horrible Histories*, which helped to inspire provoking experiences that offer fun and shock factors. Additionally, while horror films of the 1980s were influential for GGT's design, the designs of other attractions, including the Dungeons Experience, were influential for both S2D and RMKC's designs.

### The management of ethical concerns and authenticity

Finally, concerns for ethical issues and authenticity also influenced the LDVAs' designs, particularly in relation to their use of edutainment agendas. Ethical concerns relating to the display of human remains influenced S2D's design to enclose the exhibition to allow visitors the choice to engage with the human remains. Additionally, ethical concerns relating to age appropriateness influenced the amount of gore and graphic detail in some of S2D's displays. Ethical concerns relating to the LDVAs' content was interestingly not an influence on the designs, as each viewed the content as part of history. However, because the content is historically rooted, authenticity was a key influence on the LDVAs' designs. The LDVAs were explicitly concerned with remaining factually correct and authentic in their interpretation of their content, drawing on visitor empathies through the delivery of raw, non-sanitised history. Despite their intent to provoke visitor reactions through edutainment agendas, the LDVAs did not seek to create gore for the sake of gore, as education and creating a learning experience was essential, and therefore a significant influence on the LDVAs' designs. Yet, the goal to promote authenticity was challenged by commercial interests. This consequently led to conflicting interests between the LDVAs' management (commercially focused) and staff (quality focused), which for RMKC were related to the use of certain interpretation methods (e.g. animated portraits, coloured lighting). These commercial interests have also influenced the on-going management activities of the LDVAs' designs. For example, budget restrictions have influenced the ability, or lack thereof, for the LDVAs to reinvest and refurbish. However, the successful operations of the LDVAs has led to a general perception that the current designs are adequate and need no further adjustments. Yet, this research has uncovered additional conflicting interests between the LDVAs' management and staff, which further revealed communication issues between the two, as feelings of disempowerment, disregard, and fear for voicing concerns among the staff were exposed.

### **7.4 Theoretical contributions**

This thesis contributes to knowledge within the conceptual contexts of heritage tourism, dark tourism, and interpretation, as it has produced an understanding

of interpretation practice, and the influences on that practice at LDVAs, which, as a form of DVAs, are also identified within the wider realm of HVAs. As reflected in the literature review, a number of scholars have previously explored interpretation practice, including management challenges in relation to interpretation and visitor experiences; interpretation within the context of heritage and dark tourism; the use of edutainment for interpretation; and interpretation processes. However, some of these studies were descriptive accounts, visitor-focused, based on single-case study approaches, or not related to LDVAs. In fact, none of these scholars concentrated on the influences on interpretation design and/or management specifically at LDVAs; how relationships between influences can impact LDVA interpretation designs; or how these influences can create management challenges for LDVAs.

As a consequence of the literature's gaps, by exploring interpretation influences at LDVAs, this thesis has contributed to heritage tourism, dark tourism, and interpretation knowledge through its emphasis on interpretation practice and the influences that underpin its design and management at heritage-based visitor attractions that reflect historic death and tragedy through edutainment agendas. This thesis further contributes to knowledge by having uncovered relationships between the influences identified and exploring how those relationships impact the on-going management of interpretation designs within dark heritage-based visitor experiences.

Additionally, while both heritage tourism and dark tourism research have advanced exponentially over the last several decades, existing research has failed to provide a better understanding of the wide-range of LDVAs and how they successfully manage interpretation developments, whilst facing criticisms by the wider heritage tourism industry. This gap is reflective of previous studies that have been largely based on single case study approaches, generally conducted at the darkest forms of DVAs or at specific LDVAs (e.g. London Dungeons; Jack the Ripper Tours; ghost walks). These studies were also not concerned with identifying influences on interpretation design and/or management or understanding the actual processes of designing interpretation for dark tourism experiences. This is surprising given the ample amount of

literature on dark tourism interpretation, which has focused on issues and management challenges associated with interpretation. Thus, this thesis contributes to heritage tourism and dark tourism knowledge through the exploration of interpretation practice at three LDVAs that have not yet been used as case examples within research.

Though a wide range of studies has explored interpretation design in relation to tourism activities, the previous research has developed specifically from within the fields of museums, nature-based tourism, and creative design. Thus, by exploring interpretation design within this context, this thesis contributes to interpretation knowledge by generating greater awareness amongst interpretation experts of how interpretation practice is applied within dark tourism, which has not been a traditional focus in interpretation research. In addition, previous studies within the fields of museums, nature-based tourism, and creative design has generally been directed at the individual processes of planning, designing, or on-going management within the overall interpretation experience. These were also not concerned with designing interpretation for attractions that promote edutainment agendas, specifically those that use re-enactment methods. Therefore, this thesis contributes to interpretation knowledge as it stresses the importance of growing interpretation design understanding, not only within the context of dark tourism, but in relation to edutainment interpretation.

This thesis is thus an extension to heritage tourism, dark tourism, and interpretation research, and is an exploration of the under-researched topics of interpretation design and LDVAs. The importance of this thesis therein lies in its contribution to the understanding of interpretation design and the influences on design and its management at LDVAs, which are continually developing within dark tourism and the wider heritage tourism industry.

Revealing the challenges in designing interpretation without a trained designer has also been part of the contribution of this thesis. This is the outcome of the thesis' exploration of the relationships between influences and their impact on interpretation design and management at the LDVAs. This thesis has further

identified designer inclusion as a significant influence on interpretation design; however, in instances of designer absence, a guiding model for interpretation processes would be beneficial for LDVA management. This exploration contributes to a greater understanding of how lacking a designer or design experience impacts interpretation developments. It is also a contribution to practice, as, because of this exploration, this thesis has proposed a guiding design model specifically for LDVAs, but that can be adapted to help guide interpretation design for the wider realm of HVAs and DVAs.

The contribution to knowledge also resides in the demonstration of how staff feedback can be a significant influence on the on-going management of interpretation designs. More specifically, this research has revealed the LDVAs' staff are constantly making judgements about how the designs are working practically over time, including how visitors receive the designs. At the same time, this research contributes to interpretation practice at LDVAs and the wider range of HVAs and DVAs by exposing the significance of staff inclusion in relation to summative evaluations throughout on-going management activities. Such contributions may provide a better understanding among scholars and practitioners for how staff inclusion can positively influence interpretation designs to become more effective in fulfilling visitor needs and expectations, given their role in mediating the overall visitor experience.

In addition to the proposal of a guiding model and recognising the significance of staff inclusion in design management, this research further made a practical contribution, as it:

- Supports and enriches the understanding and practice of interpretation at LDVAs, as well as DVAs;
- Generates greater awareness among LDVA management of the importance of the inclusion of designers, staff, and visitors to ensure the effectiveness of a design in meeting visitor needs and expectations;
- Provides a greater understanding of the influences that underpin interpretation design and management;

- Generates knowledge on the issues and challenges that can arise because of the identified influences on interpretation design, as well as how those issues and challenges impact design outcomes.

### **7.5 Methodological contributions**

Although numerous studies within heritage tourism, dark tourism, and interpretation have adopted qualitative methods through their use of the interpretivist paradigm, they often rely on observations and semi-structured interviews through visitor-focused agendas. Semi-structured interviews were used in this research because of their effectiveness in drawing out rich data. However, this research contributes methodologically by also conducting focus groups that used RPB. The use of RPB is a contribution to knowledge, as hitherto, RPB has not appeared as a tool for data collection within the context of dark tourism research, or even heritage tourism research.

As a qualitative data gathering tool, the use of RPs offered simplified pictorial representations of the perceptions held by the LDVAs' staff of their interpretation designs and the on-going management activities of those designs. The use of RPs encouraged more in-depth discussions among the staff relating to their perceptions and conflicting understandings regarding the design and management of their LDVA's interpretation. Subsequently, this tool for qualitative research helped to promote greater discussions and uncover feelings and opinions that might otherwise be hidden in verbal discussions. Because of this, new ideas, relevant for producing interpretation change, were revealed. However, the RPs also exposed management challenges relating to conflicting interests and communication issues between the LDVAs' management and staff, which were shown to be a direct consequence of restricted staff inclusion. Thus, the contribution to knowledge also lies in recognising RPB as a beneficial tool for qualitative, exploratory research in general, and dark tourism studies in particular.

### **7.6 Future research recommendations**

Regarding future research recommendations and opportunities in the context of the findings of this study, it would be advantageous for scholars to explore the



use of the variety of evaluation measures (e.g. formative, remedial, summative) identified as essential steps for the overall interpretation design process at LDVAs, and the wider range of DVAs. It would be worthwhile exploring visitor perceptions of interpretation through these evaluation measures, which would provide a more comprehensive understanding of visitor needs and expectations for different interpretation designs. This could be addressed through qualitative or mixed-methods research, using focus groups and RPB or surveys and questionnaires. The visitors' perceptions of the identified influences on interpretation design and management could also be explored, which could perhaps lead to greater communication between visitors and the management and staff of LDVAs and DVAs. Adding to this, research could further examine the use of re-enactments for LDVA experiences. As indicated in the findings, concerns for authenticity were raised by some of the staff regarding the use of costumed character guides. Thus, greater explorations into staff and visitor perspectives and preferences for re-enactments at LDVAs can help to provide greater understanding of how effective and satisfying this interpretation method is, not only at LDVAs, but also for the wider realm of DVAs and HVAs.

### **7.7 Concluding remarks – A reflexive summary**

Assessing this thesis, the researcher believes that this study has made a significant contribution to research and practice through the enhancement of knowledge pertaining to interpretation design and management within dark tourism, and by extension, heritage tourism. As noted in chapter five, a researcher's personal experiences, values and knowledge of the world influences not only the paradigm selection, but also the entire research process. Thus, the researcher must be reflexive regarding their position in the development of knowledge.

In this case, the researcher's personal characteristics, cultural background, education and experiences have contributed to the development of knowledge for this thesis. More specifically, this reflexivity has allowed the researcher to apply her prior experience and knowledge of heritage tourism, dark tourism, and interpretation within this thesis. This prior knowledge was developed through an MSc programme in Heritage and Cultural Tourism Management,

which she completed with a final thesis concerning visitor motivations in relation to an LDVA; an MA in Humanities, where she studied interpretation at HVAs; and an MA in Museum Studies, where she acquired an understanding of interpretation design and management of museum collections. Thus, the researcher has developed a greater understanding of interpretation within the realm of heritage tourism, which was beneficial for the creation of knowledge pertaining to interpretation as it is applied within the dark tourism industry.

Moreover, knowledge pertaining to the topics that underpinned this thesis was further influenced by volunteer and internship experience and training. This knowledge was gained while volunteering as Interpretation Coordinator for the Japanese-American Museum of San Jose, where she collaborated with the museum director and owners on developing an interpretive plan for the intended restoration of the Kawakami House. Adding to this, the researcher has developed relevant knowledge through an internship for collections management at a medieval art museum; an archivist role for an osteology museum, as well as a literary museum dedicated to John Steinbeck; and the role of programme specialist assistant at the UNESCO World Heritage Centre. These particular experiences helped to shape the researcher's understanding not only of interpretation, but also of management practices within varying heritage tourism institutions. Finally, knowledge was further enhanced through the completion of courses offered by the Association for Heritage Interpretation and Historic England, which focused on interpretation planning practices and methods for accessible interpretation.

Furthermore, while the researcher's extensive academic background provided her with adequate knowledge and understanding of qualitative methodologies and the research process, she gained further understanding of advanced research techniques through a PGCE programme in research methods. This not only helped to provide a greater understanding of alternative paradigms and approaches, but also helped her to shape the methodology and research design for conducting her PhD research, for which she was awarded a PhD scholarship. In addition, the research for her MSc dissertation at an LDVA allowed the researcher to gain insight into this tour's interpretation and how it

was designed to meet visitor needs and expectations. This further contributed to the shaping of the aim and objectives of this research.

In essence, the researcher's personal characteristics, cultural background, education, and past experiences have helped to shape the entire research process from the initial concept and development of the study's aim and objectives, through the methodological process, to the secondary and primary research leading to the presentation of findings. Moreover, the aim and objectives for this study were achieved through the focus on heritage tourism, dark tourism, and interpretation areas, which underpin this study; adoption of an interpretivist qualitative approach; selection of three LDVAs; and the inductive, exploratory research. Therefore, through these efforts, this study has contributed to the existing knowledge and practice in the field of interpretation within a dark tourism context.

To conclude this thesis, interpretation at LDVAs has been explored through the comparison of management challenges and the relationships between influences, at 3 different LDVAs, allowing for the identification of influences on interpretation design and management. This has provided insight into interpretation practice, including design processes, stakeholder perceptions of interpretation management, and the use of evaluation measures. Limitations to the study have been identified and discussed, and recommendations for future research have been proposed. Subsequently, this thesis has delivered beneficial conclusions, specifically directed towards dark tourism research, while also producing greater understanding of interpretation influences and management challenges for LDVAs.

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## Appendix A – Prentice’s classification of HVA types

Type	Example
Natural history	Nature preserves; trails; aquatic displays; wildlife parks; zoos; caves; gorges; cliffs; waterfalls
Scientific	Science museums; technology centres; hands-on centres
Primary production	Farms; dairies; agricultural museums; vineyards; fishing; mining
Craft centres/workshops	Water; windmills; sculptors; potters; woodcarvers; metal shops; glass makers; silk working; lace making; craft villages
Manufacturing centres	Pottery or porcelain factories; breweries; cider factories; distilleries; industrial history museums
Transportation	Transport museums; railways; canals; shipping and docks; civil aviation; motor vehicles
Socio-cultural	Prehistoric and historic sites and displays; domestic houses; history museums; costume museums; furniture museums; museums of childhood; toy museums; ancient ruins
Associated with historic people	Sites, areas and buildings associated with famous writers, painters and politicians
Performing arts	Theatres; performing arts; circuses
Pleasure gardens	Ornamental gardens; period gardens; arboreta; model villages
Theme parks	Nostalgia parks; historic adventure parks; fairy-tale parks
Galleries	Art and sculpture
Festivals/pageants	Historic fairs; festivals; recreating past ages; countryside festivals
Stately or ancestral homes	Palaces; castles; country houses; manor houses
Religious	Cathedrals; churches; abbeys; mosques; shrines; temples; springs; wells
Military	Battlefields; military airfields; naval dockyards; prisoner of war camps; military museums
Genocide	Sites associated with the extermination of other races or other mass killings of populations
Towns/townscapes	Historic urban centres; groups of buildings; shops; urban settings
Villages/hamlets	Rural settlements; architecture; pastures
Countryside	National parks; rural landscapes
Seaside resorts	Seaside towns; marine landscapes; coastal areas
Regions	Counties and other historic regions identified as distinctive by residents and visitors

(Timothy & Boyd, 2003, p. 22)

## Appendix B – Tilden's principles

1. Relate to visitors  
Any interpretation that does not somehow relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile.
2. Information is not interpretation  
Information, as such, is not interpretation. Interpretation is revelation based upon information. But they are entirely different things. However, all interpretation includes information.
3. Interpretation is art  
Interpretation is art, which combines many arts, whether the materials presented are scientific, historical, or architectural. Any part is in some degree teachable.
4. Interpretation through provocation  
The chief aim of interpretation is not instruction, but provocation.
5. Interpretation is holistic  
Interpretation should aim to present a whole, rather than a part, and must address itself to the whole man, rather than any phase.
6. Interpretation should be appropriate  
Interpretation addressed to children should not be a dilution of the presentations to adults, but should follow a fundamentally different approach. To be at its best, it will require a separate program.

(Adapted from Tilden, 1957/2008, p. 18)

## Appendix C – Participant consent form

### Participant consent form

Date:

Edinburgh Napier University requires that all persons who participate in research studies give their written consent to do so. Please read the following and sign it if you agree with what it says.

1. I have received and read the Participant Information Sheet. I am fully aware and understand the nature and aim of this study, as well as my participation requirements for this study.
2. I freely and voluntarily consent to participate in the research project concerning the influences on interpretation design and management at dark visitor attractions, conducted by Brianna Wyatt, who is a PhD candidate at Edinburgh Napier University.
3. I understand the aim of this study is to critically evaluate the influences in the selection of interpretation design and management at dark visitor attractions. Specifically, I have been asked to:
  - Manager/Designer: Answer questions regarding the design and management of the attraction's interpretation. This interview should take approximately 1 hour to complete.
  - Guide: Partake in a focus group discussion using pictorial representation regarding the implementation and structure of the interpretation design. This focus group should take approximately 1 hour to complete.
4. I have been told that my responses will be anonymous. My name will not be linked with the research materials. I will not be identified or identifiable in any report subsequently produced by the researcher. Participants have the right to waive their anonymity, in which they will need to initial one of the options below.
  - I wish to waive my right to full anonymity– name and job title will be used
  - I wish to waive my right to partial anonymity– job title only will be used
5. I understand my participation in this study is completely voluntary. I am free to decline any questions I feel unable or uncomfortable with answering. I am free to withdraw my participation without detriment at any time if I feel unable or unwilling to continue. I understand that after data has been collected and made anonymous or after publication of results it will not be possible for my information to be removed, as it would be untraceable at this point.
6. I understand that my participation will be audio recorded and the contents of the recording will be transcribed by the researcher. I understand that both the audio recording and transcription will remain confidential and safely secured by the researcher. I understand that all data collected from

the audio recording and transcription will remain anonymous unless I have waived my right to anonymity.

7. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions regarding the researcher's study and topic of study. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction.
8. I have read and understand the above and consent to participate in this study. My signature is not a waiver of any legal rights. Furthermore, I understand that I will be able to keep a copy of the informed consent form for my records.

Participant Name

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Participant Signature

Date

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I have explained and defined in detail the research procedure in which the respondent has consented to participate. Furthermore, I will retain one copy of the informed consent form for my records.

Researcher's Signature

Date

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## Appendix D – Semi-structured interview questions

### Stakeholder impacts: Role, interests, experience

- 1) How long have you been involved with heritage tourism?
- 2) What is your background- design/management/tourism/heritage?
- 3) How did you become involved with the design for this site?
- 4) What was your role in the original design or expansion of the site/tour?
  - a. Has your role changed since the initial design developments?
- 5) Have you designed any similar past projects or sites that may be classified as dark/sensitive heritage?
  - a. If yes, how did that past experience influence this design?
  - b. If no, what were some challenges you had with this being your first project?
- 6) Did you have any prior knowledge or interest in the history/theme/topics before taking on your role within the design project?
  - a. If yes, how did this knowledge affect your role or the outcome of the design?
  - b. If no, how has your role within the design project affected your interest or perspective on the history/theme/topics?
- 7) Who are/were involved in the original design or expansion?
  - a. Were there external stakeholders (funders, consultants, community) involved in the design?
    - i. If yes, how did their involvement influence the design?
  - b. Are these individuals still involved with the site and management of the design?
    - i. If no, has their leave affected your role within the management of the design?

### Planning interpretation – general management challenges

- 8) How does the budget affect the interpretation (i.e. accuracy/authenticity of the narrative/exhibits/tour)?
- 9) Did the nature of the site affect the design (i.e. access, conservation)?
  - a. If yes, how?
- 10) Who is/was the target audience for the original design? Why?
  - a. How is/was the design affected by this target audience?
- 11) What is the theme of this site/tour? (Ex: Medieval life was harsh) Why?
- 12) What are the topics for this site/tour? (Ex: plague, poverty, war, medicine, torture devices, murder) Why?
- 13) What is the message that the interpretation design is/was meant to deliver?
- 14) What are the objectives or interpretation agenda?
  - a. What do you want visitors to gain from the experience?

### The nature of the theme/content

- 15) Did the nature of the main theme/topic/history affect the design?
  - a. If yes, how?
- 16) Were any personal or company concerns regarding the nature of the history brought up during design developments?
  - a. If yes, how were those concerns managed?
- 17) Does visitor feedback regard the nature of the main theme?

- a. If yes, has the feedback affected the design in any way?
  - b. If no, why do you think feedback is unaffected by the theme?
- 18) Were there any parts of the narrative or exhibits found too sensitive or disturbing after initial implementation/opening?
- a. If yes, how were those narratives/exhibits altered to improve the visitor experience?
- 19) Does the design soften/sanitise the history in any way?
- a. If yes, why and how is this version accurate/authentic?
- 20) Are there any parts of the story/history omitted in the narrative and/or exhibits? Why or why not?
- 21) Does the tour enhance or embellish history in any way?
- 22) How does the budget affect the accuracy/authenticity of the narrative/exhibits/tour?
- 23) Are there, or have there been, any personal or company preferences that have led to any form of sanitation/softening or embellishment of the history in any way?
- a. If yes, what were those preferences and how did they affect the design?

#### Designing interpretation – Production and installation

- 24) What were the main influences of the actual design? (i.e. personal preferences, brand, competition, access)
- 25) What methods were initially planned to deliver the design and accomplish the objectives (education programs, exhibits, text panels, self-guided trails, other media/services)?
- a. Why were these methods selected for use?
  - b. Were these methods actually employed in the design?
  - c. Are these methods still in use?
- 26) What influenced the decisions concerning the guides/actor's costumes?
- 27) How was the tour route decided?
- a. GGT- What influenced the choices for specific stops?
- 28) What influenced the aesthetic design of the bus (audio, lights, props, etc.)?
- a. Are the colours, lighting, audio, visuals in-line with the theme?
- 29) What elements of the design provoke the visitor's interest or attention?
- 30) Does the design address the 'whole'?
- a. How does the design, as a whole, illustrate the main theme?
  - b. How does each exhibit relate to the main theme?
- 31) How does the narrative support or reflect the main theme?
- 32) How was the narrative developed? (i.e. research, content development)

#### Managing interpretation – Evaluations and reinvestment

- 33) Was a front-end evaluation (pilot, soft opening, focus group) done to test the design's effectiveness in delivering the intended message?
- a. If yes, what was the outcome?
  - b. If no, why?
- 34) Are on-going remedial evaluations conducted to identify new problems or areas for improvement within the design?
- a. If yes, how often are these done and what is the process?
  - b. If no, why?
- 35) Has there been an expansion or major changes?



- 36) Are there any exhibits or parts of the design that are in need of change or improvement?
- 37) Who is involved in remedial evaluations?
  - a. What evaluation task(s) are assigned to each person?
- 38) Are guides included in the remedial evaluations?
  - a. If yes, how are their voices included in the evaluations?
  - b. If no, could they provide alternative perspectives that may contribute to the overall interpretation of the design?
- 39) What are some of the main challenges for interpretation when running a mobile attraction?
  - a. How are those challenges managed?

#### Concluding Questions

- 40) How does your site/tour stand out or differentiate itself from similar dark sites/tours?
- 41) Do you consider your site/tour to be a form of dark/sensitive heritage?
  - a. If yes, what elements about the site make it so?
  - b. If no, why?

## **Appendix E – Transcript of the interview with BH’s Director**

**Researcher:** How long have you been involved with heritage tourism?

**Manager:** So, I set Big Heritage up in 2011, which is very much about heritage, but not so much about tourism per se. We’ve done a lot of pop-up events that were, which I suppose have that tourist or attraction angle; but Sick to Death was our first permanent physical visitors tourist attraction so to speak. Whilst I have a background in lots of stuff, because we work with like LandsEnd, which is a very big tourist site, so from 2011 onwards, but our first site which is entirely our own, is when we opened Sick to Death.

**Researcher:** Ok, and what is your background in?

**Manager:** So, I have a degree in archaeology. Law and a Masters degree in archaeology. I was actually working in the wine industry before archaeology, so mostly academic archaeology and then, well certainly for the last five years in and around the world with Big Heritage.

**Researcher:** Ok, what brought you into heritage, was it, because I know with [the Head of Operations], she came in as like a project, taking a year off from her PhD. What brought you from archaeology into heritage?

**Manager:** Basically, a kinda an entrepreneurial thing really, spotting a gap in the market to fill. So, um archaeology was something that I had passion for, but I realised there was some gaps to be able to communicate with the public some very high brow academic stuff and put it in a way that’s more accessible and used in a kind of tourism angle to be able to do that. So, it was more of an entrepreneurial zeal than anything

**Researcher:** Ok, and you- the question you became involved with the design for the site, you were the concept designer, right? You were the one that developed it, so this came from you. Have you designed similar things in the past or worked on similar projects?

**Manager:** Projects, yea, but not from a tourist perspective. So we worked since 2012 with Welcome Trust Roman history of medicine projects, which is more of a road show thing, so we’ll pop up and do tour and events, I dunno, public events, shopping centres, or fairs, and take out this very macabre history of medicine show, and its popularity becomes a spin off really of the bad side of things. It was largely based around schools, going out and doing workshops at schools and the shows were a bit of a side piece, but they became more of a popular thing so it kind of spun into that.

**Researcher:** So how did your past experiences with these projects influence your concept for Sick to Death?

**Manager:** Considerably, So what we were able to do with the schools and the early projects was to eek out key themes that were, you know there’s a lot across the board that we delivered, but there’s certain things that we’d seen time and time again that got public intention or interest. So we were able to

cherry pick out of a big range of stuff that we did- themes and recurring and deliverables, like how we delivered them and how we put them across and we picked the best out of that and made it a bit more of a static attraction in Sick to Death.

**Researcher:** Ok, did you have any prior knowledge or personal interest in the history and the theme or the topics that Sick to Death represents prior to its opening?

**Manager:** Yes, so obviously through the projects we ran and the Roman history medicine projects since 2012. Prior to 2012, no, I didn't have that much interest in the history of medicine. It wasn't like my academic expertise, but it was a play between Big Heritage and schools. There was an opportunity to do something with Welcome Trust that was around the history of medicine. So, we kind of- it was an easy segway to move into the history of medicine, because we did cover aspects of medicine in school workshops. We even did a day of talking about the Romans and a small part was on health and medicine. So, the opportunity to do a specific project was made available to us so we grew into that. But outside of that there wasn't any academic background in the history of medicine per se.

**Researcher:** Ok, so as you were involved with the original design, what was your role? I know you had the concept and you delivered the concept to [the Head of Operations] and she kind of expanded on the interpretation part of it. Did you continue working with the design?

**Manager:** Yep, pretty much. No, no, I think I was more of the grand ideas person, like oh it's something like this, and this is what I should do. But it did follow through in terms of the branding and the guidelines of design and things would come back to me and I'd tweak it to well they want it like this, no it needs to look like this- so I almost directed that after coming up with the initial concepts and ideas. So, we did it like, some things would be tweaked.

**Researcher:** Has that role changed at all since its opening, because I know it is relatively new still- I think it's only been open for a year?

**Manager:** Yea, so we've not really added much new interpretation over the last 12 months, but it will change significantly. We've just been awarded not far from a million to open up a much bigger version of it. So, we will have to go through the process again with this new place, take in again what the best stuff was, what worked, what didn't, and go through that all again. So that's about to start kicking off now. We just appointed a project manager to work specifically on that project, so that's we are with it.

**Researcher:** Were there any other external stakeholders that were involved in the original design? I know [the Head of Operations], said that there was the Welcome Trust and the Council. Were they directly involved with the design, or was it just strictly funding and the lease?

**Manager:** Funding and the lease for them. We did work with Grover Museum, there's the archaeologists that we work with, which surely [the content

specialist] is a specialist in bones really- so we talk a lot of advice on the science side of things. The Grover museum and the local museum delivered some of the objects on display, including the skeleton we have on display there, so we had to work with them to get the background of where that was excavated from and the context of where that was as well. So, the museum is a stakeholder, I suppose, they are part of the Council, but they are the second part. Then, obviously there is the external scientific support and also graphic designers, which are not so much a stakeholder but are people we work with continuously, pick ideas off and stuff like that.

**Researcher:** So, the museum and the osteoarchaeologist and the designer- they are still involved with the site?

**Manager:** Yes, Well the museum certainly because we've still got their objects and we'll change their displays. The same team will be working on the next Sick to Death display, so we have a very close relationship with them, so we tend to always go back to the same people. It just means we have a slightly expanded team around Big Heritage- it's not, you know, people working for us directly, but I see them as stakeholders in that sense.

**Researcher:** Ok, so getting more into the design- what would you say is the actual theme of the site?

**Manager:** Very carefully designed to tell the story of a place through the kind of health, sickness and the dying of its inhabitants. So, there are themes, which are generic to England or Europe in the time periods. But what we've done is to ensure its specific to Chester, so it allows them to visit, who visits the city to get something that's unique to Chester, but tells of why we've brought a story that is relevant elsewhere or to their city, etc. When we open another Sick to Death in another city, we'll follow that pattern. So, if we go to, I don't know, Edinburgh, it will tell the story of the inhabitants of Medieval Edinburgh if you like but through again the health and the sickness and diseases and dying. Whilst the physiology of it won't change of how the body is affected by plague, how bodies decompose, etc., will be used in different characters from the historic records and archaeological records and different collections. But yes, it's very much a- it you can imagine a local museum or local historical venue that explains the history of that building or that collection, we're explaining the history of that place through health, disease, sickness, dying and you know, its inhabitants.

**Researcher:** To reiterate, the topics of this site- so if the theme of this site is the history of medicine within Chester, what are the specific topics? You've got plague, war, medicine- is there additional topics like torture devices?

**Manager:** No, we don't go into- So warfare comes in as a topic because warfare advances medicine. People have to come up with novel ways to heal new wounds. So, for instance when gunpowder and guns came in, they became massive open wounds that were never dealt with before, so they have to advance medicine to deal with that. So, warfare is a topic because of the medical element of it. Plague is just so- you know this sort of diocese that plays right through the medieval period, so it's so relevant. We look at surgery. Surgery is a big one as well. It is something that is relevant today, so you know

modern surgery and surgery in the past in some ways doesn't differ, like amputations and things are the same- so that's a great comparison. One theme that we always look at and we will continue to look at is bones and what they can tell us about sickness and disease, so osteoarchaeology really, there's always a strong proponent of science in that, like in modern science, in what that can tell us. And where possible, certainly in the new site, but looking at how we can learn about modern medicine and modern illnesses and diseases by looking back to previous ones, so things like antibiotics, you know we're shifting into potentially a post-antibiotic world, where they're not effective and a cut on your arm could kill you because we haven't any antibiotics to fight it, and prior to the discovery of antibiotics- that was everyone's life here going back hundreds of years. So Sick to Death is a great place to ask people questions and get people thinking about how modern medicine can be related back to ancient Rome and that's always a key topic that I'll continue to make.

**Researcher:** Ok, before I get into the message, what was the reason for using the 'walls' for the site?

**Manager:** There were pragmatic reasons and logic reasons. Pragmatically it was an empty space that the council had, and we knew we could a lease. Although to be honest, there are probably easier places to do it, but it is a historic building itself and the walls are a very popular tourist attraction actually with very little to do much other than walk around. So, it was almost like a sitting duck site to say well this is empty, people walk past it, you know there's a captive audience. However, the other bonus point for Sick to Death is that you don't necessarily have to be there just to see the themes of the attraction as it is because the building itself is the attraction. So, for the next Sick to Death we will certainly move to a historic 15<sup>th</sup> century church, which has been, well it's no longer a church, it will have the same impact. So, it's a double attraction. So, you've got the historic building and that alone is something people pay to get into, and then there is the attraction itself. So, I think we will continue that for further attractions having the building itself be of interest and not just what people walk in, if that makes sense.

**Researcher:** Ok, so what was the message that the interpretation design was meant to deliver initially? [The Head of Operations] said that she wasn't given like a one liner or anything. Did you have something in your head when you were coming up with the concept of the site?

**Manager:** I think, in terms of how we designed it, it was about trying to provide a succinct way of trying to explain some fairly complicated stuff, and to mix history and science. So, the history of medicine is one of the key areas where you can't, where you have to blend hard medical science with history. Whereas the history in archaeology a lot of it can be theoretical, a lot of it can be interpretation based on an opinion of how the human body reacts to something, which is pure science- that's not going to change. My body and the body of a medieval man my age is going to react to being stabbed or getting a disease in exactly or roughly the same way. So that was kind of how we developed it and looked at the design with the simple message that your body is the same as someone else's body, therefore your body will react to treatments in exactly the

same way; and that message is tried to be put through in these design of the interpretation text, if that makes sense.

**Researcher:** So, then what were the objectives of the experience, meaning, was it primarily education, or is there entertainment or commemoration for these people that once lived?

**Manager:** Certainly, the first two. It came from an educational project, from a school's project, I have no qualms, no issues at all with people having a morbid fascination with the body and death and dying. I don't see it as something that has to be revered or respected. People do have issue with the skeleton on display, like oh you should look at it scientifically; you shouldn't just go about it as it's a corpse. But morbid curiosity is just as good as any curiosity or even better, because if our objective is to get people to learn or get interested in heritage, which largely is an understanding, then for me, morbid curiosity is just another tool to attract people. So, if someone comes to Sick to Death because they are really interested in learning about surgery or whatever and another has come to gawk at blood and guts and stuff like that, I don't care to be honest. They are both valid reasons and I'm not bothered. We are not really traditional in doing stuff and my attitude is- like we just ran the biggest digital heritage event in the world two weeks ago using Pokémon Go, and there was some 18,000 people in the city. That was a heritage thing for me to engage all these people in a project. The fact that Pokémon Go and how we used it does not bother me- the outputs are exactly the same. So morbid fascination is brilliant. We should start encouraging museums to stop being so prissy and frightened about it. Certainly, learning and certainly having fun and enjoyment and if morbid curiosity is one of the things people are interested in then that's fine as well.

**Researcher:** So, then what do you want your visitors to gain from the experience when they leave?

**Manager:** I think a sense of place, so I'm always very keen to help people understand sense of place for Chester, specifically Sick to Death. So, understand a bit more about the physical city. The city is a backdrop or a stage for things that happen in it, and I think looking at diseases, plagues and warfare and illnesses and things help to put some flesh on the bones if you like to understand more about the city. Understand a little bit more about their own bodies as well. I think as much interest in 'people being a bit more scientifically switched on, people go away understanding or like 'I didn't know leprosy still existed' or 'that actually antibiotics are not something we should take for granted,' then that's another bonus for me. And, just scratch and itchy people curious about history and go away and learn a little bit more and just enjoy themselves, then that's fine. I think there's always this kind of thing that you have to change people's outlook on this in our aim is this or our aim is that, but for me it's did they enjoy it- yea, well then bottom line that's fine. So that's the basis. There are other depths and layers to it, but certainly there's an element of enjoyment and learning something as well is a bonus if they do.

**Researcher:** Who is the target audience?

**Manager:** This is where it is interesting with Sick to Death because it's not something we specifically targeted as this age bracket or this kind of group. Traditionally museum type attractions tend to have a fairly defined audience, which in Chester are fairly old or retired white people with some disposable income. We've tended to go along the lines of trying to move that age bracket to younger people, but without turning it into a horrible history. What we've found is the feedback has been really positive in the way we've done it. There's a lot to read, there's lots of text, but it's not undecipherable, it's not too academically heavy or anything else like that and it also allows children to get something out of it that adults won't, and vice versa. We have actually gone for quite a broad range, certainly of an age bracket of people in that sense. Again, there is enough for people with doctorates to enjoy and get something out of it through to just the kind of man off the streets with no formal qualifications- it's tried to get that balance. Whether we've done it is a different point. It seems to be that way from the feedback, but we've tried to broaden that interest to a large age group and large kind of demographic.

**Researcher:** Is that the same target then for the expansion?

**Manager:** Yes, although I want to try to get a little bit more out into harder to reach audiences. So, we do acknowledge that the price of the new Sick to Death is going to go up because there is a lot of innovation and tech and money being spent on it, but because we are a non-profit, we can use a significant profit from it. We are going to be able to use that for outreach programs in areas of social deprivation, places that we're not really getting into. So, for instance, for some of the projects we'll specifically target a group that would normally not work or know what we're doing. We've had archaeological digs where we've gone and done the processing in secure mental health units or in retirement homes where people couldn't get out and stuff like that. So, we'll do the core work where it needs to be done, and then we'll go and find areas of people where it's really not expected to do stuff and we'll try to take it to them. The expansion will do that, but there will be a bit more of an element to it going mobile as well. We'll have a more solid financial print and we'll use that to take things out a bit more evangelically.

**Researcher:** [The Head of Operations] said that you guys were thinking about doing mobile road shows for 6 months, kind of like pop-up bars.

**Manager:** Exactly. Our aim is to take it out of the obvious. So, we won't be in London or Manchester. We'd look at cities that have heritage, which in effect is everywhere in England, but more kind of deprived or places like Carlisle or Durham, which are historic cities but are big, sprawling council estates surrounding them. So that would benefit more from us as a road show to take it to those audiences. So, we're looking at first year a bit of establishing there and putting quite a lot of investment in a pop-up Sick to Death. So, it will be a really good, high quality.

**Researcher:** Will it be a pop-up Sick to Death of Chester, or will it be of those towns?

**Manager:** No, so the plan would be to go and work with the museum in Durham, get any artefacts and things associated with Durham, same as Chester, and it would tell us the story of Durham or Leicester, or wherever that is. So that is the key proponent for Sick to Death, it tells the story of a place through its people who lived in that place. So, there would be research before.

**Researcher:** Would the long-term goal be to create permanent establishments elsewhere in the UK?

**Manager:** I think so. It depends on the popularity of the pop-ups, but there is, perhaps not a franchise model, but there is certainly a model of replication and doing more with it, like the London Dungeons and things like that, but obviously with a more academic grounding. That's some of the thinking with the pop-ups is it would give us some test grounds to see how that went. But we could also pop-up into museums, like our local museum is always on the lookout for touring exhibitions. So, it could almost take the form of a permanent touring exhibition. But the idea would lend itself to us looking for us scoping out venues that could host another permanent exhibition of Sick to Death.

**Researcher:** If say in 5-10 years from now it is a great success, would you look at doing this outside of the UK?

**Manager:** Yea, if the model is replicable and if the money was there, then almost certainly.

**Researcher:** Talking more about the methods before we get into the actual design in action, when the planning was underway, what methods were initially planned to deliver the information and the interpretation, and was anything left out and not put into the actual design that exists there now?

**Manager:** We did have some challenges with that building. [The Head of Operations], said it was great and unlisted, so we were limited with what we could do. So, the new Sick to Death will be a bit more about my vision being delivered properly as opposed to having to bend around and deliver stuff that we could do rather than what we wanted to. One thing certainly as there wasn't enough time slash money to do, I wanted to do a lot more physical, hands on, grab and touch and the more digital interactive stuff isn't at this current place, but will be at the new one. So, we did have a load of different ideas but then it became a financial issue and time issue in what time we've got to deliver them thematically. Also, the other thing that we missed out really, and again it's just cause of timing, there's chronologically nothing about Roman medicine at this one and that's because at the same time in tandem we were running quite major Roman medicine exhibition at the Grover museum, so it was time, effort and resources of the Roman medicine was focused on the museum exhibition so we left it out completely, where in the new Sick to Death that will take a strong part and we'll be able to take the learning of the exhibition and things like that. So that was all missed out on this current Sick to Death but with logically good reason for it.

**Researcher:** Is that why the current Sick to Death starts with the 13<sup>th</sup> century?



**Manager:** Yea, pretty much; and again, we were limited to space in the tower. The tower is not Roman anyway, but we did have this really major Roman exhibition where we were loaning finds to the British Museum and it was really good. So, it didn't really make sense to do, because it was on for 3-4 months the Roman medicine was. So, opening up at the same time, so you could actually do Roman medicine and carry on the journey elsewhere, but once that exhibition closed, that gap just sits there and obviously we'll address that at the new place.

**Researcher:** Why does it stop with the 17<sup>th</sup> century? Does the new Sick to Death go into 18<sup>th</sup> and into modern time?

**Manager:** So, we are about to ask these questions ourselves. What happened originally the school workshops and the touring projects were all about the Romans, Greek and Roman medicine played quite a strong part in the national curriculum for schools, but two years ago the exam boards changed so it basically touches on Greco-Roman medicine and then looks completely at this chronology, from looking at 1, 2, 3 key periods to looking at changes and how things change and stay the same through to the first world war. So Sick to Death almost became born out of that because we were just a year and a bit into a three-year project on Romans in the schools, so we started looking at Romans in different time periods. Again, current Sick to Death is in that because it looks at those two time periods, as they were both important periods in the city of Chester as there are a lot of records and artefacts, so we just had those resources, but we do recognise the influence of later stuff. So, I don't know if [The Head of Operations] mentioned we redesigned the WWI museum, it's a medicine museum. It's more on nursing and healthcare and the effects and coming back from war. We got about 10K for that museum to design that. So, we probably put an element of that up to the First World War into the new Sick to Death as well. So, we'll have a much longer chronology. We are going to go through a very chunky bit of consultation and have a lot of people around the table for a couple of days and map out how it is all going to go because we have more space, but not infinite space obviously. So, there will be a bit of a mix.

**Researcher:** Why is the current exhibit self-guided? Is it just space or budgeting?

**Manager:** Again, surely practical, so it's self-guided, walk around and have a look because it's out on a limb, the tower in the city. The location is not ideal. This will be a huge benefit moving it closer into the city centre. But the staff on the door, we can't really staff people to show around because that is double the staff and staff are 90% of costs, so that's that practical element of it. It's a small, it's not a massive attraction, and it is small. Less than an hour to go around, so it just doesn't lend itself to require that basically. The new place might be a little bit better in that sense or the opportunities to do other stuff, but also we're going to put a lot more digital interactive stuff at the new place, so that might negate the need for that, but that will come out of the planning, which is the next phase really.

**Researcher:** With the space allocation of the new site, would you consider having character re-enactors of the time period with people dressed as either plague doctors? I know I saw online someone dressed as a monk and that made me think it was a guided tour, and then I found out it is self-guided, but the online material made it look like you are taken around by a monk.

**Manager:** No, what we tend to do during busier periods is we will have second staff in doing demos or taking people around, and then when we do ticketed tours like Halloween we'll have it guided around by a couple of different characters, but the day to day operations is a bit more traditional as a self-guided museum thing. It's been a balance really; we've learned that some people want that kind of hand-held thing, but a lot of people just like going around on their own time and seeing their own thing. So, we are still getting the balance right with those things. At the new place, we are very, very leaning towards getting the staff into character costumes, we'll pick a particular time period, and we'll make sure you know that it represents the history of medicine in that time period and go from there. So, that's an option on the table anyways and we'll see if the staff goes for it.

**Researcher:** What elements of the design do you think provoke the interests or attention most of visitors?

**Manager:** I think purposefully the plague doctor and the hanging man are kind of key, they certainly draw the eye and we purposefully provoke people by putting them in place. The plague doctor has connotations of the macabre with it, and whether that was the case in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, we don't know, but certainly the hanging man- a man stripped back and hanging from the ceiling does exactly that- it draws the eye to it and it is always the first thing people see and go for and people are like 'why is this there' but then there is a real strong science and history of medicine of why that hanging man represents so much about the history of medicine, whether that is the first steps of kind of looking at the anatomy properly, it tells us about the changes in attitudes and religion in studying the body. It's looking at the Renaissance and looking at the printing press, there's a lot to be said and it can all be summed by a skinned hanging man. We nailed it with that, we knew that was going to happen and it certainly worked.

**Researcher:** Do you think the design addresses the whole, meaning it illustrates the main theme and all the exhibits illustrate and support and everything is fluid?

**Manager:** Not as well as we would like, there is obviously room for improvement at the new place. I think there is a bit of juxtaposition between the top two floors. There is a bones laboratory, which has a lot of the science and I personally would like to see the science embedded a bit more throughout all the exhibitions. So, anything you see that is gory, there should be a science element alongside that. At the moment it's a bit like there's science there and there is this there and there is something else there. I would like to see kind of a bit more running as a theme throughout. So, we've got some room for improvement there. A lot of it is budget based as well. Some of the quality conditions can be improved through a bigger budget. I think things like

interactive elements, things that touch and feel are all on a lower budget and will improve obviously. The brand, I really like the Sick to Death brand, and the type face and the logos and stuff is all great and that works completely throughout so we'll keep that for the next place. I think the narrative could be improved, but it is restrained because of the building, which is a historic building. The new building is old, but it's one big massive open space, so we've got the opportunity to let the narrative flow a little bit more, which becomes a little bit disjointed in the current one. So, we've got opportunities to improve that anyway.

**Researcher:** More about the aesthetics, how do the aesthetics help to support the flow of the main theme, like the colours, lighting, audio, visuals? Are they all in line with what you are trying to do, or is there anything that is lacking?

**Manager:** I think we will probably readdress fonts and typefaces. The logo and branding are quite modern and fresh. What they have a habit of doing in Chester is anything historical they put in 'ye old English font and things like that, and I'm not a fan of any of that. To be honest I think it is a bit twee. So, I think the way we have done it works in that sense. Again, things like light and being able to manipulate light, we are held back a bit with the building and budget. I think the next one we will be able to do that a little bit more. I think it does support this idea, because it quite a modern brand, nice clean typefaces support this concept of the history of medicine not being a 'ye old history thing. It is about the science element and that sort of modern exploration of it as well and that is what we are going for.

**Researcher:** Do you think the expansion will then address everything a little more succinctly?

**Manager:** Yea, absolutely. Space and budget and having the ability to manipulate that space will be far easier and it will be a massive bonus for us because we can guide the visitor experience far more than we can now. Literally, there is only one route to go with this place.

**Researcher:** When the expansion finally opens, the lease for the tower will still be valid. So, when the lease is up, will you renew and turn the current site into something else?

**Manager:** Yea, so we are looking at doing something about the history of the tower, specifically. So, it won't be a history of medicine, per se. It will be more about the history of the walls of Chester, which are a big draw as the most complete walls in the UK. So, we'll probably tell a story about the walls because they represent the city, how they were built and how they were maintained and how people engaged, acted and fought on them. We will move the brand Sick to Death to the new place, but the logistics of it will stay the same at the current place.

**Researcher:** More on the nature of the design. Even though it is about the history of medicine, it does discuss plague and disease, there is a man sitting on a toilet discussing intestinal worms and things like that. Did the sensitive

nature of the history affect the design? Or did the sensitive nature of how the body functions and the medicine that was around back then affect the design?

**Manager:** It inspired it. To be honest, people are interested in things that they can connect to but are different from them. So, it's to be able to say, 'well that's a human body, but something is wrong.' So, I think that's what we really have gone for. There is no point in doing a history of medicine thing and saying this is how someone had a cold. People are interested in things that are different but the same, something they can relate to but on a different tangent from their day to day lives. Like people with dysentery, people hanging, plague doctors and plague; so, it's something that will provoke a reaction and we are playing on that sensitivity, I have no issues with that. I think the idea of offending people is just weird, a modern soft concept. It is what it is, that is real life and if you're offended that doesn't mean that it didn't happen. So, we do provoke people and I'm kind of disappointed we haven't had a few more complaints. We go out and display the human remains in settings and in workshops and people ask, 'well what if someone is offended' and I say 'so what? They're not going to die themselves. If they're offended, then they can go away and be offended on their own and let everyone else get on.' And, actually when people are shocked or whatever then they're usually like 'what is this about?' Then we can provoke some learning from it. So, I don't really hold too much on that and certainly people's opinions. However, if someone has a religious sensitivity to seeing human remains, we have dealt with that in *Sick to Death* with the human remains is enclosed- you can't openly see it, you choose to see it, rather than them just in your face. But we're not going to not do it just because people might be offended, otherwise we would never get anything done. I like the idea of making people sick and faint and these things, but that's just half the fun.

People are morbidly fascinated with our own mortality and that is what dark tourism is for me, some sort of subliminal understanding that we are all going to die and that is the one cast-iron guarantee and people deal with that in different ways. That might be religiously, which is great for some people, but on other levels people are interested. You don't have to look at Medieval or memorial tombs where it's all bodies rotting, and they carve the bodies in stone rotting away. It's all about that physical closeness with death and you're reminded that you're next basically. I think there is an element of that dark tourism I there but people won't admit it or maybe not understand and I think that is what the attraction is, but it's a way for humans to deal with their own sense of mortality by confronting it in ways like this. I think this is a conduit for it and I'm unapologetic about it and I think it is a great way for people to become engaged with the whole idea.

**Researcher:** Were there any personal or company concerns regarding the sensitive nature that were brought up during the design developments?

**Manager:** There was a bit of elements of me coming up with stuff and them saying 'oh, that may be a bit too much,' but I don't really see the romance in stuff. We have a portable giant anus that you can have a go for yourself and remove anal fistulas. We took that out on the road and it just looked like a giant bum-hole. Everyone told me 'you can't do that,' but it's actually one of the most popular things we've ever done. So, I think most of the team now is like 'yea,

let's give it a whirl.' The attitude is always 'well if they won't do it then we will.' We do have to check ourselves sometimes. We won't do anything that is overly sensitive. We are looking at doing something on child mortality soon as a museum exhibition and looking at the history of how people responded to infant mortality. That's where you take out that element of 'ooo, its blood and guts and gore,' because you're actually looking at people grieving and at times there is just no place for any kind of horrible histories-esq style. It requires a serious study of infant mortality, where I think elements of the body- everything is there to play with and look at- nothing major is a concern. We actually thought we'd get more complaints than we did, so slightly disappointed in that.

**Researcher:** Will visitor feedback affect the design of the expansion?

**Manager:** Yes and no, because I think with trying to provoke, we have to do more than the things that people either think they want or feel comfortable with and push boundaries a bit more with the next one. So feedback on things that weren't or were popular we will use, but I think we will do some radical changes at the next one, which people wouldn't even think to give us feedback on because it's probably not a sensible way of doing it, but that is us trying to push buttons and provoke people. Welcome Trust, our funder, is really supportive of that as well- they are a very provocative organization themselves. We do take feedback on board, but if you take the middle of the road opinion all the time then you never do anything different.

**Researcher:** What are some of the themes that you feel provoke visitors that will be brought into the new exhibit?

**Manager:** Largely, the positives. So, for example the hanging man, I thought we were going to get a bit of a stick for that, but we didn't. So, we are going to use that a push the boundaries a little bit more and have it far more realistic and far more stripped back to understand layers of the body in a more visceral way. I thought we were fairly out there with the current one, but the feedback was positive, so I want to push the boundaries a little more with it. There is probably not much negative feedback, its far more positive. There are elements where we thought may be a bit close to the bone, but they weren't, so we think let's go a bit further. Also, with a little bit more with the human remains at the new one. Again, I think we are a little bit sensitive by putting it into this enclosed area. You know it's called Sick to Death. If you are squeamish or not happy with this sort of thing then just don't come in. I don't want to segregate things off because of their sensitivities. It is what it is. If you don't like it, then just don't come through the front door. It's not tax-pay funded. You're not paying for it in any other way, so if you don't like it then just don't come in.

**Researcher:** Can you speak on other themes that you will try to push boundaries with in the new exhibit?

**Manager:** It is a team decision and we are just starting to go through this phase now. I definitely want to do more about sexual health and disease as well. At the end of the day it's not for kids in the sense that it's not for three-year olds, but I'd like to do a little bit on that. Or maybe that might be a section that we have closed off a little bit, but sexual health is a brilliant way for leaning. We

have 3D replicas with syphilis and everything else and I think it would be a great learning tool to say, 'use a condom kids because that's what your head looks like if you don't.' I think it would be great for schools and we'll get more people through the doors. No one would ever think to do a sex-ed course in a museum. That's the type of boundaries I want to push. People thought pregnancy is this, this and this, and obviously we'd get a professional to do this with us, but I like the idea of saying 'look these are the diseases, risks and elements.' So certainly that, more human remains as well. We were a little bit cautious on displaying the human remains, as we didn't want people to just be gawking. But now I am quite happy to have people be morbidly gawking as long as they are learning something and getting something out of it. We will probably be a little more relaxed and push boundaries with that. We also had a section on skin disease where you put your hand in a box and feel the different types of skin diseases, but they didn't work very well because the budget wasn't high enough to get the feel right. So, we will work on that because I want people to get a feel. I don't know how we will do it, whether we will do some sort of augmented reality or not. Again, it's a mix of being not too horrible histories and just fun and games, but just provoking people's responses and things like that.

**Researcher:** Why humans? Do you include diseases of animals?

**Manager:** No. Whether we ever cross over into vaccinations and cattle pox and stuff like that. Our aim has always been about human health. Largely because you've got that empathy as a driver- saying 'oh I could get that illness' or 'it could happen to me' and I think it is a bit detached from that in animals in a sense. The physiology is different as well and I don't have any expertise in it either. So, it's not something we'd ever say no to, but it's not on our current agenda to do.

**Researcher:** Do you think the design softens or sanitises the truth in any way?

**Manager:** We've tried not to. I think again at the next place we will go even harder, especially since at we've got a technology budget to do some kinds of 3D and digital and screens. We will go really bloody and hard with that where possible. I think where we missed out is maybe we should have put more photographic imagery, like the plague. We do have it on the images about leprosy and stuff, but we need more images about the diseases people are suffering from and making it hit home a bit more, certainly where people have those diseases today. Like rickets has had a comeback, which is bizarre, but having that in images to see people in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with rickets and stuff. So, I don't think we purposefully softened it, but I think we could go and push it a bit harder if we wanted to. But we've never been ones to try to soften it really.

**Researcher:** How do you think the design reflects historical truth?

**Manager:** Well that's what we've been careful of. Even the concept of the plague doctor has been sort of a flagship for the whole thing, but there is actually no physical or historical evidence of plague doctors wearing beaked masks in Britain. We have records of plague doctors, so we know they were around, but the beaked mask costumes have only been found in Germany and

Italy and I think in France. So, we've been careful to tell people that as well. So that's where we've come from an academic background, as most everyone in Big Heritage comes from archaeology or history background. That has to be the starting point is historical accuracy where possible, and how we interpret it is up to us in that sense; but it will always be nothing in there that we wouldn't be able to reference back to an academic text or artefact or something like that. That has always been and will continue to be the case. How that affects the design, I don't know. I don't know if it's had much of an influence on it. I don't think there has been a direct influence on it, but certainly the text is certainly referenced.

**Researcher:** So, if you can't find historical records of the plague doctor wearing a mask, then why do you use it?

**Manager:** It's very iconic. Again, no apology for it because we explain what it is. But it is a very iconic figure and I think that has to step away from the heritage kind of academic world and look at it from a branding and marketing perspective and say, 'well look, this went internationally viral, we actually got it right.' It is a figurehead, like the Chinese Emperor's logo is a dragon, which doesn't actually exist. So, the plague existed, plagued doctors existed, the plague doctor masks existed, we can't actually pinpoint one in Chester, but that doesn't mean there isn't relevance for it. So, we acknowledge time and again the plague doctor is really a marketing tool for us, which we have used well. But no apologies for it because it has achieved success.

**Researcher:** Are there any parts of the history or story that are omitted?

**Manager:** Anything that has been is just simply because we don't have the space to tell the whole story. Everything that is in there is because we had the collection or because they were pertinent themes, or we had the space and the budget to do it. If we have five stories, then we could have the space and budget to fill it. So, anything omitted is largely practical based or the themes didn't shout out as loudly as the ones we have in, which again will change rapidly. Like there is an exhibit on food, which is crap and I don't like it. So, in the new space we will get rid of it. But its kind of just filled the space and is relevant, but the way we did it was based on budget and space. So, in the next one we will do something on food and diet, but it will look completely different.

**Researcher:** The budget and space are the key driving factors for how and why the design is there, but is there any personal or company preferences for the way that the design was done or on anything that was left out or was wanted but wasn't working out?

**Manager:** I wanted more hands-on stuff, but another factor was time. We had a window of time that we had to put it up, which was 7 weeks. We haven't changed it since that 7 weeks, but there's not that many companies that can do that. So, time was a big thing. If we had more of a breathing space then we could have done a lot more, which again is just a practical thing. But if anyone had more time and more money, they'd do things completely differently. So, on the budget and time that we had, I think we did a decent job. The next one is

the one to probably judge us on because we technically have more time and more money, so we should get it exactly the way we want it.

**Researcher:** Given that it was only 7 weeks, I assume there was no formal front-end evaluation. Was anything done to test the design before it opened?

**Manager:** No is the simple answer. The background of the current Sick to Death is that we had been working in schools and stuff and Welcome Trust us and asked if we wanted to explore putting it all in an attraction because there is money there and so we put in a bid, but it wasn't right. We needed a bit of time to develop. So, we got some interim money to just test stuff out. That was actually the point of the building there is to open it for a couple of months, test the theory and what people are interested in and then close it and then go back in for the bigger chunk of money. So actually, the whole project was just a bit of a test case and determines if people would come through the door and is the feedback ok. So, it was nothing more than a pilot and proof of concept for the new expansion. So, we were never guaranteed the big chunk of money for the expansion, so Welcome Trust gave us this money to test the idea. So what we did do was try to was think if we don't get the big money then we need to utilize this best we can and if push comes to shove we can continue to run it even though it was a pilot, which is what we are doing now even though the new one has already started. The whole point of it was one big pilot really.

**Researcher:** Are there on-going or remedial evaluations for the current site to find new areas for improvement or problems?

**Manager:** It's a practical thing, where we have a lot of email addresses and a lot of feedback from visitors, but there is a new tam coming in and a new project manager. So, there has been a pause until when she is in. We've got this time period where we are starting to design the space, but the build won't actually start until after Christmas. So, we've got between now and Christmas to kind of do that, but we are a bit behind on things because of practical things, like leases and stuff. So, it's needed, it's just not started.

**Researcher:** So, since it is a self-guided tour, do the staff that runs the admissions have any say or do their voices become part of the design process or evaluations for the new expansion?

**Manager:** One certainly will be because she took on an internship with us with her degree program but is now a full-time contract with us with more responsibility so we will be able to take her day to day interactions and have her more involved with that. I know she is really keen to look at the kind of schools and school trip elements in her role. So, she'll take a bit of responsibility for that. But the new place will be completely different in how it is staffed. There will be a lot of fresh starts and we will also have the current location still running but under a different theme.

**Researcher:** How do you think your site stands out from similar sites or attractions?



**Manager:** I haven't really spotted anything similar. From a medicine perspective, you have Thackeray and the Wellcome Trust ones, which are very broad and bit more about social history and are bit more about broad changes like in the Victorian period. Whereas I think ours is a bit more provocative in that it is visceral and gory and that was the plan from the start. I always think we are not an official museum or a council museum so we can do what we want, no one has given us a grant to do this, this and this, so we have a bit more of a playful element and we don't take ourselves too seriously. Hopefully, that will manifest itself in the new place as well, so I think we are slightly less conservative than the others I've seen so far. Where you look at things like the Dungeons experience, that's historic bullshit but entertaining than anything else. We are trying to get that middle ground and do the dark and macabre, but it's soundly academic and based on references. You should be able to walk in to the new place and not think that it is a museum or anything like that, but it is still ground in some academic quality.

**Researcher:** Do you consider the Sick to Death to be a form of dark or sensitive heritage?

**Manager:** I wouldn't say sensitive because I think that is people's personal issues, but certainly the dark, macabre side of things and dealing with death is a theme. We will probably do death and dying a lot more at the new place than what we do in the current, but I can consider it to be along that line. I wanted to actually do a death tour of Chester, not a ghost tour because I don't believe in ghosts but show where murders and death and dying are a really interesting theme. There are all sorts of people; there were 15 brothels on this road at one point in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, all sorts of crime and brilliant records of people being murdered. So, I like stuff like that as a tour, with interesting graves and how people died. The whole ghost things don't interest me personally because I don't believe in any of it. But the death part of it can really spook people out because this is actually where they were murdered, I think. We will probably do a lot more of that in the future. So, to answer your question, yes, I think Sick to Death fit that bill. Not perfectly, but certainly I would classify it as dark tourism in that sense.

**Researcher:** So Sick to Death is very much in its elementary stages with the long-term goal as expansion?

**Manager:** That is the hope. What I want is to have a horrible histories meets science and medicine in permanent attractions- that kind of irreverent version of history.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the plague is one of the key elements of the Sick to Death?

**Manager:** Yea, I think we will continue to use that because one, it's a mass depopulating event that still impacts the world today. It is entirely possible that plagues of that nature could come back around again, and that is something that I want to do a bit more about in the future.

## **Appendix F – Transcription of RMKC focus group A with RPB**

Prompt: *What is your perception of the design and management of interpretation at your attraction?*

### **Focus Group Discussion while drawing:**

**Staff 1:** There are many, many guests and they are all bringing in paper notes and credit cards, but it is only the little coins that drip down to us.

**Staff 2:** I couldn't draw so I just put a stick man that's unhappy about the price-quality timeline. I didn't know how to put how kind of old and tired the place was, so I drew a picture of someone smelling not very nice because the costumes are rancid.

**Staff 3:** Yea, for the costumes I put that they look nice, but do they? The whole theatre aspect of it, 'oh I'm from the 17<sup>th</sup> century,' what is the point in that?

**Staff 1:** This is exactly why I drew a uniform with a green tick and floundering costumes with a red cross over it. I don't want to get off track, etc., but we would look so much better if guides just word plain, black clothes with The Real Mary King's Close logo on it. That would look so much better.

**Staff 2:** An offshoot of that I put the different things that people do in Edinburgh, such as the different attractions, which are historical, cultural, theatre and the ghost tours stuff. People seem to be more happy with them because they put the money back into the property.

**Staff 4:** I put that admissions is like the lower level staff.

**Staff 2:** It does kind of seem like there is a food chain. You should put that in there because retail and admissions probably have their own issues.

**Staff 4:** It is all the baseline staff that are getting the absolute pennies of the profit.

**Staff 2:** But that goes for management too because even their salaries are bad for dealing with spewers, fainters, people screaming in their face, mass throngs of people in all different languages of giving them a hard time.

**Researcher:** How does all that you are talking about impact or is influenced by the design and management of the interpretation?

**Staff 2:** It makes guides not really want to do it.

**Staff 3:** I don't enjoy doing that. If I am not getting paid enough, I am not going to enjoy my job, I'll just do it and its just whatever. But if I was actually showing them the history of the site instead of some lie or whatever just to bring in more money, then I would actually do my job better. It would be more interesting, and I would more want to do it.

**Staff 5:** That is why I've got a guide in the dark saying 20 cows, 15 cows, 50 cows and a cow that says I don't even live here, because I don't think it was really a cowshed.

**Staff 1:** The stuff we are coming out with is such speculative stuff.

**Staff 5:** Chesney's fake thunder box, the fake shelves. Why are you turning the real site fake? It was good to begin with, why are we changing it? That is the bit that is ruining it for me. Why are we fancying about in stupid costumes?

**Staff 2:** It almost adds insult to injury.

**Staff 5:** It really does, and that camera is shocking. Plus, they're not saying it may have been a tennis court or something.

**Staff 2:** Oh yea, it was a courtyard to the house or something like that.

**Staff 5:** There is just so much to the site that we are not being given the time to research and fully understand.

**Staff 6:** You said tennis court?

**Staff 5:** Yea, well you see if we weren't wasting time in the shop and instead doing proper research, we would know. It would be good to have someone with designated time to research.

**Staff 1:** That is another thing. There are serious levels of double standards among the staff. You look at certain guides and ask when they have ever done a closing tour? When have they ever worked a weekend? We can't attract core members of staff because we are not offering anything.

**Staff 4:** It creates a bad vibe personally for the staff which means you're treating your customers with contempt and then it means that they are not getting the full experience.

**Staff 2:** We need to get some sort of balance.

**Staff 5:** When you look at even the shift patterns. How are you supposed to give a five-star service on five hours of sleep? That is the way that I see it.

**Staff 2:** What we are saying is that it has been cheapened by the fact that there is no money coming into it, that's why, and then the tour suffers the staff suffers.

**Staff 5:** Some of the things they choose to focus their money on as well. Like we could afford to fix George Rae's arm, but we can buy a shed for the courtyard.

**Staff 3:** One thing that I wrote is that I feel like the site is being completely exploited. They have no care for it whatsoever. When was the last time anything was looked after?

**Staff 4:** But it is not up to us unfortunately. It is up to the City Council.

**Staff 5:** But even the fact that we have to go down and deep clean it-

**Staff 2:** Every six months it should be getting cleaned and the air checked.

**Staff 5:** It shouldn't just be up to Rob walking around with a Hoover.

**Staff 6:** That Hoover broke on him three times the other day while he was cleaning Pearson's Close. We just need to get some sort of air purifier.

**Staff 2:** I don't understand why these are problems when we are always over capacity.

**Staff 4:** Yea when we are sold out, management will overbook people because more people, more money.

**Staff 1:** Overbooking people on tours is becoming a problem.

**Staff 4:** Bear in mind this is not a chance for us to vent. This is about us speaking out our thoughts on what we think goes into making the design of the site. It is positives as well as negatives. It is not just about us going 'oh my God, we are treated like shit.' It is the general design. What do we actually think is the design and where do we think it goes wrong?

**Staff 2:** Well a positive is the fact that the site is quite an amazing site and we have pretty good access to it as well.

**Staff 1:** I would like to draw somewhere on here the tacky room that is ghost story.

**Staff 5:** Yes, and the terrible scream.

**Staff 1:** We need to put in some positives though.

**Staff 2:** Ok, how about the historical element of it. I know it is debated in terms of the quality of the tour, but the actual physical stones in place are good.

**Staff 4:** It's great that we have got access to it and we have whatever knowledge we have got even if it is not completely right. But people come to Edinburgh because it's so full of history and it is a beautiful place to be.

**Staff 6:** I think an issue is that no one is allowed into certain rooms.

**Staff 5:** Yea, we are not taking full advantage of the site.

**Staff 2:** Yea, it's like 'I can show you this, but you can't come in.'

**Staff 4:** We need people to be pushing the Council to sort our site out. We can't run as a fully historical site if we can't access the historical things. It's ridiculous.

**Staff 1:** Annie's room I am not fussed about because having 21 people in there is impossible.

**Staff 2:** It's a liability. We should basically just close it.

**Staff 1:** Plus, it is about some vague story that is probably not true.

**Staff 2:** I think that this site isn't as accessible as it should be, and it totally detracts from the whole idea of the tour. But there's also the element of it that because of this, you walk from one room to the other and it's just sort of crappy. You basically go from 17<sup>th</sup> century down to the photograph. Between that it's just nothing.

**Staff 1:** The illustrations in windows, I think are alright. Some of them.

**Staff 4:** But you never have time to talk about them.

**Staff 2:** You never have time. That is a good point is the time situation.

**Staff 1:** I know this was quite controversial when brought to air, but when guides were informed that they were going to get breaks cut to a 45-minute break, retailers only get a half an hour and that's it. Guides were brought further into line with retailers, but they're still winging about it.

**Staff 3:** It's not fair because the retailers work longer shifts than the guides do at the end of the day. Guides do 6 or 7 hours, where as retailers do 8 or 9. I think we should all be on the same amount of breaks. But then again, I don't know how people would be.

**Staff 1:** This comes back to the thing I was saying about double standards.

**Staff 5:** That causes tension between both teams, which doesn't really help the end goal.

**Staff 2:** That ties into time issues, which also ties into the general moral of the team.

**Staff 5:** It also ties into the issue with money because people are paying a lot and they are getting sub-standard.

**Staff 3:** I think it is also important to talk about the costumes.

**Staff 1:** In terms of interpretation that is the first thing.

**Staff 2:** I like the idea of a standard uniform because at least then you could take it home and wash it regularly.

**Staff 5:** The costumes do have a Disney factor about it.

**Staff 3:** It's just exploiting the site again with the costumes.

**Staff 4:** I think that is what the tourists expect though if they are coming to a tourist attraction, then they are expecting a little bit of theatrical sort of thing.

**Staff 2:** You are right, but if you go to the Dungeons, they actually put money into it. The costumes look good, they may be crappy and old, but they don't look it. Ours are old and tired. We get people all the time saying the guides smelled quite bad on the tour. It's because the costumes are rancid. You get one waistcoat to wear for how many years?

**Staff 1:** I have worked here for several years and every tour I have ever done has been in that one costume.

**Staff 5:** I have to take mine home and wash it in the washing machine, but you shouldn't have to take it home a wash it.

**Staff 2:** You can take it home and wash it over and over again, but it is the same piece of material, and that is the main attraction.

**Staff 3:** Well and you can't put it into the dry cleaning because you work too many shifts and the time to dry clean takes far too long.

**Staff 1:** And if you do it while you're on holiday, it either sits there for two weeks or it winds up lost.

**Staff 4:** There is also the issue that we have queues and queues of people, staff members are telling them we are sold out and the customers leave, so the managers start overbooking the tours because it is about the more people in, the more money in. But I don't want to make this all seem so negative, because there are good things about the company as well. From the tourist's point of view there are a heck of a lot of positives. Yes, from the staff point of view there are a lot of negatives, but there are positives as well.

**Staff 1:** I get excited when I am in the top room and people light up as I start the tour because they think they've bagged themselves a little native.

**Staff 5:** It should be noted that this is an open door to history.

**Staff 2:** It's not open though, its 15 bucks for a pretty low-cost tour. I'm sorry, but you can't try to be positive if there is nothing positive. There are good things, don't get me wrong, but you look at other things that are amazing experiences and there are no guides or audio guides and they are often less than this in price. This is an amazing site that gets no appreciation, not only from the public, but also the people running it. It's really hard to be positive about it.

**Staff 4:** I feel like we should have something about the history and the intention of the tour.

**Staff 5:** We need to talk about the fact that we lie.

**Staff 2:** Historical accuracy

**Staff 5:** Even if it were to just have the guides saying the same thing so that it is a consistent lie.

**Staff 4:** I think they've got a good idea about the fact that we've got this great historic site and we are going to make it slightly theatrical for all the tourists so it's not just this boring thing getting facts thrown at you. The full hour can be a little tough if it is that. So, throwing in a little bit of theatricality to it does make it more exciting to do for the tourists.

**Staff 1:** See I find it totally opposite to that.

**Staff 3:** I think it is a nice idea but when you are actually doing it, they don't want it.

**Staff 4:** I guess it sounds nice on paper. Some people are up for it. Some people are really all up for that.

**Staff 5:** I wish we could do different types of tours. Some could be solid history, some could be kinda in the middle.

**Staff 1:** But that wouldn't work for the company because their whole thing is about doing consistent tours.

**Staff 2:** The thing is no one does a tour that is just all facts. Even at Auschwitz, it's dense and hard to talk about.

**Staff 1:** I did that tour and I remember a Polish woman just looked absolutely miserable.

**Staff 4:** Well it's such a sensitive subject.

**Staff 2:** But imagine if they dressed up.

**Staff 1:** Oh, could you imagine me dressed up here in my stripped pyjamas. People would be outraged. So, does this then cross a line of cultural appropriation or something like that?

**Staff 2:** Other people do tours in the streets and they don't dress up. You could go down there and probably tell better stories because you are less dumb and like fiction. I would feel more confident basically.

**Staff 1:** So, we have talked about costume...

**Staff 2:** What about the actual site though?

**Staff 1:** That gallery room is absolutely dreadful.

**Staff 2:** I think that sums it up.

**Staff 1:** When you have to constantly compensate with jokes when it finishes.

**Staff 5:** It is ruining the true history.

**Staff 1:** That is something Craig was saying to me yesterday that was one of the first things he did when he became General Manager was to install that gallery. But of course, that makes perfect sense because he's come from a cinema background.

**Staff 5:** If feel like it would work if Archibald wasn't so bad because the tourists genuinely quite like it.

**Staff 2:** It works quite well at the whisky experience.

**Staff 5:** It just has to be done cleverly. There's history there to talk about but we are not paying any attention because we are watching the pictures talk.

**Staff 3:** One thing that I'd bring up is that when we have to do a school group and then you get random tourists chucked onto the tour as well because they want to make money.

**Staff 4:** That is what I said! I keep mentioning to Graham and Craig 'why are they just not fully booking a tour and then half booking the next tour so instead of having three members of the public you have ten?'

**Staff 3:** Either that or if you have a big group of kids or even just a big group, don't overbook the tour with randoms.

**Staff 4:** Yea, it takes it away from other people's experience.

**Staff 3:** When I do a kids tour it is much different from when I do an adults tour.

**Staff 2:** I feel bad for the other people because they've a lot of money to get a childish tour.

**Staff 5:** That is what I was saying about not having the tour the same all of the time. All the guides are different, so the tours are different.

**Staff 1:** The route I don't have any issues with because it is fairly chronological. But a lot of people on TripAdvisor say they don't spend enough time on the Close itself.

**Staff 2:** Yea, a lot of people say that they go through all these rooms and they say they are just a lot of empty chambers with not a lot in them and then you are whisked along the Close.

**Staff 4:** I don't know if a proper staging or periodical stuff to stage them.

**Staff 2:** Yea, more stuff to actually look at.

**Staff 4:** But then that would mean less space and less people on the tours.



**Staff 5:** Well the rooms that are half empty like windows and pre-Close, we can do something there, but we are not doing anything.

**Staff 3:** I remember at the last guide meeting there was a chat about moving all that stuff around in there.

**Staff 5:** That plague exhibition we bought from the library has been in storage for over a year.

**Staff 2:** Yea, when are they doing Mary's house?

**Staff 4:** It is so generic for so many things that ideas are taken but there is no execution.

**Staff 5:** But a lot of the time it is the time that is not set aside. Even if with Condemned, there are so many ideas but there is no time.

**Staff 1:** Opening times are the challenge. If we are open all the time, we don't have the time to stop.

**Staff 4:** I think we do need to have a period that we are closed for maybe an entire week. Not just a single day a year so that we can get stuff done. There's no communication between anyone really, so nobody ever knows what's going on. I think that's why we have struggled coming up with positives about what the concept of the design is because we don't know what the full concept of the design is.

**Staff 5:** Also, the lighting downstairs. Like, why is plague purple? It makes no sense.

**Staff 3:** Yea, sometimes it is so bright you can't see because it is hitting you right in the eyes.

**Staff 5:** You pay money to see something and you can see anything because you have an LED in your face.

**Staff 3:** Something that bothers me that isn't really part of the design, but the fact that we aren't first aid trained.

**Staff 4:** Oh yea! And how much would that take the load off the DMs if the guides were.

**Staff 1:** If have been there where I had someone lying on the floor and someone else pleading with me to do something and I have to explain that legally I can't touch them.

**Staff 3:** If it were a life and death situation there is nothing that I could do and by the time a DM gets down the stairs, which it is just how the site is, but imagine that someone dies and it's because we are not first aid trained.

**Staff 5:** Especially when there is only one DM on at a time.

**Staff 3:** I also think that in terms of the design as well, when someone faints and you're not able to do anything cause you can't touch them and then the rest of the tour is just standing there and that's when you get questions of why you're just standing there.

**Staff 5:** I have literally been screamed at because I couldn't do anything, and I was just standing there waiting for a DM and it was just chaos.

**Discussing the completed rich picture:**

**Researcher:** Top corner, people with equal sign and money.

**Staff 1:** That refers to the vast number of guests that we receive paying large amounts of money for the tour and this results in a huge cash income, of only, in comparatively speaking, pennies of which filter down to the staff who are making this happen in the first place.

**Staff 3:** It also affects the staff morale, which is extremely low.

**Researcher:** How does that impact the design or the management of the interpretation?

**Staff 3:** If morale is low, then tours are not going to be up to the high standards that they are advertising. When you know staring at a group of people who paid almost double the amount that you get paid and you know that none of that money is coming to you, you can't help but feel a wee bit begrudging sometimes. Therefore, the tour loses some of its-

**Staff 5:** Especially if it's a tough crowd.

**Staff 1:** It creates personal resentment for the company.

**Researcher:** What is the iPad or iPhone and the X's and checks?

**Staff 1:** So, this is in reference to photographs. Their official reason for this is because if you had people taking photographs that it would slow the group down, which I can see the reasoning behind it. Groups as slow already, never mind if they were going to take photos on top of that. But it does take the piss out of them when you've got a poor-quality option to then charge you again for a photograph. This is something that is vented a lot about on TripAdvisor by guests. The charging of photographs is something that the public do not react well to, at all.

**Researcher:** How does that impact the design or the management of the interpretation?

**Staff 1:** It compromises the historical integrity of the Close and it tarnishes. It compromises the historical reality and tarnishes the ambiance of the site.

**Researcher:** What is happening with Mickey and Minnie Mouse?

**Staff 5:** It refers to the cheap costumes. They look terrible. You feel terrible in them. It is taking away from the site as a whole because you look like a Disney character. I hear this from guests on the tour all the time saying, 'why do the guides look like Disney characters?' I am not saying to not have a costume. I'm saying make the costumes match the cost of the tour, like the quality. Some of them have more holes than we have socks. Things like that.

**Researcher:** Are you saying there should be no costumes and everyone should be in black shirts and kilts or just better costumes?

**Staff 3:** In my personal opinion we should just scrap the costumes all together, but I know other people don't agree with that. I do understand why the costumes are there. For some tourists, they like that. But I think they are just a waste.

**Staff 5:** I think the thing is that if they are going to put us in costumes then they need to be responsible enough to help us maintain them.

**Staff 4:** Yea and replenish them.

**Staff 1:** Yea, don't put on something that you can't maintain.

**Researcher:** What is the admissions ticket picture?

**Staff 5:** Its referring to the admission to get into the site and then you get a closed door.

**Researcher:** What is going on with the no entry? Is that in reference to the admission costs?

**Staff 5:** Well, you pay all this money to go into a historical site and then you can't get into most of the site. You can't get into Chesney's. You can't get into Annie's. There is a third floor that we can't get into. Things like that. You are paying all this money to see it and you can go around and look at it, but you can't get near it. You can't really see Chesney's toilet when you are that far away.

**Researcher:** So, what do you recommend then?

**Staff 4:** They need to put pressure on whoever it is that is in charge of actually renovating the site and make sure that it is getting done, because otherwise sooner or later we are going to have absolutely nothing left of the tour because nothing is getting restored and we are going to have no attraction whatsoever.

**Researcher:** How would you respond if the response to that is concerning money and the issue of having to close the site for a specific amount of time?

**Staff 1:** I would encourage a closure.

**Staff 4:** Its either that or risk completely losing the site forever.

**Staff 3:** The site is not going to be here for much longer, I don't think.

**Staff 5:** It's going to get to the point that they are going to have to cement it in.

**Researcher:** What is happening with the green cross and the question mark?

**Staff 1:** That is regard to first aid training, particularly for guides who can often find themselves in very isolated areas of the site in very dangerous situations.

**Staff 5:** With no radio signal.

**Staff 1:** Questionable radio signal, with strangers, the reactions of these strangers and how they can impact not only the guide but the people around them as well.

**Researcher:** How does that impact the design or the management of the interpretation?

**Staff 5:** It's scary because the guides are not equipped to deal with that.

**Staff 1:** The design of the site can cause problems for the guides in practical emergency situations.

**Researcher:** What is the pyramid with all the people?

**Staff 4:** That had intent, but the drawing never really took off.

**Researcher:** What was the initial concept?

**Stage 1:** I was going to do several points. One corner was going to be history. One corner was going to be money. One corner was going to be standards. It was just something unfinished.

**Staff 5:** It is unfinished, like most of the projects around here.

**Researcher:** Does that go with this picture of a checkmark and cross?

**Staff 5:** Yea.

**Researcher:** So, then what is happening with the clock and this wide-eyed person?

**Staff 1:** Time management impacts the site in a number of ways. Time management is problem for guides. Guides are late because they do their job and provide answers to questions, and most find it very difficult to apologise for that. Time management impacts the presentation of the site. This ultimately ties in with the issue of money though, because time is money.

**Staff 5:** Really you need a good hour and a half down there, but they're not going to give you that because more time means less tours, which means less money.

**Staff 1:** If you go back into the pages and see the locals that did tours here, their tours lasted two hours. Obviously, you couldn't get away with that now because the practicalities would be madness, but in an ideal world. But would I want a two-hour tour? I don't know.

**Staff 4:** Some of the tour companies are doing two-hour tours, like Mercat and City of the Dead.

**Staff 5:** Emmerdale even does the tours far enough apart that you could run late or run early. So, if you had a really good group you can tell them information because the next group isn't right behind you. So, it didn't matter if you overran by 15 minutes, but of course because the tour before, you are a half an hour ahead you could even move quicker if you wanted to.

**Researcher:** What is this about a shift?

**Staff 4:** Its basically about equality. Staff are treated unfairly. The retailers tend to be working longer shifts than the guides but then get less breaks than the guides get. Just creates a bit of tension between staff members, which then transpires how you interact with the guests, which obviously isn't offering a five-star attraction.

**Researcher:** Does that go back to the morale?

**Staff 1:** This is going to sound controversial, but this comes down to the company being orientated by capitalism because capitalism is their focus, history suffers, people suffer. Capitalism is profit above everything else and that is the whole reason why a lot of this is on this map in the first place. That opens up something else entirely.

**Researcher:** What is this drawing of a man with his hands in the air?

**Staff 4:** That represents the ridiculous gallery and not doing anything with Stuarts close, which is the actual proper history.

**Staff 5:** Yea, we are ignoring the actual, historical thing that people have come down to see just to watch a man chatting shite. That's basically what that is. It is lazy if anything else.

**Researcher:** What would you recommend then?

**Staff 5:** Getting rid of it and putting in something decent in that room. Something that has more relevance and that has to do with the site.

**Staff 3:** I was told recently that what they use to have in Stuart's Close was a model of the site. Most people when they come here ask the question 'how is this underground?' With that model it would make it so much easier to explain what was going on. That should be in there instead of the gallery so you can have a solid time looking at this site, instead of walking straight past it and not even acknowledging it, or only so for like two seconds. We can then use the gallery space to look at something like model or something else.

**Researcher:** What is going on over here with the colours and the guy with X's on his eyes?

**Staff 4:** That's the lights down there. Although they are quite atmospheric at times, although they are not, because why would you have a purple light filling up plague?

**Staff 5:** And why would a cowshed be blue?

**Staff 4:** The tourists spend a lot of money and especially in plague it is the worst because they can't actually see what is going on because there is a blinding purple light in their face. Tourists often have to shield their eyes from the light because it is actually impairing their vision from what it is we want them to see.

**Staff 1:** Light is scare. So, the way it is apparent and positioned is done incorrectly.

**Researcher:** How do you think that the light impacts the design or the nature of the site?

**Staff 4:** I understand the intent to the coloured lights.

**Staff 1:** Thankfully they are not overboard, to be fair.

**Staff 4:** So when you have the green light on in plague, I get that because it is not a very pleasant colour and it was this horrible disease, but at the same time it is a historical tour and they wouldn't have had these bright, blinding green and purple lights in the 1600s. It distracts and people are trying to listen to the stories are being told, but they are too busy trying to find the right position to block their eyes from the light.

**Staff 5:** And they are trying to make room because it is overcrowded.

**Staff 4:** It is taking away from the experience.

**Researcher:** Do you guys think this tour is a form of dark tourism and does that influence the design or does the design influence the actual context of the experience?

**Staff 1:** I think this is a dark tourism site. I think people of the modern age, because it was so long ago though, people have created a cognitive distance from it. Auschwitz, the extermination of the Jewish race. That was only 70 years ago, there are people still alive that were a part of that and that was on a much larger scale. Well, actually not really, because the plague killed half the people on planet Earth at one point, but cognitive distance is created because of the historical barriers and time stretch and what not. So, people have become desensitised through gaps in time.

**Researcher:** How does that desensitisation impact the design or the management of the interpretation?

**Staff 1:** Mock up models of people dying, referring to the plague room specifically with people covered in boils. One of the models is a child, one of them is a very small child, one is a baby. Its people dying.

**Researcher:** Is that appropriate? How do you create a design about this?

**Staff 1:** People have created a distance.

**Staff 5:** I feel like a lot of them aren't affected by it because they are seeing it as entertainment and stories. They forget that it actually happened.

**Staff 1:** I have had ladies cry on the tour though.

**Staff 4:** I love the fact that we are bringing to light that people lived like this and these are the things that genuinely happened. This is how we used to live. But a lot of people are coming in like that, that these are just stories and not real.

**Staff 5:** They seem to want to be taken back by them. They want the shock factor and they want to be entertained by it.

**Researcher:** So then how does the nature of the historical context influence the design and its delivery by you all?

**Staff 3:** I don't think the company really cares what happened because it is just a money maker for them. I feel like the core history and what is down there and what happened, the company just put a wee airbrush over it to put on what sounds nice. I just think the company needs to realise the potential of what this site has and then build up from there instead of saying 'oh it's a wee bit grim at this point and maybe the tourists wouldn't like that so much, so we will dumb that down at some points.'

**Researcher:** What are the pieces of paper with things written on them?

**Staff 1:** That represents the script given to guides, which we are expected to follow, which is dire.

**Staff 5:** I feel like a fact sheet would be better.

**Staff 1:** The script is far too theatrical and clearly not written by people who are not from theatrical backgrounds.

**Researcher:** What is airbrushed history, history?

**Staff 3:** This is the company trying to airbrush the history and the other layer on top of it more history.

**Staff 4:** It is history lying underneath what is actually portrayed.

**Staff 3:** It is a dumbed down version of what actually happened.

**Researcher:** So, then what do you recommend?

**Staff 5:** The real history.

**Researcher:** It is the Real Mary Kings Close, so what is it that is not real?

**Staff 1:** We are already dealing with a site that is incredibly speculative.

**Staff 4:** Obviously we are going back hundreds of years, there is only so much that we can really know as hard facts. So yes, there is going to be a lot of speculative information in there, but if there was a lot of stuff that we genuinely think is incredibly speculative, then why is it in the script? If there is no hard evidence, then why is it included into the content of the tour?

**Staff 5:** I don't understand why we are just not honest.

**Staff 3:** We actually don't know everything about this site, and I would love to sit here and say that I know everything about it, but I don't. So instead of acting like a character who doesn't know anything because they are from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, which I know some guides still do, I will just be honest and answer questions saying that I don't know because we don't know the information about things. I feel like it is better for guides and the guests themselves if we just told them that we wished all of this was real, but at the end of the day, we don't really know. There is so much about this site. That may take away from the experience, but I feel like that is better than lying in my opinion.

**Staff 5:** I feel as though guides who act like they really are from the 1600s, people are not stupid. It is patronising.

**Researcher:** Is there anything else you want to add to include your voice about the design and management of the interpretation?

**Staff 4:** The management of it, we don't have a voice I don't think. They will get staff to come in 'voluntarily' during non-sociable hours, so they don't have to pay us on sociable hours to help clean and what not. We are the ones having to do the actual cleaning and maintenance once a year, on a night that we have already been working because we are open because they won't just close the site for a day, and then they are not even providing us with good quality protection. Even with dust masks and hazard suits they did nothing. So, we risk our own health to help because they don't want to employ professionals to actually tend to our site on a regular basis. And then we don't even get a say in any of it.

**Staff 5:** If you don't clean it as well it will just get worse and worse, so you are going to suffer anyways.

**Staff 1:** This is a fantastic site, but its representation is compromised by a number of factors as per discussed today.

**Staff 3:** The site is beautiful and there is so much more down there.



**Staff 4:** We are all very passionate about the site but there is a lot of things that could be done that could make it a lot better for both the guests and staff members.

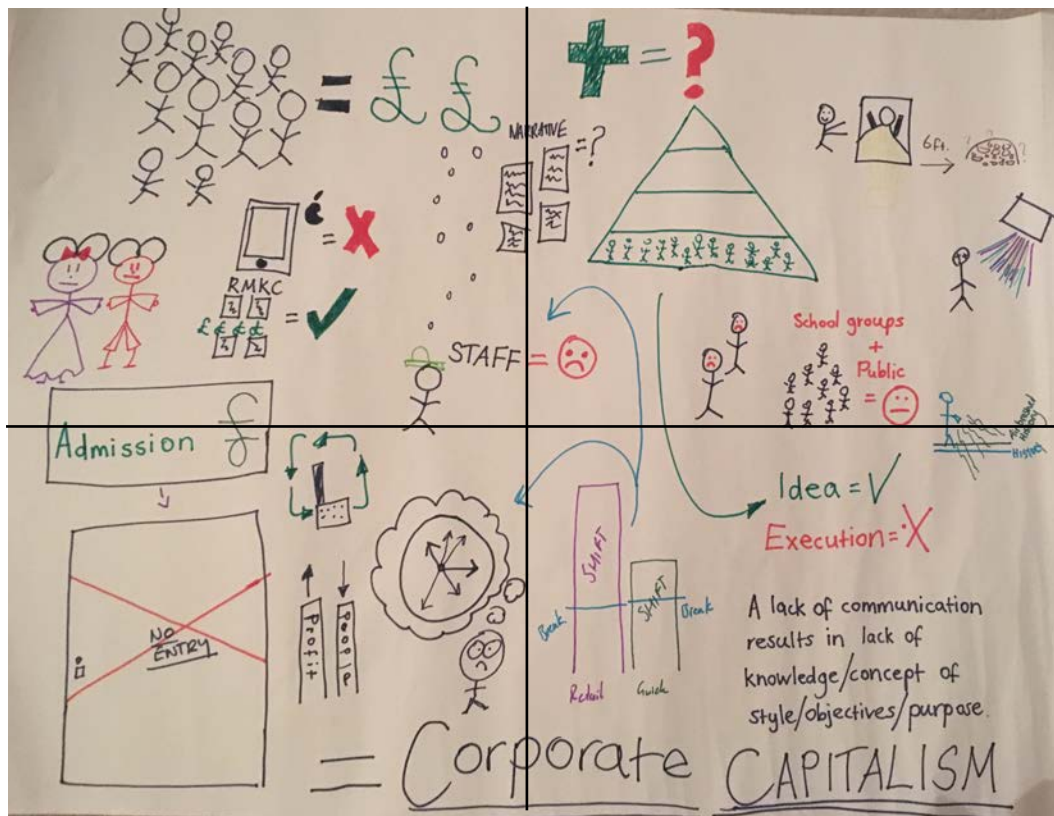
**Staff 5:** For the most part, the staff are amazing, but there are things that could be done to make things better.

## Appendix G – Steps for rich picture analysis

Step	Name of Step	Description	Applied to RPB
1	Locate the style	Note the art historical context and its characteristic features upon which the content of the piece depends.	The context of the RP (e.g.: the problem or system under investigation).
2	Descriptive features and structures	Note the descriptive features and structures in the piece (e.g.: shapes, colours, arrangements, textures, thickness of lines).	The content of the RP (e.g.: the use of colours, shapes, drawings).
3	Primary aesthetic features	Note the presence of representational, expressive or exemplified features	Any features that dominate the RP (e.g.: any that are placed centrally or drawn larger or in bolder colours)
4	Value features	Note aspects of both form and content (e.g.: relationships of features in the drawings)	Linkages between elements in the RP (e.g.: whether drawings are isolated or reflective of other drawings).
5	Low-level interpretation	Notes the meaning or content of the pictures in a basic form.	The overall content of the RP (e.g.: is it narrowly focused or encompass many points)
6	High-level interpretation	Drawing on the low-level interpretation, note any declarations made by the artist about the picture and the art in a historical context.	Are there any points made by the group when describing what has been drawn? How rich is this description?
7	Critical judgment	Note whether the picture has or lacks aesthetic value to a degree and whether the picture has more or less value than another.	Stemming from all previous steps, what is the overall sense of the quality of the RP?

(Bell & Morse, 2013)

## Appendix H – Rich picture analysis of RMKC focus group A



Step	Name of Step	Description
1	Style	The design and management of the interpretation.
2	Descriptive features and structures	<p><b>Colours:</b> Black, Green, Red, Maroon, Blue, Brown.</p> <p><b>Shapes:</b> Stick figure people, Arrows, Symbols, Thought bubble, Lines, Geometric shapes</p> <p><b>Drawings (UL):</b> <b>1)</b> An equal sign (black) in between twelve stick figures (black) and two GBP symbols (green) which have small circles (black) falling down onto a stick figure (black) with a hat (green) and the word 'staff' (black) next to it and an equal sign (red) pointing from the word to an unhappy face (red). <b>2)</b> Four rectangles (black) with line scribbles representing written text with the word 'narrative' (black) above them and an equal sign (black) pointing towards a question mark (black) <b>3)</b> A rectangle within another rectangle (black) to represent an iPad with the Apple symbol (black) next to it and an equal sign (black) pointing towards an X (red). Situated below it the acronym 'RMKC' (black) with two rectangles (black) below it, four GBP symbols</p>

		<p>(green) below those, and two more rectangles (black) below that. Each rectangle has a line scribble in them and the whole is next to an equal sign (black) pointing towards a check mark (green). <b>4)</b> One stick figure (maroon) in a dress with mouse ears (black) and a bow (red) standing next to another stick figure (red) in a shirt and pants with mouse ears (black).</p> <p><b>Drawings (UR):</b> <b>1)</b> An equal sign (green) in between a plus sign (green) and a question mark (red). <b>2)</b> A four-tiered triangle (green) with fourteen stick figures (green) in the bottom tier. <b>3)</b> A stick figure (black) pointing to a rectangle (black) that has a stick figure (black) inside it and lines (yellow) representing a light shining on it. Next to this, an arrow (black) with the phrase '6ft' (black) above it and pointing to an arch (black) with circles (black) in it to represent stones, and three question marks (black) above it. <b>4)</b> Two stick figures (black) with unhappy faces (red) next to nine smaller stick figures (black) to represent a school group and an equal sign (red) in between the phrase 'school groups + public' (red) and an unhappy face (red). <b>5)</b> A stick figure (black) with x's for eyes next to several lines (purple, blue, green) coming from a square (black).</p> <p><b>Drawings (Mid):</b> <b>1)</b> A line (blue) that branches off into two and turns into arrows pointing towards LL drawing #3 and UL drawing #1. Another line (green) turning into an arrow from UR drawing #2 and pointing towards LR drawing #2</p> <p><b>Drawings (LR):</b> <b>1)</b> A stick figure (blue) with line squiggles (grey) standing on a line (grey) that reads 'airbrushed history' (grey) next to it, which is situated above another line (blue) with the word 'history' (blue) next to it. <b>2)</b> An equal sign (green) in between the word 'idea' (green) and a check mark (green), situated above another equal sign (red) in between the word 'execution' (red) and an X (red). <b>3)</b> A sentence (black) that reads: A lack of communication results in lack of knowledge/concept of style/objectives/purpose. <b>4)</b> An equal sign (black) that leads to the phrase 'corporate capitalism' (black). <b>5)</b> A tall rectangle (maroon) with the word 'shift' in it next to a shorter rectangle (grey) with the word shift in it. A line (blue) through each rectangle at the same level with the word 'break' (blue) next to each. Under</p>
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		<p>the tall rectangle the word 'retail' (maroon) and under the shorter rectangle the word 'guide' (grey)</p> <p><b>Drawings (LL): 1)</b> A rectangle (black) with the word 'admission' (green) in it and the GBP symbol (black), with an arrow (maroon) pointing down to another rectangle (black) that reads 'no entry' (black in side of it and a large X (red) over it. <b>2)</b> Two rectangles (black) one with the word 'profit' (black) inside it and an arrow (black) pointing upwards from the top, and the other with the word 'people' (black) inside of it and an arrow (black) point downwards from the top. <b>3)</b> A stick figure (black) looking confused with a thought bubble (black) with a picture of a clock (black) inside of it and on the clock there are six hour/minute hands <b>4)</b> A square (black) with 7 dots (black) inside of it and a rectangle (black) on top of it to represent a building and four arrows (green) circling from the building and back into it.</p>
3	Primary aesthetic features	<p>Drawings (Mid) #1 dominates as it is central and uses bright blue and green colours.</p> <p>Drawings (UL) #4 dominates as it looks like Disney characters Mickey/Minnie Mouse.</p> <p>The use of the colour red to signify negatives (i.e. X's, unhappy faces, question marks)</p>
4	Value features	<p>Some drawings appear isolated, such as UR drawings #3 and #5. The other drawings appear linked in theme surrounding money and emotional states. There are clear lines as reflected in Drawings (Mid) #1 linking other drawings together.</p>
5	Low-level interpretation	<p>While there are many points being made in this picture, it seems to centre on the theme of operations, with images reflecting money, clocks, admissions, and a clear statement about corporate capitalism.</p>
6	High-level interpretation	<p>A key point being made is about the poor conditions of the costumes. This is supported by comments such as 'I drew a picture of someone smelling not very nice because the costumes are rancid,' for the costumes I put that they look nice, but do they?' 'I drew a uniform with a green tick and floundering costumes with a red cross over it,' I like the idea of a standard uniform because at least then you could take it home and wash it regularly,' 'the costumes do have a Disney factor about it,' 'if you go to the Dungeons, they actually put money into it. The costumes look</p>

		<p>good, they may be crappy and old, but they don't look it,' and 'You can take it home and wash it over and over again, but it is the same piece of material, and that is the main attraction.'</p> <p>Another point made is the exploitation of the site for purposes of making a profit. This is supported by comments such as 'It's just exploiting the site again with the costumes,' 'Why are you turning the real site fake? [...]' 'Why are we fancying about in stupid costumes?' 'it has been cheapened by the fact that there is no money coming into it,' 'I feel like the site is being completely exploited [...]' 'When was the last time anything was looked after?' 'when we are sold out, management will overbook people because more people, more money,' and 'it's like 'I can show you this, but you can't come in,' 'this site isn't as accessible as it should be and it totally detracts from the whole idea of the tour.'</p> <p>Another point being made is the operations of the tour, which appears to fork into two separate discussions- one about staff management and one about the actual operation of the tour.</p> <p>*From the perspective of the staff management, there are clear frustrations with operational aspects such as commitment, wage, management of hours, etc. This is reflected in comments such as 'It does kind of seem like there is a food chain,' 'It is all the baseline staff that are getting the absolute pennies of the profit,' 'If I am not getting paid enough I am not going to enjoy my job, I'll just do it and its just whatever,' 'there are serious levels of double standards among the staff. You look at certain guides and ask when they have ever done a closing tour?' 'we can't attract core members of staff because we are not offering anything,' 'How are you supposed to give a five-star service on five hours of sleep?' 'There's no communication between anyone really, so nobody ever knows what's going on,' 'The management of it, we don't have a voice I don't think.'</p> <p>*From the perspective of tour operations, it appears the staff feels the information delivered is speculative, the costumes are poorly managed and the number of guests on the tour impact the quality of the tour. This is</p>
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		<p>reflected in comments such as ‘I don’t think it was really a cowshed,’ ‘the stuff we are coming out with is such speculative stuff,’ ‘there is just so much to the site that we are not being given the time to research and fully understand,’ ‘when we are sold out, management will overbook people because more people, more money,’ ‘you never have time [to talk about windows]. That is a good point is the time situation,’ ‘people are paying a lot and they getting sub-standard,’ ‘The charging of photographs is something that the public do not react well to, at all,’ ‘Guides are late because they do their job and provide answers to questions, and most find it very difficult to apologise for that [...] This ultimately ties in with the issue of money though, because time is money.’</p> <p>A final point made is regarding the quality of the interpretive methods used. While the staff have commented that the physical site is good, the methods for delivering the tour are poorly executed This is shown in comments such as ‘This is an amazing site that gets no appreciation, not only from the public, but also the people running it, ‘We get people all the time saying the guides smelled quite bad on the tour. It’s because the costumes are rancid,’ ‘That gallery room is absolutely dreadful [...] you have to constantly compensate with jokes when it finishes [...] It is ruining the true history,’ ‘the rooms that are half empty like windows and pre-Close, we can do something there, but we are not doing anything,’ ‘Also, the lighting downstairs. Like, why is plague purple? It makes no sense [...] the tourists spend a lot of money and especially in plague it is the worst because they can’t actually see what is going on because there is a blinding purple light in their face, ‘I feel like the core history and what is down there and what happened, the company just put a wee airbrush over it to put on what sounds nice,’ ‘The script is far to theatrical and clearly not written by people who are not from theatrical backgrounds.’</p>
7	Critical judgement	The picture is of adequate value. Upon first look at this picture without reflection of the verbal discussion, it is clear that the staff have reservations about the business nature of this attraction, which is clearly reflected in the drawings reflecting profit increases alongside

		<p>Disney looking characters and restricted access, which represent the inauthentic feeling of the tour. What is not featured in the picture are the positive comments in the verbal discussion, such as 'a positive is the fact that the site is quite an amazing site and we have pretty good access to it as well,' 'I know it is debated in terms of the quality of the tour, but the actual physical stones in place are good,' 'it's so full of history and it is a beautiful place to be,' 'From the tourists point of view there are a heck of a lot of positives. Yes, from the staff point of view there are a lot of negatives, but there are positives as well,' 'throwing in a little bit of theatricality to it does make it more exciting to do for the tourists.' What is not reflected in the picture but is clear in the verbal discussion is for every attempt to have a positive discussion about the site; comments quickly returned to negative aspects, thus suggesting the negatives outweigh the positives. Moreover, it is clear that the staff would prefer to use standard uniforms instead of costumes, and to offer a variety of tours to appease different types of visitors.</p>
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