

And, like novels, real world places must know their audience before the story is written. It's common sense taken to the level of brand marketing. Every place is potentially a brand. In every way as much as Disneyland and Las Vegas, cities like Paris, Edinburgh, and New York are their own brands, because a consistent, clear image has emerged of what each place looks like, feels like, and the story, or history it conveys.

Place has meaning and memories. Place is not passive. Place is not good or bad simply because it's real vs. surrogate, authentic vs. pastiche. People enjoy both, whether it's place created over centuries, or created instantly. A successful place, like a novel or movie, engages us actively in an emotional experience orchestrated and organised to communicate purpose and story.

Story is a strong metaphor for place. It becomes the organising principle and the shared memory. Sometimes the place creates the story, as in Edinburgh, where characters and events have shaped the outcome. Sometimes story is the basis upon which place is created, as in the movies, or at Disneyland. It was no accident that the original creators of Disneyland were art directors and production designers from the Disney Studio, the Imagineers, adept at translating story into place in theatrical and emotionally engaging ways.

Over the years the Imagineers have followed certain principles fundamental to creating a successful place. These principles are concerned with structure and theme (organisation of ideas and people flow), sequence experience (telling of story or purpose), visual communication (details, symbols, and magnets), and participation (through the senses, action, and memory).

The first of these principles is structure and theme. Structure in this context is about planning organisation. It's about flow and Gestalt (memorable pattern). People like simple, logical flowplans. It's easier to follow a sequence of events, easier to orient, and makes people feel more comfortable, more in control. They aren't threatened; they lower their defences and enjoy themselves more. Circuitous sidetracks or dead ends are fine if they're short and consistent with the story. Decision points should be limited. Too much choice creates stress and confusion.

The structure should reflect the 'theme'. A Movie Studio theme will have a grid layout. An Adventure theme will be looping and circuitous. A Discovery theme may be molecular in structure and branching.

In many cultures the 'shape' of a place has additional meaning. For some, the Mandala, or circle, is

a key organising shape, reflecting fundamental spiritual ideologies and primordial truths. It is universally symbolic, representing both the Hero's Journey of leaving and returning home, and the circular nature of life. The circle is a safe, comfortable shape, reinforcing harmony and unity. Disneyland is circular, with a central hub and radiating spokes or paths taking guests on circular, looping journeys into different lands and stories, one at a time.

Circular plans are common in European cities, for practical reasons of defence, surrounding a strong point, or castle, and straddling some natural feature such as a hill or river. Their story reflects a need for protection and reassurance, like a memory of the womb and connection to the umbilical cord. Early Edinburgh had a simple, anthropomorphic Gestalt. The High Street was the spinal cord of the Old Town, connecting the strong head, the Castle, with the rest of the body, branching out to either side with the heart at the Lawnmarket. And, just as Disneyland is organised as distinct, separate stories and lands (Adventureland, Frontierland, etc.), central Edinburgh has a similar structure. On the one side, Holyrood Park and the Old Town, on the other James Craig's Georgian New Town and the port of Leith. Each area of the city is distinctively different in its form, function, and feel. Each has its own, clearly legible story. It's part of what makes Edinburgh a successful place.

The second principle is sequential experience. Experiencing a place is much like following a river ... "which flows, now fast, now slow, now placidly between broad banks ... now halted by a dam, now debauching into an ocean" (Eric Bentley, *The Life of the Drama*). The experience unfolds emotionally, in a physical sequence.

In moviemaking, storyboarding of sequential images is used linearly to describe a single point of view of action and settings. In a place-making story, sequences are experienced in multiple ways, from different directions and different points of view. There may not be a classic beginning, middle, and end, or plot points. It is interactive story. All the more reason to keep it simple, clear, and consistent.

In a spatial sequence, like a movie, gradual transitions (dissolves), sudden changes (jump cuts), or new perspectives (different point of view), control the narrative. Each creates a different emotional response. In a spatial narrative, elements of the place can be story points. A small tunnel becomes a 'crossing over' or start of something new, like Alice's rabbit hole. A labyrinth or steep stair can represent an ordeal, a rickety bridge or dead end a test, and multiple doors or passageways represent dilemmas