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## THE SYMBIOSIS BETWEEN THE CONTEMPORARY MUSEUM, EMOTIONAL AND EXPERIENTIAL TOURISM

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### Rezumat

#### Simbioza dintre muzeul contemporan, turismul emoțional și cel experiențial

Transformările extrem de rapide pe care le-a cunoscut societatea umană în ultimele decenii atrag după sine prefaceri ale tuturor domeniilor și instituțiilor, care sunt obligate să se ralieze acestora pentru a-și asigura supraviețuirea. Muzeul, ca instituție de cultură păstrătoare a patrimoniului național, a intrat în acest vârtej al modificărilor de paradigmă tocmai pentru a face față unei concurențe tot mai acerbe din domeniul cultural. Acesta și-a extins caracteristicile adoptând și metode ale turismului, cu predilecție ale celui experiențial și emoțional, care au în comun punerea în poziție centrală a călătorului/vizitatorului, satisfacerea nevoilor sale culturale prin mijloace de mediere culturală cât mai sofisticate care să incite la trezirea curiozității și a emoțiilor, să-l implice pe acesta în acțiuni transformându-l din spectator în actor. Relația dintre muzeu și turism este relevantă pentru perioada post-modernă, caracterizată de o mare mobilitate atât la nivel național, cât mai ales internațional. Muzeul contemporan adoptă și creează permanent mijloace de mediere a patrimoniului. Dacă turismul pune la dispoziția călătorului o paletă largă de destinații culturale, muzeul, prin evenimentele sale, încearcă să absoarbă un număr cât mai mare de turiști. În acest caz, relația dintre cele două instituții devine simbiotică, cu beneficii pentru ambele părți, principalul câștigător însă este călătorul/vizitatorul care, dacă muzeul și-a atins scopul, pleacă îmbogățit cognitiv și emoțional, cu dorința de a reveni.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** muzeu, patrimoniu, turism, emoție, experiență.

### Резюме

#### Симбиоз современного музея с эмоциональным и экспериментальным туризмом

Стремительные трансформации, которые человеческое общество переживает в последние десятилетия, бросают вызов всем социальным сферам и организациям, которые вынуждены сплотиться, чтобы обеспечить свое выживание. Музей как культурная институция, сохраняющая национальное наследие, вступил в этот вихрь смены парадигм именно для того, чтобы столкнуться со все более жесткой конкуренцией на культурном поле. Он расширил свои характеристики, приняв также методы туризма, отдав предпочтение эмпирическим и эмоциональным методам, общим и центральным фокусом для которых является фигура туриста / посетителя, удовлетворение его культурных потребностей посредством самых сложных путей культурного посредничества, чтобы вызвать возбуждение любопытства и эмоций, вов-

лечь его в действия, превратив из зрителя в актера. Отношения между музеем и сферой туризма актуальны для периода постмодерна, характеризующегося большой мобильностью как на национальном, так и на международном уровне. Современный музей постоянно принимает и создает средства трансляции наследия. В то время как сфера туризма предлагает путешественнику широкий спектр культурных направлений, музей посредством своих мероприятий пытается привлечь как можно больше туристов. Отношения в этом случае между этими двумя структурами становятся симбиотическими, с выгодой для обеих сторон, однако в большем выигрыше остается турист/посетитель, который в случае достижения музеем своей цели уходит более обогащенным интеллектуально и эмоционально, с желанием вернуться.

**Ключевые слова:** музей, наследие, туризм, эмоция, опыт.

### Summary

#### The symbiosis between the contemporary museum, emotional and experiential tourism

The extremely rapid transformations that human society has experienced in recent decades have entailed changes in all fields and institutions, which have been forced to accept them in order to ensure their own survival. The museum, as a cultural institution preserving the national heritage, has entered this whirlwind of paradigm changes precisely to face an increasingly fierce competition in the cultural field. It has expanded its characteristics by also adopting methods of tourism, particularly from the experiential tourism and the emotional tourism, that are traveler/visitor-oriented so as to meet their cultural needs through the most sophisticated means of cultural mediation that incite curiosity and emotions, as well as to involve him/her in actions that will transform him/her from spectator to actor. The relationship between the museum and tourism is relevant for the post-modern period, characterized by great mobility both nationally and especially internationally. The contemporary museum permanently adopts and creates means of heritage mediation. If tourism provides the traveler with a wide range of cultural destinations, the museum, through its events, tries to absorb as many tourists as possible. In this case the relationship between these two institutions becoming a symbiotic one, with benefits on both sides, but the main winner remains the traveler/visitor, who, if the museum has achieved its goal, leaves more cognitively and emotionally enriched, with the desire to return.

**Key words:** museum, heritage, tourism, emotion, experience.

In a society in constant transformation, in which technological advances are taking place at a dizzying speed, with all the fields experiencing substantial and extremely rapid changes, the contemporary museum cannot remain outside the general flow of changes, thus having to keep up with the avalanche of transformations in order to remain competitive in an increasingly diverse and technological cultural market. That is why, in the conditions where tourism, at least in the last decades, has seen a true spatial expansion, the museum must make every effort to insert itself into the cultural programs of tourism agencies, welcoming visitors with more and more unique and implicational offers in order to attract and motivate visits to the museum, but even more importantly, to digitize and technologize so as to face increasingly fierce and diverse competition.

The desire to travel goes back to the childhood of humankind, when for various reasons the individual was forced to move around; over time, the need to travel turned into the pleasure of making shorter or longer trips, depending on the proposed goals. It is common knowledge that to travel means to know, to discover, to learn, and that is why travel can be seen as a tool for personal achievement. Thus, in the course of some trips with lucrative, business, military or religious purposes, man discovered places steeped in history, special monuments, exceptional architectural achievements, works of art designed to delight the eye and the soul, to produce pleasure. This was a first step in the development of tourism, with a predilection for cultural tourism, i.e. trips with a spiritual purpose, for the enjoyment of the soul, for arousing artistic or religious emotions, for piety in front of human achievements from the childhood of humankind to the present day. Cultural tourism has heritage and cultural elements as its destination and therefore, the connection between heritage and tourism/tourist should not be overlooked. The collection of objects endowed with value and the emergence of the phenomenon of "sacralization" of monuments began in Antiquity. But this presupposed the existence of a witness, an "Other", whose look or interest would guarantee their value and preciousness, the local look being considered lacking distance or competence in evaluating specificity or originality; here the well-known "Tourist" intervenes who, by comparison and his/her knowledge, would thus generate the first heritage consecrations (Noppen, Morisset 2003: 57-59). Therefore, "the notion of heritage can be associated with two major concepts from social science research. The first rather emphasizes the emotional, symbolic and cultural values of the heritage, while the second emphasizes the production of heritage in a logic of commercial

valorization"; that is, the sentimental representation of heritage corresponds to the relationship that the individual has with the environment, while cultural representation refers to the relationship between the community and its environment (Payeur 2013: 23).

Regarding emotions, we must notice that from an etymological point of view, this term comes from the Latin language, being composed of "e", which means "outward", and "motio", which means internal movement caused by an external event (Fabry, Zeghni 2021: 2). On this basis, emotional tourism has developed which focuses on affects and emotions rather than reason. Because when one travels, one meets new people, cultures, territories, and civilizations, absorbs new and unknown information, has special inner feelings, and is left with memories, mostly positive, about the visits made and the things seen. Therefore, visits to museums represent aspects of cultural interest in tourist packages and programs, which is why museum institutions make efforts to insert into and adapt to current tourism, offering the visitor/traveler the most attractive offers.

The contemporary museum constantly seeks to mold its activities, exhibitions and generally all actions according to the visitor, their preferences and cultural needs. Since the last century, activities have been undertaken to test the visiting public precisely in order to identify not only the types of visitors, but also especially their cultural needs. Thus, museum specialists have sought to find new ways of cultural mediation that would stir special feelings, affections, and emotions in the visitor during their direct contact with the museum object, to trigger inner feelings that would facilitate the appreciation of the past, to arouse respect for their precursors and their achievements of value, to provide originality and authenticity. And this because the emotion can be closely related to that feeling of a common past aroused by the antiquity of places and things, the antiquity of the heritage favoring "a feeling of closeness to a community marked by a balanced coexistence of technology, art, culture and nature, a feeling which proves both soothing and exciting in comparison with our disordered present...seeing vestiges of the past is also conducive to a sense of being in the presence of something truly original or whose rarity strikes us as absolutely exceptional..." (Fortuna 2013: 110-111). It must not be forgotten that when we come into contact with the ancient artifacts, with the monuments handed down in whole or in part, with their attributes of antiquity, rarity, continuity, succession, finality, authenticity and beauty, most of the time one feels immersed in a past that seems to suspend the present and teleport one into a strange state of rev-

erie, of melancholy, typical of the romantic vision of artists, poets and writers, experiencing both a sensation of being absorbed by the objects and of the objects being absorbed by the visitors (Fortuna 2013: 112). Perhaps that is why the ruins of the past fascinate and attract, because in their centuries-old story they leave room for re-interpretation, re-invention, and re-knowledge, for contemplation and dreaming. Regarding ruins, Georg Simmel, in *The Ruin*, emphasizes that ruins combine culture (the architecture) and nature (the plants that grow in and on the ruin) in a dynamic dialogue and suggests a possible reconciliation between the two opposing forces of the material and the form, combining creative and destructive powers (Simmel 1965: 265) and this, because “The ruin can be compared to a lenticular image that can only be fully appreciated by an unstable perception that flips between two different images, impossible to hold both in balance or to be seen simultaneously: the ruins are evidence of nature asserting itself, crushing civilizations and triumphing over the achievements of mankind, or they can be seen to redeem nature as creator, the force of life prevailing over the destructive of human tyranny. The ruin is both a mark of human civilization asserting its enduring presence on nature, and vice versa. As such, ruins hold both promise and threat, they speak of death, disaster and destruction as much as they do of resistance and rebirth, especially as nature, meaning new life, takes over the decaying remains” (De Simone: 2). Direct contact with heritage objects or ancient monuments also triggers states of *nostalgia*, especially the heritage type, which “tells us the story of the control of the past by the present. It is not politically disengaged, because it evokes in the minds of the participants in the ongoing process a feeling of the continuity of perennial values, which in fact has very little to do with the objective reality of the past itself. And a non-critical and non-reflexive acceptance of an unexamined past is only the first step to a non-critical and non-reflexive acceptance of an unexamined present” (Brown 2023: 40-41). And this because “Heritage and patrimonial memory do not only mean history and are not forms of active participation in that type of existence of the past that can provide an antidote for nostalgia. Heritage nostalgia is a form of sentimentality, but the fact that we feel emotions and feelings does not necessarily involve the intervention of reason in the process of understanding our own states. In fact, patrimonial nostalgias might represent the very antithesis of rational knowledge” (Brown 2023: 39).

Another type of inner experience is empathy, i.e. that ability that meets the basic human need for

emotional closeness and communication with other people, but also with other living beings and objects, including in particular the need to understand other people in a social and self-reflective context to gain knowledge for a holistic understanding of life (Gassner 2006: 13), also viewed as an ethical norm and moral sentiment. During a trip, a visit to a museum or to monuments, empathy can play a particularly important role by the simple fact that what is seen can, to a certain extent, resonate with the individual, with his/her experience, with his/her cultural or human formation, with his/her oral education or precepts about life or others, which facilitates the understanding of historical characters, the contextualization of events and their fitting into the period, behaviors and attitudes, etc. Historically, empathy can be traced back to early human history, when the gods and their demands were central to the lives of individuals who sought to identify the most appropriate actions to reconcile the gods in order to obtain the best possible living conditions or the granting of purely personal interests. Later, the offerings, which consisted of various objects with an often peculiar aesthetic, were endowed with divine characteristics, at the same time assuming that a person can understand the divine message about the meaning of human existence through a process of empathy and adapt his/her life to it (Brown 2023: 9-10), a concept that is still valid today because this ability to be empathetic gives one a superior understanding of people and the human community. In pedagogy, implicitly in museum pedagogy, empathy is often considered as a sub-process within a complex educational process; depending on the support theory and focus, it is used as a motivational factor for certain educational tasks (Brown 2023: 10). Thus, empathy provides particularly strong bases for learning about morality and is indispensable for museum and memorial pedagogy and for teaching history in general (Brauer 2016: 30).

Even if the museum uses the arousing of empathy as a means of cultural mediation, we must not omit the fact that visitors are still unpredictable. Generally, they have a predictable behavior when they come into contact with historical exhibits, the explanation being that “empathy is a way of emotionally navigating the encounter with history that takes place within the limits of internalized social expectations. On the other hand, the voluntary behavior of some visitors can be explained by how individual perceptions are shaped. As an emotional practice, empathy is a process of interpretation and not an immediate perception of the historical object. Thus, empathy certainly has the potential to bridge the gap between the self and the others. However, this says

little about the observers who might make a connection, and little about whether that connection will provide them with real information about the lives of historical figures” (Brauer 2016: 36). Thus, “historical empathy always relies on a series of mediating instances to cross the spatio-temporal gap. As a particularly mediated form of encounter with the past, memorial sites could serve as good examples here. Memorial sites are places where «history did not go on, but broke off more or less abruptly» (Assmann 1996: 16). Thus, visitors are helped in their interpretation of the specific memorial site and their encounter with history through renovations of the site, monuments, placards, brochures, exhibits and tourist guides. Ultimately, however, the individual is responsible for dealing with the site’s history in his or her own way. Confronting history as an autonomous act of productive appropriation takes place most likely as an activity of the imagination and in the mode of empathy” (Brauer 2016: 37).

Considering the above, nowadays, people’s preferences are beginning to favor the sensations, the emotions triggered by authentic and original things, never seen before, and this is because tourists/visitors are “increasingly well-informed, sophisticated, fluid, chameleon-like, but always looking for authenticity” (Turismul 2016). But one should not forget that coming into contact with certain artifacts, historical information, monuments, works of art, etc. can also trigger emotions such as disgust, fear, sadness, frustration, etc. that have a negative impact on us. But, from a psychological point of view, we are not talking about negative emotions, because all emotions exist for a reason, they fulfill a specific function and are message carriers, helping us to adapt to the external environment, but determining a behavior that can have a negative impact (Thing-Léoh 2023). An example of a negative emotion trigger would be the gloomy/dark or tragic tourism. This type of cultural tourism is an intrinsic part of the post-modern world and refers to “the presentation and consumption (by visitors) of real and commercialized places of death and disaster” (Foley, Lennon 1996: 198-199), the visitors being motivated to visit places laden with “negative” memory that put the individual in contact with inhumanity, that focus on the negative or macabre aspects of the human interest, allowing him/her to experience a reality beyond media images and that raises complex ethical issues, places where humanity presents its other side, the dark one, shadowed by sometimes unimaginable horrors. Unfortunately, the places that promote brutality, terror, suffering and death or the practice of crime, such as Nelson Mandela’s prison, the Jewish extermination camps,

the colonial mines of Potasi (Bolivia) where Native American workers worked in hellish conditions, etc., have come to be seen as ways of representing a variety of more or less exotic, if not macabre, ways of “belonging” to a community and participating in a certain collective “experience”. And this, despite what such “experiences” represent in terms of cultural loss and affront to democracy and human dignity. The irony of the emotions generated by this type of “experience” can only be understood within the tourism system that characterizes today’s post-emotional society and the socio-temperamental barbarism it promotes (Meštrović 1993). Here, according to Carlos Fortuna, we witness the touristification of the emotion, which calls into question the very elements of heritage, the attribution of new meanings under the impact of criteria that confer value through socio-cultural negotiations (Fortuna 2013: 120).

In the relationship with the visitor, the museum specialist must know how to decipher the emotions in order to be able to communicate according to the moral standards and values of society, a good example being the smile, perceived as a positive state, satisfaction, good mood (Ungureanu, Hajbotă 2013: 30), ever since the visitor enters the museum. And this because “the emotion is a cognitive activity, a social and cultural construct that becomes a personal fact through the individual’s own style”, who “thus participates in a system of meanings and values specific to a social group whose validity is confirmed” (Le Breton 1998: 9). Therefore, it is vital that staff be polite, knowledgeable and willing to help visitors.

Today, in his free time, man is looking for experiences that are different from his daily life, to get out of a strictly materialistic and stressful present and to go towards “something else” and “the other”. And the museum tries to fill this void of the contemporary man by trying to transform the relatively passive museum visitor into an active, critical, and creative one, eager for involvement and interaction. Some characteristics of experiential tourism can be successfully adopted by the museum institution. These are: it is focused on a theme (thematic); it offers the possibility of personal (aspirational) development; it has an important educational (instructive) component; the tourist lives the vibrant life of a destination, rediscovers customs, traditions (authentic); one can easily get information, transport, there is no need for a special budget (affordable); it is fun and interesting; it enables the involvement of the tourist, who becomes an actor rather than a spectator (participative); it incorporates the landscape and culture specific to the respective place (ethnic); it creates a unique, personal connection of the tourist with the visited place (personal);

it adds value to the tourist approach, it enriches the visitor informationally and testimonially (creator of new value); it exceeds the tourist's expectations – the experiences intrinsically have the element of surprise (surprising); it identifies an emotional trigger – a new experience causes a strong emotional reaction – (wow factor) (Turismul 2016).

Museum specialists, by combining some characteristics of experiential and emotional tourism and using various methods of making the most of an original and authentic heritage, through real museum scenographies, can create genuine means of bringing visitors to the museum.

It is known that our emotions rather than reason often determine our behavior and way of thinking. We cannot overlook “the connection between emotion and experience, which is not related to the presence on the spot nor to localized socio-cultural interactions, but is based on pre- or post-visit emotions, which in the latter case poses a problem of memory distortion and emotion reconstruction” (Ungureanu, Hajbotă 2013: 4). In addition, this raises the issue of the connection between emotion and cognition, the latter being influenced by the visitor's emotions, his/her subjectivity in choosing information, and his/her internal cognitive absorption. This principle can be successfully applied by museum specialists when designing exhibitions, for example. Presenting photographs or images with a positive effect, such as smiling, warm faces, people in central positions, colors that induce positive moods, reenactments that arouse interest and surprise, that lead to empathy and diverse emotions, arousing curiosity, are ways that attract the visiting public (Quest ce). Also, organizing traditional events, such as culinary ones, through the appearance, taste, smell of the dishes can bring back memories related to childhood, anniversaries, marriage, or other happy events, feelings personalized by each one through individual experiences that are among the most beautiful memories.

The scenography used must induce contemplation as well as curiosity and interest in the exhibited objects, in the period, in the artistic and aesthetic aspects, generally inducing positive moods and a desire for knowledge beyond daily or professional concerns, leading to an intense cognitive and educational absorption. Of particular importance are the ambient conditions (temperature, music, smell/perfume, etc.), the space and the objects that are exhibited, the representative symbols (decoration style, artifacts, etc.), colors and light, the human factor (physical appearance, competence and behavior of employees), visitors' needs (allowing them to forget about all their problems, not to feel the passage of

time, to be excited about the activities, to be totally involved in what they are doing, to feel that they have control over themselves and to be happy) (Ungureanu, Hajbotă 2013: 32).

Also, during the visit, the senses are strongly activated, mainly sight, then the auditory and olfactory senses. For blind people, the sense of touch is the main contact with reality, and therefore museums should also have specific means to meet these people's needs, an example being labels or information written in Braille or making available some exhibits, original or duplicates, which can be touched. The sense of smell becomes central to some museums, which through gastronomic activities invite the visitor not only to sample food, but also to the act of preparation, training him/her to participate directly, involving him/her in the event, making him/her part of it, activating his/her interest and skill, making him/her an actor rather than a spectator. This so-called experiential approach allows the tourist/visitor to immerse himself/herself and truly enter the “emotion register”. The tourist's/visitor's sensitivity and creativity are at the center of the offer and the experience becomes an attraction, this alliance of senses and emotions giving the destination a new flavor: the pleasure of experimenting in order to enrich one's own sensory panel (Manfredini 2019: 115).

Another way of cultural and emotional mediation of the visitor is *the story*, told beautifully and sensitively that always arouses human interest, building a universe around strong values that allow living an emotional experience in which the visitor/traveler finds himself/herself, a story that facilitates human contacts, since it is common knowledge that relationships, connections are all positive signs (Quest ce). *The guide*, or the printed guides produced by cultural or tourist institutions, also play an important role in the process of heritage mediation, regardless of the type. They are “privileged vehicles of the «stereotypes», or tourist intermediaries that actively participate in the social construction of the symbolic borders that separate several heritage worlds” (Mayaud 2014: 33), the qualities of the guides being extremely important. They are carefully selected, trained, and motivated, and the guided tours are specifically geared towards the needs of different groups (Coccosis 2005: 56-57).

Other means of cultural mediation for the transmission of information to the visitor belong to information and communication technology and are presented in the form of audio and video tapes, sound and light shows for interactive programs, the presentation of special exhibits that add value to the visit (Coccosis 2005: 56-57), brochures, leaflets, exhibition catalogs, etc.

Contributing to the positive impact is the building itself, its architecture, along with the use of immersion devices that must immerse the visitor in the spiritual experience and introduce him/her to the story of a nostalgic past of a regional community, united by ancestry and heritage or religious culture (Cerezales 2014: 79).

Tourism can also be considered a means of mediation that offers the possibility of traveling to heritage places that puts the tourist in direct contact with heritage elements, cultural landscapes, new and more or less known or unknown places, offering the chance not only to visit tourist sights, but also to learn and accumulate experience. Thus, tourism can be an experience of otherness, an encounter with the heritage object or with others. Through travel, man experiences, accumulates, and exchanges knowledge, so "tourism means to teach yourself by acquiring new knowledge <...> to learn from the other <...> it is a practice of the relationship with the other, an experience with the other in the whole world <...> it develops the ability to access the world from each of its places <...> a real project and program of permanent formation, open to the world and the others from all over the world" (Lazzarotti 2010).

There are opinions according to which tourism and tourists are destructive, that through their mobility, they invade places and disturb the locals. However, there are also opinions that consider the tourist a carrier/transmitter of culture, and tourism a factor that makes it possible to bring heritage out of oblivion and safeguard it, by opening culture and dynamizing it, thus being a means of cultural exchange and a development tool.

The differences of opinion notwithstanding, tourism remains a global phenomenon that allows travel all over the world, facilitates access to the culture and national heritage of various countries not only for the elites or the rich, but also for ordinary people, often brings territorial development through the modernization of the infrastructure, of the local economy, of urban modernization, and the transmission and inclusion of national values in the circuit of world values, etc. Tourism is used as an economic justification for heritage conservation and also serves to preserve artifacts found in many parts of the world, with historical artifacts always being one of the most traded commodities in the tourism industry (Christou 2005: 4).

The *natural landscape* is also of particular importance, which has become a cultural one in most cases, as it is the environment where the heritage object exists; it is part of the general scenography that has the role of highlighting its characteristics and drawing attention to it. Therefore, the reconsider-

ation of the environment is part of the local tourism development and conservation policies alongside the historical monuments. Thus, the landscape is a basic component of the natural and cultural heritage as it contributes to the formation of local cultures and to human well-being, to the consolidation of national identity, acknowledging that the landscape is an important part of the quality of life for people everywhere: in urban or rural areas, in degraded areas, or in those that present themselves in a perfect state, in spaces recognized as being particularly beautiful, as well as in ordinary areas (European 2000: 1).

### Conclusions

In recent decades, the relationship between heritage and tourism has become particularly tight, becoming inextricably connected all over the world: heritage, as a bearer of historical value from the past, is seen as part of the cultural tradition of society. On the other hand, the concept of tourism appears as a form of modern consciousness, its fundamental nature being "dynamic, and its interaction with heritage often results in a reinterpretation of heritage. In its essence, the relationship between heritage and tourism parallels the debate that takes place within a society's culture between tradition and modernity" (Christou 2005: 4). Heritage or cultural tourism provides visits to places that include performances, museums, exhibitions, archaeological sites, traditional religious practices, crafts and cultural shows, which provide the opportunity for the visitor/tourist to come into direct contact with elements of culture and civilization distinct from those known to him/her. Both the tourism industry and the museum industry have the same goal, namely to meet the cognitive, emotional and educational needs of the visitor/tourist, offering the opportunity of inducing a positive state of mind either through contemplation alone, or especially through interactivity, making the visitor/tourist part of something novel and exciting, distinct from his/her everyday life.

This is a win-win relationship, with both tourist and cultural institutions and the visitor/tourist benefiting from such a trip/visit, which underlies the unprecedented development of the tourism industry and the permanent reorientation and rethinking of the contemporary museum.

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