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## Authenticity and the Use of Multimedia at Cultural Tourist Attractions

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# **Authenticity and the Use of Multimedia at Cultural Tourist Attractions**

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**Thesis submitted for the award of a PhD**

**to the**

**Dublin Institute of Technology  
Faculty of Tourism and Food  
School of Hospitality Management and Tourism**

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## **Abstract**

Within the area of cultural attractions new developments in modern technologies have brought changes as to how culture and heritage are presented and interpreted. This has evoked debates whether such sites can still be regarded as authentic. While researchers have investigated these issues on a theoretical basis, the perception and experience of authenticity as well as the use of modern interpretative tools have been treated separately and still lack empirical investigation. Therefore, this study explores the perceptions and experiences of authenticity at cultural attractions where modern technologies are applied. The central research questions are: (1) How can the key concepts of authenticity, multimedia and experience of cultural attractions be brought into an integrated measurable model? (2) What are the determinants of an authentic attraction and an authentic experience? (3) What is the role of multimedia in the visitor experience of a cultural attraction?

In order to provide answers to these research questions a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods was applied. In the first stage, focus-group discussions, expert interviews as well as a small scale quantitative study at “Ceol” – The Traditional Irish Music Centre were conducted. Based on these findings and a thorough literature review a Structural Equation Model was developed. This model incorporates visitor satisfaction, site specific attributes (including multimedia and perception of authenticity) and experiential aspects (i.e. experienced object-, personal-, and social authenticity). The model was tested using data from different sites in two different cities. These included The Guinness Storehouse in Dublin, a modern-type attraction in which multimedia constitutes an integral element of the experience, and the Sisi Museum in Vienna, an old established museum where audio-guides are offered.

The findings revealed that object- and personal authenticity proved to be important concepts. However, the role of experienced social authenticity needs further investigation. The results also show that technology does not undermine the authenticity of a site - many visitors prefer to experience an attraction without such tools and in addition the use of an audio-guide did not lead to a higher satisfaction with the site.

The suggested model can be regarded as a promising basis for further modelling the visitor experience at cultural attractions.

## Declaration

I certify that this thesis which I now submit for examination for the award of Ph.D., is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others, save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

This thesis was prepared according to the regulations for postgraduate study by research of the Dublin Institute of Technology and has not been submitted in whole or in part for another award in any Institute.

The work reported on in this thesis conforms to the principles and requirements of the Institute's guidelines for ethics in research.

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Signature\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_

## **List of Abbreviations**

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| e-mail | Electronic mail  |
| ERDF   | European Regional Development Fund                               |
| EU     | European Union   |
| ICT    | Information and Communication Technology                         |
| ICTs   | Information and Communication Technologies                       |
| n.d.a. | no date available  |
| n.p.a. | no page available  |
| PC     | Personal Computer  |
| TV     | Television   |
| UK     | United Kingdom   |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| USA    | United States of America   |
| WHS    | World Heritage Site  |
| WHSs   | World Heritage Sites   |

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# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## **1.0. Introduction**

This chapter provides a brief overview of the research of this thesis. It starts out with a description of the overall rationale and framework of the thesis by setting out the research problem and the research gap that leads to the research questions and the objectives of the study. Also within this context, the contribution of the study to the industry is highlighted. The following section outlines the primary research conducted in this study next to some issues for consideration. This chapter closes with a chapter outline of this thesis.

## **1.1. Research Problem**

Attractions are at the heart of any tourism destination as they instigate travel to specific areas (Benckendorff 2006). Many destinations owe their appeal to the fact that they offer a cluster of attractions. Cultural heritage sites are among the attractions most typical of both city and rural tourism. History tends to materialise in the artefacts accumulated by the population in rural areas and urban agglomerations. Museums in their various forms as well as heritage centres are the natural places for preserving exhibits of cultural value.

Embedded in transformations in the general economy the determinants of tourism undergo significant changes (Stamboulis and Skayannis 2003). With respect to cultural tourism changes have been manifesting in (1) increased popularity of cultural attractions to spend leisure time and (2) transformations of cultural attractions to provide meaningful and pleasurable experiences for their visitors (Urry 1990, Prentice 1993, Foley and McPherson 2000, Bloch 2002). In relation to the latter, many destinations have been witnessing significant changes in their attractions. Not only different variations in the content and profile of cultural attractions have evolved but there has also been a buoyancy among cultural attractions of late to implement “new”

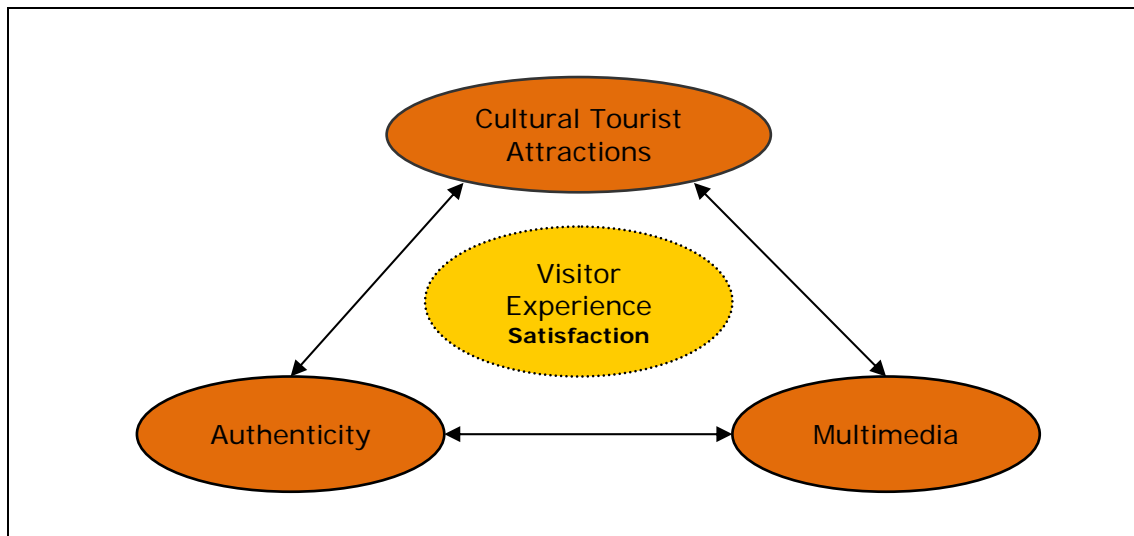
media (modern technology) for the presentation and interpretation of culture and heritage. Visiting a cultural attraction has in many places become a multimedia experience. Pearce, Benckendorff and Johnstone (2000) note that “the use of high technology is already apparent in the development and transformation of attractions for the future” (p. 125). Stevens (2003) and many others notice a new generation of visitor attractions.

This recent development raises new questions concerning the importance of authenticity of cultural sites. The implementation of modern technology (multimedia) fuels the tension between interests of education and entertainment and, moreover, between the poles of the traditional authentic claim and hyper-reality and artificiality, respectively. Critics contend that multimedia application has become part of the commodification of culture and history at the risk of losing authenticity of the cultural sites (Hewison 1987, Kockel 1994). Yet, cultural attractions strive to implement on-site multimedia to fabricate new customer experiences as they feel the urge to react upon needs of society which is increasingly determined by a consumer- and event-centred experience culture.

Cultural attractions have increasingly been applying modern technologies (Tufts and Milne 1999). Although the use of modern technologies in cultural attractions has become very popular, little knowledge exists with respect to authenticity and the visitor experience. Numerous studies exist which have attempted to tackle the issue of authenticity on a conceptual level (e.g. Boorstin 1964, MacCannell 1976, Cohen 1988, 2002, Cook 1991, Bruner 1994, Harkin 1995, Hughes 1995, Crang 1996, Holtorf and Schadla-Hall, Löwenthal 1992, Wang 1999, Lego et al. 2002, Jamal and Hill 2002, 2004, Scarpato and Daniele 2003, Peterson 2005, Belhassen and Caton 2006, Steiner and Reisinger 2006, Reisinger and Steiner 2006a). Also, qualitative studies have been

carried out (e.g. by DeLyser 1999, Goulding 2000a, 2000b, Kelner 2001, Vesey and Dimanche 2003, Kim and Jamal 2007) and a few quantitative studies were conducted (e.g. by Moscardo and Pearce 1986, Asplet and Cooper 2000, Waitt 2000, Naoi 2004, Revilla and Dodd 2003, Xie 2004, Chhabra, Healy and Sills 2003, Chhabra 2005). Moreover, several studies investigated the application of modern technologies at cultural attractions both on a conceptual (e.g. Wallace 1995, Fahy 1995, Davis and Trant 1996, Patten 1996, Perlin 1998, Bennett 1999, Griffiths 1999, Müller 2002, Knell 2003) and on an empirical level (e.g. Light 1995, Economou 1997, Wohlfromm 2002, Vom Lehn et al. 2005, Owen, Buhalis and Pletinckx 2006).

Although plenty of studies were conducted on both sides (i.e. authenticity and multimedia) these concepts have not been addressed in a combined manner. Hence, the perception and experience of authenticity at sites where multimedia is applied still lacks empirical investigation. Furthermore, satisfaction research has mainly concentrated on tangible and intangible elements of various attractions (e.g. Frochot and Hughes 2000, Nowacki 2005, 2009) largely ignoring experiential aspects of such visits. Therefore, this research seeks to explore the relationship between “Cultural Tourist Attractions”, “Multimedia” and “Authenticity” with respect to the “Visitor Experience” and the visitor’s satisfaction with it (see Figure 1)

**Figure 1: Key concepts of this thesis**

Source: by the author

On the basis of the identified research gap, this piece of research seeks to answer the following research questions:

- (1) How can the key concepts involved (i.e. cultural attractions, authenticity, multimedia and the visitor experience) be brought into an integrated measurable model?
- (2) What are the determinants of an authentic attraction and an authentic experience?
- (3) What is the role of multimedia in the visitor experience of a cultural attraction?
  - (a) Does the use of multimedia have an impact on the perception of a site as authentic and on the authentic experience of a site? Does it support an authentic experience of the site?
  - (b) Does the use of multimedia lead to higher satisfaction with the site?

## 1.2. Objectives

The aim of this research is to develop a unifying model that brings together the concept of authenticity in relation to cultural tourist attractions and the new means of presentation and interpretation of culture and heritage provided by multimedia technology. This study explores the role of visitor's perceptions and experiences of



authenticity. Particularly, it identifies several variants of the authentic experience and analyses how they are intertwined and how they feed visitor satisfaction.

Since the three major concepts involved (i.e. cultural tourist attractions, authenticity, multimedia) are complex issues in themselves they first need to be explored separately and then investigated in a combined manner. Therefore, the issues to be explored (outlined in Table 1 below) serve as a guideline to provide focus and direction for this research.

**Table 1: Research areas and issues to be explored**

| <b>Areas</b>                | <b>Issues to be explored</b>  |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>Cultural Tourism</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definition of culture and cultural tourism.</li> <li>• Cultural tourism and its various forms and dimensions.</li> <li>• Cultural tourism in Ireland and Austria.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Cultural Tourist</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural tourist and his/her needs and wants.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Cultural Attractions</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural attractions and their various forms and dimensions.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Visitor Experience</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concept of visitor experience in general and that of cultural attractions in particular.</li> <li>• Measurement of experiences.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Authenticity</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definition of authenticity and the authentic experience.</li> <li>• Concept of authenticity and the authentic experience in tourism in general and in relation to cultural tourist attractions in particular.</li> <li>• Visitor perceptions and assessment of authenticity of cultural attractions.</li> <li>• Determinants of authenticity and the authentic experience of a cultural attraction.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Multimedia</b>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definition of multimedia.</li> <li>• Types of modern technologies applied for cultural/heritage presentation and interpretation.</li> <li>• Concept of authenticity and the authentic experience in relation to multimedia-application.</li> </ul>   |

**Source: by the author**

This research provides important insights into visitor perception of authenticity and their experience of cultural tourist attractions where multimedia is applied. These visitor- orientated insights are critically needed for sustainable future product developments in that field. More specifically, the findings may serve as a benchmark for other attractions with respect to multimedia application. Also, they may be used to

inform possible marketing directions of cultural/heritage attractions. From a theoretical point of view, this research provides valuable output for modelling the visitor experience at cultural attractions. In addition to making substantive contributions to authenticity theory this research seeks to extend previous work in terms of methodological effort.

### **1.3. Research Design**

In this thesis the concept of mixed methods, including qualitative and quantitative methods, which is also known as “triangulation” is applied. Various methods are aimed to complement each other, yet having different objectives and problems (Ryan 1995). In order to overcome problems associated with one method it seems to be appropriate to apply either form. Triangulation is not used in order to correct any bias or to improve validity. It is used because no single method ever adequately solves the problem of rival causal factors. Since each method reveals different aspects of empirical reality, multiple methods of observations must be employed (ibid.). Methodological triangulation involves researchers using several methods to gather data relevant to a study. By applying the concept of triangulation rigor, breadth and depth can be added to the study.

There has been much debate regarding the application of qualitative and quantitative methods in the field of social science (Creswell 2003, Jennings 2001, Neuman 2003). In general it can be said that the research question determines the specific approach to a study (Silverman 2004). Liebscher (1998) argues that qualitative methods are appropriate when “the phenomena under study are complex, are social in nature, and do not lend themselves to quantification” (p. 669). In contrast, quantitative methods are suitable “where quantifiable measures of variables of interest are possible, where hypotheses can be formulated and tested, and inferences drawn from samples to populations” (ibid.). Qualitative and quantitative research are guided by different

ideological research positions. While quantitative research is based primarily on the positivistic school of thought, qualitative research is more constructivist in theory (Carson et al. 2001). However, they should not be seen as rival camps but as two paradigms that could very well support each other in most social science inquiry (Neuman 2003).

The research design of this thesis consists of three major research phases: exploratory research, literature review, and empirical testing. This research commences with exploratory investigations in the form of a small scale quantitative study at “Ceol” – The Irish Traditional Music Centre, two focus group interviews, and 11 expert interviews. These studies serve to reveal insights into both, the providers’ and visitors’ point of view on the issues of authenticity and multimedia. Exploratory research is a study which aims to find patterns, ideas or hypotheses. The focus is on gaining familiarity with the subject area and on gaining insights for more rigorous investigation at a later stage of the study (Hussey and Hussey 1997).

In the second stage, an extensive review of the pertaining literature results in the formulation of hypotheses and in the development of a causal model. The testing of the hypotheses leads to the third phase of this research. Following a pilot-test, a large-scale quantitative field survey is undertaken at two different study sites. Empirical data are collected on the visitors’ experience of The Guinness Storehouse situated in Smithfield Village in Dublin, where different types of media are applied to support the visitor experience. For reasons of comparison, another site, namely the Sisi Museum located in Austria, is chosen. The Sisi Museum is one of Vienna’s most popular heritage attractions and can be jointly visited with the Imperial Silver Collection and the Imperial Apartments of Emperor Franz-Josef and his wife Elisabeth (Sisi). At the Sisi Museum audio-guides are offered as an additional service for visitors. Since not all visitors make use of this service a comparison between users and non-users of audio-

guides should reveal the influence of this interpretative tool on the visitor experience. Testing the developed causal model against the data of the two study sites should reveal whether the formulated hypotheses can be supported or need to be abandoned. Thereafter, model improvement is performed. Finally, a revised model is suggested and tested against the data of the second half of the data of the Sisi Museum (which is retained until then) and against the Guinness data. Model testing is performed by using the software package Mplus (version 4.0) by Muthén and Muthén (2007).

#### **1.4. Research Issues for Consideration**

This research presents a comprehensive study of the relationship between cultural tourist attractions, authenticity and multimedia application. The challenge lies in unifying these three concepts in a meaningful way. Each of these concepts is complex in its nature and represents a study area on its own. Therefore, bringing them into a conceptual framework means that these components are limited within these confines.

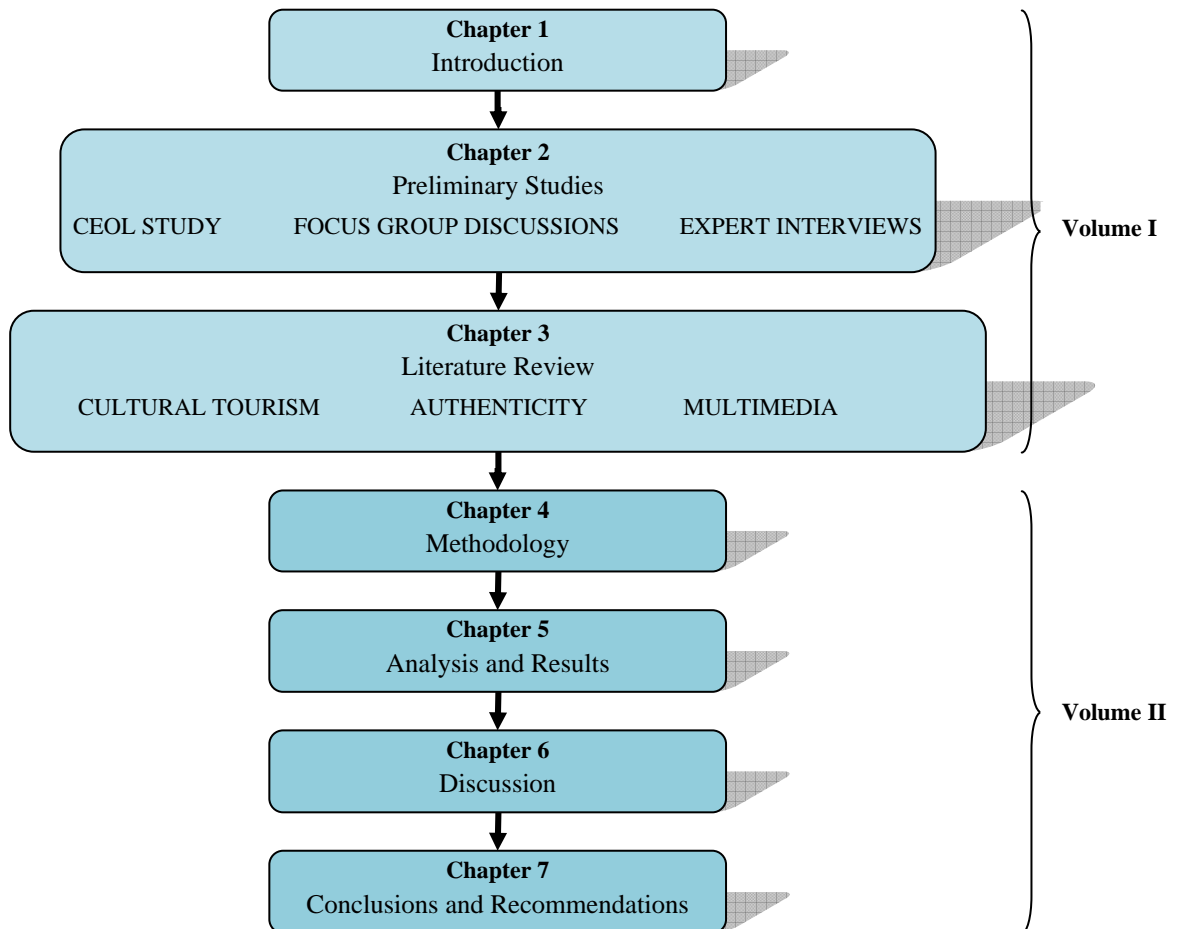
Cultural tourist attractions include a broad spectrum. However, the main focus will be on tangible cultural attractions in the form of museums, heritage centres, interpretative centres, etc. and visitor's evaluations and experience of these. These are the sites where multimedia is applied for presentation and interpretation of culture and heritage.

Furthermore, there are several contact points of multimedia and cultural attractions which would be interesting areas for investigations, however, going beyond the area of tourism (e.g. multimedia art, digitisation of cultural heritage). For this reason, they are not elaborated in this research.

## 1.5. Chapter Outline

The structure of this thesis follows the overall guidelines provided by the Dublin Institute of Technology-Postgraduate Studies. The text is arranged into seven chapters (Figure 2), starting with the Introduction.

**Figure 2: Structure of the thesis**



**Source: by the author**

Because of the wide scope of this study, the thesis is presented in two volumes. While *volume I* contains the chapters Introduction, Preliminary Studies and Literature Review, *volume II* deals with the Research Methodology, Analysis and Results, Discussion, and Conclusions and Recommendations.

Chapter *two* presents investigatory research carried out at the beginning of this research. First, the aims of the three studies (i.e. CEOL study, focus group discussions,

expert interviews) are outlined. Then, each study is explained and the major findings are presented. Finally, conclusions are drawn which serve as a basis for the literature review as well as the empirical study at a later stage of this thesis.

Chapter *three* provides an in-depth review of the literature relevant to this thesis. It is divided into three major sections, namely cultural tourism, authenticity, and multimedia. The aim of this chapter is to explore definitions of terms and to investigate theories and concepts provided by various authors in the study fields. Chapter three starts out with a review of the literature pertaining to cultural tourism. Within this section a clarification of the definition of cultural tourism versus heritage tourism is provided. This involves an elaboration on the terms culture and heritage and shows problems associated with their definition. Also, elements of culture and heritage are explored. Then, based on a typology suggested by Smith (2003), various forms and dimensions of cultural tourism are investigated. The subsequent sub-section is dedicated to the cultural tourist and investigates new consumer behaviour, motivations and characteristic traits of cultural tourists. The next sub-section looks at cultural tourist attractions and introduces various types of attractions leading from naturally grown to artificially constructed ones. Special attention is given to museums and heritage centres. Furthermore, managerial issues in relation to cultural attractions are addressed. A sub-section on experiences including insights into human perception, measurement of experiences and customer satisfaction follows. Finally, cultural tourism in Ireland and Austria is investigated and briefly compared.

The section on authenticity provides an extensive discussion of the definition of authenticity and the authentic experience. It commences with a brief overview of various areas of research in relation to authenticity. This is followed by an examination of different concepts of authenticity in which the shift from concepts provided by modernists as opposed to postmodernists is highlighted. Then, object-related

authenticity and the authentic experience are investigated and cultural attractions and their different orientations towards authenticity are addressed. Finally, the concept of existential authenticity and different forms of existential experiences are explored.

The multimedia section first provides an overview of the development of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). It then investigates the application of ICT at cultural attractions in general and reviews various definitions of multimedia. Thereafter, terms such as “hypermedia”, “hypertext” and “Virtual Reality” are introduced and explained. Then, the portfolio of modern presentation techniques currently applied at various cultural attractions to communicate, present and interpret culture and heritage is outlined and substantiated by carefully chosen examples where possible. A systematic view of the role of multimedia is applied to reveal advantages and disadvantages as well as problems and challenges associated with multimedia application at cultural attractions. There is also a short discussion on the “Virtual Museum” as a new type of attraction that tries to overcome time and space. Finally, multimedia and issues of authenticity are explored referring to multimedia as a means to provide additional information to an exhibit/subject, to presentations of objects in digital formats, and to multimedia and the social experience.

In the literature review part, summaries are provided after each sub-section except for the authenticity and multimedia chapter where a chapter summary is provided at the end.

Chapter *four* outlines the applied methodology for primary research. First, the development of hypotheses and the hypothesised model are introduced. Then, some theoretical insights into causal modelling as well as issues on validity and reliability are provided. A description of the two study sites is followed by an account of sampling and the operationalisation of the major concepts involved. This chapter

concludes with insights into the pre-test and an explanation of the data collection process.

Chapter *five* presents the analysis and results of the primary research. First, response rate, data preparation and sample characteristics are described. Then, the results of the estimated original model are presented in relation to the Guinness sample as well as to the two samples from the Sisi Museum (i.e. Sisi “users of audio-guides” and Sisi “non-users of audio-guides”). Thereafter, the results of the estimated alternative models are outlined. Finally, the revised model is portrayed and the results of testing it against the data of the Sisi “users of audio-guides”, Sisi hold-out sample as well as the Guinness sample are demonstrated.

Chapter *six* discusses the research findings in relation to sample profiles and motivation, users and non-users of audio-guides, attitude towards multimedia application, satisfaction with site attributes and experienced authenticity as well as goodness-of-fit measures. This chapter also seeks to compare the results of the different samples and discusses the findings of the primary research in light of previous findings portrayed in literature.

Chapter *seven* draws conclusions on the findings of this research and outlines their implications for theory and the industry. The chapter concludes by highlighting limitations of the research and by providing recommendations for further research.



## **CHAPTER TWO: PRELIMINARY STUDIES AND FINDINGS**

## 2.1. Introduction

The following portfolio of methods was used at the beginning of this research to gather information on visitors' and experts' perspectives of authenticity and the use of multimedia at cultural attractions:

- Ceol Study (quantitative);
- Focus Group Interviews (qualitative);
- Expert Interviews (qualitative).

The purpose of these preliminary studies was to get a general feeling on the topic at the initial stage of this research and to get first insights into visitors' and experts' opinions on the topic under investigation before embarking on a detailed literature review. The surveys were exploratory in nature. The information gathered through the "Ceol" study and the two focus groups were also used to inform the development of a causal model as well as the preparation of a questionnaire in a later stage of this thesis. The specific objectives of the exploratory studies are outlined in Table 2.

**Table 2: Objectives of "Ceol" Study, Focus Group Interviews and Expert Interviews**

| <b>Studies</b>                | <b>Objectives</b>   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <b>"Ceol" Study</b>           | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To ascertain if authenticity is an issue for visitors.</li> <li>2. To explore visitors' attitudes towards the use of modern technologies.</li> </ol>  |
| <b>Focus Group Interviews</b> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To explore definitions and term applications of "authenticity".</li> <li>2. To explore criteria of judgements on authenticity.</li> <li>3. To explore expectations towards a museum/heritage centre.</li> <li>4. To discuss participants' views regarding multimedia application at cultural attractions and how far this influences their (authentic) experience.</li> </ol> |
| <b>Expert Interviews</b>      | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To gain insight into the providers' perspectives on authenticity and multimedia as well as their perception of the visitor and his/her needs.</li> <li>2. To explore the importance of authenticity from a curatorial perspective.</li> </ol>   |

**Source: by the author**

## 2.2. “CEOL” Study

This exploratory survey was carried out in October 2001 at “Ceol”<sup>1</sup>, the Traditional Irish Music Centre, located in Smithfield in Dublin. “Ceol” was in particular chosen as a site because of the various modern technologies applied there (e.g. touch screens, interactive computers, audio-visual show). A formal questionnaire was set up and face-to-face interviews were carried out. The questionnaire contained 13 questions which took about 20-25 minutes to answer and which included questions on:

- Reason for visiting Dublin and motivation to visit a museum/heritage centre;
- How visitors want to experience a museum/heritage centre;
- Authenticity;
- Presentation techniques;
- Level of satisfaction;
- Demographics.

It took four weeks for all surveys to be completed and 99 visitors were interviewed. The visitors were very open and talkative and besides completing the formal questionnaire they took their time to talk to the interviewer about their experience at “Ceol”. This provided additional valuable insights. Thus, there was a combination of formal questionnaire and personal interviews. Table 3 below provides a brief summary of the most important findings of this study.

**Table 3: Summary of findings of the “Ceol” Study**

### 1. Visitor Profile

- From the 99 respondents 69% were tourists and 31% locals<sup>2</sup>: 77% of the tourists had a general interest in culture, 33% had a strong interest in culture.
- Visitors originated from 13 different countries, 73% were from Europe, 14% from the United States, 7% from Australia and 6% from Asia.
- “Ceol” attracted visitors from all age groups but very little family visitors.
- Visitors were all very well educated<sup>3</sup>. Occupation-wise there was a high number of “white collar workers”.

<sup>1</sup> Ceol is the Irish word for music.

<sup>2</sup> Locals were defined as people from Dublin.

|   |
|---|
| <p><b>2. Motives to visit a Museum/Heritage Centre</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Education” was evaluated as the most important motivator followed by “entertainment”, “special motives”<sup>4</sup>, “social motives”<sup>5</sup> and “general motives”<sup>6</sup>.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>3. How visitors want to experience a Museum/Heritage Centre</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visitors have a greater leaning towards entertaining presentations and tools such as e.g. interactive artefacts and hands-on opportunities rather than traditional text panels.</li> <li>• There was a particularly high rating for “audio-visual” as opposed to re-enactment.</li> <li>• The architecture and the servicescape play an important role in the “museum experience”, especially for younger people.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>4. Authenticity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 95% of the visitors stated that authenticity is important for visiting a cultural attraction. Nobody evaluated authenticity as unimportant.</li> <li>• Locals view “old type” museums as more authentic, tourists favour “heritage centres”.</li> <li>• Landscape and nature (the setting) make the experience more authentic. Negative effect on authenticity include noise, too much stimulation or a too modern setting.</li> <li>• In order to experience an authentic visit the existence of “original artefacts” is crucial followed by “original location” and “atmosphere”.</li> <li>• When making judgements on authenticity visitors built on past experiences, their knowledge about the site/artefacts/topic and their cultural background. Irish visitors were more critical in their judgements as opposed to foreigners.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>5. Multimedia</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was a high acceptance of multimedia application at cultural attractions.</li> <li>• 39% of the respondents thought that multimedia affects the original meaning of the cultural product, 39% were not sure and 22% thought multimedia has no influence.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>6. Duration of Visit and Satisfaction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visitors’ average duration time of the visit was two hours.</li> <li>• There was an overall high level of satisfaction.<sup>7</sup></li> <li>• Articulated disappointing aspects included: the location, no signposts, no advertisements, expensive, setting factors, unfriendly reception personnel, some exhibits did not work, too contemporary, too much information and stimulation, no pub atmosphere, missing human factor.</li> <li>• Positive aspects mentioned included no commercialism and individualism.</li> </ul>   |

**Source: by the author**

<sup>3</sup> 49 % University, 30 % Technical College, 21 % primary/secondary school

<sup>4</sup> aesthetic experience, meaningful leisure activity, use of modern presentation techniques

<sup>5</sup> to be together with people, to spend time with family

<sup>6</sup> bad weather, on recommendation, novelty, calm and relaxation

<sup>7</sup> 86 % would recommend the site to other visitors.

### 2.3. Focus Group Interviews

The focus group is an interview conducted by a trained moderator among a small group of respondents in an unstructured and natural manner (Malhotra and Birks 2000). The approach is to probe for participant's underlying feelings and motivations as they relate to the subject under investigation. The information provided in focus groups can be of most use in defining the issues more clearly and providing a basis for further research.

The interviews were held in Vienna in July 2002 and in Tyrol in August 2002. The interviews were conducted in German and food and drinks were provided. The length of the first interview was three hours, the second took two hours. Both interviews were taped for later analysis with permission of the participants and confidentiality was guaranteed. The first focus group comprised five participants and the second four (two did not show up) (the list of participants can be found in the Appendix in Volume II). Table 4 below provides an overview of the most important findings of these focus group interviews.

**Table 4: Summary of findings of the Focus Group Interviews**

|   |
|---|
| <p><b>1. Definition of “Authenticity” and Context within which the Term is applied</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants found that authenticity is a very “slippery” term and its application is very difficult. Definitions referred to a characteristic of a person, to interpretation, and to the quality of an artefact.<sup>8</sup></li> <li>• There are three different levels regarding the experience of authenticity: object, interpretation, personality level.</li> <li>• Participants argued that interpretation is a subjective and speculative issue and therefore a museum cannot be authentic.</li> <li>• Participants argued that in order to judge about authenticity certain criteria have to be applied (scientific = objective, or personal = subjective). If a museum is authentic cannot be verified by an ordinary individual because of a lack of scientific criteria.</li> <li>• The individuals' self-concept is the crucial point for judgements on authenticity.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>2. “Authentic” versus “Quasi-authentic Experience”</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The “authentic experience” was referred to as the experience of the authentic/real.</li> </ul>  |

<sup>8</sup> Definitions: credibility, realness/pureness, not forged, congruency, to present findings as they were found, a person who is not false.

|   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The “quasi-authentic experience” results from the perception of a replica or copy. Participants argued that this can come very close to the authentic experience (in fact it can be the same). Therefore, they thought that someone can have an authentic experience out of something inauthentic (quasi-authentic).</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>3. Multimedia</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multimedia application at cultural sites is appreciated for the following reasons: they offer more possibilities to take in a site, you get more information to the objects, stimulation of more senses, they are important to get children into a museum.</li> <li>• Multimedia is not seen as a problem as regards the authenticity of the site. If they are applied faithfully they can enforce the transmission and heighten the experience.</li> <li>• The following aspects are required: the right balance, multimedia should be perfect and not overwhelming, people should be made aware that the multimedia presentation merely represents one possible interpretation.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>4. Motivations to visit a Museum/Heritage Centre</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The following motivations were mentioned: education, social aspects, to see something “extraordinary”, to have a condensed experience. Authenticity is not an ostensible motivator.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>5. Expectations towards Museums and Heritage Centres</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expectations of a cultural site are strongly connected with authenticity: reproductions should be declared as such, honest conception is required, limited number of visitors and areas to contemplate should be provided.</li> <li>• Further expectations include the way knowledge should be imparted and how they want to experience a museum.</li> <li>• Participants showed no interest in being entertained in a museum, yet “how” something is presented is important to them.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>6. American Culture and Mass Culture</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants argued that American culture and their cultural attractions (e.g. Disneyland) are exaggerated, in particular, American Museums were viewed as not trustworthy as regards authenticity.</li> <li>• Mass culture is considered to cause a destruction of the self-concept as individuals are to a certain extent manipulated and not encouraged to use their own mind.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>7. Authentic Place (Vienna)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What tourists get presented is “staged Vienna” and this version is not a true experience of Vienna. However, the tourist is happy with it because s/he does not know the real.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>8. Senses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tactile, aural and olfactory experiences make the whole experience more intense, help to get a better idea, add to the liveliness of a site, and make the experience more authentic.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>9. Original versus Copy/Reproduction/Replica</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reproductions are not rejected as such but not accepted if they are kitschy or a replica of famous paintings/sculptures.</li> <li>• To know that it is the original makes the difference because the original has an aura.</li> <li>• Participants have stronger expectations towards a museum as opposed to a Heritage Centre regarding authenticity.</li> </ul>   |

**Source: by the author**

## 2.4. Expert Interviews

Expert's views on authenticity and the use of multimedia is of particular importance in order to identify the gap between visitor's and curator's perspectives. The first five interviews were carried out as a pilot exploration using a semi-structured format. For the last five expert interviews a interviewer guideline was developed. The interviews were held in German and English. Mainly experts in the field of cultural attractions with a strong focus on museum curators were interviewed (see List of References). As with all qualitative studies the findings (see Table 5) cannot be generalised but they give important insights into the management and curatorial point of view on the subjects under investigation.

**Table 5: Summary of the findings of the Expert Interviews**

|   |
|---|
| <p><b>1. Authenticity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authenticity is seen as vitally important from a curatorial point of view and also for the visitor experience. Curators see in authenticity the strength of a museum.</li> <li>• Museums are seen primarily as places to learn with the aid of unique “objects”.</li> <li>• In other cultural attractions such as e.g. “Schlosshof” (castle near Vienna)the “authentic experience” is emphasised, less the scientific truth.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>2. Reproductions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reproductions are seen as a loss of the “aura” and the “kick of the authenticity”, however, are regarded as being legitimate in certain cases.</li> <li>• Interviewees argued that in terms of the learning experience a reproduction is not much different, but mentally and psychologically it may.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>3. Presentation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objects are increasingly put into context which provides an extra level of experience. The clinic isolation of objects has run its course.</li> <li>• The role of the interpretive planner/designer has evolved and has become important.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>4. Multimedia</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multimedia is seen as a new tool to bring a message across but should have a secondary function.</li> <li>• Multimedia enhances communication but the interplay with the authentic object is seen as vitally important.</li> <li>• Multimedia is applied to bridge time and space, to reduce complexity, if no original objects are available, as soundscapes and as an additional kick to attract visitors.</li> <li>• Multimedia is seen as important, especially for young people.</li> <li>• Articulated problems associated with multimedia include: high costs of investment and danger of getting into a financial loop, technical liability, autistic consumption, high visitor numbers, they can be intrusive, they can detract from the exhibit, not letting them to take over.</li> </ul> |

|  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenges of multimedia application include: they must be of very high standard, the ethos with which they are produced is important.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>5. Visitor</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visitors are portrayed as being more mature, having less fear of entering, being far more critical, being more cosmopolitan, expecting more services, are increasingly impatient and different in their needs (enlightenment, education, looking at famous objects).</li> <li>• Tourists are seen as an important target group although museums are not seen as tourist attractions per se. Beside museums, there are other cultural attractions which could not survive without tourists such as “Schlosshof”.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>6. Other important Aspects</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entertainment is seen to be elusive – the (museum) experience, however, is aimed at sustainability. But that does not mean that a museum has to be boring. The interactive aspect is important for children.</li> <li>• Additional events are nowadays offered such as a roof circuit for tourists, guided tours through repository and cellar, social and charity events, children activities, lecture series with food and wine, musical performances, storytelling, book launches, museum afterdark. At “Schlosshof” a light-show, water-shows and fireworks are planned.</li> <li>• Interviewees pointed out that many of today’s museums face an economic dilemma and try to find a solution through populism to bring visitors in.</li> <li>• Museums are seen to be in competition with other leisure attractions and this causes dangerous variations of the “raison d’être” of the museum.</li> </ul> |

**Source: by the author**



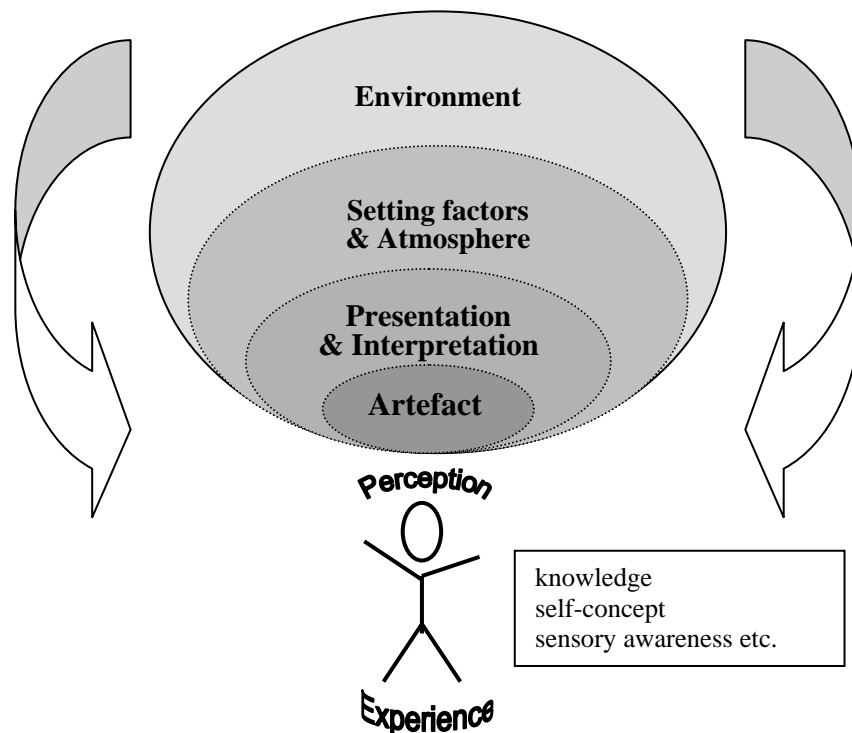
## 2.5. Conclusions

The three exploratory studies provided valuable insights into visitor's experience of cultural attractions and into thoughts of those who are responsible in providing these experiences. The findings show that from a visitor point of view authenticity

- has many facets and is used in various contexts, i.e. as a characteristic of a person, as a quality of an object and as quality of interpretation
- can be regarded as an important feature when visiting a museum/heritage centre
- is perceived subjective, i.e. authenticity means different things to different people according to their self-concept.

From the findings of the “Focus Group Interviews” as well as the “Ceol-Study” the following model on determinants/elements of the authenticity of a cultural site which were communicated by the visitors can be summarised in the figure below.

**Figure 3: Elements of authenticity of a cultural site**



Source: by the author

### **1. Artefact/object**

The artefact can be authentic or not in the sense of being an original or a reproduction/copy/replica/simulation. The visitor in most cases cannot judge on this and has to rely on the curators expertise. The visitor takes it for granted that museums exhibit authentic objects. With more popular forms of heritage presentation the visitor is less strict about the authenticity of objects and accepts reproductions. As regards the object the question is how far the presentation goes away from the original artefact. The descending order would be as follows: authentic artefact, reproduction, simulation, virtual reality.

### **2. Presentation of artefacts/site and intermediation/interpretation**

With authentic objects the question is how they are presented, in clinical isolation or put into context? Presentation is strongly linked with interpretation. The latter includes three different levels/ways of interpretation:

- a) first-hand experience with no interpretation;
- b) guided tour (with human being as an important element);
- c) interpretation with the aid of multimedia.

The crucial aspect with interpretation is how much information is provided and in which way it is provided.

### **3. Setting factors and atmosphere**

First of all the question is how the site itself is presented, e.g. restored or not restored? Is there interpretation or not? A gallery or museum for example constructs a space or environment to view art work. Setting factors include e.g. architecture, design and style of presentation (old/new), aesthetics, “servicescapes”, lightening, and temperature. These factors can have an auxiliary function which help to generate an authentic atmosphere. Noise and too much stimulation can have a negative effect on the atmosphere of a place. Many elements together create atmosphere. Beside the setting itself visitors themselves contribute to the atmosphere through their own

presence and behaviour. Atmosphere is also intertwined with the environment, the next layer.

#### **4. Environment**

The environment can be a crucial factor if a site is perceived as authentic or not. This includes issues such as original location where the event took place or where the artefacts were found or the physical surroundings (e.g. beautiful landscape and nature or urban environment).

From the findings it can be concluded that for visitors the authenticity claim goes beyond the (authentic) object. It contains tangible (material authenticity) as well as intangible (atmospheric authenticity) elements. These elements are the triggers which activate the emotional, sensory and mental experience that occurs within the individual. The visitor brings along a certain level of knowledge, his cultural background, self-concept and sensory awareness. Different ways of presentation/interpretation and experiences appeal to different people, depending on these personality factors. For people who are e.g. more tactile to touch things would heighten their experience and would make their experience more authentic. The cultural background has also a significant influence what visitors expect and how they experience a site. Europeans seem to have strong expectations regarding authenticity and view many American sites as exaggerated and inauthentic.

In order to be able to evaluate the objective authenticity certain knowledge is required. Ordinary visitors do not possess this knowledge, hence they apply subjective criteria based on their self-concept. In the evaluation process the perception/experience referring to various determinants is compared with the expectations. As visitors have different expectations, perceptions and experiences different judgements about authenticity and authentic experiences result. Judgements on authenticity, however, are

rarely either yes or no. Visitors differentiate between different degrees of authenticity and expect sites e.g. to be “as authentic as possible”.

Visitors appreciate multimedia application because they help them to consume the site, i.e. to get a better understanding of the object/site through the information provided. Multimedia has no influence on the authenticity of an object as such but the way how it is perceived and, therefore, has an effect on the quality of the experience. In a positive way it can heighten the experience.

Findings from the “expert interviews” show that museum curators in unison see the authentic object as indispensable and as the backbone of a museum. However, in other cultural attractions such as castles emphasis is often placed on the “authentic experience”, i.e. the holistic experience of the attractions. Both curators and attraction managers seem to put a lot of effort into customer orientation and are open minded for the visitor needs. They recognise that the consumer/visitor has changed and demands for different presentation styles. They realise that design, staging, aesthetics, and architecture have become very important in the presentation and representation of culture and heritage. Curators and attractions managers try to find any way possible to get visitors into their attractions. However, they also expressed the need for professionalism for not “disneyfying” cultural institutions by using automated and exaggerated styles like in theme parks. They regard multimedia as a new tool that helps to deliver the message. Most of them articulated a very positive stance towards the use of various modern media although pointing at different problems associated with multimedia application. However, they also emphasised that the authentic objects must come first. Multimedia is applied to provide information, to reduce complexity, and to generate ambience (e.g. by using sounds). Curators are aware that multimedia application is a pull factor for visitors. It is often an economic question to make

cultural attractions more appealing as regards presentation and implementing multimedia. Especially privately run institutions and big projects use “Disneyworld” etc. as a benchmark not only for management issues but increasingly for visitor management and presentation issues.

These findings provided some early insights and helped to better specify the research questions. How these findings fit into existing concepts of authenticity, heritage presentation and the use of multimedia, and if they support or contradict with the literature was the next step undertaken.

## **CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW**

## **3.1. CULTURAL TOURISM**

### **3.1.1. Introduction**

Tourism is one of the fastest-growing industries in the world and the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) predicts that world tourism will grow threefold between now and 2020. Within the tourism industry, cultural tourism has become an important player (Richards 1996a, DuCros 2001).

One of the enduring motivations for travel to other countries is the opportunity to observe other people and their way of life, thus learning more about the world in which we live (Bord Fáilte 2000a). Indeed, it can be argued that cultural tourism is as old as tourism itself (Swarbrooke 1997). Foreign culture and heritage have long been appealing to tourists (Feifer 1985), however, its motivation for travel was first only reserved for a tiny minority of the general public. This had found its expression in the Grand Tour of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, which was once considered an essential part of a “gentleman’s” education (Lord 1999). Although cultural tourism has been common over decades, its continuous presence was overshadowed by the spectacular growth of beach-related holidays (Hughes 1996). Since the 1980s, the mass tourism market for sun, sea and sand has matured, but tourists increasingly search for new experiences (Hughes 2000a). Cultural tourism has increasingly become recognised as offering new and more varied experiences to tourists (Prentice 1993). Participation in arts and heritage-based forms of cultural tourism has grown immensely (Zeppel and Hall 1992) and has developed into a high-profile mass-market activity (McKercher and DuCros 2002). Cultural tourism has been generating large numbers of tourists from each of the major tourist-generating countries in the world. Within the EU alone, it is estimated that the market for cultural tourism is in the region of 25 million people (Bord Fáilte 2000a). Cultural tourism nowadays no longer constitutes a niche market but a major area of tourism supply and demand (Bywater 1993, Richards 1996a, Williams 2000). The WTO

has estimated that 37% of all pleasure trips had cultural elements in them and the annual growth rate for this form of tourism was 15% in the 1990s (Bywater 1993).

Research undertaken by the European Association for Tourism and Leisure Education (ATLAS) reveals that the growth in cultural tourism in Europe is intertwined with the overall growth in global tourism (Richards 1996a, 2001b). As overall tourism increases, there will consequently be more visits to cultural attractions. Also, more attractions have been defined as “cultural”, thus adding to the growth phenomenon. Richards (1996a) argues that cultural tourism in Europe had grown no faster than tourism in general.

Tourism figures document that demand for cultural tourism has increased. Strong interest in culture emanates from the so-called “new bourgeoisie” (Bourdieu 1984) or the “new middle class” (Urry 1990, Munt 1994, Richards 1996a) emulating former primarily elite class activities. The “new middle class” have come to be characterised as the “producers and consumers of postmodernism par excellence” (Munt 1994, p. 106). However, Richards (1996a) argues that “it is not simply the consumption of heritage that is determined by the rise of the new middle class, but also the production of heritage” (p. 455). For him, “postmodernity is marked by consumption-driven cultural production” (Richards 1996a, p. 250).

As a result of the powerful tourist demand, big efforts have been made in improving and diversifying cultural heritage presentations all over the globe. The UNESCO Courier July/August 1999 reported that cultural institutions and sites are preparing themselves for the growing demand: museums have been refurbished (e.g. for doing up the Louvre more than 1.1 \$ billion were spent), new museums of modern art were opened in San Francisco, Barcelona, Rome, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Bilbao and recently in Vienna, historic city centres have been renovated, monuments restored, and there has been an extraordinary rise in the number of big exhibitions and blockbuster shows (the Monet



exhibition in the year 1999 in London broke the record with 8,500 visitors a day) (Patin 1999, p. 35). Neil Cossons (1989), Director of the Science Museum in London confirms e.g. that museums have never been more popular. Archaeological sites, monuments, museums and heritage centres have economically become extremely important. A new business has developed dependent upon cultural and heritage tourism. The field of cultural tourism has grown in importance as a source of revenue.

Culture is increasingly used as a marketing tool by many destinations increasing the competition in the cultural tourism market. Cities and whole destinations see in cultural tourism a lucrative means of diversification. The international effort to preserve the inheritance of the past which is expressed in “World Heritage Sites” has particular relevance for tourism as most of the sites on the list of World Heritage Sites are of high calibre and therefore are first-rank tourist attractions. On a European level, the introduction of the European Cultural Capital of the year was established. The concept based on supporting European culture has become a magnet for numerous tourists enjoying year-round events based on culture.

Before exploring cultural attractions as such it is important to investigate culture and the various forms and dimensions of cultural tourism. Hence, this chapter first aims to shed light on the complexity of culture and cultural tourism. There is confusion among academics as to what constitutes cultural tourism. Therefore the multiple forms of cultural tourism are presented and discussed. Then focus is placed on the consumers of culture – the so-called cultural tourists – and their characteristic traits and needs. In this context different categories of the cultural tourists are presented to show that cultural tourists do not constitute a uniform market in terms of their motivation and experience sought. Cultural tourist attractions are explored starting out with categorisations of visitor attractions in general. To get an overview of the market various cultural attractions are then introduced and future developments anticipated. Particular attention

is paid to the museum in its various forms and how they have changed in order to satisfy today's consumers with innovative displays and interpretative techniques. From a management perspective cultural attractions are then ascertained in terms of the experience they provide, which is central to this thesis. Important factors for product development with regard to experience design are outlined and interpretation as key to offering satisfying experiences is examined in-depth. Also problems with turning sites into tourist attractions are highlighted. Finally, cultural tourism in Ireland is elaborated beginning with an overview of general tourism development and some characteristics of tourism in Ireland. Following this, the Irish cultural and heritage product including specific niche products are introduced and a profile of visitors engaging in historical/cultural activities is provided. The last part of this section is dedicated to Dublin and investigates Dublin as a cultural destination. Infrastructure and area regeneration plans are introduced, and Dublin's culture and heritage is highlighted. Finally, cultural tourism in Austria is outlined and compared to the Ireland.

### **3.1.2. Definition of Culture and Cultural Tourism**

#### **3.1.2.1. What is Culture?**

After researching the enormous variety of definitions and meanings that the word “culture” has carried during its history in English and other European languages Raymond Williams, early pioneer in the field of “cultural studies”, came to the conclusion that culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language (Williams 1983). However, since the idea of culture is central to the study of cultural tourism there is need to elucidate the term and to explore the processes involved in order to get a better understanding of its complexity.

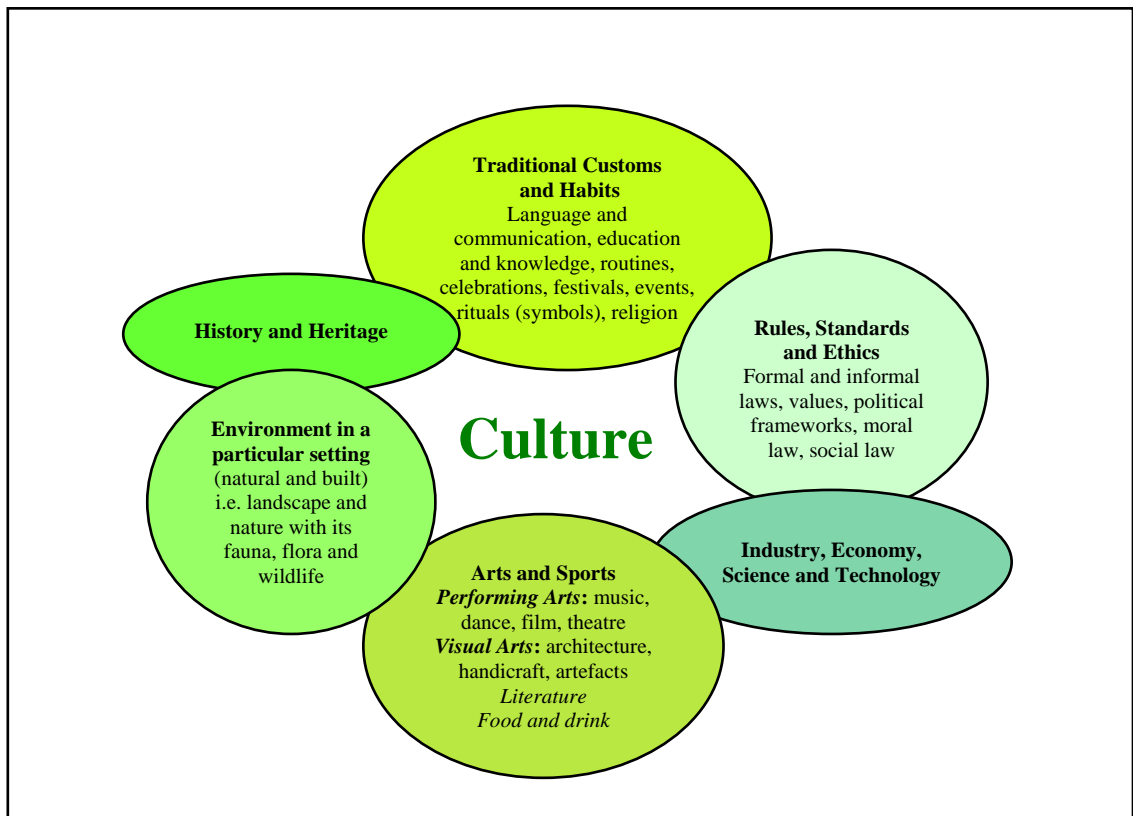
The term “culture” has its roots in the Latin verb “colere” which means to tend or to cultivate and was first confined to the field of agriculture. Later the term was expanded to entire ways of living of groups of people and their beliefs and ultimately to the arts. The Encyclopedia Britannica provides a very comprehensive definition of culture. It defines culture as “the integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behaviour, language, ideas, beliefs, customs, taboos, codes, institutions, tools, techniques, works of art, rituals, ceremonies, and other related components...” (Encyclopaedia Britannica 1989). A broader definition is suggested by the UNESCO's Mexico City Declaration of the World Conference on Cultural Policies which says that culture is “the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group (...)” (UNESCO 1982).

Tomlinson (quoted in Richards 1996a, p. 252) argues that there are hundreds of definitions of what is regarded as culture “which would suggest that either there is a considerable amount of confusion [...] or that ‘culture’ is so large and all-embracing a concept that it can accommodate all these definitions”. To capture all dimensions of culture in a single definition would lead to a degree of generalisation which would totally fail its goal and as Richards (1996a) has pointed out “renders the act of definition

useless” (p. 253). Eagleton (2000) argues “was the word ‘culture’ once too spiritually minded term, so it has now the sponginess of a term which encompasses practically everything” (p. 55). He summarises that “it is hard to resist the conclusion that culture is both too broad and too narrow to be greatly useful” (Eagleton 2000, p. 32). However, no matter how broad or narrow the definition is worded, Tylor’s (1873) assertion that culture is by definition not genetically transmitted but learned, something that is acquired and inherited by man as a member of society (Eagleton 2000) has to be kept in mind.

Culture is a very broad concept and can be regarded from various viewpoints. Figure 4 depicts elements of culture, however, they are not claimed to be exhaustive.

**Figure 4: Elements of culture**



**Source: by the author**

This simple model constitutes the working base to begin with and will be further expanded in the course of this thesis. The model features the following elements of culture:

- *Traditional customs and habits of a people that form a distinctive way of life.* This includes such components as habitual language use and communication. Also education and the knowledge of a people is an important part of the distinctiveness of a culture. A peoples' way of life finds expression in their everyday routines and rituals as well as extraordinary celebrations, festivals, and events. Cultural symbols are used to underpin these. They are signs that have meaning peculiar to a specific society or group and represent their "*Weltanschauung*" and "idea of man". Religion is fundamental to a peoples' culture and is the basis out of which many customs and habits result. Religion gives people a sense of belonging together and is part of their cultural identity.
- *Rules, standards and ethics shared by a society that produce particular behaviour of a people.* Rules and standards include political frameworks as well as ideologies, moral and social convictions/values expressed in formal and informal laws. Together with ethics they dictate acceptable and unacceptable behaviours.
- *Industry, economy, science and technology.* The industry/economy results from the various resources available, i.e. natural resources, people's skills/knowledge, science and technology.
- *Arts and Sports.* The arts are a constitutive of any culture and are the most visible expression of a culture and its economical, philosophical, historical, and political attitude. Arts include the performing and the visual arts, literature, cuisine and drinks. Also sports in its various guises can be regarded as part of the arts of a people.

- *Environment*. Environment encompasses the natural<sup>9</sup> and built environment as well as urban and rural settings with its respective peculiarities. People have influence on their environment just as the embeddedness in a particular environment/landscape shapes their culture.
- *History and Heritage*. History is a dimension that pervades every single element of culture. Heritage is what is preserved from the past and passed on to next generations<sup>10</sup>.

So far, basic elements of culture have been defined and explained. This, however, is not sufficient for capturing the complexity of the concept of culture. To allow for a more in-depth view, the concept will therefore be enriched by the following aspects and necessary differentiations:

**a) Culture can be tangible and intangible**

Culture has many dimensions and is expressed and manifested in various forms. It can be *tangible* (material) in the form of e.g. landscape, buildings, artefacts or handicrafts, food, dresses of a community or a geographical area, which is also referred to as “hard culture”. But culture can also be *intangible* in terms of people’s values, attitudes, traditions, ways of life, lifestyles, oral culture, festivals, dances, rituals, and language – the “soft” elements of culture. These intangible elements of culture, however, require the presence of culture bearers to bring them to life (McKercher and DuCros 2002).

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<sup>9</sup> To be precise, completely untouched nature as such is in a strict sense not part of a people’s culture, however, if people cultivate land, nature becomes part of their culture in the sense of e.g. cultural landscapes.

<sup>10</sup> Heritage also pervades other elements outlined in the model. Traditional customs and habits are part of a people’s heritage.

**b) Culture can be categorised into high and popular culture**

Culture is often conceptualised in two contrasting categories: the high arts, literature, music, theatre etc., as opposed to popular/mass/low culture. “High culture” can be described as

(...) art produced with the focus on the internal objectives of the artist and the final artistic product. (...) The art is the product of the artist’s inner vision alone, with no consideration given to shaping the art to what the consumer might wish purchase (Kolb 2000, p. 22).

“High art” carries with it implications of social exclusivity and superior knowledge. When objects became mechanically mass produced, they lost their scarcity value and were no longer considered high art. Elitism, autonomy of the producer and the authenticity of the finished product became marginal. With popular culture, the importance is placed on the consumer and his desires and needs. In postmodernism, the boundaries between high and popular culture become increasingly blurred.

**c) Culture is hybrid, heterogeneous and not static**

Every group has its own culture, often including multiple subcultures. Culture is a concept shared by multiple people which implies that one single person cannot constitute a culture. However, an individual may belong to multiple cultures simultaneously (e.g. national culture, organisational culture through employment etc.). Hannerz (1990) points out that there are also “cultures” without a clear anchorage in any territory.

The modernist idea of a demarcated, territorialised, homogenous and ethnically bound culture is no longer tenable (Welsch 1999). Meethan (2001) argues that

[w]e can no longer assume that cultures are as spatially bounded or territorially coherent as they may at first appear. In short, there is no simple correlation between place and culture (p. 120).

A “pure culture” (e.g. destination culture) does not exist as “all cultures are interwoven, no one is completely isolated and pure, all are hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinary differentiated and not monolithic”<sup>11</sup> (Said 1994 quoted in Eagleton 2000, p. 26).

Furthermore, it is vital to recognise that culture is continuously advancing and undergoing changes throughout time (Cook 1991, Bruner 1994). It is not something fixed and frozen in time. Culture changes as a society faces new problems and opportunities. For example, new needs can emerge through shifting lifestyle forces. People take on new traits and discard old ones. Culture is therefore adaptive. This insight is strongly connected with the assertion in the next paragraph.

#### **d) External forces influence regional culture**

One of the major forces that are accounted for cultural change is globalisation. Through the media, increased mobility of material objects and of people themselves (tourism), people now have access to cultural products and ideologies from societies from around the globe and this greatly reduced cultural distance and cultural clashes. Individuals no longer feel tied to their culture of origin; they feel free to pick and choose from many cultural viewpoints and styles (Kolb 2000).

With globalisation, national cultures absorb and integrate elements and customs of alien cultures increasing homogenisation of culture. Consequently, there is a threat and anxiety that local cultures will disappear and/or amalgamate to a so-called “world culture”. Immigration is another such external force whereby invading foreign identities can cause fears of a “loss of identity” and “sense of belonging” (Smith 2003). Especially indigenous people and ethnic minorities feel the need to protect their interests because of these external forces (Smith 2003). But locals also valorise their

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<sup>11</sup> Translated by the author from German into English.



particular patrimony not least from an economic point of view (Boniface and Fowler 1993).

While denationalised life styles, the blending of lifestyles through acculturation<sup>12</sup> (Weiermair 2002), are an increasing phenomenon, it can be argued that this process has simultaneously created new “hybrid” forms of culture. Culture is subject to continuous changes and is made and remade both for domestic purposes as much as tourist consumption (Meethan 2001). Furthermore, globalisation (and modernisation) and the freedom of movement is leading to reassertion of local identity and to a stronger focus on traditional native cultures. In short, globalisation and other processes cause assimilation of cultures but simultaneously lead to a new accentuation of national and regional particularities.

**e) Culture is basis and part of identity**

Culture is inextricably connected with people who bear it. At the same time, people draw identities from culture. Hence, culture constitutes their frame of reference. Cultural identity is “the (feeling of) identity of a group or culture, or of an individual as far as she/he is influenced by her/his belonging to a group or culture” (Wikipedia 2004). Cultural identity contributes to people’s wellbeing (Thiem 1994). It is an important factor for people’s sense of self, how they relate to others and want to be recognised. Cultural identity is essentially determined by difference. Outwards, i.e. for interaction with members of other societies, the distinctiveness of culture means therefore an indispensable demarcation for the ensuring of identity (Thiem 1994). However, Thiem (1994) points out that identity is not a rigid concept, it should be regarded as a process and is therefore alterable. People may also identify with more than one culture. Cultural identity is therefore not exclusive.

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<sup>12</sup> The term “acculturation” is used to describe the learning of a new or foreign culture.

After laying down further aspects and differentiations of culture, the basic model of culture Figure 5 can be advanced by the following considerations:

- all elements of culture are interlinked;
- the elements of culture undergo continuous change;
- external forces such as globalisation exert influence on (regional) culture and add to the dynamics of cultural change;
- people's behaviour, their values, beliefs and social practices are linked with culture; people draw their identities from culture.

Furthermore, culture can be conceptualised in:

- tangible (material artefacts) and intangible elements (e.g. social relations);
- everyday culture (routines) and extraordinary aspects expressed in heritage and high arts;
- high and popular culture, whereas the boundaries between these two categories nowadays increasingly seem to break down.

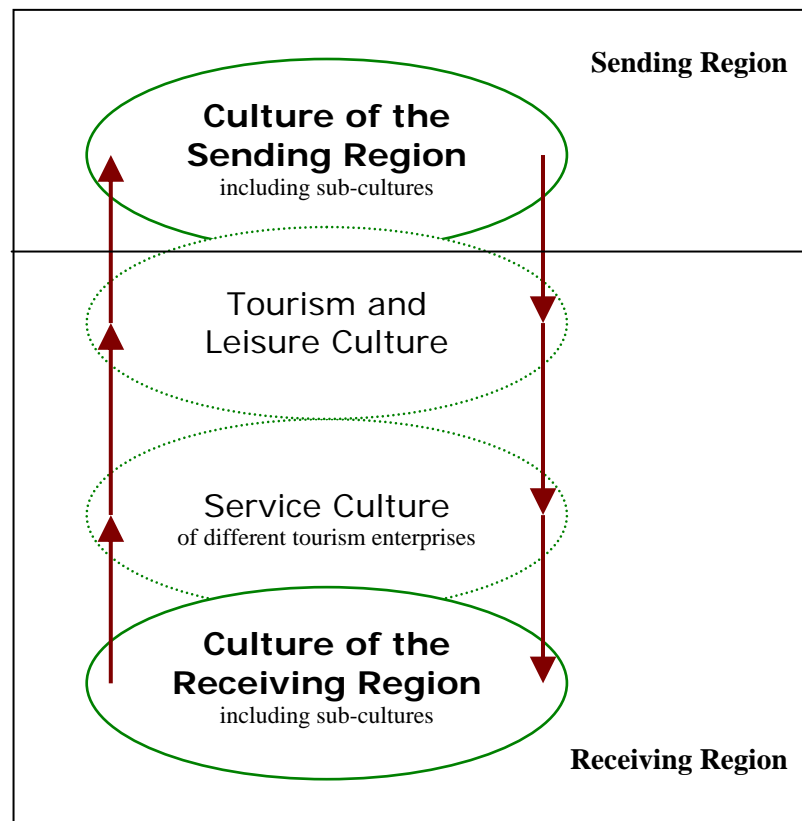
#### **3.1.2.2. The Cultural Encounter**

In tourism a situation arises where different cultures meet. This phenomenon is often described as “cross-cultural encounter” and is well documented in the literature (e.g. Pizam and Sussmann 1995, Hofstede 1997, Reisinger and Turner 1997, Stauss and Mang 1999). Thiem (1994) has introduced a schema (see Figure 5) which describes four different domains of culture in the context of tourism. Thiem's schema can therefore be seen as the logic expansion of the above general model of culture by placing it within the framework of tourism. It represents a valuable overall framework which is important for an understanding of the complex system of “tourism cultures”. The schema highlights the dynamic aspect of culture and describes causal connections of effects between the various domains. Thiem's schema is also useful to show the scope of the problems in relation to tourism and culture. As tourists' perceptions and experiences of the authenticity of cultural presentations are the focus of this thesis, only those

interrelations will be elaborated which are relevant in this context. Dealing with all areas and connections would go beyond the scope of this work.

The first two important domains depicted in Figure 5 below are the “*culture of the sending region*” and the “*culture of the receiving region*”. Thiem (1994) describes the “*culture of the receiving region*” as the grown and distinctive local culture which differentiates it from other cultures. It contains the everyday life culture as well as specific cultural landmarks which are characteristic for the host destination. Jafari (1982) points out that “it is precisely this unique ‘resource’, (...) which is promoted and eagerly sought by tourists. It represents a ‘product’ not comparable (...) to others” (quoted in Thiem 1994, p. 36). The cultural resources of the receiving region provide the foundation on which touristic goods and services can be built upon.

**Figure 5: The four cultures schema**



Source: Thiem (1994, p. 42) based on Jafari (1982)

The “*culture of the sending region*” comprises that which is characteristic for the people of the sending region. It provides the material and immaterial prerequisites for the “*tourism and leisure culture*” which springs from it. The “tourism and leisure culture” entails the lifestyle/activities practised by various groups when being on a holiday. During their holiday tourists show specific behaviour which is clearly different to their everyday lives. Tourists step into the role of a tourist. More specifically, they step into the role of an adventure traveller, wellness freak, culture enthusiast, etc. The value system apparent in the “culture of the sending region” determines tourists’ perception and behaviour through retained cultural identity, cultural images/stereotypes/prejudices, affinity for other cultures, ethnocentricity<sup>13</sup>, but also through such components as orientation to the past, present or future<sup>14</sup> etc. The presence of cultural values can be assumed to be distributed across different segments of the travelling public (Weiermair 2002). The receiving region thus has to deal with various clusters of cultures as tourists originate from different cultures (in the simplest sense they come from different countries although it is important to recognise that culture and nations are not the same). Beyond this, the receiving region is faced with different cultures emanating from different segments of the travelling public.

The point of cultural interaction is where “tourism and leisure cultures” meet the “*service culture*” of the host destination. The “service culture” represents the lifestyle exercised by the people of the host destination in their role as hosts as well as those enterprises especially established for tourism purposes. Just as tourists step into the role of tourists, locals step into the role of hosts. Both roles are marked by particular characteristics and therefore constitute a culture on their own. The value system of the

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<sup>13</sup> Ethnocentricity refers to the common tendency for people to view their own group as the centre of the universe, to interpret other social units from the perspective of their own group, and to reject persons who are culturally dissimilar. Thus the symbols and values of the person’s ethnic or national group become objects of pride, whereas symbols of other groups may become objects of contempt.

<sup>14</sup> also between long and short time horizons. Further aspects: etiquette, social rituals like hugs and kisses, how food is eaten, nonverbal behaviour (high versus low context cultures), and status.

“culture of the receiving region” influences perception and behaviour of bearers of the “service culture”. The presence of the cultural values might also be distributed across different parts of the destination population.

Thiem (1994) claims that the permanence of the presence of “tourism and leisure cultures”<sup>15</sup> in a particular destination has consequences for agents of the “service culture”. Locals take on different behavioural patterns (e.g. manners of speaking) and attitudes. East and Luger (2002) argue that “the host inevitably feels obliged (...) to orient himself towards the expectations and images created by the media and tourism marketers” (p. 232). Taken the case of Austria, this implies that in their role of hosts in some ways Austrians become stereotype ‘catalogue Austrians’ (East and Luger 2002). Tourism also affects traditional customs and architecture of the host destination (East and Luger 2002). To spin this thought out – the “tourism and leisure cultures” can by means of the “service culture” change the “culture of the receiving region”. Particularly vulnerable from negative cultural externalities are lower-developed parts of the world.

From the model it becomes clear that tensions between tourism and culture exist on several levels. Keller (2001) says that the relationship between tourism and culture is in theory and practice subject to cultural critique. One of the most-discussed areas in this respect is the authenticity problem. The aim is to preserve the cultural heritage in its genuineness in order to keep up the cultural difference on which cultural tourism is built upon and what cultural tourists cherish. In relation to culture, tourism and authenticity the following aspects can be derived from the model which will be important for further discussions in this work:

- The importance of authenticity is different among various tourism segments, i.e. different according to the motivations and the role the tourist takes on when being on vacation.

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<sup>15</sup> Note of the author: in a critical number.

- Authenticity is an important feature in terms of the experience of a different culture and their attractions and in terms of learning about different cultures.
- Tourism has impact on the authenticity of the host destination and its service culture in terms of changed behaviour and customs of the hosts as well as on the authenticity of their cultural products (presentation of heritage sites, festivals, events, etc.) if commodified for tourism purposes.

After establishing a model of the various elements of culture and generating the passage over to tourism in using Thiems' (1994) schema, it is now possible to concentrate on cultural tourism in its various forms and dimensions, cultural attractions, and the cultural tourist. Although already touched on issues of authenticity they are not considered in the following sections as this will be done in-depth in the dedicated chapter.

### **3.1.2.3. What is Cultural Tourism?**

The tourists' experience of the host culture is very complex and reaches from the consumption of local food, hiking through the particular landscape of a country to visiting cultural attractions. Following this, it can be argued that basically all sorts of holidays have cultural elements in them. This very broad meaning of cultural tourism is supported by MacCannell (1976, 1992) for whom all tourism activities constitute cultural experiences (Nahrstedt 1996). Urry (1990) goes further and argues that "tourism itself is culture". Nahrstedt (1996) identified four different levels of cultural tourism from very specific on the first level reaching a very broad definition on the fourth level where cultural tourism can be understood as a sort of "world culture" (p. 20). Similarly, Hughes (2000a) has introduced a breakdown of four categories of cultural tourism which are used to cover several different activities (see Table 6).

**Table 6: Different categories of cultural tourism**

| <b>Category</b>                    | <b>Description</b>   | <b>Example</b>   |
|------------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Universal cultural tourism</b>  | Most tourism is “cultural” in that visits will usually involve some exposure to aspects of other cultures in the widest sense as “a complex of values, ideas, attitudes and other meaningful symbols” which binds people into groups and imparts group character so that a distinct way of life results. | German, English or Mexican culture (Williams 1983).  |
| <b>Wide cultural tourism</b>       | Some tourists will set out with the purpose of experiencing a different culture, in the widest sense, of a destination visited: the arts, crafts, work, religion, language, traditions, food and dress.  | This definition could for example refer to the culture of “ethnic groups and hinterland peoples” as Walle (1996) suggested.  |
| <b>Narrow cultural tourism</b>     | This most widely used definition includes visits to experience the artistic and intellectual activities of a society (Williams 1988) rather than the whole different way of life of a society.   | This definition includes visits to historic buildings and sites (castles, churches, battle fields, etc.), museums and art galleries and to theatres and concert halls (to attend the performing arts). |
| <b>Sectorised cultural tourism</b> | The components of cultural tourism identified above distinguished individually.  | Heritage tourism, arts tourism.  |

**Source: following Hughes (2000a), p. 112**

Silberberg (1995) focuses on the motivational aspect and defines cultural tourism as

(...) visits by persons from outside the host community motivated wholly or in part by interest in historical, artistic, scientific or lifestyle/heritage offerings of a community, region, group or institution (p. 361).

This definition highlights the different degrees of tourists’ interests (motivations) in culture. Hence culture can be the key motivator for travelling or it may be only partial. For Silberberg (1995) a partial interest is sufficient to talk about a cultural tourist. Dreyer’s (1996) definition that “cultural tourism is all holidays whose motives emphasise cultural activities” is more restrictive. For Dreyer the “special” interest in culture separates this segment of tourism from other forms of tourism. Furthermore, for Dreyer (1996, p. 26) the perception of the tourist alone suffices when drawing a distinction between cultural and non-cultural activities. This can be critical as tourists’ perceptions are likely to be influenced by the marketing efforts of providers as Garrod and Fyall (2001) suggest. Johnson and Thomas (1995) (quoted in Garrod and Fyall

2001, p. 150) argue that many attractions have simply added cultural/heritage rhetoric to capture a share of this market.

Besides definitions provided by Silberberg and Dreyer emphasising the motivational aspect, McKercher and DuCros (2002) have identified three further categories of definitions of cultural tourism:

- *tourism derived definitions* where cultural tourism is placed within a broader framework of tourism and tourism management theory;
- *experiential definitions* which are based on educational aspects, need to experience or to have contact with culture in order to get a better understanding;
- *operational definitions* where participation overrules the motivational aspect.

Given the diversity of products and/or experiences that constitute cultural tourism, definitions tend to focus either on broad or narrow sets of activities. Definitions are also often shaped to suit people's own political needs. They are often as inclusive as possible to show the level of consumer interest (McKercher and DuCros 2002).

Richards (1996a) proposed the following, what he terms "conceptual definition" of cultural tourism: "The movement of persons to cultural attractions away from their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs" (p. 24). This definition includes visits to all types of cultural attractions, "hard" elements such as museums and the built environment as well as "soft" elements in the form of e.g. performances. Furthermore, this definition is not based on the motivational aspect only but also on the educational and experiential. Although it is recognised that every definition has its limitation and that there is the associated problem with definitions that one rarely transcends rhetoric (Garrod and Fyall 2001), for the purpose of this study Richards (1996a) definition on cultural tourism seems the most appropriate to work with.



### **3.1.3. Forms and Dimensions of Cultural Tourism**

#### **3.1.3.1. Introduction**

The world of culture has become rather unspecific as almost everything is deemed to be “culture” in one way or the other. This change is linked with the shift of the term towards a much broader meaning (Lohmann and Mundt 2002) and has consequences for the understanding of cultural tourism. In the past, cultural tourism referred to organised study trips to the great cultural monuments in Italy, Greece, Egypt, Mexico etc., and was seen as a form of arts or heritage in its narrowest sense (Smith 2003). Today, cultural tourism is not restricted to historical sites and to “high arts” any more, but also includes more popular forms of culture such as festivals and events, and themed attractions (e.g. literature trails). New emerging forms of cultural tourism are closely linked with societal developments such as the desire to learn more about wine making and its history and participate in creative activities such as gardening. Cultural tourism activities nowadays encompass many different types of experiences. Lord (2002) stresses the following:

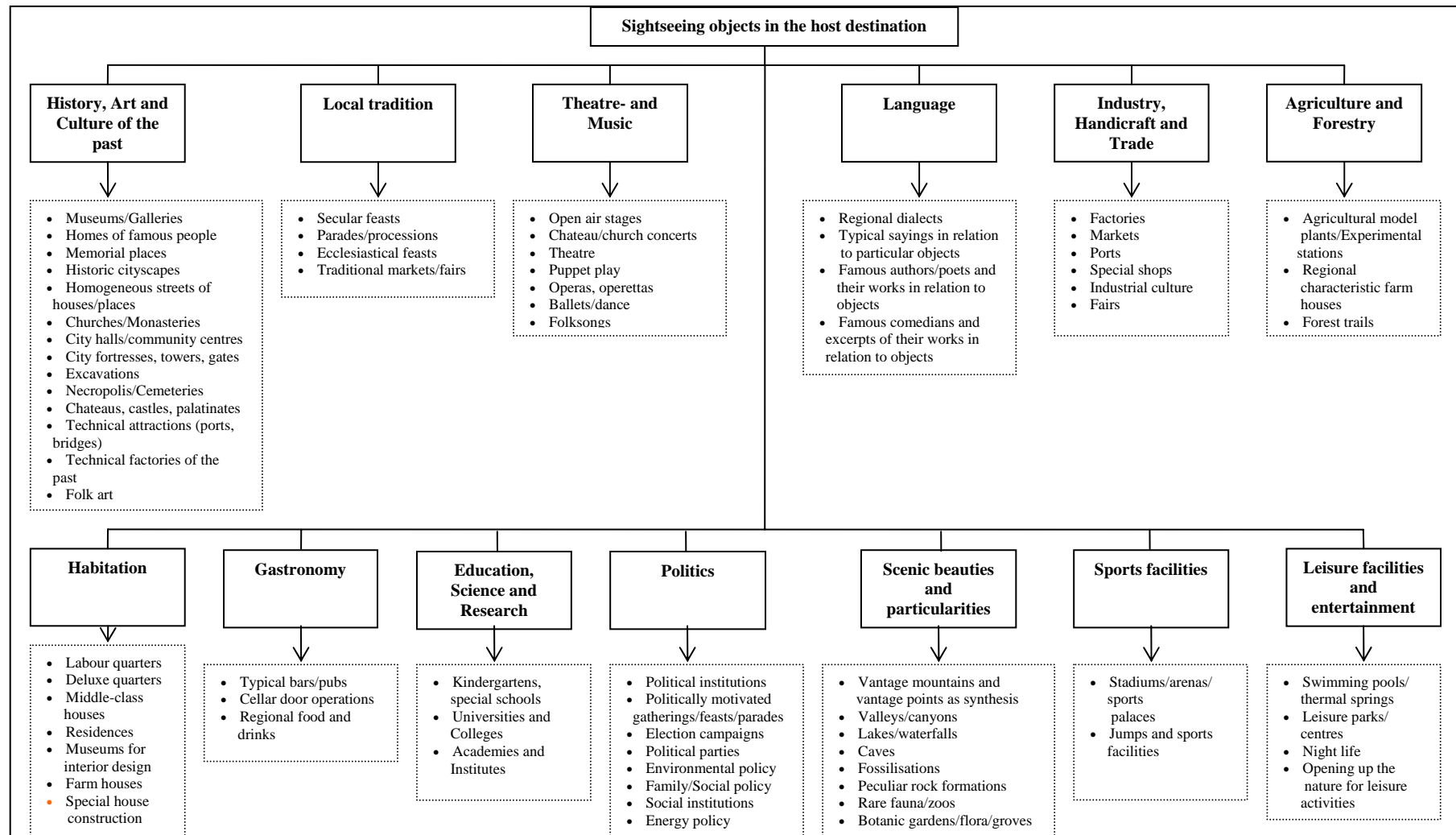
While many of those can be categorised narrowly to include such activities as visiting historic sites, museums or galleries, and attending performing arts events, they can also include aspects of other streams of tourism activity, such as ‘eco-tourism’, ‘edu-tourism’, ‘heritage-tourism’, ‘adventure-tourism’ and ‘agro-tourism’. Indeed, cultural tourism can also include such activities as shopping, dining, and similar means of experiencing a community’s culture (p. 1).

Similarly, McKercher and DuCros (2002) argue that

(...) cultural tourism has become an umbrella term for a wide range of related activities, including historical tourism, ethnic tourism, arts tourism, museum tourism, and others (p. 6).

The full spectrum of possible sightseeing objects is enormous which can be learned from Groß’ (2004) listing (see Table 7). The list shows what would be possible discrete forms of cultural tourism from a theoretical point of view.

**Table 7: Sightseeing objects in the host destination**



Source: Groß (2004) following Schmeer-Sturm (1998), p. 150

A typology of cultural tourism is provided by Jätzold (1993, p. 138) who distinguishes between various forms and sub-forms of cultural tourism outlined in Table 8. His first differentiation is built on the question whether the tourists' motivation pertains to a single object, an area or a cultural ensemble. The typology is then expanded by event-related and gastronomy-related cultural tourism, which both represent more popular forms of cultural tourism. Finally, remote cultural tourism refers to cultural tourism to other cultural groups in urban or rural areas.

**Table 8: Typology of cultural tourism**

| <b>Form</b>                                | <b>Motivation</b>   | <b>Sub-form</b>  |
|--|---|--|
| <b>Object-related cultural tourism</b>     | single cultural objects (e.g. churches, castles, galleries, museums, exhibitions, fortresses, historical sites, literary sites, archaeological sites, technical and industrial sites) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• arts tourism</li> <li>• museum tourism</li> <li>• history tourism</li> <li>• castle tourism</li> <li>• literature tourism</li> <li>• heritage tourism</li> <li>• prehistoric tourism</li> <li>• industry tourism</li> </ul> |
| <b>Area-related cultural tourism</b>       | accumulation of cultural objects (cultural/heritage landscapes such as wineries, trails of cultural objects, castle accumulations)  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cultural landscape tourism</li> <li>• cultural area tourism</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Ensemble-related cultural tourism</b>   | cultural ensembles (village ensembles, city ensembles)  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• village tourism</li> <li>• city tourism</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Event-related cultural tourism</b>      | cultural events (festivals, folkloristic arrangements of music, courses in arts, folk art, music, dance, languages)   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• festival and event tourism</li> <li>• course tourism</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Gastronomy-related cultural tourism</b> | gastronomic culture (grape gathering, wine tasting, wine shopping, wine and dine)   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• experience cultural tourism</li> <li>• wine tourism</li> <li>• gourmet tourism</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Remote cultural tourism</b>             | other cultures (specific rural cultures, specific urban cultures, nature orientated cultures)   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ethnic tourism</li> <li>• socio cultural tourism</li> </ul>   |

**Source: following Jätzold (1993), p. 138**

Jätzold (1993) offers a helpful typology that is still frequently quoted within German speaking countries. Another typology of cultural tourism was introduced by Smith (2003) (see Table 9). Smith (2003) differentiates between urban and rural cultural tourism. Heritage tourism and indigenous/ethnic tourism constitute a category of their own underlining their importance. Arts and Creative tourism includes special interest

activities which contain more experiential aspects than other forms of cultural tourism. Popular forms of cultural tourism lead from visiting pop concerts to visiting theme parks.

**Table 9: Forms and dimensions of cultural tourism**

| <b>Form</b>                      | <b>Dimensions</b>  | <b>Form</b>                     | <b>Dimensions</b>   |
|----------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|---|
| <b>Urban Cultural Tourism</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historic cities/modern cities/regenerated industrial cities</li> <li>• Architecture, cityscapes, city quarters</li> <li>• People and their way of life</li> <li>• Arts and heritage attractions</li> <li>• Popular cultural attractions</li> <li>• Festivals and events</li> <li>• Shopping, nightlife, entertainment, food</li> <li>• Museum of country life, wine museum</li> </ul> | <b>Heritage Tourism</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monuments, castles, palaces, country houses, religious sites, archaeological sites</li> <li>• Museums</li> <li>• Gardens, landscapes, cityscapes</li> <li>• Genealogy</li> <li>• Architecture</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Rural Cultural Tourism</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heritage attractions</li> <li>• Popular cultural attractions</li> <li>• Eco-tourism</li> <li>• Agro-tourism</li> <li>• Cultural landscapes gardens, national parks, wildlife</li> <li>• People and their particular way of living</li> <li>• Food and wine trails</li> <li>• Festivals and events</li> </ul>  | <b>Arts Tourism</b>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fine Arts: Arts Museum, Galleries</li> <li>• Visual Arts: paintings, sculptures, handicraft</li> <li>• Performing Arts: music, drama, cinema, storytelling, poetry (Theatre, Opera, Concerts)</li> <li>• Entertainment</li> <li>• Festivals, carnivals and events</li> <li>• Literary sites</li> </ul> |
| <b>Indigenous/Ethnic Tourism</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arts and crafts</li> <li>• Cultural performances</li> <li>• Festivals</li> <li>• Museums and cultural centres</li> <li>• Hilltribe, desert or mountain trekking</li> </ul>  | <b>Creative Tourism</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Photography</li> <li>• Painting</li> <li>• Pottery</li> <li>• Dance, music</li> <li>• Cookery</li> <li>• Crafts</li> <li>• Language learning</li> </ul>  |
|                                  |  | <b>Popular Cultural Tourism</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theme parks and themed attractions</li> <li>• Shopping</li> <li>• Pop concerts</li> <li>• Sporting events</li> <li>• Shopping malls</li> <li>• Media, film sets, communications</li> <li>• Fashion and design museums</li> <li>• Architecture</li> </ul>   |

Source: adapted from Smith (2003), p. 37

Smith (2003) recognises that the concept of culture includes almost everything that we are and everything we do. This is problematic unless a differentiation between the

activities that are contained within it is being made. Many of the sub-forms (activities) mentioned in both typologies however represent only border areas of cultural tourism and are not included in statistical data. In cultural tourism there is the general problem of generating precise data, i.e. data that would encompass all forms of cultural tourism to show its extent. Firstly, this is due to the existing obstacle of an accurate delineation regarding motivation and activities of cultural tourists. Secondly, new forms of cultural tourism are continuously evolving and first have to establish as an independent category (e.g. wine tourism). Up-to-date there is no commonly agreed categorisation of cultural tourism worldwide. Furthermore, precise data on cultural tourism are neither available in Ireland nor in Austria which makes cross-cultural comparisons difficult.

In the following section, various forms of cultural tourism and their dimensions are explored whereby Smith' (2003) typology is used as an overall guideline. First, heritage tourism is explored. Heritage tourism still represents the lion share of cultural tourism offer and is part of most of the forms of cultural tourism. Thereafter, arts and creative tourism is introduced followed by urban tourism and its counterpart rural tourism with its sub-forms agro tourism and indigenous/ethnic tourism. For the latter, the concept of ecotourism is central and is therefore shortly being addressed. Finally, food and wine tourism as well as festivals and events are elaborated as a more popular form of cultural tourism offer. Other specific sub-forms of cultural tourism such as museum tourism are expatiated on together with cultural attractions. The aim of the next section is to show the variety of experiences of cultural tourism and tourists' motivation to participate in these. Again, critical aspects regarding authenticity are not specifically included but will be focused on in the dedicated chapter afterwards.

### 3.1.3.2. Heritage Tourism

The term “cultural tourism” is often used synonymously with “heritage tourism” and in some literature it is also referred to as “cultural heritage tourism”<sup>16</sup>. In some languages (e.g. German) there is even no such expression as “heritage tourism”, everything surrounding culture and heritage simply constitutes “cultural tourism”. Both terms are undoubtedly related to each other, but nevertheless there is a difference in their meaning.

“Heritage” is defined as “anything from the past, considered as the inheritance of present-day society” (Encyclopaedia Britannica 1989). In contrast to this LeBlanc (1993) explains “heritage” as “whatever each one of us individually or collectively wishes to preserve and pass on to the next generation. If we want to preserve something, then it is our heritage” (p. 1). Millar (1989) suggests that heritage (tourism) is “about the cultural traditions, places and values that (...) groups throughout the world are proud to conserve” (p. 13). LeBlanc’s and Millar’s definitions are very much based on the intentional aspect of conservation - which might not always be the case in practice – thus looking ahead today we decide what might be our heritage in the future. The Oxford English Dictionary provides a more general definition “what is or may be inherited” and links the past and the future.

According to Yale (1991), the connotation of the word “heritage” has changed with time. He argues that the current understanding first developed in the United States as opposed to the UK’s thought of “heritage” in terms of “values, traditions and ideas, rather than in terms of paintings, historic houses, machinery, etc.” (Yale 1991, p. 21). Today, beside tangible and intangible “cultural heritage” such as folklore traditions,

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<sup>16</sup> The Colorado Heritage Area Partnership talks about *Cultural Heritage Tourism* when describing “Travel for the purpose of discovery, understanding and enjoyment of the distinctive places, activities and artefacts that authentically represent peoples and their stories from the past to the present.” available at: <http://www.coloarts.state.co.us>.

rites, social customs, beliefs, language, literature, archaeological sites, monuments, works of art, archives and libraries, also “natural heritage” like great scenic areas, the fauna and flora such as gardens, wilderness areas and valued cultural landscapes are seen as part of the national heritage (UNESCO 1982, Tassel and Tassel 1990, Yale 1991, Swarbrooke 1997). Similar to culture it is very difficult to come up with an exact definition of heritage as it is quite an eclectic and contradictory entity and the “heritage product” is fairly heterogeneous (Prentice 1993, Bennett 1999, Drummond and Yeoman 2000). Kockel (1994) argues that “definitions of heritage are notoriously non-specific and therefore flexible in the way they can be interpreted” (p. 1).

CERT (1997) states that the difference between cultural and heritage tourism lies in the linkage of heritage to the past whereas culture also contains the present. They give the following explanation to differentiate between cultural and heritage tourism:

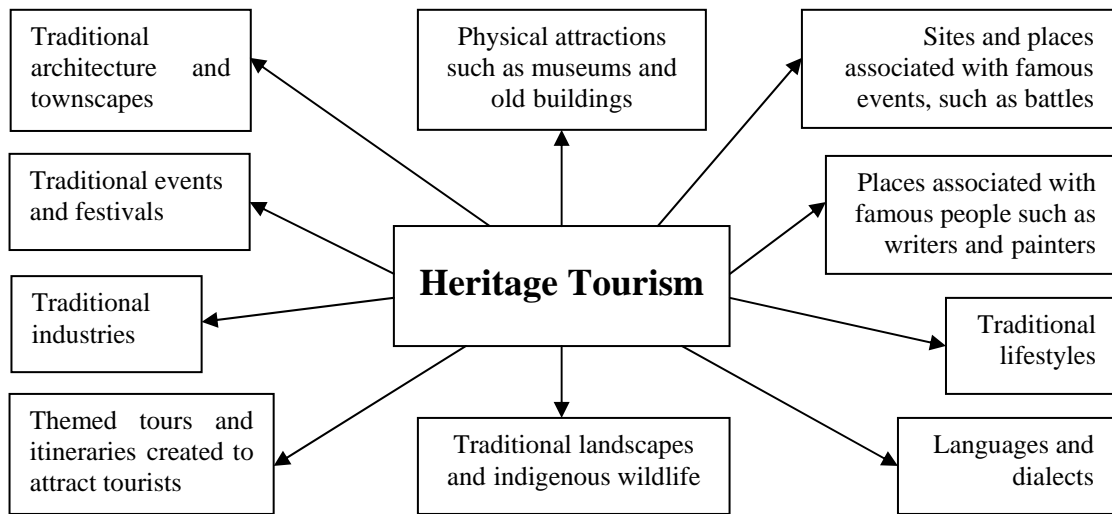
Heritage Tourism refers to the tourism markets and tourism industry which have evolved around heritage. It incorporates all facets of natural and man-made heritage which are categorised as tourist attractions, together with literature, maps, trails and related consumer merchandise. (...) While heritage tourism revolves around the cultural attractions of the past, cultural tourism relates also to contemporary cultural activity such as art, architecture, literature, music, dance, drama, film design etc. (p. 108).

Following this definition the difference lies in the “old” and the “new”. A modern building (cultural attractions) that embodies the latest “*Zeitgeist*” of architecture would accordingly express culture but would not yet be counted as a heritage property. The differentiation between old and new/past and contemporary attributes might not always be as clear-cut as they can be in many ways linked with each other. In many cases it is almost impossible to distinguish between them. On the basis of tourists’ motivations, Garrod and Fyall (2001) point at the difficulty that arises in trying to draw a sharp dividing line between heritage and cultural attributes as it can very often be simply a combination of the two. This can be exemplified by museum tourism which includes both, museums focusing on the inheritance of the past as well as those museums

emphasising contemporary culture/art. It becomes clear that in practice, visitor motivations are unlikely to enable the researcher to differentiate clearly between heritage and cultural tourism (Garrod and Fyall 2001). Richards (2000) alludes to further points of differentiation between heritage and cultural tourism. For him, heritage tourism's primary cultural focus is on "high culture" and "folk culture", cultural tourism also includes "popular culture". In terms of consumption, Richards (2000) suggests that heritage tourism's primary form relates to products whereas cultural tourism involves also processes.

Out of the discussion above it can be concluded that heritage tourism is tourism based on presenting and interpreting the past (Smith 2003). Swarbrooke (1997) states that "heritage tourism" is tourism based on heritage, where heritage is the core of the product that is offered, and heritage is the main motivating factor for the consumer. Heritage tourism tends to be education-oriented. From a motivational point of view people visit heritage sites mainly because they want to learn from the past through visual displays and performances. Heritage tourism also has a strong nostalgic component in the sense of experiencing the atmosphere and spirit of a time gone by. Elements of the heritage tourism product are outlined in Swarbrooke's (1997) overview (see Figure 6). The figure illustrates the broad field of heritage tourism including many special interest aspects ranging from examination and experience of the physical remains of the past and natural landscapes to local cultural traditions (e.g. folkloric traditions, arts and crafts, ethnohistory, social customs and cultural celebrations).



**Figure 6: Elements of heritage tourism**

**Source: Swarbrooke 1997, D 25**

Heritage tourism has also stimulated, and has been stimulated by, the development of new forms of heritage products in recent years, such as (Swarbrooke 1997):

- themed heritage centres based on the local history of a particular place;
- “living history” interpretation of historic scenarios by actors;
- live drama and music performances at historic properties;
- representations of industrial heritage and the social history of “ordinary people”;
- opening up the workplaces of traditional industries to visits from the public;
- themed tours and itineraries.

Many of these popular heritage attractions provide a more experiential presentation of history for visitors, and reflect the growing trend towards experience-based leisure, centred on educational elements (Lavery and Stevens 1990). One popular approach is for example costumed historical interpreters who re-enact and explain (e.g. Bunratty Folk Park).

### 3.1.3.3. Arts Tourism

The arts represent a constituent element of cultural tourism. Smith (2003) points out that [i]f we consider for a moment the concept of art as opposed to culture, we are dealing predominantly with the works of creative expression of an artist or artists, rather than the whole way of life of a people (p. 134).

The area of arts contains the two sectors of the *visual arts* (sculptures, paintings in museums, heritage centres and art galleries) and the *performing arts* (drama, comedy, dance, music etc. performed in theatres, concert halls, arenas and other venues or else also within the framework of festivals and events). The principal visitor activities of arts tourism are therefore visiting art galleries/museums as well as attending arts performances and festivals. Hughes (2000b) noticed that the performing arts have been neglected in tourism studies in the past. He argues that “many of those who go to the theatre as part of a holiday are often not included in the discussion of cultural tourism at all” (Hughes 2000a, p. 119).

Arts tourism has strong linkages to heritage tourism, festivals and events (dance festivals, jazz festivals), and ethnic tourism. Zeppel and Hall (1992) regard arts-tourism as containing more contemporary and more experiential aspects than heritage tourism. For these authors arts tourism tends to be experiential, whereby tourists become involved in and stimulated by the activities that are presented to them. The places where arts feasts/events take place and the buildings themselves form an important element of the arts experience. They often have particular architectural or historical importance and are unique to the destination. Certain artefacts are also inextricably linked with particular museums/galleries (e.g. David with the Uffizi, Mona Lisa with the Louvre, Velasquez with Madrid). Increasingly open-air performances (e.g. Salzburg Festival, Bregenz Seefestspiele at Lake Constance, Wagnerfestspiele in Bayreuth) enjoy great popularity but also other diverse arts events such as gay parades. The arts are essential parts of many other tourism products such as conferences and trade exhibitions. In this

case they are not the main focus of the event but they are often considered to be valuable and necessary additions to the main activity (Hughes 2000b, p. 80).

Participation in forms of high arts such as operas are still motivated by prestige values and social status (Zeppel and Hall 1991) in contrast to participation in more popular forms such as rock concerts and events. Hughes (2000b) highlights the phenomenon of “psychological barriers” when people think that the arts are not for them because they are either associated with more educated and wealthier sections of the society or they think that they do not have the knowledge to determine the codes and make sense of the arts. The appeal of the arts is among others believed to lie in the opportunity to see, meet and be with others for social interaction.

It is considered to have a “sense of occasion” that staying at home does not. The performance itself has a sense of excitement about it derived from the interaction of performers and audience and a directness that is unfiltered by television or compact disc (Hughes 2000b, p. 17).

Some might go to a theatre while on holiday while at home they would not. Also the entertaining aspect appeals to a growing number of tourists.

It is likely that much of the discussion explaining cultural tourism or special interest tourism – in terms of ‘learning’ in particular – does not readily explain tourists’ interest in the performing arts. Often this phenomenon can only be explained by having a good night out (Hughes 2000a, p. 119).

The issue of entertainment is discussed in depth later on in this thesis. However, as this is an important aspect associated with the arts it is shortly touched upon at this point. Entertainment is not always seen in a positive light. From a postmodern view the distinction between arts and entertainment is outdated, rather complete new hybrid forms have developed. It is very often regarded inferior to and less valuable and serious than the arts. Hughes (2000b) argues that “the arts and entertainment provide the opportunity to expand the mind and senses but also to relax, to escape and fantasize, to

be out in the company of others and an opportunity for display” (p. 17). However, he also points out that

[w]hilst these apply to all forms of the arts and entertainment, the motivations of relating to the arts at the highest levels of understanding and appreciation are often associated with the arts whereas factors such as escapism and relaxation are associated with entertainment (Hughes 2000b, p. 17).

#### **3.1.3.4. Creative Tourism**

While both heritage and arts tourism contain experiential aspects in the sense of being involved in the visual/performing arts or of feeling part of the history of a place, creative tourism requires active participation by tourists in the creative process (Richards and Raymond 2000). In its essence, creative tourism is centred on activities for self-realisation and self-expression whereby tourists become performers as they engage in creative processes.

Creative Tourism can be subdivided into two forms. Firstly, it can be seen as the extension of an individual’s hobbies or profession. As leisure time has become scarce for many people, they want to follow their creative hobbies and specific interests also during their holidays and combine a hands-on creative process with a learning experience. This suggests that vacation is increasingly becoming a mere extension of people’s everyday lives. Examples for creative tourism are manifold: painting, pottery, photography, cookery, crafts, language learning, gardening etc. Photography and painting have become fields with growth potential and specifically tailored holidays featuring various creative activities/workshops are offered by various tour operators. Secondly, Creative Tourism can also be seen in the light of learning from cultures of the destination visited. In this sense, creative tourism involves learning a skill on holiday that is part of the culture of the country or community being visited. The Irish National Museums for example offers creative and craft workshops such as cookery (featuring traditional recipes), candle making, weaving, knitting, straw rope twisting, spinning, to

name but a few. In engaging in these workshops, tourists can learn about the culture of the place visited and interact with local people. Rather than being only observers in the museum through these workshops people are encouraged to become *active* participants.

Richard Florida (2002) provides an extensive study of a new social class which he terms as the “Creative Class”. For him they constitute a new type of consumers and are characterised as being extremely mobile, innovative in the use of technology, self-motivated, craving for real experiences in the real world (“heart-throbbingly real experiences” as Florida (2002, p. 166) expresses it) favouring active over passive forms of recreation, and craving for stimulation but not escape. Florida (2002) argues that as opposed to Pine and Gilmore’s consumers, who desire experiences that are memorable and highly valued, and are more type of pre-packaged Disney type of experiences, the Creative Class wants a hand in structuring their experiences. For them, diversity and innovation are cherished values. Creative people see themselves as people “with creative values, working in increasingly creative workplaces, living essentially creative lifestyles” (Florida 2002, p. 211). Their desire for experiences is shaped by their new way of thinking (simultaneous, metaphorical, aesthetic, contextual and synthetic as opposed to sequential and logical thinking) and making sense of the world. Play, aesthetics and empathy are ingredients which describe the character of new creative experiences. The creative ethos, therefore, is a participatory one that will help society function as much as it will creatively live it (Florida 2002). Creative experiences, as described by Florida, can be found in many of the new forms of tourism such as extreme adventure and sports activities but they comport as well with many forms of cultural tourism such as dark tourism, heritage tourism, and genealogy tourism (Gretzel and Jamal 2007).

Creative elements can be found in almost all products of the multiple forms of cultural tourism. However creative tourism has only recently been established as an independent

field of tourism studies. It can therefore be regarded as one of the youngest forms of cultural tourism. The demand for learning and the emphasis on “new experiences” are key motivations for cultural visitors and align with those of the creative tourist (Richards 2001b).

### **3.1.3.5. Urban Cultural Tourism**

A growing number of tourists are attracted by urban spaces. Flanagan (1999) highlights that

[t]ourists visit urban areas for a variety of reasons, such as entertainment and nightlife, to appreciate historical and cultural attractions, to attend major sporting or festival events, to shop or just to enjoy the charm and character of a particular city (p. 29).

What sets cities apart from rural areas is their high concentration on things to see and do and the intensity of life. An increasing number of European cities have selected tourism as a strategic sector for local development. Urban tourism is often seen as the panacea for post-industrial cities (e.g. Manchester and Glasgow in the UK). Tourism has in many cities been incorporated to boost the economy (Flanagan 1999) and culture has become an important agent for urban regeneration plans (Middleton 2000).<sup>17</sup>

City tourism is not cultural tourism per se. From a motivational point of view, people travel to cities either for business or pleasure. Dolnicar and Ender (2000) argue that because of the cultural interest in visiting a city, city tourism can be seen as a form of cultural tourism. The special cultural travel motive segregates cultural city breakers from other city tourists (e.g. business travellers). However, as regards activities, the city tourist who does not come primarily for cultural reasons might have visits to cultural

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<sup>17</sup> The award of the “European City of Culture” for example has prompted city development and -revitalisation and is the main reason for many investments in prestigious projects. It has evolved to being an important hallmark for urban cultural tourism.

landmarks of the city on his agenda. Moreover, cultural tourism to cities is not restricted to visiting cultural sites. In its broadest sense it includes shopping and nightlife.<sup>18</sup>

Moreu (1999) contends that apart from the image other emotional considerations such as atmosphere, friendliness of the people and street life influence the cultural tourist. As a more rational criterion, a city's tourist attractions, their number and types must be sufficient in order to justify a visit. An investigation of tourists' perception of Amsterdam in 1993 revealed that the three top criteria for choosing a city in general are atmosphere, history and museums followed by tourist attractions and cultural offerings.

There are a number of cities which have positioned themselves as cultural, heritage or more recently, as "arts" cities. "Classic" or "best selling" tourist cities in Europe identified by Berg et al. (1995) include

Amsterdam, Athens, Barcelona, Berlin, Budapest, Dublin, Florence, Istanbul, Lisbon, London, Madrid, Moscow, Paris, Prague, Rome, St. Petersburg, Stockholm, Venice and Vienna (p. 9).

Many of these cities have gained fame based on specific cultural elements or themes which often spring from particular traditions in that area. Vienna is immediately associated with music, Paris with art (Montmatre), and Dublin with famous authors such as James Joyce (literature). Most of these cities have therefore an already established worldwide cultural and artistic reputation (Van der Borg, Costa and Gotti 1996). Also smaller heritage cities like Salzburg, Seville, Annecy, and Verona are popular cultural destinations. Changes in Eastern European countries will increase the number and range of urban cultural destinations significantly. In fact, many of them, such as Český Krumlov, a small heritage town in Bohemia, were recently rediscovered

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<sup>18</sup> Although shopping and nightlife might be part of the cultural experience of a city these elements will not be elaborated further in this work.

and especially valued for their pureness and authenticity which many modern cities seem to lack of.

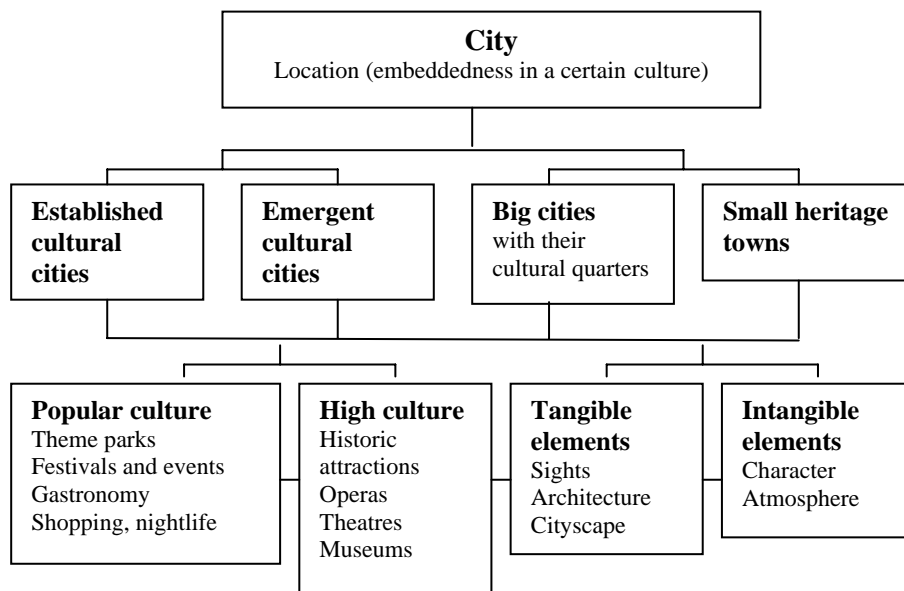
Urban centres often represent the strongholds of the culture of a certain destination for they are well endowed with cultural sites and attractions of high culture such as museums, opera houses, theatres, and historic remnants. However, not all cities possess this precious historic and cultural reservoir to develop a viable cultural tourism product. Many cities lack well-preserved historical centres because their cultural treasures were destroyed during the First and Second World Wars. Others are quite young in their development such as many North American cities. They increasingly employ more popular forms of culture such as festivals and events, theme parks and other purpose-built attractions such as shopping arcades and hotels and restaurants with spectacular design and gastronomy, to take root in the cultural tourist market. Although some cities lack historical landmarks and other specific attractions, it is often the distinctive atmosphere through architecture and the cityscape (e.g. lanes, bridges, parks) that makes them appealing and interesting to explore. Dublin's cityscape, for example, is characterised by its unique red brick Gregorian houses and the absence of modern style buildings. This is in total contrast to such modern cities as Singapore, with its skyscrapers, endless shopping malls, and almost clinical cleanliness. But it is not only the visual (tangible) particularities that make up the character of a place.

A cities' distinct character is also closely linked with its people and their distinct way of life. For instance, Dublin whose population structure is earmarked with a high number of young people makes it a pulsating, vivid and cheerful 24-hour city. Vienna's societal profile is completely different leading to a more calm and serene city. On the other hand, big cities such as New York City are often a melting pot of different nationalities which bring along their culture condensed in designated cultural quarters (Chinese



quarter, little Italy, French quarter etc.) with different lifestyles, religions, language, food, and architecture. The location of the city, the embeddedness in a particular culture, is a crucial factor for its unique character and cultural offers. Homogenisation and the degree to which they have become westernised/McDonaldised can influence this uniqueness. Cultural tourism to cities is based on physical cultural attractions as well as on their people and their way of life. The dimensions of a city as a cultural destination are summarised in Figure 7 below.

**Figure 7: Dimensions and elements of cities as cultural destinations**



**Source: by the author**

If the emphasis to experience a city lies on the tangible or intangible cultural aspects or as an ensemble of both depends on the (cultural) tourist and his motivations how s/he wants to experience a city and under what particular theme (e.g. museums). Moreover, it depends on the city itself what specific cultural products can and/or will be offered. It can also be argued that the city and its culture are shaping the type of tourism to it and by the same token, tourism is shaping the city and its presentations (Tyler 2000).

### **3.1.3.6. Rural Cultural Tourism**

Similar to urban tourism, rural tourism contains a range of forms of tourism which feature cultural elements in diverse ways. In rural areas it is not the quantity of sites that is the decisive factor for visitation. Rural implies that landscape is central to these types of cultural tourism. Nilsson (2002) argues that “the countryside is often regarded as an incarnation of calm and reflection, with a trait of backwardness and a lifestyle, different from an urban perspective” (p. 8). Many urban people of today embrace the 18<sup>th</sup> century romantic view of nature as pure and good in opposition to the cultivated and civilized world (Nilsson 2002, p. 8). In this romanticism, nature is the natural place where one can become a whole human being, a place of contemplation and inner development. The attractiveness of the countryside and its culture and people lies in what urban life cannot give (ibid, p. 9). People travelling to rural areas cherish the natural beauty and sense of tranquillity there.

### **3.1.3.7. Indigenous Tourism**

Indigenous tourism refers to “tourism activity in which indigenous people are directly involved either through control and/or by having their culture serve as the essence of the attraction” (Hinch and Butler 1996, p. 9). Harron and Weiler (1992) stress the involvement of first-hand experiences with the practices of another culture as a critical element of ethnic tourism. The umbrella term “indigenous people” is used to describe “races of people who are endemic or native to a destination region” (Hinch and Butler 1996, p. 9). Tourists are attracted by indigenous cultures because of their indigenous heritage and their “distinct way of life”, often described as “exotic”. Indigenous people often live in remote and isolated areas and this has conserved the very way they live and protected them from external influences (westernisation). Therefore, they hold unique cultural and physical resources and practise a lifestyle that is seen as primitive and authentic. This is what makes them particularly appealing to the ethnic tourist. Non-indigenous people observing and experiencing indigenous cultures have been criticised

largely as a type of “cultural voyeurism” (Smith 2003, p. 117) and is sometimes viewed to constitute a new form of colonialism (Nash 1995).<sup>19</sup>

The ethnic tourism product can take different forms, including elements of interaction with indigenous people and learning about their culture, history and lifestyle. Specific marketed products are (Smith 2003):

- Cultural tours or treks (hilltribe and mountain trekking, desert treks, rainforest and jungle ecotours, wildlife tourism and national parks, arctic and northern periphery tourism, village tourism, heritage tourism, arts tourism) involving visits to or overnight stays with tribal people or villagers. This often includes visits to native homes and to observe and/or participate in native customs, ceremonies, rituals, dances and other traditional activities and local events, and to sample native foods.
- Cultural parks/museums/heritage centres.

While some of these types are still reserved to the independent backpacker, other forms have become mainstream and almost a mass tourism phenomenon. Other close relatives of ethnic travel include nature based tourism, art and heritage tourism, and adventure and sports tourism.

#### **3.1.3.8. Culinary Tourism**

Culinary tourism includes the two areas of food and wine tourism. Good food and drinks (wine, whiskey, beer, etc.) are important elements of the holiday experience in general. However, for an increasing number of tourists food and wine are among the prime motivators for travelling to a specific region. Parallel to this trend a growing body of knowledge focusing on culinary tourism can be noticed (Hall and Macionis 1998, Hall et al. 2000, Getz 2000, Boniface 2003, Long 2003). Bruwer (2003) asserts that the

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<sup>19</sup> The relationship between tourism and indigenous people can also be seen in a more positive light insofar as tourism has the potential of stimulating ethnic revitalisation (Grünewald 2002). If managed carefully, indigenous cultural tourism has the potential of benefiting local communities considerably (Smith 2003). As one form of control Harron and Weiler (1992) suggest education of tourists as to appropriate, culture-specific behaviour. Other measures that have been taken to protect indigenous people are for example “codes of Ethics”.

very nature of the wine industry lends itself to a marriage with tourism as “wine is a beverage that is associated with relaxation, communing with others, complementary to food consumption, learning about new things, and hospitality” (p. 423). Activities of wine tourism encompass embarking on a wine tour and/or learning more about the cultural, historical and gastronomic aspects of the areas. Wine tourism involves travelling to the regions where wine is actually produced. Wine regions tend to be attractive places, and the vineyards themselves are aesthetically pleasing. Similarly to wine tourism, tourists increasingly intentionally explore and participate in the “foodways” of others when they eat in ethnic restaurants, attend food festivals, discover unfamiliar ingredients and learn and try new recipes in cooking schools (Long 2003). Cooking has now gained a new lease and the longing for healthier lifestyle has led to the promotion of slow food and organic food (in opposition to McDonaldisation). Attention to food and culinary arts is being driven by the growing number of celebrity chefs and cooking programs on TV (e.g. Jamie Oliver in the UK). Food has become a means and symbol of social differentiation. Boniface (2003) argues that

[w]e are making a social and cultural statement through our choices among food and drink products and the options we select from their range of contextual environments of shops and retail outlets, restaurants, bars and cafes and tearooms etc. (p. 28).

Eating out has become a form of serious leisure activity and combines sensory and tactile pleasure with social aspects. However, dining out as a tourist is a different experience than when dining out for other reasons. On holiday it is more intensified as “the very nature of the travel experience heightens our sensory awareness and imagination” (Mitchell and Hall 2003, p. 75). It also provides a contrast to tourists’ own culture. Culinary tourism is a way to connect with different cultures. Food and wine tourism represent an increasingly significant component of the rural cultural tourism product/experience (O’Neill and Charters 2000). It provides a means of differentiation for a destination (Hall et al. 2003).

The wine-tourism experiences can be provided/consumed in versatile ways including tractor or train rides through wineries, guided tours through wine estates, caves and museums<sup>20</sup> (e.g. Moët et Chandon museum), participation in the grape harvest, wine tasting and cellar door sales. Getz (2000) also shows linkages of festivals and events as wine tourism products. Wine routes (roads, trails)<sup>21</sup>, connecting several wine estates and wineries in a given area, have been popular in Europe since many years and are now springing up also in the “New World”. A wine route allows the tourist to engage with the diversity of the natural and cultural features of the landscape and contains notions of exploration and discovery (Bruwer 2003). Charters and Ali-Knight (2002) argue that wine tourism is often part of an overall “bundle of attractions” for a tourist and it is likely that most visitors would not associate themselves with a “wine tourist” (yet). Therefore, wine tourism is rarely a discrete activity, but will probably be undertaken in conjunction with some or all of rural, eco-cultural or adventure tourism, and its participants are unlikely to separate the various tourism forms. There is no single stereotypical “wine tourist”. Charters and Ali-Knight (2002) and others (e.g. Hall and Macionis 1998) have suggested various categories: the “wine lovers”, “connoisseurs”, the “wine interested” and “curious tourists”. They also highlight the fact that the level of involvement (e.g. buying, tasting, and learning) in consuming the wine experience is useful in assessing the process of wine tourism.

It is important to notice that the experience of food is a sum of various elements (see Table 10). It involves educational elements as well as sensory and emotive ones, the latter heavily rely on the characteristics of the individual itself. That means that the food tourism experience unfolds differently depending on all these factors.

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<sup>20</sup> Other wine visitor attractions have evolved recently such as “Vinopolis” in London, which offers the tourist a “wine-centred” experience however detached from the actual wine growing area.

<sup>21</sup> Other popular beverage trails are Whiskey trails in Scotland and Ireland.

**Table 10: Elements of the food and wine product/experience**

| <b>Food</b>  | <b>Wine</b>   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethnic restaurants, Gault Millau restaurants, etc.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restaurants, wine bars, “Heurigen”<sup>22</sup></li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooking Schools</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wine tasting seminars</li> </ul>                           |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Pick your own”</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harvesting grapes</li> </ul>                               |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Markets (vegetable, fruit, organic agri-markets)</li> </ul>   |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Production sites (breweries, theme-park type of “food” attractions (e.g. Cadbury World/UK)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wineries, wine estates, caves, museums</li> </ul>          |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Festivals and events</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Festivals and events</li> </ul>                            |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Themed trails (e.g. apple, cider, oil and cheese trail in Austria).</li> </ul>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wine trails</li> </ul>                                     |

**Source: by the author**

### 3.1.3.9. Festivals and Events

People have always been travelling for big events throughout the ages but “special events have only in the 1990s ‘come of age’” (Jago and Shaw 1998, p. 21). Over the last decade, they have been exploding in numbers and causes (Prentice and Anderson 2003). The increasing interest in investigating this area can therefore be linked with the rising number of community festivals and special events in many places. Tourism can be seen a key force promoting festival and events growth and expansion (Quinn 2004b). On the one hand, festivals and events are part of various forms of (cultural) tourism while on the other, they have become major (cultural) tourist attractions on their own.

Given the fact that special events can embrace a wide variety of elements such as “contests, concerts, exhibitions, dancing, theatre, sports, children’s events, parades, beauty contests, flea markets, raffles or lotteries, races, and tours” (Sonmez, Beckman, and Allen 1993, pp. 111-112 quoted in Jago and Shaw 1998, p. 23) makes it not only difficult to come up with a precise definition but also hard to locate them clearly within cultural tourism studies. Festivals are held to celebrate

<sup>22</sup> The “Heurigen” is a show (or series of shows) to celebrate new wine in particular areas.

[d]ance, drama, comedy, film and music, the arts, crafts, ethnic and indigenous cultural heritage, religious traditions, historically significant occasions, sporting events, food and wine, seasonal rites and agricultural products (Zeppel 1992, p. 69).

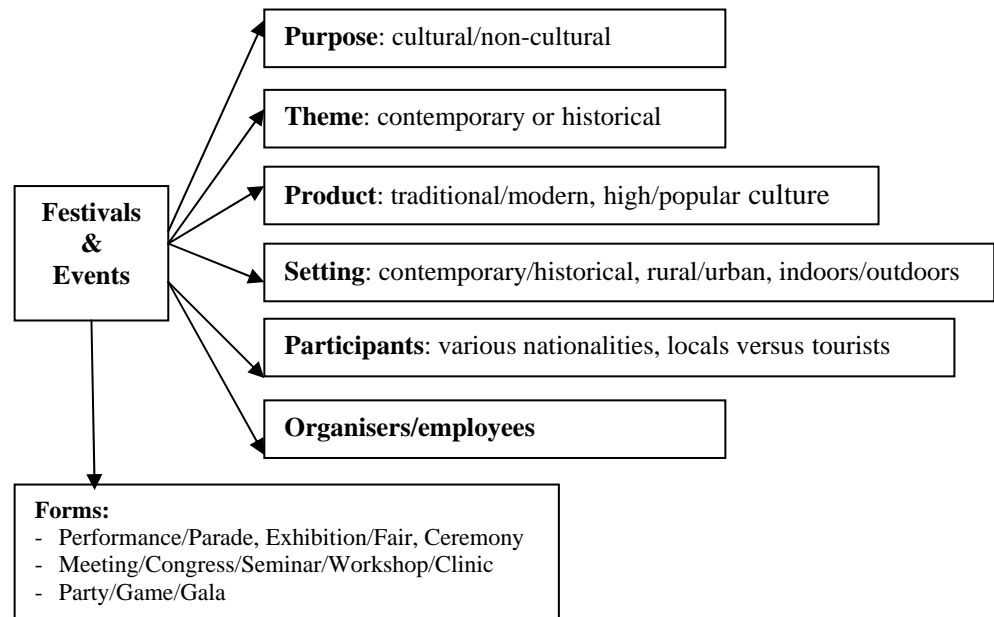
The terms festivals and events are often used interchangeably. However, as a general rule, a festival can be regarded as an event but an event is not necessarily a festival. A series of definitions for the various categories of events are shown in Table 11.

**Table 11: Various definitions of events**

| <b>Event type</b>      | <b>Definition</b>   |
|------------------------|---|
| <b>Special Event</b>   | A one-time or infrequently occurring event of limited duration that provides the consumer with a leisure and social opportunity beyond everyday experience.   |
| <b>Major Event</b>     | A large-scale event that is high in status or prestige and attracts a large crowd and wide media attention. Such events often have a tradition and incorporate festivals and other types of events. |
| <b>Hall mark Event</b> | An infrequently occurring major event that is tied to a specific place whereby the destination and the event become synonymous.   |
| <b>Mega-Event</b>      | A one-time major event that is generally of an international scale.   |
| <b>Festival</b>        | A special event that is a public themed celebration.  |

Source: Jago and Shaw (1998), p. 29

As already argued, it is somewhat problematic to pinpoint events as cultural. In general, events can be regarded as cultural when they have a cultural theme or purpose/occasion. Business/trade and political would therefore with a few exceptions not fall under cultural tourism. However, events might not have a cultural purpose/theme, they nevertheless can have cultural elements (products) in them, or simply use a historical setting to stage the event. Moreover, when looking at the participants, they can constitute different cultural groups (e.g. different ethnicity, different nationalities with different languages, hosts versus guests) and the cultural exchange between them can be regarded as a cultural activity which is totally detached from the theme/purpose of the event as well as the setting. These elements are shown in Figure 8 below. It becomes evident that festivals and events have many dimensions and can provide cultural experiences in a number of ways.

**Figure 8: Festivals and events and their dimensions**

**Source: by the author**

Festivals and events are increasingly used to add vitality to otherwise silent halls such as museums, historic houses or other heritage resources, thus meeting contemporary consumer appetites and adding to the appeal of these environments. Living history events and festivals with re-enactments of major historical events have become very popular for learning about and enjoying many aspects of past lifestyles (Janiskee 1996). For their special atmosphere, historic places have become attractive places to hold exhibitions, musical performances, parties etc. This signals that undoubtedly historic properties in their various forms and festivals and events have become partners that are capable of attracting large crowds. In their function to animate an otherwise static attraction, cultural events can attract people who might otherwise not make a visit (Getz 1991). However, events in such environments often have less to do with the learning aspect and cultural exploration than with pleasure and entertainment.

Crucial for the cultural exploration of a tourist are festivals and events that are place-specific and the culture in which they are set. Results from various studies on festivals and events suggest that motivations for attending events vary from event to event



(Prentice and Andersen 2003). There is little evidence of generic event motivations (Crompton and McKay's 1997). That means that the diversity of events is connected with different motivations for event-going and that cultural exploration is only one of these. Although a festival/event might be celebrated under the banner of culture and tradition, this might not be the impetus for people attending the festival/event. It also has to be considered that at various festivals and events culture can be consumed as a historic and/or contemporary experience which has a different appeal to different segments (Prentice and Andersen 2003).

Although the difference between festivals and events is somehow nebulous, from their origin, festivals have always functioned as “cultural practices through which communities express beliefs, celebrate identities and variously confirm or contest the social structures and value systems that bind them together” (Quinn 2004b, p. 4). Many festivals have their roots in celebrations that are strongly linked with religions in their various forms, with particular areas, and with traditions that sometimes go back to ancient times. More recently, these festivities (and events) have been valued also for the economic benefits they generate and tourists have become attractive contributors.

#### **3.1.3.10. Summary**

There is considerable confusion about terms and coverage of cultural tourism. It is difficult to define its limits and decide what counts as cultural tourism and what doesn't as all human activities and their tangible outcomes without any thematic constraint can be content of a cultural tourism offer. After showing the various forms of cultural tourism and its dimensions in using Smith' (2003) classification it becomes evident that cultural tourism “cannot be considered ‘as a single entity’” (Hughes 2000a, p. 111). Cultural tourism encompasses many diverse activities in many diverse settings offering different cultural experiences. The various forms of cultural tourism are not clear-cut. Hence, the various products offered within a given form of cultural tourism overlap with

those in other forms of cultural tourism. Moreover, cultural experiences are also connected with other forms of tourism in general such as business tourism. Differentiations between different forms of cultural tourism therefore remain merely theoretical constructs. In practice only combinations of these forms appear whereby the various forms can constitute either the core or only the peripheral product. Every form of tourism is tangent to some cultural aspects of a visited destination. Culture is inextricably connected with tourism and notably, travel itself can be regarded as part of a people's culture (of the developed world).

Culture was identified as a dynamic concept and new forms with innovative products of cultural tourism (e.g. creative cultural tourism, food and wine tourism) have been gradually emerging in the "conventional" cultural tourism arena which used to be largely associated with "high culture" up until recently. Cultural tourism is therefore a complex and hybrid construct that continuous to develop further.

From an experiential point of view the various forms provide experiences which are multidimensional, such as learning experiences (heritage tourism, creative tourism), visual/aesthetic experiences (heritage tourism, city tourism, rural tourism), ambience experiences (heritage tourism, festivals, arts tourism), lifestyle experiences (indigenous tourism, heritage tourism, city tourism, rural tourism), social experiences (heritage tourism, culinary tourism, indigenous tourism), or entertaining experiences (festivals and events, city tourism, heritage tourism). In contrast to these more cognitive experiences are bodily and spiritual experiences which result when tourists actively engage and participate in a cultural activity or feel connected with certain places/people (creative tourism, heritage tourism).

Tourists participate in cultural experiences for a variety of reasons. They want to admire, learn and explore and thereby expand their mind. Or they simply want to escape

and therefore look for pleasure and entertainment. Also relaxation and contemplation by simply enjoying a specific site or place can be strong motivators. Finally, for many social aspects are prevalent, they want to meet, see, communicate and be with others. Cultural tourists and their motivations, characteristics and needs constitute the next topic which this thesis now turns to.

### **3.1.4. The Cultural Tourist**

#### **3.1.4.1. Introduction**

Socio-demographic changes in society (increased income, education and disposable leisure time), changing lifestyles and the epochal value change with a changed attitude towards leisure time (psychographic change) were the driving forces for the creation of a new paradigm of travel behaviour with different tourists' perceptions and demands (Opaschowski 1990, Poon 1993, Lehmann 1993). This shift from "old" to "new" tourism (Poon 1993) has been identified by Voase (2002b) as a manifestation of the cultural transition from the modern to the postmodern<sup>23</sup>. The old consumers/tourists have been complemented by a more experienced, inconsistent, multifaceted, and "paradox" travelling public. Culture has become a central element of the holiday experience and the search of authenticity is a major concern of today's tourists.

In the following, general trends and changes in the travelling public will be outlined. This entails socio-demographic changes, changes through Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), value and lifestyle changes, and social changes. Central to the latter is the search for the authentic. Furthermore, these changes and their implications on what is demanded as regards cultural tourism products and how they want to be experienced will be investigated<sup>24</sup>. Finally, the cultural tourist as such will be discussed and various categories of cultural tourists suggested in the literature are introduced.

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<sup>23</sup> Voase (2002b) argues that postmodernisation of tourism is not a transformation as such, but rather an intensification of certain thematic traits which have complemented, rather than replaced, the 'old' forms of tourism. Voase (2002b) makes the claim that the postmodern represents some kind of dichotomy in relation to the modern and refers to Lyotard (1984, p. 79) who suggests that the postmodern is 'undoubtedly part of the modern'. For Voase (2002b) old tourism – mass tourism – is far from extinct: in fact, it is thriving. This line of thought is shared in this dissertation.

<sup>24</sup> This however does not mean that supply-side changes do not influence consumer behaviour and expectations. As Voase (2002b) has described it, market behaviour is in part a response to the purchase or experience opportunities available, rather than to those that are not.

### **3.1.4.2. New Consumer Behaviour and Implications for Cultural Tourism Products**

#### **a) Socio-demographic changes**

Travelling and taking a holiday have become an integral part of spending leisure time. Over the last three centuries considerable changes took place regarding the amount of leisure time people have at their disposal (Rojek 1995). At the same time, touristic mobility and travel intensity have increased substantially (Grüner 1993). The reduction of pure working time and the increase in pure leisure time coupled with increased affluence due to higher disposable income, made it possible to take a second or even third short holiday along the usually longer main holiday. However, pressures at work have been increasing over the last few years and people need more time for regeneration from work which diminishes the amount of pure leisure time (Müller and Brunner-Sperdin 2004). Recent discussions in Germany about extending actual working time in order to resolve economic problems means that people might have to face a negative change in terms of their leisure time budget. Morello (2004) argues that there is a growing awareness of time and temporality in our society. Rosa (2003) alludes to the acceleration of the pace of life arguing that we live in a so-called “high speed society”. Time has become a valuable resource in modern society and many are anxious about having a sub-optimal time management and missing possible experiences (Müller and Brunner-Sperdin 2004). The increase in time pressure and travel intensity means that people are trying to pack more activities into more frequent trips of shorter duration (Pikkemaat and Weiermair 2003). The growing popularity of city breaks is a case in point. This trend towards time intensive consumption suggests that also cultural attractions want/have to be visited faster and more efficiently. Concurrently these travellers want value for time spent and therefore measure up value for time spent at a site/activity against other options. As leisure time is becoming more scarce people put greater emphasis on quality time experiences for which they are also willing to pay more (Pine and Gilmore 1999). Thereby, as Edwards (2001) argues, it is often less the

quantity of experiences but the intensity of enjoyment and instant gratification that counts. Tibbott (2001) argues that the decreasing attention span especially with young consumers has resulted in a seeking for quick bursts of experiences in the leisure industry. Increasing work-related pressures which can be seen by the increasing prevalence of weekend and evening working encourage consumers to seek “bite-sized” leisure activities at times before and after work (Dewhurst and Dewhurst 2006).

The above mentioned changes in socio-demographic conditions have been accompanied by a so-called “educational expansion”. Increased education has equipped individuals with higher cultural capital (knowledge of culture) (Richards 2000) and denotes that today’s tourists have become more critical consumers of cultural attractions and their interpretations or of cultural lectures. Foot (2004) argues that today’s educated tourists demand experts as tour guides and seminar presenters. For example, qualified experts can help tourists to interpret the fossil that he/she volunteered to dig at an archaeological site. Tours that provide educational components are likely to be of increasing interest, especially for customers from older generations, to quench the increasing thirst for knowledge. Foot (2004) also points out that

[k]nowing what to look for or what you have just seen is an important aspect to many better-educated travellers. This is as true for genealogical tours as it is for nature tours; it is as true for wine tours as it is for birding tours, and for culinary tours as it is for archaeological tours (p. 13).

Changing demographics are among other factors responsible for changing customer preferences and leisure choices (Foot 2004). Godbey (2004) accounts the historically unprecedented rapidity of the ageing of the population as the most important demographic trend in the world today. That is to say that the proportion of older people will increase significantly. For example, in Western Europe a ‘greying’ of the population (the so-called empty nesters) will occur (Voase 2002c). Yet, the ageing of populations as well as life expectancy vary across different countries and nations. For

example, the proportion of young people in Ireland is much higher than in countries such as Germany, Italy and Austria (Foot 2004). Customers from younger countries are likely, on average, to be more attracted to sports, adventure and extreme tourist activities. They are described as independent, mobile, and highly educated travellers who also prefer to travel relatively cheaply. Customers from older countries are likely, on average, to be more attracted to culinary, garden and genealogy tours and are prone to pay more for quality. Population ageing is moving the customer through a life cycle, thereby resulting in challenges for active cultural tourism options and opportunities for slow cultural tourism options (Foot 2004, p. 14). It can be anticipated that with the aging of the population of the main tourist sending regions, such as Germany, stronger emphasis regarding product development might have to be placed on the latter. This includes not only specific facilities but also special programmes which attract this market segment. The stage of lifecycle individuals are in (e.g. dominance of children) also plays a role as to how important cultural experiences are considered and may change when moving further into a more mature life phase and moving up the “travel career ladder”. Looking at age clusters in general, i.e. beyond the confines of a geographical area, the aging baby-boomers market is still critical for cultural tourism but increasingly the younger so-called “Gen-X” tourists, who are born between 1965 and 1977, have impact on cultural tourism.

Today’s tourists have accumulated a high level of travel experience and have become more quality conscious and “smart” consumers. They have high demands towards products in tourism and seek unique personalised travel experiences. Hence the cultural experience needs to meet individual customers’ needs. In order to provide such customised services, trained knowledge about the culture of the sending region, e.g. language skills, are of vital importance. Today, high quality has to be provided throughout the tourism value chain. When tourism once could be regarded as a single

mass market; tourists increasingly became very different in their needs. Today they are asking for several options and want to enjoy freedom of choice. With respect to culture they want to have the option between traditional and modern, active and passive goods and services, high and popular culture and Western and foreign cultural experiences. Pikkemaat and Weiermair (2003) point out that contrasting or “paradox” preference for cultural products/experiences can even exist within the same individual. Examples are cultural experiences that are captivating and stimulating and promise fun and excitement or are spiritual and awareness heightening. Today’s tourists/consumers can also be described as inconsistent and fluid in their attitudes and behaviour: they can be part of the mass, another time they can be found in a certain lifestyle-group, and another time as solitary travellers. Depending on the circumstances they are shifting selves and demonstrate different behaviour (Todd 2001, Mandel 2003). Venkatesh (1999) sees the fragmentation of the individual “self” as one of the key concepts of postmodernism. He argues that “in redefining the self, the consumer becomes continuously emergent, reformed, and redirected through relationships to products and people” (p. 155). In their choices today’s consumers mix form and content as their whim permits which means that “the consumer sets no discernible patterns and engages in multiple experiences” (Venkatesh 1999, p. 155). Today’s consumers/tourists are extremely individualistic, and they want to be independent and in control in making consumption decisions (Lewis and Bridger 2000). Given this hybrid consumer characteristics and needs, specific products need to be developed that appeal to a broader market.

Within the travelling public an ever increasing level of taste can be noticed. Regardless how diverse taste may turn out on an individual level it can be said that aesthetics play an important role in the tourist experience in general (Harrison 2001), and cultural experiences/products in particular. MacCannell (1976) asserts that postmodern tourists are aesthetically and experientially oriented. Featherstone (1992) argues that the study



of aesthetics was originally home to the world of arts but in “postmodernity” became transported into everyday life (aestheticisation of everyday life) by turning life “into a work of art” (p. 269). The aesthetics signal the craving for visual pleasure (or the “tourist gaze” as Urry (1990) has termed it) and refer to landscape (nature) as well as infrastructure (e.g. architecture and design). However, also other sensory experiences such as aural, olfactory, gustatory are increasingly embraced or even requested parts of the cultural experience. Visitors to cultural attractions have come to favour a hands-on approach to satisfy their tactile need. Sensory nourishment resonates at an emotional or even spiritual level, which means that emotional and spiritual arousal is evoked.

#### **b) Changes through the proliferation of ICTs**

Over the last few years our society has experienced an increasing impact of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) which has also led to transformations in the organisation and experience of leisure (Bryce 2001). Bryce (2001) argues that traditional technological leisure activities such as TV and cinema remain integral to contemporary leisure but alongside these existing leisure technologies “computer technology and the Internet are emerging as important locations of contemporary leisure activity” (p. 8). They create new spaces for leisure participation and traditional leisure activities are often simply reproduced in virtual spaces. In “Cyberspace” the temporal, interactional and spatial dimensions of leisure change. Also, they constitute spaces where “fantasy, reality and fiction converge” (Bryce 2001, p. 9). Developments in ICTs have been identified as one of the main factors having an effect on both tourism production and consumption (Buhalis 1998). For example, the Internet has become an important gate for tourists that allows them to explore information about sites often in the form of a virtual visit of the area-site, to book their flights/hotels and arrange trips, and also for after travel activities. As people get used to ICT in various situations of their every-day life such as in-home entertainment products, they demand greater sophistication of ICT applications in (cultural/heritage) presentations of cultural

attractions. However, the rate at which individuals have access to, accept and adapt new technologies is likely to be quite different within geographic areas (Godbey 2004). Younger people adapt to these changes usually faster than adults of which some might even resist totally. The differences in education levels and incomes also have implications on the use and acceptance of ICTs. Overall it can be said that both the supply of people with personal computers and other electronic devices is steadily increasing. This goes hand in hand with an increasing computer literacy worldwide.

**c) Value and lifestyle changes**

In addition to the above mentioned changes there has been a gradual alteration in traditional value patterns. Values such as self-actualisation and self-development have come to the fore and leisure time becomes their playground. Leisure time is regarded not only as compensation from work anymore but as meaningful extension from work, i.e. work and free time no longer exist in separate spheres. Trend analysts such as Opaschowski (1993) argue that socio-demographic features (profession, income, etc.) are increasingly complemented by so-called “life-style” concepts. People’s lifestyle is increasingly determined by the way to spend leisure time whereby the individuals’ personality is articulated by miscellaneous leisure activities. The increased leisure oriented lifestyle among the general public implies that “life-style” und “leisure-style” approximate and become almost congruent (Opaschowski 1993). In this new leisure orientated lifestyle culture has adopted important value. Culture is increasingly used as a means of personal development (Richards 2000) or as a status symbol for differentiation (Kneafsey 1994) in the sense “I am with what I surround myself, what places/attractions I visit and which cultural events I participate in”. In such a stance culture has received symbolic and sign value. Baudrillard (1981) has introduced the idea of the sign system in the context of consumption. The image becomes important and the “individual has become a consumer of symbols rather than objects” (Venkatesh 1999, p. 158). Culture in its various forms and dimensions also offers multiple experiences for

those travellers who increasingly feel alienated with the modern life-style and want to escape from it.

**d) Social changes: alienation with modern life and search for the authentic**

Rojek's (1995) analysis is a helpful starting point for insights on postmodernity and the reasons for alienation. Rojek (1995) distinguishes between two periods of modernity: Modernity 1 and Modernity 2<sup>25</sup>. Modernity 1 is characterised by a productionist work ethic, technological progress and a structured work-leisure relationship. These factors were mainly driven by capitalism in Western industrialised nations. Leisure becomes a legitimate, democratic feature of civilised modern social life. Mass production and circulation of commodities are seen to widen the choice of escape alternatives. Nature becomes an "authentic" place to escape to since little is found in the urban-industrial landscape. Recreational opportunities in commercialised and commodified natural and cultural spaces show similarities to institutional rationality, e.g. packaged tours.

*Modernity 2* (also referred to as post-modernism by other scientists) is marked with disorder and fragmentation which drive human societies to seek order and control. Ambivalence is the key feature together with mass production, mechanical reproduction and a widening of consumer choice. Leisure is no longer a separate activity, but one woven into daily life. For MacCannell (1976) the modern condition represents a state of differentiation that causes alienation and a longing for wholeness. He argues that postmodern tourists find the cultural uniformity of modern life as deeply unsatisfying. They perceive their world as superficial or lacking a central unifying ethic. This sets them off to search for the authentic in other times and other places and to transcend the differentiations of "modern" life. They believe that authentic experiences "are available only to those moderns who try to break the bonds of their everyday existence and begin

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<sup>25</sup> Modernity 2 is what other authors term postmodernity. Venkatesh (1999) writes "if modernity refers to the period during which much of the social transformation that we witness today has taken place, then postmodernity refers to the period that has just begun" (p. 154).

to ‘live’” (MacCannell 1976, p. 159). In this context Mehmetoglu and Olsen (2003) state that tourism becomes a ritual to overcome the differences in modern society and the tourist becomes a “metaphor of the changing social world” (Dann 2002a).

Central to postmodernity is a collapse of boundaries. Rojek (1995) says that

aided by technological and communication innovation, the distinctions between ‘high’ and ‘low’ (mass) culture, between the original and the reproduced facsimile, between truth and fiction, are reduced to a state of equivalence where ‘authenticity’ is mediated by images, signs and symbols (p. 33).

De-differentiation between signifier and signified reigns supreme. The bewildering array and bombardment of signs and impressions reinforce the individual’s sense of alienation and loss of control. Inauthenticity prevails all spheres and there is no escape. For Rojek (1995) under Modernity 2, in contrast to Modernity 1, leisure consists not of search for authentic experiences but rather of activities that help people avoid “the realisation that originality, uniqueness and spontaneity are dead” (Rojek 1995, p. 85). Authenticity no longer carries the “quasi sacred meaning that it had for modern tourists” (Urry’s 1990, p. 109).

The industrialisation of society, the development of tourism and the omnipresence of the mass media have brought about changes in the economy, in lifestyles, and in everyday cultural practices. This has led to breaks with cultural traditions and the dissolution of traditional lifestyles and identities (East and Luger 2002, pp. 235-236). MacCannell (1976) sees the inauthenticity of modern life (society) as the reason that tourists seek authenticity in purer lifestyles where social values/orders and moral concepts are still intact. Nostalgia for a vanished world drives the search for ‘authentic’ experiences in pre-modern cultures. Baudrillard (1978) argues

[w]hen the real is no longer what it used to be nostalgia assumes its full meaning. There is a proliferation of myths of origin and signs of reality...a panic stricken production of the real and the referential (p. 14).

The increasing “nostalgia trend” (Lindtstädt 1994, Vesey and Dimanche 2003) can therefore be conceived as a compensation process to the increasingly technologised society and social changes. This searching of the past for meaning is according to Voase (2002b), arguably, also connected with a crisis of confidence in the future. According to him we live in an age where progress is perceived as creating more problems than it solves. Hence, the conviction arises that there was a time, in the past, when certain issues were better understood. The new consumer is described by Selwyn (1996b, p. 2) as a seeker of pre-modern contentment. The search outside is for an otherness, an “imagined world which is variously pre-modern, pre-commoditised or part of a benign whole” (Selwyn 1996b, p. 21). For Selwyn (1996b) tourism in its various guises is a quest for myths in various forms.

Another feature of alienation is the separation of humans from nature in the modern period. This disenchantment with the world leads to a desire to reconnect with the natural environment to strengthen the body, mind and soul (also in the sense of wellness). This has simultaneously engendered increased environmental awareness. It has called for a “greening” of tourism which advocates responsible contact with the natural world. The increasing concern about the environment among more educated people means that cultural tourists expect and demand the tourism industry to contribute to sustainability of communities and the natural environment (Lord 1999). As Jamal and Hill (2002) have noticed, the theme of “alienation” with modern life runs through a number of works on tourist motivation and authenticity and has given rise to such forms of tourism as heritage tourism and eco-tourism. Several forms of rural tourism with farm tourism, ethnic tourism, the longing for the primitive and untouched, can also be accounted to this.

Due to increased alienation with modern life “authenticity” has become a major concern for postmodernist travellers. Today’s cultural travellers look for authentic historical, cultural, and natural experiences, closer contact with living cultural heritage products and the people of a place, engaged in their traditional routines (Partry 2002). The “other” and the “past” become the counter-concept of modernity and are inscribed with the authenticity for which tourists search (Mehmetoglu and Olsen 2003).

For Rojek (1995) Modernity 2 (or post-modernity) is the world of the “homo ludens” as opposed of the “homo faber” under Modernity 1. The tourist/visitor is a sophisticated traveller, enjoys ludic experiences, and finds pleasure in an illusory, hedonistic consumption of signs, symbols and images where the aesthetic experience rates higher than capturing the ‘authentic’ original. According to Wang (1999) postmodernist approaches in tourism seem to be characterised by deconstruction of authenticity and the justification of the contrived. Based on theories of social development the concept of “homo ludens” (Huizinga 1997) comprehends the idea of being creative and enjoying life. Play is the opposite of seriousness. Eric Cohen (1995) has described this new tourist attitude as “ludic attitude”. Tourists have also come to be characterised as hedonists (Horx 2002) who follow a way of life that is based on pleasure and happiness. This new hedonic behaviour leads to a desire for playfulness, entertainment and stimulation also in association with the cultural experience. The “fun” element has gained in importance and the success of theme parks has created high expectations in this respect also for cultural tourist attractions (Lord 1999). These times tourists/visitors expect and demand an impressive experience. Cultural attractions therefore need to find ways to cater for various tourist behaviours: for low-commitment visitors who want to be surprised and others who are not content just to browse but seek a full immersion and engagement in the experience.

Tourists may, according to Urry (1990), know that “tourism is a game (...) with (...) no single, authentic tourist experience” (p. 100) but it has to be born in mind that there is not only one cultural “ideal type”, there is also the pre-modern and the modern (Selwyn 1996b, p. 20). Selwyn (1996b) puts forward that

[b]eneath the surface structures of the various tourist sites, experiences, images and myths (...), there remains a clearly identifiable sub-structure of concern in the tourist imagination with traditional-looking themes which seem at once modern and pre-modern and to which the term ‘authentic’ seems all too applicable, namely the nature of the social and of the self (p. 20).

### **3.1.4.3. Characteristics of the Cultural Tourist**

According to various study findings from the ATLAS group (European Association for Tourism and Leisure Education) cultural tourists can be characterised as being better educated and mainly fill high status positions (managerial or professional position) which also relates to their relatively high average incomes. They are frequent travellers and tend to stay longer (Richards 1996a/b, 2000, 2001). Not only older and retired people, who are naturally inclined to culture because of their socialisation experiences (Kolb 2000), were identified to be important cultural visitors but also younger people such as student backpackers. They possess a high degree of cultural capital due to increasing education standards (Boniface 1995, Richards 2000). However, in general the cultural tourist tends to be older. Also women constitute an important part of this market segment (Silberberg 1995).

Although tourists may share similar demographic and trip profile characteristics these are unreliable indicators of cultural tourists. McKercher and DuCros (2002) argue

[o]ur own research in Hong Kong (...) shows that demographic and trip profile characteristics are useful in differentiating American cultural tourists from other American tourists but are not reliable in differentiating cultural tourists from other countries from non-cultural tourists (p. 136).

Significant differences were, however, identified in the behaviour among the different groups. Kolb (2000) points out that

[w]hat is often forgotten is that a correlation between attendance and such factors as age, education and income does not imply causation. The fact that two or more factors may exist in the target population at the same time does not mean that one causes the other (p. 52).

Therefore, it can be no longer assumed that the type of culture and cultural attraction desired by different market segments is based on income and education demographics. Also, what should not be forgotten is that attendance figures alone do not reveal the depth of visitor satisfaction. Successful attractions must elicit visitor satisfaction. Therefore, in order to achieve this objective a thorough understanding of market segments is required (McGettigan and Burns 2001).

Cultural tourists are interested in extended family experiences and desire education-oriented experiences to increase their knowledge about people and places (Kerstetter, Confer and Bricker 1998). The educational aspect as well as novelty play a major role for the cultural tourist (Richards 2000) accompanied with a search for authenticity (MacCannell 1976). The cultural tourist is also described as a skilled consumer, for whom the pursuit of culture is a form of personal development (Richards 1996b). There is also a renewal of interest in spiritual matters among cultural tourists. Shackley (2003) contends that today's visitor is seeking to spend leisure time in holy or religious places as a substitute for personal prayer, a new form of pilgrimage. McGettigan and Burns (2001) see these stirrings not finding expression in the traditional sphere of religion, but being manifested more in a "reaction to the frenetic pace of modern life, of materialism and a perceived loss of spirituality and connection to nature" (p. 156). Cultural consumption leads from the mundane to the sublime and indoctrination is no longer accepted by today's audience for culture. The distinction between high and popular culture has become less important for most consumers of culture.

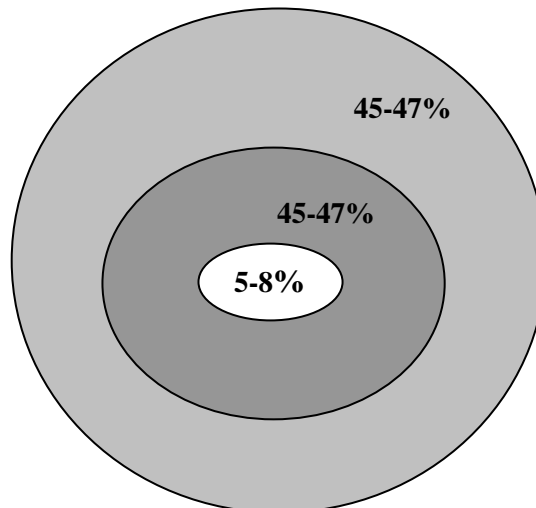


It is nowadays widely acknowledged that cultural tourists do not constitute a uniform market as they differ in their motivations, characteristics and needs (McGettigan and Burns 2001). Within the cultural tourist group Bywater (1993) identified three discrete segments which are motivated by cultural experiences (see also Figure 9):

- *purely culturally motivated tourists*, which is, however, a very small individualised segment accounting only for 5-8%;
- *culturally inspired tourists*, who are generally interested in culture accounting for a share of 45 – 47%;
- *culturally attracted tourist, who see in culture a substitute activity* accounting for 45 – 47%.

Given the small proportion that represents culture “aficionados” – those tourists who are purely culturally motivated, Hughes (2000a) argues that “many of those who visit cultural attractions may, though, be more satisfactorily categorised as ‘mass tourists’ rather than as ‘cultural-tourists’” (p. 114).

**Figure 9: Three categories of cultural tourists**



**Source: by the author**

A more detailed categorisation of cultural tourists is provided by Lord (1999), including those who do not visit cultural sites:

- *greatly motivated* cultural tourists, representing 15% of the total non-resident pleasure travel market;
- *motivated in part*, representing 30% of the market;
- people for whom culture is an “*adjunct*” to another more important motivation, representing 20% of the market;
- *accidental cultural tourists*, who “stumble” into a museum/festival, representing about 20% of the market;
- 15% of tourists who *would not* attend a cultural attraction or event under any circumstances.

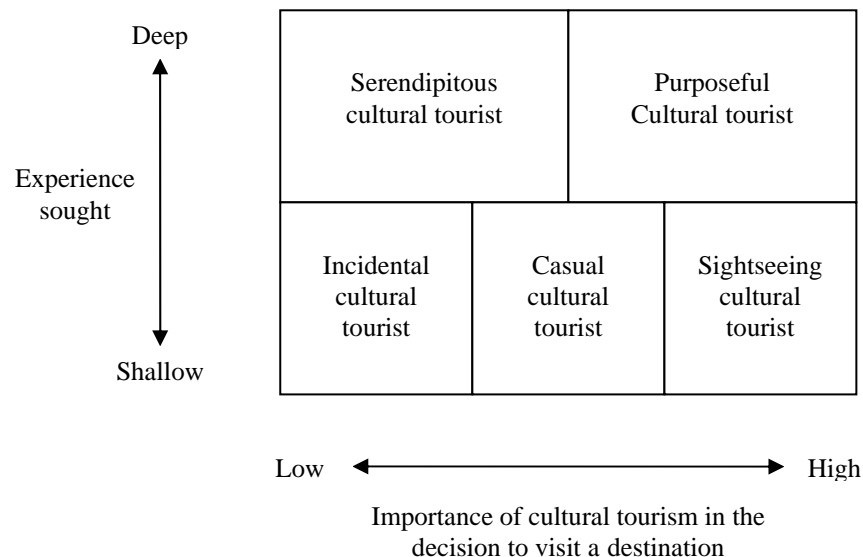
The above categories of cultural tourists signal that cultural goods are not the prime decision parameter/satisfier and sole motivator except for a small proportion of tourists. The majority of tourists use cultural opportunities (such as) more for general vacation purposes. Visiting a museums, cultural festival or theatre constitutes only one element but not the main reason for travelling to a certain destination. In such cases cultural sites are employed more as a backdrop to serve other primary tourism activities such as hiking, skiing, golfing, visiting friends and relatives. How much cultural goods/attractions/events matters can be seen in the ever increasing popularity through the way in which they enrich the tourism experience (Weiermair 2002). As a result, the cultural dimension has been added successfully by the industry to the aims of mere rest and relaxation (Kneafsey 1994). Culture and heritage are specifically important for a small group of cultural freaks. However, through promotion and packaging mainly those tourists are targeted who have the potential to participate in cultural activities along with other things (Lord 1999, Silberberg 2003).

In combining the importance of cultural tourism in the overall decision to visit a destination and the depth of experience McKercher and DuCros (2002) have identified five types of cultural tourists (see also Figure 10) (p. 139ff):

- The *purposeful cultural tourist*: Cultural tourism is the primary motive for visiting a destination. The individual has a deep cultural experience.

- The *sightseeing cultural tourist*: Cultural tourism is a primary or major reason for visiting a destination, but the experience is more shallow.
- The *serendipitous cultural tourist*: A tourist who does not travel for cultural tourism reasons, but who, after participating, ends up having a deep cultural tourism experience.
- The *casual cultural tourist*: Cultural tourism is a weak motive for visiting a destination, and the resultant experience is shallow.
- The *incidental cultural tourist*: This tourist does not travel for cultural tourism reasons but nonetheless participates in some activities and has shallow experiences.

**Figure 10: A cultural tourist typology**



**Source: McKercher and DuCros (2002), p. 140**

A cultural site/destination can attract all different types of visitors at the same time that all will visit the site for different reasons and will seek different intensities of experiences to satisfy their needs. Likewise, “depending on the trip taken and the motivation for travel, one person could be identified as all five types of cultural tourist” (McKercher and DuCros 2002, p. 146).

Cultural sites can attract different shades of cultural tourists based on different motivations and the depth of experience sought. Some will be more serious and mindful

than others and will seek different benefits from the attraction visited. The latter suggests that these are not always just cultural ones. Poria, Butler and Airey (2004), for example, suggest three main motivations for tourists to visiting heritage sites:

- (1) recreational experience;
- (2) cultural and education experience; and
- (3) heritage and emotional experience.

Recreational tourists want to relax, look for having a good day out and want to be entertained. The latter two desire to learn something, however, the third group also wants to become emotionally involved with the site. McKercher and DuCros (2002) argue that the majority of people visiting cultural heritages sites are not engaged in a deep learning experience. Such visitors are only partly interested in the historical reality (Schouten 1995, pp. 21-22). Fun and entertainment have become important for many tourists who wish to escape from the constraints of everyday life. Not all are looking for an educational experience, instead fun and pleasure can be prominent.

In a similar vein, Falk and Dierking (1994) grouped “reasons” for people to visit museums<sup>26</sup> into three categories:

- (1) social-recreational reasons;
- (2) educational reasons; and
- (3) reverential reasons.

They have found out that the first category ranks very high among visitors as opposed to educational reasons. They explain this that semantics may be a problem in interpreting visitor studies as the public still tends to associate “learning” with “school”. Therefore, they suggest to broaden the definition of learning to include results of curiosity and exploration. They have also found out that especially for frequent visitors the “reverential” motivation is considerable. For them, a museum can offer something akin

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<sup>26</sup> They see museums as including a wide range of informal educational institutions, including art, history, and natural history museums; zoos; arboreta; botanical gardens; science centres; historic homes; and a variety of other exhibits and collections.

to a religious experience for those who seek something higher, more sacred, and out of the ordinary than home and work are able to supply.

Various other authors have introduced categories of motivations in different scales of depth. In practice, however, it is mostly a combination of various criteria why people choose to visit a particular attraction.

In a recent attempt to look at the actual relationship between a site's attributes and the tourist behaviour Poria (2001) has found that tourists' who perceive a site to be a part of their own heritage have different behavioural characteristics in their reason for visiting that site, in the perception of their visit and in their intentions to revisit the site in the future. For those visitors of which the site was part of their own heritage, reasons for visits were more to be emotionally involved and they felt more obliged to visit the site as opposed to those visitors for whom the site was not part of their own heritage. For them, the fact that it was a world famous site was more important as motivation for visiting the site. The former group also showed a higher satisfaction level and a higher intention to visit the site in the future.

Because of its specific attributes the type of attraction may also attract mainly a certain type of visitor. In a study on the relationship between various types of industrial heritage attractions and tourists' behaviour undertaken at the Path of Progress, an industrial heritage route in south-western Pennsylvania, Kerstetter, Confer and Bricker (1998) found out that railroad sites were mainly attracted by a very specialised type of heritage tourist. The findings suggest that these "railroad enthusiasts" (they more likely travel alone, and plan ahead) seek out experiences that match their level of knowledge and skill and they may consider certain attractions as too shallow to meet their needs.

Cultural tourists may also be influenced by differences in the level of their demand for authenticity. McIntosh and Prentice (1999) argue that authenticity may influence the depth of experience. It can be presumed that purposeful cultural tourists demand a high degree of authenticity and therefore contrived elements negatively influence the depth of their experiences. For cultural sightseers, who seek shallower experiences, and casual and incidental cultural tourists, who exclusively seek shallow experiences, the openness for contrived elements can be assumed to be much higher. Despite the lower degree of authenticity they gain satisfactory experiences. In view of these visitor typologies it can be concluded that the same cultural site will provide satisfactory or unsatisfactory experiences according to the visitors' diverse quests for authenticity.

#### **3.1.4.4. Summary**

A number of changes in the travelling public and their characteristics can be identified which lead to different expectations what cultural products should offer and how they want to be experienced. Today's travellers are portrayed as having less time available, are more experienced and quality conscious, possess a higher "cultural capital", are hybrid or even paradox in their preferences, show multiple personae, are aesthetically and experientially oriented, and increasingly use ICTs in their everyday life. A critical view on modern society (fragmentation, loss of traditional world order, work and time pressure, missing social structures, disconnection with nature etc.) reveals that people feel alienated with modern life. They want to escape from everyday routines and seek personal fulfilment and enrichment in their holidays. While the condition of modern life can be regarded as having induced the quest for authenticity, some authors (e.g. Urry 1990, Cohen 1995) argue that structural changes of modern society have undermined the importance of the authentic and that tourists find pleasure in the inauthentic and simulations. Societal trends also point to the increased importance of culture in travel experiences, however, tourists participate in cultural experiences for different reasons.

Several authors suggest different categories of cultural tourists on the basis of their motivation (e.g. incidental versus accidental) and interests or depth of experiences sought. Therefore, cultural tourists cannot be regarded as an undifferentiated mass. As tourists show various interests and motivations when engaging in various forms of cultural tourism also authenticity has to be seen as a feature that has different value for different types of cultural tourists. Hence it is legitimate to assume that for purposeful cultural tourists authenticity is a necessary prerequisite to have satisfying cultural experiences as opposed to other types of cultural tourists. Typologies, however, do have limitations as different personalities and lifestyles are not taken into account.

While cultural tourism has developed to a mass market phenomenon where cultural consumption is sought as ancillary enjoyable element to complete a trip and should be easy to consume, the core of cultural tourism is still a small niche market represented by “enthusiasts” profoundly interested in culture.

### **3.1.5. Cultural Tourist Attractions**

#### **3.1.5.1. Introduction**

It is widely noticed that cultural attractions, often simply referred to as visitor or tourist attractions, are crucial elements of any destination as they instigate travel to particular areas (Richards 2002, Benckendorff 2006). Many destinations owe their appeal to the fact that they offer a cluster of attractions (Holloway and Taylor 2006). However, the market for visitor attractions is in many destinations, especially in Europe, saturated. Many cultural attractions have to fight for survival, some have already collapsed financially. Dewhurst and Dewhurst (2006) argue that “competitive pressures [...] have emerged from within and outside the attractions’ sector of the leisure economy” (p. 293). The ever-growing number of commercially-driven attractions pushing into the leisure market together with recent advances in the quality and variety of in-home leisure products has led to an uphill struggle for visitors. It comes with no surprise that in a situation of growth in and diversification of leisure provision “the level of demand for visitor attractions has failed to match the level of provision” (Dewhurst and Dewhurst 2006, p. 293). At the same time, many museums and other heritage attractions have been facing decreasing subsidies from the state. These supply-related factors along with rapidly shifting patterns of demand and rising consumer expectations (as described in section 3.1.4.1.) force attraction managers to re-package and re-invent themselves if they wish to survive in the long-run. Today’s attractions need to engage in development programmes that focus on both core and ancillary activities to embrace the needs of diverse markets (as described in section 3.1.4.2.). The provision of high-quality visitor experiences which leave behind a memory has become key to success.

First, in order to get an overview of the variety of cultural attractions various typologies are outlined. Then specific attractions such as museums and heritage centres, world heritage sites, heritage trails and popular cultural attractions are explained in detail and explored in terms of the settings and contexts in which they appear. Finally, focus is



placed on the management of cultural attractions including experience design, interpretation, and specific issues on product development.

### **3.1.5.2. Types of Attractions**

In the broadest sense cultural attractions are specific destinations and include the landscape/townscape and the distinctive patterns of the local people – all that which defines the particular character of a destination. Within the multiplicities of national contexts numerous cultural attractions rooted in the past as well as in the contemporary have been establishing.<sup>27</sup> Linked with the various forms of cultural tourism (see Table 8 and Table 9) different types of attractions can be determined. Various authors (e.g. Swarbrooke 1997, Leask 2003, Benckendorff 2006) have attempted to categorise visitor attractions along a number of different dimensions such as physical characteristics, ownership, capacity, market orientation, and type. Also many country specific categorisations exist (e.g. from the English National Tourist Board, Board Fáilte, Austrian National Tourist Board) which, however, are diverse in their level of detail reflecting the variety of attractions evolved over time within nation specific contexts (see Table 12). However, such country-specific categorisations make comparisons across different countries difficult, if not impossible when it comes to statistics on visitor numbers.<sup>28</sup>

The variety of visitor attractions is continuously growing. One of the latest developments, especially in the UK but also in other European countries, is the rise of so-called “industrial heritage sites”, where given-up quarries, mines, factories, etc. are made accessible for visitation.<sup>29</sup> This specific type of heritage tourism has seen

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<sup>27</sup> It has to be noted that although the majority of heritage supply can be found in urban areas for some cultures and regions natural environments can take on a greater importance such as in Canada and New Zealand, whose heritage is connected to nature (Timothy and Boyd 2003).

<sup>28</sup> The cause of this can also be found in differing definitions of heritage and culture. Moreover, when it comes to attendance there is a huge number of buildings open to the public for which no records are kept.

<sup>29</sup> Many post-industrial places have started to market themselves as heritage destinations.

considerable growth within the last few years. Other examples featuring more popular elements of culture are so-called “brand lands”.

**Table 12: Categories of visitor attractions in England, Ireland, and Austria**

| England (2001)                  | Austria (2005)                 | Ireland(2003) <sup>30</sup>    |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • Cathedrals and churches       | • Museums & exhibitions        | • Historic Sites and Monuments |
| • Country parks                 | • Heritage sites and monuments | • Industrial Heritage          |
| • Farms                         | • Popular cultural attractions | • Historic Houses and Castles  |
| • Gardens                       | • Archives                     | • Interpretive Centres/Museums |
| • Historic houses and castles   | • Libraries                    | • Parks and Gardens            |
| • Other historic properties     | • Theatre and music            | • Wildlife                     |
| • Leisure and theme parks       | • Pageants and festivals       | • Other Attractions            |
| • Museums and art galleries     | • Cinema and film              |                                |
| • Steam railways                | • Radio and television         |                                |
| • Visitor centres               | • Visual arts                  |                                |
| • Wildlife attractions and zoos | • Books and press              |                                |
| • Workplace attractions         | • Further adult education      |                                |
| • Other attractions             | •                              |                                |

**Sources: ETC (2001) in Beech and Chadwick (2006), p. 288; Statistik Austria (2007), n.p.a.; Fáilte Ireland (2003), n.p.a.**

A basic differentiation can be made between *natural attractions*, such as the Grand Canyon in the US, and *man-made attractions* such as cathedrals, castles, and archaeological sites. Both are not purpose-built to serve the interests of tourism, even if they may have been modified to do so (Holloway and Taylor 2006). A third category contains *attractions, which are built to allure tourists* such as museums and heritage centres (Swarbrooke 2001, p. 16). Besides these physical attractions there are also intangible ones such as festivals and events, whereby festivals are anchored in local traditions (see section 3.1.3.8). Event attractions can be either temporary or permanent. Temporary events may be one-off events at different places while others reoccur at the same site (ibid.).

Other authors such as Dewhurst and Dewhurst (2006) (see Table 13) have provided more comprehensive categorisations of visitor attractions. He identified four main categories with a number of sub-groupings including such attractions which focus on

<sup>30</sup> Fáilte Ireland differentiates between fee-charging and non-fee charging attractions.

entertainment, however, he neglected to include non-physical or permanent attractions such as festivals and events.

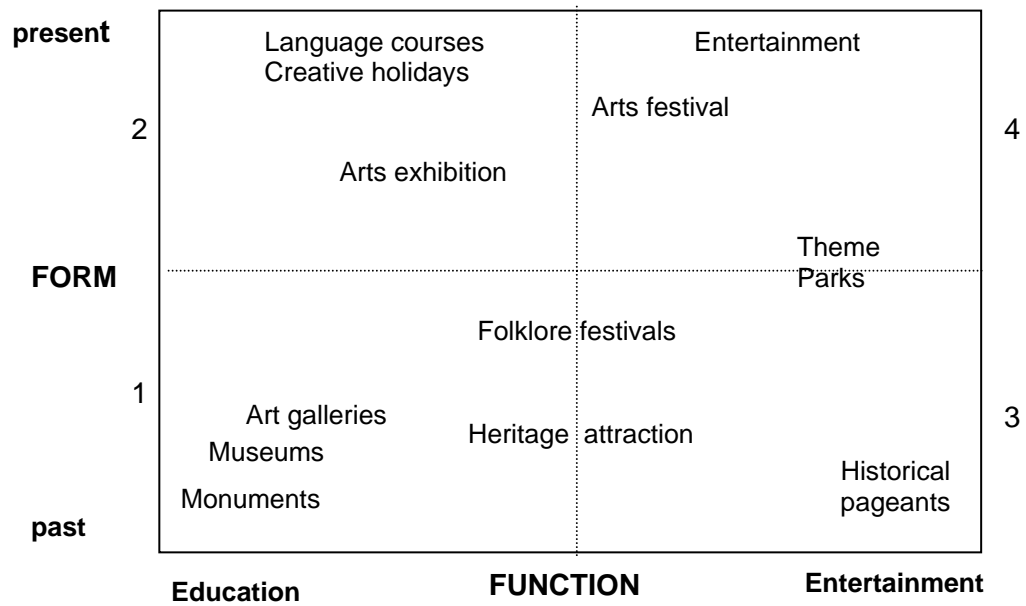
**Table 13: Categories of visitor attractions**

| <b>Category</b>            | <b>Types</b>   | <b>Constituent attractions</b>   |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Historico-cultural</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Religious sites</li> <li>• Museums and galleries</li> <li>• Historic sites</li> <li>• Interpretative heritage sites</li> <li>• Multi-faceted historic sites</li> <li>• Sites of murder and destruction</li> </ul> | Abbeys, cathedrals, chapels, priories<br>Art galleries, open air museums, traditional museums, science centres<br>Castles, landmarks, monuments, palaces, cultural quarters<br>Interpretative centres, heritage sites<br>Castles, docklands, piers, historic houses, palaces<br>Battlefields, concentration camps, prisons |
| <b>Environmental</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Animal attractions</li> <li>• Parks and gardens</li> <li>• Country parks</li> </ul>   | Safari parks, wildlife parks, zoos, rare-breed farms, nature centres, aquaria<br>Botanic gardens, outdoor activity parks, public parks, arboreta<br>Country parks, reservoirs  |
| <b>Entertainment</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leisure and recreation complexes</li> <li>• Amusement parks</li> <li>• Theme parks</li> <li>• Themed retail outlets</li> <li>• Workplace industrial visit</li> </ul>  | Leisure centres, leisure pools, recreation centres, water parks<br>Pleasure beaches, pleasure parks<br>Indoor parks, outdoor parks, beach resorts<br>Antique centres, garden centres, retail and leisure parks<br>Craft workshops, factory shops   |
| <b>Miscellaneous other</b> |  | Piers, themed transport  |

Source: based on Dewhurst and Dewhurst 2006, p. 289

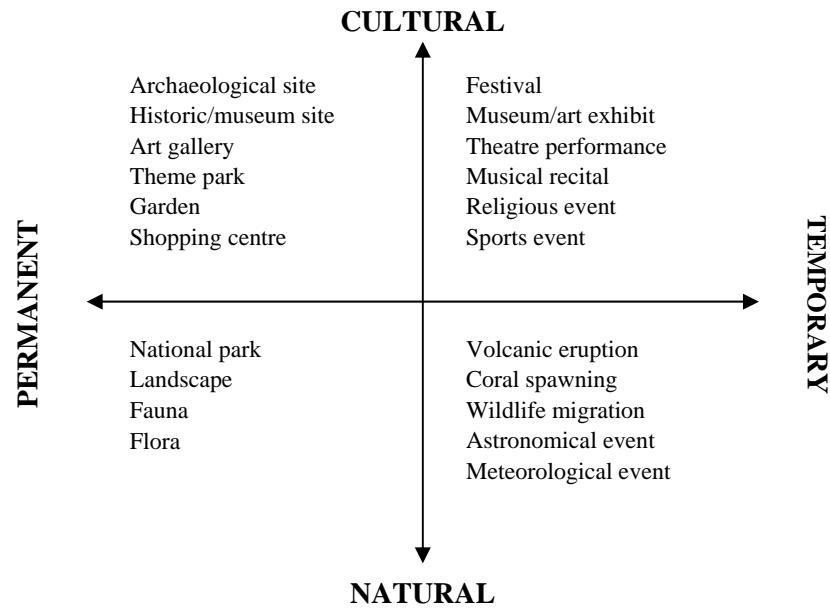
Also Richards (n.y.a.) has come up with a categorisation of attractions which takes not only their orientation towards the past or present (form) into account but also towards education or entertainment (function) (see Figure 11).

**Figure 11: Typology of cultural tourism attractions**



Source: based on Richards (n.y.a.)

Beside the above mentioned categorisations Benckendorff (2006) introduced a comprehensive framework for attractions (this will be explained in-depth in the product development section). For him the *core resource* of an attraction can be conceptualised as containing two dimensions: being natural or cultural and being temporary or permanent (see Figure 12). The natural-cultural dimension notices that attractions can be based on tangible natural or manufactured attributes but also acknowledges that individuals themselves and their customs can be attractions. The temporary-permanent dimension recognises that some attractions are permanent, however the core resource may change. Furthermore, the temporary nature of events as attractions is considered. This is in line with conceptualisations introduced by Swarbrooke (2001).

**Figure 12: Conceptualising the core resource of tourist attractions**

Source: Benckendorff (2006), p. 203

Leask (2003, p. 7) goes even further and classifies attractions along the following lines:

- whether they are natural or built;
- whether they charge admission fees or offer free entry;
- whether they are under public or private ownership;
- whether they are geared towards the local, regional, national, or international market.

As shown above, many authors have offered more or less comprehensive typologies of attractions. It can be concluded that the attractions sector is such a heterogeneous entity that it is often not clear what to define as an attraction and what not. The issue becomes even more intricate when defining *cultural* attractions. Looking at the multitudes of visitor attractions that exist nowadays the question is which of them qualify as cultural attractions? There is still broad support that cultural attractions encompass only those of “high culture” leaving aside such attractions as “theme parks”, “shopping centres” or “sports events”. An attraction must fulfil the requirement of being also some kind of cultural asset to the destination, tangible or intangible, historical or contemporary, to be regarded as a cultural attraction. For this thesis this broader view is applied which

means that cultural attractions include not only those which are based on heritage but also contemporary attractions.

Given the multitude of cultural attractions, in the following section only a selection of some of the more common and timely tangible attractions will be focused on. These include museums and heritage centres, World Heritage Sites, and emerging cultural attractions. It should also be noted that when describing these types of cultural attractions there may be some overlaps.

#### **3.1.5.2.1. Museums and Heritage Centres**

Many different types of museums have developed during the past century (see Table 14). A great deal of them has been specifically built for housing museum collections. Others are accommodated in buildings of historical significance such as castles, churches, barns and farmhouses, schools, factories, and stately homes.

Besides the traditional functions of museums, which are conservation, preservation, interpretation and exhibition, “museums [...] take on the colouring of the society in which their activity takes place”<sup>31</sup> (Hudson quoted in Waidacher 1996, p. 72). Museums are therefore expressions of the place in which they have evolved and are coined by political and societal developments. As many other elements of culture, museums are also subjects that underlie continuous change in their roles, functions, exhibitions, design, and style of presentation in the course of time. This changing process is depicted in the following section and is important not only because it shows that specific cultural attractions have emanated from museums but also because approaches such as interactivity and hands-on experiences have their origins in museums.

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<sup>31</sup> Translated by the author from German into English.

**Table 14: Types of museums**

| <b>Types</b>                    | <b>Description</b>  | <b>Example</b>  |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Art museums</b>              | display paintings, sculptures, photography and handicrafts  | Louvre in Paris                                       |
| <b>Sport museums</b>            | celebrate local sport figures or those of more international acclaim  | Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York        |
| <b>Music museums</b>            | display photographs, musical instruments, clothing, awards, albums and other related equipment produced and used by famous musicians  | Mozart Museum in Salzburg                             |
| <b>War/armoury museums</b>      | celebrate war heroes and display remnants of armed conflicts  | Collins Barracks in Dublin, War Museum in Vienna      |
| <b>Industrial museums</b>       | demonstrate manufacturing or extractive processes and exhibit goods extracted or produced in that type of establishment (often based in functioning industrial centres and factories or in derelict buildings that have been renovated) | Bergwerkmuseum in Breitenbach/Tyrol                   |
| <b>Science museums</b>          | demonstrate the heritage of technology and knowledge: transportation and other technological innovations, geology, climate and weather animals, chemistry and vegetation  | Exploratorium in San Francisco, Science Museum Vienna |
| <b>Local historical museums</b> | house artefacts of local importance ranging from maps and photographs to agricultural tools, clothing and building materials  | Vienna Museum   |

**Source: based on Timothy and Boyd 2003, pp. 23-24**

### **3.1.5.2.1.1. The Development of Museums and their Displays**

The museum owes its birth to the transfer of royal and baronial art treasures into the ownership of the state and its public presentation in the course of the French Revolution. In the year 1793 the Louvre was established and offered collections which were systematically edited with the aim of historic and aesthetic education of the public. This was in total contrast to its forerunners, the cabinets of arts and wonder of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, which housed unsystematic acquired and presented collections of “pieces of splendour” with the purpose of not so much to educate rather than to amaze people and therefore adding to the fame of its proprietors (Maier-Solgek 2002). In the 19<sup>th</sup> century museums were “major organs of the state dedicated to the instruction and edification of the general public” (Bennett 1988, p. 63). The cultures of subordinate classes were

totally absent in the display not only because the working class was not regarded as having a culture worthy of preservation but also because the states policy was to improve people by exposing them to the beneficial influence of middle-class culture (ibid., p. 73). Changes in the post-industrial society have brought these ivory tower-like museums to collapse and new museum initiatives with new ideas oriented towards non-elite social strata arose. This new orientation was expressed in *folk museums* and *open-air museums* where the daily lives, costumes, rituals, and traditions of ordinary people were shown (ibid., p. 63). They are also known as living museums, historic (theme) parks and folk life museums. These museums were also a response to the perceived threat of the Industrial Revolution and its impact on traditional lifestyles, hence traditional structures were rebuilt and preserved, and old ways of life began to be nostalgialised (Timothy and Boyd 2003). The first open-air museum was developed in Sweden in 1873 and is nowadays known as “Skansen”. Many other countries followed the Swedish example and established living heritage museums as modernity began to replace many traditions and cultural practices in the late 1800s. They have also gained popularity because of their specific approach to interpretation such as staff dressed in characteristic costumes demonstrating traditional ways of life and skills such as baking bread, farming activities, etc.

In the 1960s the big opening of the museum took place in two ways: from outside through privatisation, which was the answer to a lack of money at that time, and from inside due to a search for better and more appropriate ways to imparting knowledge. During the 1970s a new form of heritage interpretation emerged as a clear contrast to the still widespread “elite”-museums. This separation found expression in so-called “*heritage centres*”. The first heritage centre was opened in Great Britain in 1973 (Yale 1991). An overview of the difference between museums and heritage centres is provided in Table 15.



**Table 15: Difference between museums and heritage centres**

|                       | <b>MUSEUMS</b>   | <b>HERITAGE CENTRES</b>  |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| <b>Purpose</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to collect, document, preserve, display and interpret material evidence and associated information for the public benefit (ICOM)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to display and interpret material evidence and associated information for the public benefit</li> <li>more tourist-oriented</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Collection</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>significant number of authentic objects</li> <li>extensive collection including various themes</li> </ul>                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>no collection</li> <li>exhibition is centred around one particular theme/story</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Display</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>facts, scientific, historically accurate</li> <li>often elitist</li> <li>home to originals</li> <li>changing exhibitions</li> </ul>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>often a 'rose-tinted' view of the past evoking nostalgia</li> <li>everyday life</li> <li>may need to rely on reproductions &amp; simulations</li> <li>fixed exhibition</li> </ul> |
| <b>Interpretation</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in a more scholarly manner</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>often in an entertaining manner</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Intermediation</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>intermediation through presentation of authentic objects</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>often mixture of museum and theatre (Brown 1995, p. 74)</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Experience</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>learning experience</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>pleasurable experience</li> </ul>   |

**Source: by the author**

In the late 1980s and 1990s in Europe a real boom in the museum industry took place associated with high investments. This created new roles for well-established museums. Many museums became aware that they have disregarded their visitors for too long, however, it can be said that there is still a widespread lack of this awareness nowadays. Discussions among museums experts arose that the "old" encyclopaedic form of display had run its course and that the priority has to be shifted from conservation and preservation towards interpretation. Harald Falckenberg, chairperson of the "Hamburger Kunstverein", stressed that collections and exhibitions need tailoring which goes beyond the narrowly terminated educated class, the so-called "*Bildungsbürgertum*" (Blomberg 2002).

Recent economic difficulties in the museum arena have led many of these institutions to have a stronger focus on customer service, partnerships and packaging opportunities. In economic terms museums and galleries in the United States were from their beginning forced to attract high visitor numbers not only to generate revenues but also to attract

sponsors. As opposed to American museums which mostly work independently, most museums in Europe are state-owned and are therefore financially under the auspices of the state. However, this situation has changed dramatically. The financial allocations by the state have been shortened considerably. This has led many museums to rethink their position, made them more receptive to new ideas and approaches regarding what and how exhibits are presented and interpreted and ultimately to follow a more entrepreneurial spirit.

In the last three decades there has been a shift in the way museums communicate the past (and the present) – not only *what* is shown is considered as important but also *how* it is shown is significant (how artefacts get displayed and represented, what they are made to mean) (see Figure 13). There has been a steadily turning away from purely static presentations, so-called “open text presentations” (*expert approach*), to presentations, where the art object is embedded in a context (*context approach*). In open-text presentations the object speaks for itself where no or only a minimum amount of information and interpretation is provided with the aim that the artefact can unfold its fully aesthetic effect without any influence from other stimuli (Terlutter 2001, p. 102). In this approach the interpretation is up to the visitor itself, who, however, might be overwhelmed with this task because the artefacts are taken out from their historicity, i.e. the meaning of the objects in its original utilisation context (ibid., p. 103). This approach, however, can still have value in art-galleries. In using the context approach objects are incorporated into their historical context and historical information is provided. The visitor could, for example, be shown how different artefacts were used. A learning exhibition can stand as synonym for the context approach as Terlutter (2001) points out, whereby a solid defined learning goal is predetermined. In this concept originals in fact do not possess self-value but get their relevance and meaning through the function in the epistemological process. Modalities and even the choice of the objects can be dictated by the target group. One of the main criticisms on this concept is

that it incorporates a subjective interpretation from the curator, an already pre-coloured knowledge on history and culture (Terlutter 2001, p. 104). Another keystone advancing the culture/heritage presentation and interpretation is *technological innovation* with new aspects like interactivity and the adding of dynamic elements to the museum experience (see multimedia section). Wallace (1995), noticing recent changes in presentation and interpretation practices, argues that there are not only “new things that are worth saying” (issues of race, gender, class, imperialism, and ecology) but also “new ways of saying things”. This means that both “different messages” and “different media”, particularly with new emerging museums, can be determined. Frank Oppenheimer’s Exploratorium, which was concerned primarily with the exploration of scientific phenomena, was paving the way for many of today’s hands-on and interactive museums (Caulton 1999). In order to continuously improve their product museum professionals started to study how visitors learn and behave in museum environments. Many museums of late use the services of exhibition design companies to write the storylines, procure the exhibits and manage the installation (Caulton 1999, p. 42).<sup>32</sup> However, technological innovation can be regarded as being still in its infancy and new products are continuously developed. Besides computer installations, simulation, pastiche (bricolage) and parody have become part of the museum representations (Jameson 1990, Ritzer 1999, Brown 1995, Hannabuss 1999). Parody is defined as the imitation and mimicry of other styles (Goulding 2000b).

But not only exhibition practices, i.e. the way of how objects are presented, have been changing also the buildings themselves have become an attraction in their own right. Holloway and Taylor (2006, p. 223) say that “modern constructions are becoming almost as important as historic buildings in their ability to attract tourists”. For the most

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<sup>32</sup> However, this is by no means any guarantee for a successful exhibition. Caulton (1999, p. 43) points out that monitoring the design process is important in order to guarantee that educational, technical and safety considerations are not compromised.

part museums and heritage centres are grand buildings designed by prestigious architects such as by Norman Foster in Great Britain, Alvar Aalto in Denmark, Sweden and Finland, Frank Lloyd Wright and Richard Neutra in the United States. Daniel Libeskind's "Jüdisches Museum" in Berlin was already a first rank attraction as an empty architectonic cover without any exhibits housed. To Frank O. Gehry's Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao more than one million visitors annually have been paying homage since its opening (Maier-Solgek 2002). The shining power of these newly constructed museums is enormous with the result that they are nowadays often conceptualised as touristic infrastructure to augment neglected parts of the city (ibid.).

Many museums try to attract visitors in offering *additional services*. Almost every museum nowadays offers some element of food service to the public, i.e. café/restaurant, and museum shops have become attractive for additional merchandising. Museums also increasingly provide their rooms for diverse social events, with the result that these additional services often generate more money than entrance fees.

Museums in their various forms have become an important part of the tourism industry. Their new associated imagery compliments the increasing tourism demand. Andoni Iturbe, Director of Cultural Projects for the Diputacion Foral de Vizcaya (the regional authority for the Basque Country) said:

We see the Guggenheim more for the city's image and a way of attracting tourists to spend money. The Basque Government decided that it needed an international project to raise the city's profile. We need to attract tourists, not local people (quoted in Green 1998, p. 30).

However, not every museum or heritage centre is capable or willing of being a significant tourist attraction (Silberberg 1995).

The boom in the number of museum openings has attempted to offer rooms for the new cultural behaviour of the mass, where art often has evolved to a form of entertainment, a form of leisure activity. In other words, museums offer different rooms for a different type of demand (Weibel 2000). As places of communication and social meeting, museums have become attractive places to spend leisure time. They have become places “for visiting exhibitions, eating, studying, conserving and restoring artefacts, listening to music, seeing films, holding discussions (...)” (Lumley 1988, p. 1). Caulton (1999) however, states that these “third-generation museums” risk of becoming indistinguishable from commercial operators if they fail to meet their original objectives. The difference between first, second and third generation museums is outlined in Table 16. Caulton (1999, p. 138) also argues that the distinction between museums, libraries, archives, schools, shopping centres, parks, zoos, art galleries and performing arts spaces, and even social service centres will blur.

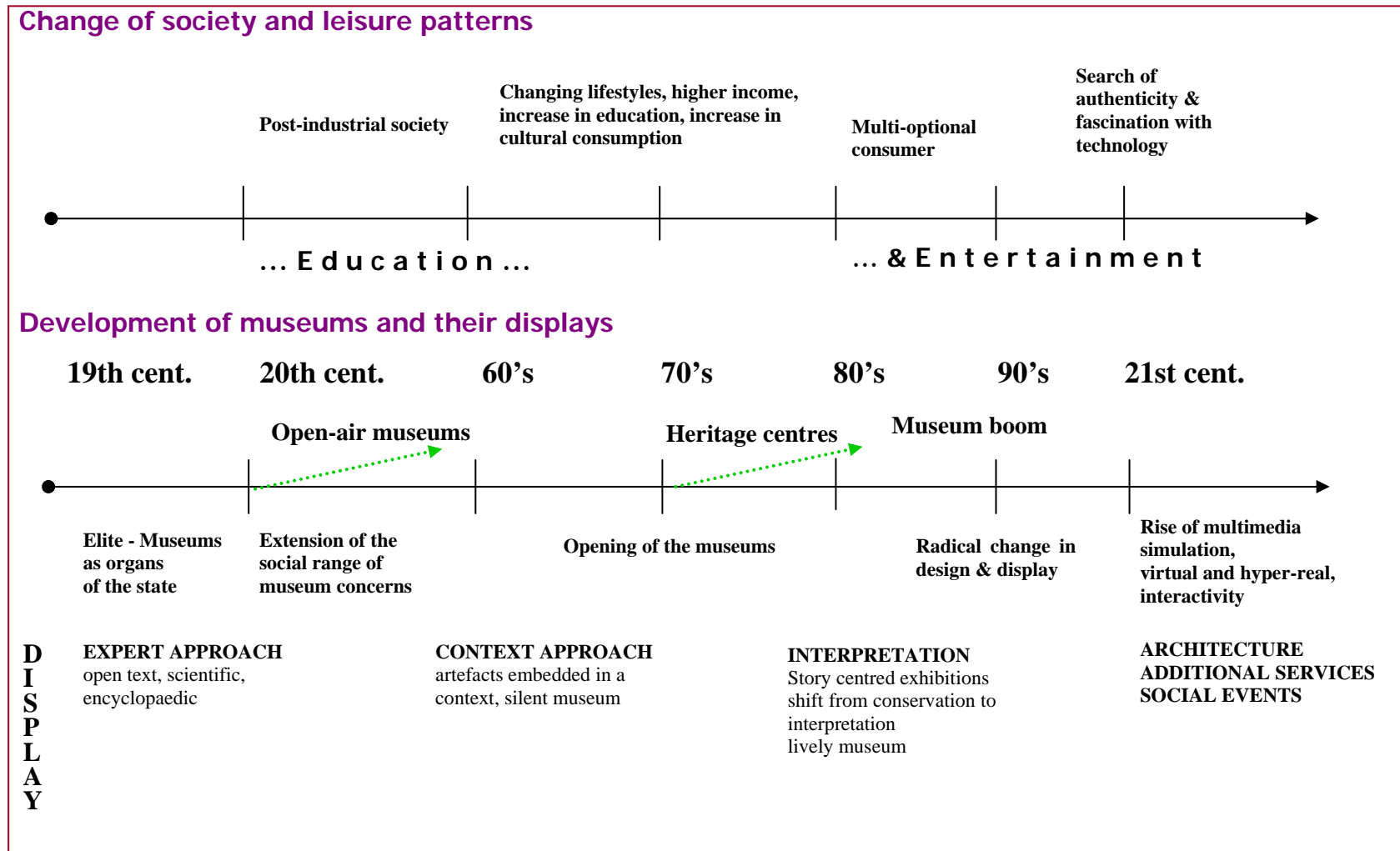
**Table 16: Difference between first-, second-, and third-generation museums**

| <b>Type of museum</b>            | <b>Description</b>  |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>First-generation museums</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• publicly funded</li> <li>• object centred, focus on formal education</li> <li>• target visitors were rarely defined</li> <li>• success, if measured at all, was determined by critical acclaim and by the number of visitors</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Second-generation museums</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• partly funded</li> <li>• often forced to adopt a more commercial approach</li> <li>• provide exciting, innovative and fun exhibits that are historically authentic and scientifically accurate               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ promote public understanding of real objects or real phenomena</li> <li>○ education and entertainment (people can learn and have fun at the same time)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• visitor studies on satisfaction</li> </ul> |
| <b>Third-generation museums</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• partly funded</li> <li>• increasingly indistinguishable from commercial operators (process of hybridisation: incorporation of features not normally attributed to museums)</li> <li>• use cutting-edge technologies for visitor experience but also to store photographs, video, music, dance and stories</li> <li>• education and entertainment</li> <li>• continuous visitor studies on satisfaction and experiences</li> </ul>  |

Source: based on Caulton (1999, pp. 134-140)

Caulton (1999) sees the strength of a museum in their provision of *authentic experiences*. Whether the museum is based on a collection of artefacts, a historic site or the presentation of scientific phenomena – for him, these are all “real” experiences as opposed to a fantasy world of the theme park (ibid., p. 137). He argues that first- and second-generation museums are content-driven, based on interpreting authentic sites, objects or phenomena. Third generation museums, however, which incorporate latest technologies should not lose sight of their original objectives. Caulton (1999, p. 138) senses danger in new technologies encouraging a shift from authenticity to virtual reality. Therefore, commitment to real objects and phenomena should not be given up for the sake of remaining financially viable. The aspect of authenticity, technology and the visitor experience is elaborated in-depth in the dedicated sections.

Figure 13: Development of museums and their display



Source: by the author

### **3.1.5.2.2. World Heritage Sites**

The World Heritage Convention, established by the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) in 1972, provides a permanent legal, administrative and financial framework for international co-operation to safeguard humankind's cultural and natural heritage<sup>33</sup> (UNESCO 2003). Its primary mission is to define and conserve the world's heritage, by drawing up a list of sites whose outstanding values should be preserved for all humanity and to ensure their protection. On signing the convention each country pledges to conserve those cultural and natural sites within its borders that are recognised by the World Heritage Convention. Effective management is required to ensure that the sites are preserved for the future, whilst allowing access to present generations. In return, the international community helps to protect the World Heritage Site (WHS), via payments made to the World Heritage Fund and the exchange of conservation expertise and advice (Leask and Fyall 2000).

As of June 2007, 183 countries had ratified the Convention and the World Heritage List included 830 properties: 644 cultural, 162 natural and 24 mixed properties in 138 States Parties (UNESCO 2007). Amongst the most prominent attractions are the Pyramid Fields from Giza to Dahshur, the Great Wall of China and Petra in Jordan. WHS often represent national icons and frequently act as magnets for tourists (Leask and Fyall 2000). A list of designated WHSs in the Republic of Ireland and in Austria is warranted in Table 17.

Leask and Fyall (2000) identified a number of benefits to a site obtaining WHS status including for example receiving funds for support or being listed enhances the attractiveness to tourists. Disadvantages and threats for WHS status include the influx of

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<sup>33</sup> Cultural heritage: a monument, group of buildings or site of historical, aesthetic, archaeological, scientific, ethnological or anthropological value. Natural heritage: designates outstanding physical, biological, and geological features; habitats of threatened plants or animal species and areas of value on scientific or aesthetic grounds or from the point of view of conservation.



visitors which can endanger the site, danger of economic exploitation, and commercialisation and optimisation of interest to site managers.

**Table 17: Designated World Heritage Sites in Ireland and Austria**

| <b>Republic of Ireland</b>                            | <b>Austria</b>  |
|---|---|
| 1993 Archaeological Ensemble of the Bend of the Boyne | 1996 Historic Centre of the City of Salzburg              |
| 1996 Skellig Michael                                  | 1996 Palace and Gardens of Schönbrunn                     |
|   | 1997 Hallstatt-Dachstein Salzkammergut Cultural Landscape |
|   | 1998 Semmering Railway                                    |
|   | 1999 City of Graz – Historic Centre                       |
|   | 2000 Wachau Cultural Landscape                            |
|   | 2001 Historic Centre of Vienna                            |
|   | 2001 Cultural Landscape of Fertö/Neusiedlersee            |

**Source: UNESCO 2007**

Recent developments regarding the World Heritage List include an expansion from tangible to intangible heritage, making local traditions such as the so-called “hudhud chants” of the Ifugaos people on the Philippines or the sand designs of Vanuatu an attraction in their own right. As noted earlier in this thesis, individuals themselves and their every-day culture customs can constitute cultural attractions.

### **3.1.5.2.3. Emerging Types of Visitor Attractions**

Especially over the last ten years totally new types of attractions have been emerging in the Western world. Among these are so-called “brand-lands” and “themed attractions”. A number of companies have recognised that by opening their doors to the public, either to see work in progress in the factory, or to maintain a workshop or museum of some kind on site, has huge public-relations value (Holloway and Taylor 2006). Many different types and experiences of brand-lands exist leading from Flagship Stores to company museums, factory building visitations, visitor centres, and theme parks. Besides the already well established “Disney Land” and “Disney World” in the United States many prominent examples can be found in Europe such as The Guinness Storehouse in Dublin, Swarovski Crystal Worlds in Wattens/Tyrol, Cadbury world in

Birmingham, and VW Autostadt in Wolfsburg<sup>34</sup>. Also an increasing number of French, Austrian, South African etc. vineyards open their caves for *dégustation*. The crucial point with these attractions is that their main aim is to sell the product (be it beer, wine, jewellery, chocolate, or a car) and to emotionally bind the customer to the brand. Many of them have almost become something like modern pilgrimage sites of people's favourite brands. The Guinness Storehouse has since its opening in 2001 evolved to Dublin's tourist attraction number one. The Swarovski Crystal Worlds rank under the top-10 of Austria's most visited attractions. Holloway and Taylor (2006, p. 231) argue "[w]hat is often a minimal tour of the 'factory' itself is followed by an extended visit to the shop". The concept standing behind such brand-lands is to unify sales, promotion, education and entertainment (Steinecke 2001, p. 87).

Another innovative strategy that is used broadly in the attractions sector is "theming". Themed attractions are based around nature, culture, history, fantasy, industry, agriculture, and sport. Especially those of *ecological* persuasion have been mushrooming throughout Europe focussing on a range of ecological and environmental themes. They educate about ecological sustainability and how mankind must nurture its relationship with its natural environment. Prominent examples are the "Eden-Project" in Wales/UK and "Volcania" in the Auvergne/France. They are often supported by reproductions and the application of new technologies such as high-tech rides, virtual realities, and interactive displays. In contrast to brand-lands described earlier, which can be seen as modern industrial tourism attractions, there is another emerging type of attractions which focus on the past, namely so-called "industrial heritage sites". In Britain many redundant factory buildings and obsolete machinery dating back to the industrial revolution have been lately preserved and restored for tourism. A case in point

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<sup>34</sup>The complex includes: guided tours through the factory, the Volkswagen museum, a Ritz Carlton Hotel, several pavilions dedicated to their cars (e.g. Skoda pavilion), Maritime Panorama Tour, the SunFuellLab, Training parcours, a car design studio, restaurants and cafes, special year-round events.

is Ironbridge, now on the World Heritage List, which has enjoyed considerable success since its opening. Many of these old factories and warehouses are nowadays recognised as architectural gems. Industrial heritage includes early mining sites (coal, copper, gold, diamonds) and derelict textile mills. Many of them have been converted into museums, open-air museums, or even theme parks. The attraction can either constitute an industrial remain in the form of an old factory or a whole area that is characterised by industry (Fontanari and Fontanari 2001). Events and evening programmes often complement the programme.

Originated in the United States an increase in so-called integrated leisure complexes can also be spotted in Europe lately. Such centres combine retail, leisure, entertainment, catering and accommodation into usually one huge complex. Rather than being stand-alone attractions they offer a dense spectrum of recreational opportunities in multifaceted facilities (Benckendorff 2006). Another remarkable trend can be noticed worldwide where art and tourism have been forming tight bonds. For example, in the Oberengadin (Switzerland) a “Grand Hotel” from the Belle Epoch era which was recently renovated by international star architects has furnished its facilities with “world-class”-art from an art gallery in Zurich. The hotel also offers various artist-in-residence programmes. These trends imply that traditional distinctions between attractions have diminished (Dewhurst and Dewhurst 2006). Caulton (1999) argues that it may be difficult for museums and other cultural attractions to maintain their individual identity in the future as boundaries blur between different types of leisure attractions.

The supply of cultural and heritage attractions throughout the world varies in age, size and historical significance (Timothy and Boyd 2003). They are subject to continuous change in two basic ways: they can be widened and deepened (ibid.). On the one hand side new sites are constantly discovered (or “constructed”) and others may change their

status from previously not seen as significant attractions to be designated as such. Over the next century further changes in the nature of the cultural attractions sector can be expected. The array of facilities will be continuously broadened offering multifaceted education and entertainment opportunities for cultural tourists and their differing needs.

### **3.1.5.3. Settings and Contexts of Cultural Supply**

The settings of cultural supply encompass urban and rural areas (see section 2.3.5. and 2.3.6.)<sup>35</sup>. Many of the oldest cities of Europe have a wide array of historical significant buildings and other cultural attractions in the form of museums, archaeological sites, theatres, operas, squares, bridges, fountains etc. and have become major tourism destinations. But also rural areas have become attractive in terms of their cultural and heritage assets such as castles, large estates, gardens and arboreta, battlefields, etc.. In both rural and urban areas so-called “touristic icons” can be found. They are crucial in attracting first-time visitors. However, in order to attract repeat visitors a broader stock of attractions is required (Holloway and Taylor 2006).

Ways of linking several cultural or heritage sites that are spread over a bigger area are so-called “heritage trails”. This specific form combines several attractions under a particular theme and can be regarded as linear tourist attractions (Timothy and Boyd 2003). The individual attractions are usually connected by a walking, cycling and/or driving route. Such trails exist at different scales as outlined in Table 18 below.

Heritage trails can be found in both rural and urban areas, and are sometimes a combination of the two. Timothy and Boyd (2003) argue that most of the mega and large-scale trails are located predominantly in rural areas with a certain urban component, while small scale trails are almost exclusively based in urban areas. They

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<sup>35</sup> as they were already discussed in depth as part of the various forms and dimensions of cultural tourism they are only mentioned here as an aside.

are very different in terms of their themes and stories told. The connection of several attractions under one theme provides significant benefits in terms of marketing and the spreading out of heavy visitation of a well-recognised site to a wider area. In marketing a whole ensemble of e.g. small scale attractions raises their level of attractiveness that an individual site is rarely able to achieve (ibid.). Furthermore, internationally recognised landmarks can be bundled with lesser-known attractions. For example, at Newgrange, a megalithic site and one of the most visited heritage attraction in Ireland, visitors are offered a tour through the Boyne Valley including sites such as Knowth, Dowth and the Hill of Tara to emphasise other attractions nearby and thereby protecting the key attraction from visitor overloads.

**Table 18: Different scales of heritage trails**

| Scale   | Examples   |
|---|--|
| <b>mega</b><br>(international)                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Silk Road throughout Central Asia and the Middle East</li> <li>• La Ruta Maya in Central America</li> <li>• Slave Route in West Africa</li> </ul>   |
| <b>large or intermediate-sized</b><br>(national and regional) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mormon and Oregon trails in the USA</li> <li>• Winery routes in South Africa</li> <li>• St. James way in Spain/Portugal</li> </ul>  |
| <b>small</b><br>(local)                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wine trail in Lower Austria</li> <li>• Apple and copper trail in Styria/Austria</li> <li>• Cheese trail in Vorarlberg/Austria</li> <li>• Industrial heritage trail around Stoke-on-Trent in England</li> <li>• Dublin writers trail in Dublin</li> <li>• Garden trail in Wicklow/Ireland</li> </ul> |

**Source: adapted from Timothy and Boyd (2003), p. 51**

#### 3.1.5.4. Management of Cultural Attractions

A number of visitor management techniques are required to safeguard and protect the sites and artefacts. At the same time, cultural attractions need to ensure that visitors enjoy a satisfying experience of the site.

[A] lack of visitor management will undermine the visitor experience and contribute to a sense of dissatisfaction among visitors, who will be less inclined to make a repeat visit and more inclined to make negative comments about the attraction to their friends, neighbours and relatives, thereby reducing the likelihood of them choosing to visit the attraction (Dewhurst and Dewhurst 2006, p. 298).

Fyall and Garrod (1988, p. 227, Garrod and Fyall 2000, p. 686) have identified the following critical success factors of heritage sites in making tourists' visits enjoyable and satisfying. The site:

- should be inexpensive;
- should be user friendly;
- should be physically and intellectually accessible to as many different visitor groups as possible;
- must be managed in a way that balances the needs of visitors with those of conservation;
- must have its integrity and authenticity maintained;
- must give visitors good value for their money.

The outlined success factors have direct relevance to this thesis. The use-friendliness will become all the more important when the issue of application of multimedia and the visitor experience will be explored. The intellectual accessibility of a site is closely linked with interpretation as will be seen in the next section. Site protection and sustainability can be regarded as *sine qua non* when making a cultural treasure accessible for the public. Especially for sites with high visitor numbers strict management plans have to be implemented in this regard. Fyall and Garrod (ibid.) also stress the importance of keeping up the integrity and authenticity of a site. Likewise, McKercher and DuCros (2002, p. 122) see quality and authenticity as critical

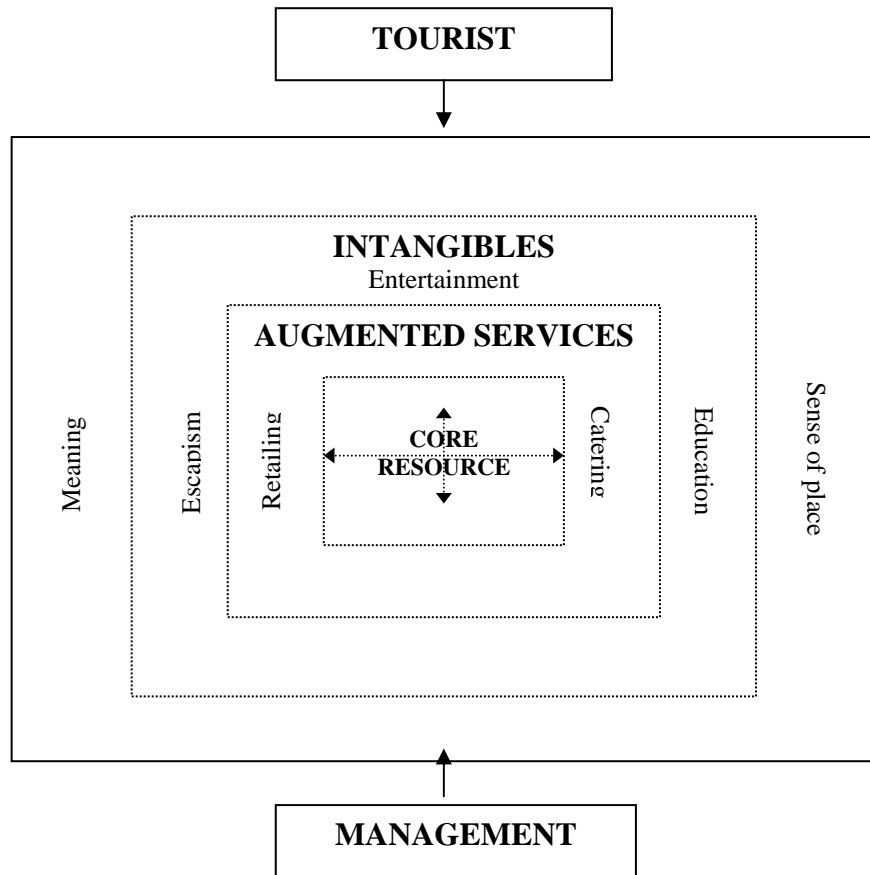
ingredients to make a cultural heritage product successful. Caulton (1999) goes even further and states that authenticity can provide a competitive advantage for a cultural attraction. In any case, the needs of the visitors have to be in line with the benefits provided from visiting a specific attraction (McKercher and DuCros 2002, p. 109). Visitors want value for money. However, this does not mean that the site should be inexpensive. Differentiated pricing is therefore seen as a more successful concept that should be applied for effective and successful visitor management.

Continuous monitoring of visitor needs and focus on product development and experience design is required in order to survive in the competitive market for cultural attractions. Providing high-quality experiences is an essential part of heritage management. Before exploring authenticity and multimedia, general issues on product development need to be investigated to determine general domains and aspects of the visitor experience and the experience itself. Also site protection issues are addressed briefly.

#### **3.1.5.4.1. Product Development**

Benckendorff (2006) has introduced a useful framework for attractions based on earlier conceptualisations brought forward by Gunn (1988) and Wanhill (2003), as illustrated in Figure 14. This framework is based on three product components: the core resource, augmented services, and intangibles, and will be used as a starting point to investigate the visitor experience of cultural attractions.

**Figure 14: Framework for tourist attractions**



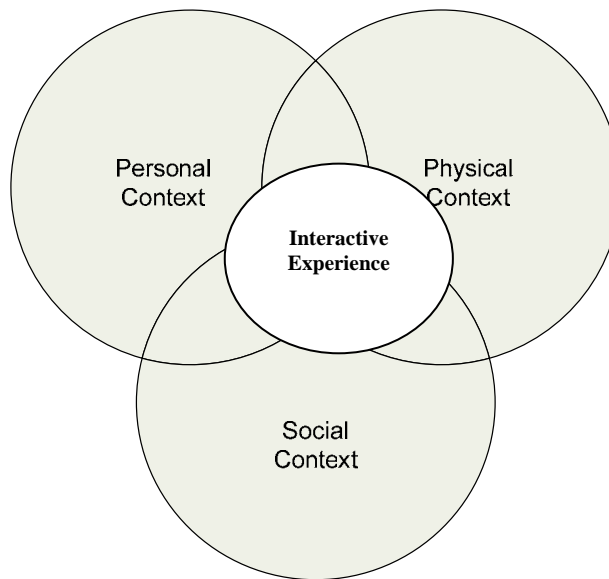
**Source: adapted from Benckendorff (2006), p. 202**

For Benckendorff (2006, p. 203) the *core resource* provides a setting for activities that result in the creation of visitor experiences. It is what attracts the visitors to visit in the first instance (Leask 2003, p. 6). There are two dimensions inherent in the core resource: cultural versus natural and permanent versus temporary features. However, there are more dimensions in which the core resource can be conceptualized as outlined in the section types of cultural attractions. The *augmented component* features the tangible and intangible elements that are peripheral to the core appeal of the attraction, but which contribute to satisfying customer needs (Swarbrooke 2002). This includes car parking facilities, toilets, catering, and retail outlets. Timothy and Boyd (2003) suggest that any heritage attraction needs a good support service infrastructure. Attractions themselves are not enough; they nowadays require a certain infrastructure around them to cater to the needs of the visitors. They have to provide food and shopping facilities



and in a broader sense also transportation. *Intangible elements* such as education, entertainment, excitement and escapism are connected with the desire of visitors to choose experiences which meet their needs. These include the product components associated with the core appeal of the site together with the quality of service, presentation and interpretation of the site. Rising consumer expectations coupled with new possibilities have forced many attractions to place strong emphasis on presentation and interpretation. Many existing attractions have been enhanced by attaching a visitor centre or interpretative centre next to them or also by augmenting additional exhibits and buildings. Benckendorff (2006) argues that attraction managers increasingly recognise that the core resource can be exploited or further developed for multiple uses. For example, cultural attractions are increasingly used for film sets (e.g. Louvre – “Da Vinci Code”), weddings and other special events. Some attractions have even come to offer accommodation and conference facilities to increase the utility of the resource. Furthermore, attractions are extending their opening hours, some offer special night tours and some are open even 24 hours.

As noticed earlier, cultural tourist attractions are very different in their nature. For example, a concentration camp provides a different experience than an art gallery. Therefore, regarding the experiences they provide there are a number of differences but also similarities among them. In the following, an overall framework is presented following Falk and Dierking’s (1994) “Interactive Experience Model” which suggests the interaction of three different spheres: the personal, the social, and the physical context (see Figure 15). The interactions of these elements create the visitor’s experience. Although the various spheres are viewed separately in practice they function as an integrated whole.

**Figure 15: The interactive experience model**

**Source: based on Falk and Dierking (1994), p. 5**

#### **3.1.5.4.1.1. Visitors**

Regardless of the type of cultural attraction “different types of visitors manifest distinct patterns of behaviour” (Falk and Dierking 1994, p. 1). The cultural tourist was already discussed in the previous section. Here, some further important aspects of visitor behaviour are explored subsequently. Falk and Dierking (1994) outline a number of variables which behavioural patterns depend on such as interests, motivations, concerns, the knowledge and experience people bring to bear upon their visit. These patterns result in expectations and anticipated outcomes for the visit with which visitors arrive. In other words, each person arrives at a cultural attraction with a personal agenda and needs to be fulfilled. Falk and Dierking (1994) argue that “the decision to visit a [site] involves matching personal and social interests and desires with the anticipated physical context and the associated activities of a [site]” (p. 13). This has implications whether/how a site will be enjoyed and appreciated.

Visitors arrive at a certain attraction with certain expectations and these vary from visitor to visitor. For many visitors, expectations are moulded by earlier visits to the same or similar sites. Repeat visitors know what to expect and take some things for

granted. However, this does not mean that first-time or occasional visitors come with no expectations. Sometimes, their expectations can be very specific. Although they might lack recent, direct experience, their expectations can be shaped by various sources of information such as radio or television announcements, newspaper articles, advertising, travel literature, or by word-of-mouth from friends or relatives who have previously visited the attraction. Regardless from which source visitors gather information, if it was stated that they must see a certain object/painting etc. and they fail to do so they feel that, no matter how wonderful the rest of the visit was, it was somehow incomplete (Falk and Dierking 1994, p. 34). Falk and Dierking (1994, p. 35) argue that

[v]isitors to zoos expect to see animals. Visitors to history museums expect to see historical objects. Visitors to art museums expect to see art. These content-specific expectations seem not only to form a major part of the visitor's agenda for a visit but also appear to influence the outcomes of a visit.

They (*ibid.*) also mention that an important factor of shaping visitors agendas is if they plan to visit the attraction alone or with partners and family. In general, cultural attractions are very appealing for family outings. However, children and their parents have quite different expectations. While for most of the parents the social and educational aspect seems to be prevalent, children's concerns are centred on favourite exhibits, the gift shop, and food (*ibid.*, pp. 35-36). Adults with families are first and foremost preoccupied with their children while adults in other groups are typically interested in the nature and content of the site (*ibid.*, p. 36). Therefore, for them the intellectual experience usually rates higher than the social one. Some adults use sites as places to take visiting relatives or to meet other adults. Overall it can be said when visitors come in social groups of any constellation (also organised groups) the needs, comfort, and enjoyment of other group members are crucial to the success of the visit (*ibid.* p. 36).

While experiencing a site “the same thing can mean different things to different peoples” (Boniface and Fowler 1993). Some visitors are locals and some are foreigners. Some are novices and some are experts in a given subject matter. Novices and foreigners need help with interpretation and orientation. If they feel uncomfortable and do not find their way around a particular attraction, this can dramatically affect visitor response and behaviour (Falk and Dierking 1994, p. 149). Visitors are also quite disparate as to how they learn best (touching things or reading). Whatever a visitor experiences is filtered through the personal content. In other words, no two people ever see and experience the world in quite the same way (ibid., p. 4).

No matter what people’s intentions are to visit a cultural attraction, once a particular site is experienced this shapes expectations of future experiences. This includes not just intellectual, but also social and physical elements of the experience (Falk and Dierking 1994). This implies that previous experiences significantly affect the visitor’s experiences.

#### **3.1.5.4.1.2. The Social Context**

A cultural attraction provides a social context for different groups of people such as visitors and staff. Social interaction between these groups plays a critical role in the experience of a cultural attraction. Social interaction takes place between visitors, who come there in a group (e.g. family), between visitors and different members of the staff, and between visitors and other visitors who happen to be there at the same time. This includes questions and discussions generated by looking at exhibits, reading labels, looking at performances, and discussions with a tour guide or other visitors. People usually have a desire to talk about things they have discovered, what they find interesting, what they like/dislike about an exhibition/site, or what sense they make of certain exhibits/stories. They often relate and compare objects to their own concrete experiences (Falk and Dierking 1994, p. 47) and want to share their ideas with their

companions. Falk and Dierking (1994) argue that visitors also pay attention to what other visitors are doing and get influenced by their behaviour. However, a major problem at many cultural attractions is crowding which can severely undermine the visitor's social experience.

Visitors also come in contact with different members of the staff when they decided to visit an attraction, such as guards, receptionist/ticket seller, tour guides etc.. Guards are there to ensure the security of a place and are often dressed in uniforms reminding of police. They inspect the visitor's admission ticket and instruct them to leave items in the cloak room. People might also approach them to ask specific questions. Therefore, the tenor of the visit can be influenced by the demeanour and appearance of the guard (ibid., p. 87). Also people working at the information desk and as tour guides are part of the social context or the "humanware" of a site. Their attitude und friendliness has a huge impact whether visitors feel welcome and happy at the site and therefore influences the visitor experience and satisfaction with the site. Falk and Dierking (1994, p. 157) claim that personal interaction increases the likelihood that a museum experience will be memorable. Therefore, staff should attempt to personalise the experience for each visitor.

#### **3.1.5.4.1.3. The Physical Context**

The visitor experience occurs within a certain physical context and generally speaking, people want a safe, stimulating, and enjoyable environment. People are influenced by the various elements/stimuli of the physical surroundings such as the objects on display, the architecture, and what Falk and Dierking (1994, p. 3) term as the "feel" of the site including objects and ambience. The physical context, therefore, contains tangible and intangible elements of experiences.

Visitors are drawn to cultural attractions because they contain objects outside their normal experience (ibid., p. 146) or because they are fascinated by the exceptional architecture. For example, visitors come to a museum to see unique objects or they come to a castle or manor to see the unique building and its interiors. In experience design of newly built attractions, the setting is important and should provide the backdrop of the content and message that wants to be communicated. Heide, Lærdal and Grønhaug (2007) have studied ambience in the hospitality sector and provide some important insights into this complex phenomenon which can be transferred to the context of cultural attractions. They argue that ambience is an important determinant of customer satisfaction in service organisations. As service organisations sell the “intangible”, ambience is a tool for influencing a consumer’s perception and experience of a site. Perceptions of ambience can lead to certain emotions, beliefs, and physiological sensations (Heide et al. 2007). Ambience, however, only counts if it really generates a reaction within or among individual visitors. Put differently, “ambience is expected to evoke an internal *response*” (Heide et al. 2007, p. 2). Ambience, though, is a term that is rather difficult to grasp and constitutes an ambiguous concept. Ambience goes beyond atmosphere, which is linked with the physical environment or “servicescape” as Bitner (1992) has termed it. According to Heide et al. (2007) ambience has to be seen as being created by the interaction between individuals and their environment (p. 2). Hence, ambience also depends on staff; their attitude towards visitors and how they interact with them. Heide et al. (ibid.) have identified three important factors for creating a desired ambience:

- *atmospheric factors*: background conditions in the environment, e.g. temperature, scent, noise, music, and lightening;
- *social factors*: the “people” component of the environment;
- *design factors*: functional and aesthetic elements, e.g. architecture, style, and layout.

From the above it can be concluded that it seems to be a combination of several factors that contribute to special ambience. For Heide et al. (ibid., p. 5) “it is the atmospheric drivers combined that create the ambience”. This suggests that the desired ambience can never be created by a single factor. At the same time, one inconsistent element can be enough to ruin an otherwise favourable ambience. It is reasonable to assume that tourists perceive the elements of a cultural attraction holistically. This implies that it is the total composition of elements that determines how an attraction’s ambience is perceived. The authors (ibid.) also stress the dynamic nature of ambience, meaning that it may change gradually depending on time of day, weather, season, type of visitors etc. Although knowledge about ambience is partly personal and tacit, i.e. uncoded, it is a key factor of the contentment of attraction visitors (ibid.).

It is out of question that the experience of an attraction nowadays also includes parking facilities, restrooms, gift shops, and restaurant/coffee shop. These facilities are just as important as the quality of the exhibition itself. Falk and Dierking (1994, p. 90), again referring to the museum, say that “[f]or visitors, walking around exhibit halls, visiting the gift shop, and eating at the food service are all part and parcel of the same event – the museum experience”. For visitors, e.g. souvenirs are important reminders of their experience. They like to buy so-called “memorabilia” also to show them to friends and relatives. As mentioned earlier, visitors experience a cultural institution as a whole, or as “*Gestalt*” as Falk and Dierking (ibid, p. 93) term it, and food service, gift shop, and toilets are important elements of it.

Falk and Dierking (1994, p. 56) identified a number of consumer behaviour patterns in museum environments which can also be generalised to other cultural attractions. Visitors, for example, seem to have a tendency to turn to the right upon entering regardless of exhibition content or design. They usually spend more time in the first few halls and first floor than exhibits on upper floors. Exits have a tendency to “pull”

visitors toward them, meaning that visitors will generally exit a gallery through the first door they encounter. Visitors also get tired as they proceed through an exhibition. They become both physically and mentally exhausted - what was termed by Benjamin Gilman (1916) as “museum fatigue” (quoted in Falk and Dierking 1994, p. 56). Falk and Dierking (1994, pp. 58-63) suggest to differentiate between first-time and occasional, frequent visitors, and organised groups in terms of their “typical” patterns of behaviour. The first group, they suggest, have four components in their patterns:

1. *orientation* (lasting three to ten minutes);
2. *intensive looking* (lasting fifteen to forty minutes);
3. *exhibit “cruising”* (lasting twenty to forty-five minutes);
4. *leave-taking* (lasting three to ten minutes).

Frequent visitors usually follow a predictable pattern of behaviour and are more likely to exhibit a two-phase pattern: (1) intensive looking and (2) leave taking. They are far more efficient in their consumption but are also susceptible to museum fatigue. Organised groups demonstrate a different set of behavioural patterns. They are usually led through an exhibition in two phases: a long period of guided intensive looking, followed by a brief free period of exhibit cruising.

Regarding the physical context from the above it can be taken that visitors behave in a fairly predictable manner, despite the diversity of people who visit cultural attractions and the variety of exhibit content and design (Falk and Dierking 1994, p. 66). However, visitors are selective in what to focus on, they make different choices, allocate their time differently, and attempt to personalise and make sense of what they see. They interpret a site/object/exhibit on the basis of their mental constructs they bring with them and their individual frames of reference (influenced by education, hobbies, and reading). They are drawn to exhibits that are either visually compelling or intrinsically interesting to them. Many visitors do not view the exhibits in the intended order and choose their own way



through an exhibition. Furthermore, they do not absorb all the information presented. This is because people are able to perceive only a limited number of things at one time, regardless of their intelligence (ibid. p. 79). Therefore, it can be said that visitors create their own experiences.

Cultural attractions are behaviour settings. Falk and Dierking (1994, p. 64) claim that within our culture, behaviour is constrained in certain physical/social environments by accepted convention. For example, “visitors to museums are expected to act reverentially, to look at, but not touch, the objects, keep their voices low, wear appropriate attire, and show respect for the collection” (ibid.). However, the trend of hands-on approaches has gained momentum over the last three decades in many cultural attractions and allows for different behaviour patterns. The hands-on approach will be discussed in more detail in the interpretation section.

The ultimate aim of a cultural attraction is to enhance the visitor experience. This includes not only orientation on content, but also affective and psychomotor elements. If content becomes the only consideration, this can dramatically reduce the experience quality of a site. Approaches of weaving content into experiences are interactives and multisensory and multimedia techniques. This helps audiences “acquire information through visual, aural, and tactile means” (Falk and Dierking 1994, p. 137). Falk and Dierking (1994, p. 155) claim that “[n]o matter how adept one is at absorbing abstractions, nothing reinforces experience like involvement of the senses”. At the same time, cultural attractions should offer different opportunities for different learning styles. Therefore, information should be presented in different ways in order to cater to the needs of different visitors. Each visitor learns in a different way, and interprets information through the lens of previous knowledge, experience, and beliefs (ibid., p. 135). Hence, visitors try to understand a site/exhibit in the context of their own experiences, e.g. visitors tend to compare an object on display to an object they have

seen before (*ibid.*, p. 139). Therefore, exhibits should facilitate the visitor's ability to personalise objects and ideas. This can be achieved through labels, humour, theatre, live interpreters, contextual arrangement of objects, or videos that begin with the familiar and move to the unfamiliar (*ibid.*). Visitors arrive with different previous knowledge and it is important to understand what the visitor already knows in order to provide him with a satisfying experience. Providing introduction to abstract ideas helps visitors to understand a topic. This can be achieved through various interactives but also through short videos or audio-visual shows. Visitors also have different expectations for what the attraction will hold. Museum professionals have largely ignored that visitors do not only come to their institutions to learn but to a much bigger extent, to have fun. Different social groups have diverse expectations also as regards social interactions. Especially for families such experiences should be promoted.

Falk and Dierking (1994, p. 138) suggest to design exhibits which accommodate a broad range of visitors. A common approach would be to design exhibitions with multiple layers (e.g. parts for the neophyte and parts for the expert, parts for the visitor spending five minutes and parts for the visitor spending fifty minutes). Another approach, they suggest, is to design some exhibits specifically for first-time visitors and some specifically for frequent, or expert, visitors. Attraction managers need to be attuned to the needs and desires of their visitors. However, it may not be possible to accommodate everyone's agenda with a single approach or within a single exhibit.

#### **3.1.5.4.2. Interpretation**

Although Falk and Dierking (1994) have developed a comprehensive model as to how visitors experience a site they have failed to thoroughly integrate an important element, namely interpretation. Interpretation has become an essential part of cultural tourism and designing experiences for the visitor. Culture and heritage when viewed by people who are not experts have to be interpreted to them (Dewhurst and Dewhurst 2006, p.

485). Moreover, people who come from a different cultural context need detailed on-site information to derive meaning of the culture/heritage presented to them and to develop a sense of place. Interpretation enables tourists to obtain an understanding of the culture and heritage alien to them (Goodall and Beech 2006, p. 486). It creates an enhanced appreciation of the site and increases visitors' respect of it. Interpretation can therefore be regarded as key to the cultural/heritage experience. Furthermore, quality interpretation has the ability to raise the added value of a site in the eyes of the tourist (Timothy and Boyd 2003, p. 204).

Much of the work regarding interpretation at cultural and heritage sites is based on Freeman Tilden's (1967) pioneering work on interpretation in National Parks in the United States. He defined interpretations as

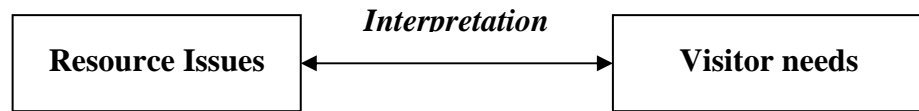
an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by first-hand experience and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information (ibid., p. 8).

Interpretive philosophies have been continuously advancing and nowadays many cultural attractions work with specialist interpretive planners and pedagogical trainers.

When planning interpretation of a cultural site both sides have to be considered: the site and the visitor as Figure 16 illustrates. Poria, Butler and Airey (2004) claim that heritage tourism is essentially a phenomenon based on demand whereby the tourists' perceptions of certain site attributes rather than the attributes themselves are important. Therefore, a link between the tourist and the heritage site needs to be established rather than taking the two of them separately (ibid. 2006, pp. 324-325). In a similar vein, Herbert (2001, p. 316) stresses the importance of matching the needs of the respective visitor segment and the interpretational facilities, resulting in the overall question of how to interact (see Figure 16). In the following, first interpretation regarding the visitor

needs is addressed. Then interpretation and resource issues as well as differing perspectives as to how a site should be interpreted are investigated.

**Figure 16: Basic model of interpretation**



**Source: by the author**

Tilden (1967) placed strong emphasis on the visitor experience and suggested the following principles of interpretation which should be acknowledged:

- to provoke a reaction from the visitor;
- to relate to the personality or experience of the visitor;
- to deal with all aspects of human knowledge;
- not to dilute interpretation to adults in the case of children.

For Tilden (1967) visitors should be integrated and stimulated to participate. He also recognised that an important element of interpretation is to provide the visitor with an emotional experience.

When again taking the museum as an example, firstly artefacts/exhibits are collected, they are preserved and restored and research is conducted, and finally they are exhibited and interpreted for the visitor. It is important to note at this point that presentation and interpretation are interrelated. This means that the way exhibits are presented already involves a certain interpretation. Caulton (1999) points out that every hands-on exhibit chosen, every artefact, every structure, every label or graphic image communicates a message to the visitor. In order to understand interpretation it is helpful to take a look at the communication process and how it works to get a message across to the visitor. In the communication process the *sender*, which are in most cases the exhibition developers/interpretative planners (likely to be a whole team of experts consisting of the curator, archaeologist, historian etc.) encode the historical and scientific information

and use a certain medium (e.g. artefact itself, text panel, multimedia) as a channel to bring the information to the *receiver* (the visitor). However, the expert team does not only have to encode the messages in an accurate and appropriate way but they also have to match them with the needs of the visitors. The aim is to

encode the message in such a way that the recipient is able to decode it with as little interference as possible – to maximise opportunities for visitors to construct the meaning (or range of meanings) from the exhibition (Caulton 1999, p. 40).

Eco (1998) points out that “the meaning of a message changes according to the code with which [the receiver] interprets it” (p. 139). Every visitor might perceive and interpret the message in a different way depending on the code used. Hence, when the message is decoded by the visitor it depends what codes s/he uses to understand the message (to get the message right). Visitors are rarely homogeneous in their profiles, motivations and cognitive processing. This implies that the way in which the visitor decodes and interprets the message can’t be really regulated (Eco 1988, p. 143). This implies that the picture the visitor gets in the end is not controllable.

In any case interpretation must reflect the different information processing capabilities of individual visitors. A difficulty in this context is that experts such as e.g. archaeologists, curators, historians etc. often tend to use a language (or jargon), i.e. codes, non-experts are not familiar with. Hence, they are not able to decode the message. Another obstacle is that often exhibit interpretation establishes complex relationships between objects and ideas. Falk and Dierking (1994, p. 107) argue that “[t]hese relationships may be so well understood by the content experts designing the exhibit that they are not made explicit on the assumption that the visitor will understand them”. Furthermore, it should be recognised that visitors are only able to take in a certain amount of information. Overall it can be said that fewer information is better than information overload with the inherent danger of creating “museum fatigue”. Also, a mere listing of facts might be worthwhile in its own right but might not be as

appealing as facts presented in a fashion that makes a certain topic easily digestible for a broader audience and not just for the expert.

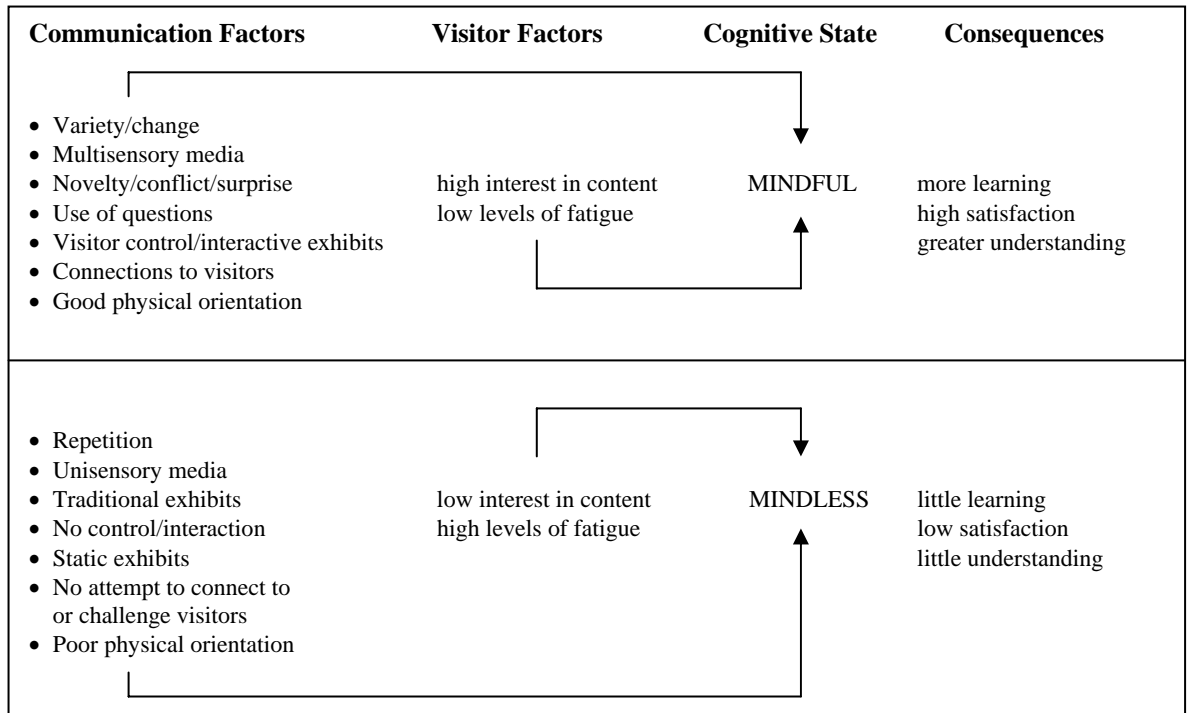
Especially in tourism also cross-cultural needs of visitors must be addressed. Schouten (1995, pp. 21-22) argues that information is processed through a person's cognitive structure. This implies that "information gets filtered that fits with a certain person's knowledge, or concept, around him" (ibid.). Therefore, a person's ability to process new information especially when it relates to a heritage context other than one's own has to be considered when interpreting a site. Visitors come to cultural sites with divergent cultural backgrounds and they cannot understand the site in the way locals would. They need to be told what is unique about the place or the exhibit and orientation, direction and instructions are therefore necessary. In order to increase a visitors' empathy for a different cultural background active questioning and participation should be encouraged. Furthermore, interpretation has to address issues like multilingual interpretation and cross-cultural understanding.

On the basis of her mindful-mindless idea, Moscardo (1996) has provided a helpful overview of communication factors at heritage sites that either lead to high or low satisfaction with the site (see Figure 17).

To create a satisfying experience Moscardo (1999) suggests that attraction managers should help visitors to find their way around through the application of orientation systems such as maps and signs. Furthermore, personal connections to visitors should be made by engaging them in conversation and giving them choices to allow some degree of control. Also, offering variety and surprises is important that visitors do not get bored. This means that diverse senses should be addressed and different levels of not only mental but also physical activity should be provided. A number of interactives and hands-on activities can be used to arrange this. Finally, using themes and stories to

organise and present information helps to create understanding and is an effective means of connecting to tourists (McKercher and DuCros 2002).

**Figure 17: Mindfulness – mindless model**



**Source: based on Moscardo 1996, p. 46**

Attractions should also provide for social experiences, as outlined earlier. Caulton (1999) points out that the visitors’ experience of the exhibition depends to great extent on the social and personal context of the visit. Even though these factors lie largely beyond the influence of the development team an ambience should be created “that is likely to be friendly, engaging, lively, exciting, dynamic, warm, inspirational, thought-provoking, full of movement and fun” (Caulton 1999, p. 26).

In the above model it becomes clear that not only communication factors are important to create high satisfaction among visitors. Instead the visitors themselves and what they bring with them to the attraction has an influence whether they leave the attraction with a meaningful experience or not.

#### **3.1.5.4.2.1. Forms of Interpretation**

Goodall and Beech (2006) argue that whatever the reason for visiting a cultural attraction may be there is need for some form of interpretation. When viewed from the angle of consumption/experience the following three main forms of interpretation can be determined (ibid., p. 502):

- passive;
- active;
- inter-active.

Traditional forms of displays are either passive (glass showcases) or active (working models and machines). When visitors “look at” exhibits or observe a site but do not interact then this can be regarded as a passive form of interpretation. However, it has to be noted that this does not mean that when “only” looking at an exhibit the visitor also has a low mental activity. Both, active and passive displays are regarded as “hands-off” (Caulton 1999). Today’s visitors are no longer satisfied simply gazing at displays in glass cases, they expect to be actively involved with the exhibits through “hands-on” experiences. However, the hands-on concept is still quite unusual for those visitors, who were indoctrinated with a “do not touch” philosophy (ibid., p. 27). Timothy and Boyd (2003, pp. 224-225) argue that

[a] site that offers opportunities to participate in historic activities, to handle and use artefacts, or to view the re-enactment of a historically significant event is much more interesting to visitors than simply looking at a motionless display of gadgets and photographs.

Interactive interpretation enables the visitors to participate in and to become both physically and mentally involved. Beech and Goodall (2006) assert that “allowing visitors to handle objects does have benefits in encouraging personal interpretation” (p.



503). Interactivity<sup>36</sup> means that the tourist provides information on himself in order to receive a customised service. The visitor becomes a “*co-producer*” through discovery, action and interaction. Interactivity, therefore, opens the possibility to turn visitors into explainers (Caulton 1999). Interactivity works at multiple levels: it may not directly involve handling artefacts but is also designed to help visitors explore objects or phenomena (e.g. scientific phenomena) alongside the exhibit. Interactivity is therefore often associated with computer games and high-tech tools, where the physical interaction is limited to pressing buttons and touching screens. Moreover, interactivity also means that visitors can be animated to interact with each other and thereby fostering the social experience within a cultural attraction. Almost every new exhibition or attraction today incorporates an interactive element for its visitors. There has been widespread improvement regarding visitors’ physical and intellectual access to real objects and real phenomena through interactive features and hands-on learning. Timothy and Boyd (2003) see interactivity as a central element in heritage visitation. There is widespread conviction that interactivity provides added educational value and that participation stimulates curiosity and contributes greatly to visitor’s enjoyment (Caulton 1999). Therefore, it comes with no surprise that science centres and hands-on museums have enjoyed remarkable success as major visitor attractions throughout the world.

#### **2.1.5.4.2.2. Education versus Entertainment**

Interpretation should provide knowledge and therefore educate people. It is aimed at making the tourist understand and therefore appreciate a particular place or phenomenon (Timothy and Boyd 2003). For many tourists, however not all, learning is a major motivation for visiting heritage sites, especially for frequent visitors. These

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<sup>36</sup> interactive and hands-on have similar meanings and have become largely interchangeable. However, a hands-on exhibit that simply involves pushing a button is not truly interactive; rather it is reactive, in that the exhibit simply follows a predetermined outcome (Caulton 1999). This will be explained in more detail in the multimedia chapter.

tourists engage in informal learning as opposed to formal education such as in schools and universities. Falk and Dierking (1994) state that the conditions of e.g. museum learning are very different from those of the classroom as it is self-directed rather than directed by a teacher/lecturer. For them “[e]xhibits replace the teacher as the central medium of instruction. Objects instead of words are the principal currency of discourse” (ibid., p. x). Tourists’ willingness to learn coupled with their background knowledge also determines the extent of interest and attention to interpretative media (Light 1995a quoted in Timothy and Boyd 2003, p. 200).

Many of the modern type of cultural attractions interpret their site by also entertaining people. This new approach, however, has evoked much controversy. It has been criticised largely as being part of the “heritage industry” (Hewison 1987), i.e. history being trivialised, commodified and sold to visitors, and therefore reducing the quality of the heritage experience (this issue will be dealt with in more detail in the authenticity section). When it comes to interactive experiences a frequently posed question is: Are visitors really learning or are they merely playing around? And also: Does a “hands-on” also lead to “minds-on” understanding of a site/exhibit? Caulton (1999, p. 35) argues “if interpretation is reduced to participatory activities alone, very selective and superficial storylines may be presented which distort historical or scientific reality”. He goes on to state that although interactive exhibits are attractive media, they cannot alone tell the whole story. Others, however, believe that entertainment has become a critical success factor for teaching and for getting the message across (e.g. McKercher and DuCros 2002). Advocates believe that if visitors are enjoying themselves, it is more likely that they will be learning at the same time. Therefore, they support the idea that apart from education, interpretation should also provide an enjoyable, and even entertaining experience for visitors. Cultural attractions should be designed to encourage a variety of emotional responses, and entertainment is one tool to achieve this.

Learning theory suggests that children think and learn differently from an adult. This implies that what is appropriate for adult learning is not necessarily applicable to children. Bloom's (1956) taxonomy of learning is widely used to explain positive outcomes of interactive exhibitions: they encourage

- *cognitive learning* (knowledge and understanding);
- *affective learning* (attitudes, values, feelings, emotions, interests and motivation);  
and
- *psycho-motor development* (physical skills of manipulation and co-ordination).

It is important to note that the learning effect is generally higher with shared problem-solving than guided discovery. Furthermore, it is commonly acknowledged that individuals learn in a variety of different styles: learning by listening and sharing ideas, learning by thinking through ideas sequentially, learning by testing theories, and learning by trial and error. Different learning styles are also connected with different intelligences (e.g. linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, bodily/kinaesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal) (Falk and Dierking 1994, pp. 101-102). Some people perceive more efficiently visually, others more aurally, and still others by touch. “[I]nformal learning environment of interactive exhibitions may provide opportunity for individuals with different learning styles to learn effectively” (Caulton 1999, p. 20). Insofar they have an advantage over formal learning environments which may not stimulate all areas of learning to their full potential. Numerous competing theories and schools of thought exist regarding learning. Falk and Dierking (1994), in a critical voice, say that many of the learning theories are inadequate as they neglect the important roles that the personal, social, and physical contexts play in learning.

In a hands-on exhibition, there should be a clear message which the developer wants to communicate. An exhibition needs to be designed in a way that the visitor itself discovers the educational objectives of the exhibits through interaction rather than by

being told. Constructivist learning theory says that visitors learn by experience, they construct their own knowledge based on their personal, social and physical context for the visit (Caulton 1999, p. 37). Learners do not simply add facts to what is already known, but they constantly reorganise information and their view of the world as they interact with it. Therefore, opportunities should be provided to make connections with familiar concepts. Caulton (1999) points out that

in the constructivist museum, visitors are encouraged to construct knowledge from the exhibit through personal and social interaction, and they are enabled to draw their own conclusions about the meaning of the exhibition (p. 37).

However, it is important to mention that visitors should not only remember the effects but understand the explanations. At best, three outcomes should be achieved: visitors enjoyed the experience, they have understood the subject area, and they can remember the experience for a long period after the visit.

Visitors are quite different in terms of their motivation to visit a site, as explained earlier. Hence, different tourists should be provided with different experiences. From the above it becomes clear that one of the key concerns of cultural managers is to heighten the visitor experience whereby the entertaining element of interpretation can no longer be neglected. Today, it is widely acknowledged that entertainment can add substantially to the quality of the visitor experience. There is evidence that attractions which combine education and entertainment are the most successful in attracting visitors (Caulton 1999, p. 134).

#### **3.1.5.4.2.3. Interpretative Media**

Interpretation exists in verbal, written, or other visual forms. Media used to support interpretation include displays and exhibits, printed brochures and maps, signs, audio presentations, and guided tours. Not only the philosophy as to best interpret a site has changed also the tools available for interpretation have been changing (this will be

discussed in detail in the multimedia section). The application of new technology has become commonplace often replacing human guides at cultural attractions.

Timothy and Boyd (2003, p. 218) differentiate between personal and non-personal media and define these as follows:

Personal media are those that utilise a living person as the actual medium for disseminating information. Non-personal media are mechanisms and set-ups that require no intervention on the part of staff for visitors to obtain the information they need (p. 218).

Person-based and non-person based interpretation can be organised in different ways as shown in Table 19. Living characters and cultural demonstrations are most commonly found at heritage theme parks and open-air museums. But they are increasingly applied also in the “conventional museum” during specific exhibitions and events. Personal interpreters should be convincing in the role they play (often professional actors are hired), should know what they are speaking about (possession of a solid understanding of their field), should be conversant with pedagogical theories, and should possess excellent communication skills and a friendly personality. They should inspire visitors. Timothy and Boyd (2003, p. 201) say if natives/locals interpret a site this can enhance the experience visitors take away from the site.

**Table 19: Personal and non-personal media for interpretation**

| Media  | Examples   |
|--|--|
| <b>Personal media</b>  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>presentations that take place at set times in particular places</li> </ul>      | e.g. at archaeological sites   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>guided tours</li> </ul>   | e.g. through a site or museum or thematic walking tours  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>information attendants stationed in one location (stationary guides)</li> </ul> | usually at entrances to orient visitors before they begin a guided or self-guided tour; but also strategically places throughout museums and outdoor sites to answer questions relating to the places where they are stationed |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>living characters and cultural demonstrations</li> </ul>                        | <i>interpreters</i> portray a non-specific character and are dressed in period costumes, speaking with period dialects, and taking on a first-person approach to <u>information giving</u>                                     |
|  | in <i>role-playing interpreters</i> present a real person from the past  |
|  | <i>living history performances</i> ; such re-enactments perform e.g. war battles, bank robberies, rituals etc; sometimes visitors are involved in re-enactments and play active roles  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>heritage events</li> </ul>  |  |
| <b>Non-personal media</b>  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>written material</li> </ul>   | brochures, guidebooks, labels, maps  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>signs</li> </ul>  | allow a great deal of material to be included at each stop along the trail or alongside the display path also used to help visitors to find their way around   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>text panels, graphics</li> </ul>  | often used at outdoor sites in the form of an exhibition but also inside museums to provide general introduction, orientation and overview of the attraction   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>self-guided audio tours</li> </ul>  | describe the objects in view and often include sound effects and other animation, allows visitors to experience the site in their own language and at their own pace   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>other devices</li> </ul>  | e.g. multimedia technologies   |

**Source: based on Timothy and Boyd (2003), pp. 218-222**

Guided tours allow for interaction with the interpreter and visitors can ask questions which are personally relevant for them. This represents a pro-active form of communication as opposed to text based media, a passive form, where visitors must work to extract meaning from a written message on their own (Hughes and Morrison-Saunders 2005). Also Tilden (1967) stressed the importance of interaction and claimed personal interpretation as the most effective form.

Text and graphic images can play a key role in communication and helping visitors to understand an exhibition. However, people are more likely to read text in the early parts of the visit and easily get bored if too long texts are provided (Caulton 1999). A key rule is therefore that texts should be short (limited number of points), clearly understandable (no technical language) and readable (simple typeface and in appropriate height). Also graphics are important in aiding comprehension, whereby complex images or pictograms may be more confusing than helpful. Drawing style and structure should be carefully attended to. Non-personal media that go beyond written ones will be dealt with in-depth in the multimedia section.

Finally, the question is how much interpretation should be provided at a site or what is the appropriate intensity of on-site interpretation. Hughes and Morrison-Saunders (2005) provide some insights into these issues claiming that intensity can be expressed in terms of quantity and type of media applied. For them interpretation intensity increases not just with the quantity used at a site (number of signs, guides and so on) but also with increased engagement of multiple senses and more active social interaction between visitors and site staff. They suggest that too much interpretation can overwhelm the visitors thus refraining them from having a joyful learning experience. However, not all sites require a high intensity of interpretation in the sense that simply being at a particular site can be meaningful and “provoke visitors into viewing their surroundings in new ways” (ibid., p. 162). However, many exhibits/sites cannot be fully understood simply by looking at them. Minimalist interpretation requires the visitor to recognise significance and derive meaning from the experience. This may result in low fulfilment if the visitor is not able to achieve this. For example, in a museum some paintings need interpretation to facilitate understanding which goes beyond enjoying their aesthetic beauty.

When looking at the attractions side the question is which form of interpretation should be applied and which media should be used to help to tell the story in order to augment the visitor experience. Many authors have focused on the issue of interpretation and have been introducing various “interpretation plans”. There is general agreement among experts that interpretation needs to be attuned to the type and specific characteristics of the cultural attraction. Goodall and Beech (2006) emphasise that there is no single model of interpretation that can be used in all situations. Similarly, Uzzell (1989a) denotes that there are no stock solutions of interpretation because it is always a function of

the uniqueness of place and the individual response that is required to interpret effectively, meaningfully and enjoyably that planning and design solutions should reflect local environmental, organisational and cultural circumstances (p. 6).

However, interpretation can only be effective if the different needs of visitors are recognised. Different groups are looking for different experiences such as children as opposed to adults, experts as opposed to the lay person, and locals as opposed to foreign visitors. Hence, the challenge is to offer the right interpretation to different segments.

Caulton (1999, p. 28) suggests the following guidelines for exhibition design:

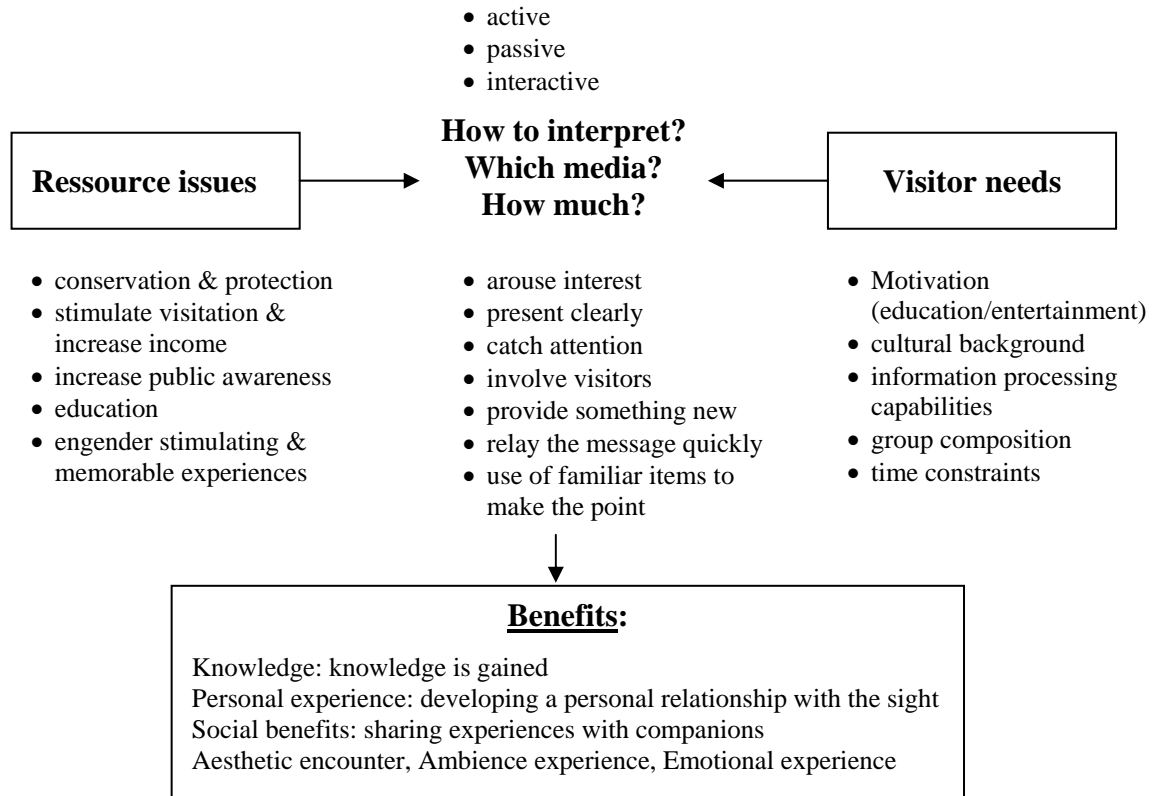
- to have clear goals, expressed in terms of encouraging visitors to develop physical skills, to improve their knowledge or understanding, or refine their feelings and opinions (i.e., psycho-motor, cognitive and affective outcomes);
- to work at multiple intellectual levels, for visitors of different ages and abilities;
- to encourage social interaction between friends and family members;
- to provide multi-sensory stimulation;
- to employ a range of interpretative techniques appealing to visitors with a wide range of interests and learning styles;
- to provide exhibitions that are challenging but not threatening to visitors, and which help to build confidence;
- to provide enjoyment for visitors, and leave them feeling they have understood something more than they did previously;



- must be well-designed, safe, robust and easily maintained.

A summary model of the concepts of interpretation discussed above is shown in Figure 18.

**Figure 18: Interpretation - dimensions**



**Source: based on Timothy and Boyd (2003), p. 231**

Caulton (1999, p. 39) sums it up and argues that the experience each visitor has in a cultural attraction “is influenced by their physical surroundings, by their prior knowledge and expectations, and by the people attending with them”. This is in line with the Interactive Experience Model by Falk and Dierking (1994) introduced earlier, meaning that the visitor experience is dependent upon the interplay of the personal, social and physical contexts of the visit whereas interpretation also plays a significant role. Therefore, the aim is to provide an environment which will enhance the visitor experience taking these key issues into consideration.

### 3.1.5.4.3. Digression: Site Protection

If it is decided to make a cultural site accessible for public visitation the site is subject to changes. While standardisation and commercialisation may not always be a bad thing to a site, needed modifications in the physical layout of the site and problems like damage caused by high visitor numbers have to be considered. Careful planning is needed and regulations have to be put in place in order to guarantee protection and sustainability of the site.

**Table 20: Physical damage caused by visitors to historic sites**

| <b>Damage</b>   | <b>Explanation</b>  |
|-----------------|---|
| • Wear and tear | deterioration of stairs, paving stones and memorials as a result of thousands of tourist feet                     |
| • Litter        | cigarette butts, broken bottles, cans, chewing gum  |
| • Pollution     | moisture and condensation created by breathing, sweating and touching which affect delicate surfaces and painting |
| • Vandalism     | graffiti, souvenir hunting  |

**Source: based on Timothy and Boyd (2003), pp. 125-128**

Damage caused by visitors, as outlined in Table 20, is often irreversible. Visitors' widespread disrespect towards historic sites has led Moscardo (1996) to come up with a concept that should create "mindful" tourists. She argues that through educating tourists towards proper use of heritage attractions can raise their conservation awareness and leads to more respect for the site. For her, mindful tourists are more sensitive to context. They process historical information more actively and have a better personal control of various situations. Therefore, mindful tourists have a greater understanding of and appreciation for the past as opposed to mindless tourists who are less able to learn new information and to change their perspective.

#### 3.1.5.4.3.1. Risk of Damage through high Visitor Numbers

Many cultural sites are increasingly threatened with destruction and many of them can not stand the tourist influx anymore. For example, many World Heritage Sites count visitor numbers they almost can't handle any more causing a real threat to the site itself.

The Roman city of Pompeii (Italy) was added on the World Heritage List in the year 1998. Visitor numbers exploded from 863,000 in 1981 to nearly two million in 1998. Andrea Carandini, one of Italy's most eminent archaeologists said "at this rate, in 10 years time there won't be much to see at Pompeii" (Jacot 1999, p. 37). Boniface (1995) argues "if the 'widest possible public' actually had unconstrained access to any of the world's heritage sites, many could not stand the strain" (p. 42). Diminishing the numbers of tourists on a site for protecting it from over-use and keeping up the quality of the experience can be attained by (Boniface 1995, p. 71ff):

- De-marketing a place: limited to no marketing once carrying capacity is reached;
- Restricted number of visits to a site or refusing admittance to visitors;
- Dispersing visitors over a wider area than the site under threat;
- Diverting visitors from the site to another;
- Developing a new attraction<sup>37</sup> or alternative form of compensation<sup>38</sup> for those who are not necessarily interested in the spiritual experience of a site.

#### **3.1.5.4.3.2. Architectural and Physical Considerations**

Another issue that has to be considered is that cultural sites have to undergo some change when turned into a tourist attraction, i.e. to provide the necessary service facilities and comfort expected as well as interpretative facilities to offer information needed to understand the site, often in the form of an interpretative/visitor centre. Not only the architecture but also the location of an interpretative/visitor centre has to be planned with much care and professionalism for not compromising the integrity and authenticity of the site (on the cost of exposing it to visitors). While many sites have successfully managed to do so there are ample examples where the visual and atmospheric harmony of the site has been affected. One case in point is Clonmacnoise, the most famous of all Irish monasteries, situated in Co. Offaly overlooking the River

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<sup>37</sup> e.g. replica of the Lascaux Caves in France.

<sup>38</sup> e.g. virtual reality.

Shannon. McGettigan and Burns (2001) report about miscarried physical layout of the site where the “concept of spatial zones” of a site suggested by Gunn (1988), i.e. the nucleus (core of attraction), the inviolate belt (buffer space) and zone of closure (surrounding area), was disregarded. The car park intrudes on the quietness of the site and the architecture and size of the visitor centre subverts the site, making the ruins appear secondary. As a consequence, the site has suffered a loss of authenticity, mystery and simplicity.

Strategies for successful management of heritage attractions for tourism should include principles that minimise the overall impact on the environment, benefit the host community and be sustainable (McManus 1997). A narrow sighted exploitation of a country’s scenery, heritage and culture for the purpose of achieving only economic targets runs the risk of destroying the very assets on which the tourism industry depends. The Bord Fáilte plan for Sustainable tourism, for example, recognises the necessity of securing these assets for a viable future in emphasising quality and the conservation of an authentic base of the industry rather than to increase tourist numbers at any price (ibid.).

#### **3.1.5.5. Summary**

This section has investigated cultural tourist attractions starting with a general overview of visitor attractions. It has been ascertained that the concept of an attraction is a very broad one encompassing many different sites. The scale of cultural attractions leads from single-built attractions to whole cities and themed trails. Cultural attractions can be found in different settings and at different levels, ranging from those which receive international status (e.g. World Heritage Sites) to those that exist for a small and local market. Furthermore, within the last few years several new types of attractions have emerged in terms of their themes (e.g. industrial heritage sites, “brand-lands”, etc.) as

well as their orientation towards combining several attractions under one roof such as integrated leisure complexes (often housing a museum or gallery). The latter suggest that traditional distinctions between attractions are increasingly diminishing. The supply of cultural tourist attraction and their characteristics underlie continuous change, bringing forward new directions and contents coined by the spirit and ideology of a certain period of time.

It has been established that the diverse nature of visitor attractions makes it difficult to find a universal categorisation scheme. A number of different typologies have been introduced by researchers determining various important dimensions. A summary of these dimensions is warranted in Table 21. The range of experiences cultural attractions provide is diverse and not easy to encapsulate. Any cultural attraction can be determined by a number of different dimensions of experiences. In other words, different types of cultural attractions provide different experiences.

**Table 21: Dimensions of cultural attractions**

| <b>Attraction</b>                           | <b>Dimension</b>   |
|---|--|
| <b>Overall trait</b>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• man-made – naturally grown</li> <li>• permanent – temporary</li> <li>• physical – non-physical</li> <li>• authentic – contrived</li> <li>• single – ensemble</li> </ul> |
| <b>Ownership</b>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• public – private</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Admission</b>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• admission fee – free entry</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Visitor market</b>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• local – regional – national - international</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Cultural orientation</b>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• past – present</li> <li>• high culture – every day culture</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Interpretation</b>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• interpreted – uninterpreted</li> <li>• personal – non personal media</li> <li>• education – entertainment</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Experience &amp; Visitor Involvement</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• active – passive – interactive</li> <li>• physical – cognitive – emotional</li> <li>• aesthetic/visual – bodily/sensory</li> <li>• solitary - social</li> </ul>         |

**Source: by the author**

The ultimate aim of cultural attractions is to provide satisfying experiences: visually stimulating, intellectually challenging, and socially enriching. Hence, the visitor and his needs are central. Besides adequate facilities (retailing, catering, transport, etc.) and quality of services, interpretation was identified as one of the key elements of providing visitors with a satisfying experience. Presentation and interpretation of culture and heritage has undergone several profound changes over time. The museum was used to exemplify this development which today is characterised by interactive and “edutainment” approaches. It was found out that today a wide array of media are used to support interpretation leading from personal to non-personal media offering different levels of visitor involvement. A trend towards mediated experiences by the use of modern technologies is already apparent. Although various authors have introduced “best practices” as to how a site should be presented and interpreted there is no magic solution that suits in all cases. Culture and heritage can mean different things to different people over space and time. Interpretation has to be attuned to both, the site and its specific characteristics and the visitor. Furthermore, good interpretation must match the visitors’ capability to grasp and digest information, should stimulate his interest and must address cross-cultural needs. In the case of tourists interpretation is nearly always a necessity in order to make them understand the significance of a place/exhibit and the meaning of it. Without any assistance this is hard to grasp for people with a different cultural background.

The experience of cultural attractions was found to be based on the following tangible and intangible elements:

- exhibits and the physical surroundings;
- interpretation;
- the visitors motivation, prior knowledge and expectations; and
- people attending with them.

Finally, the question of site protection was raised. Tourists can cause negative impacts to cultural attractions and can compromise the visitor experience. Therefore, management needs to respond to these issues that tourism does not destroy the very assets on which it is built upon.

### **3.1.6. Experiences**

#### **3.1.6.1. Introduction**

Satisfaction of visitor needs lies at the heart of any cultural attraction. For better understanding customer satisfaction, visitor experiences have become high on the research agenda (Chhetri, Arrowsmith and Jackson 2004) whereby affective and/or emotional states are viewed as potentially strong determinants of satisfaction/dissatisfaction (Mudie, Cottam and Raeside 2003, p. 90). It is claimed that “[p]ositive emotions may lead to positive word-of-mouth behaviour, while negative emotions may result in complaining behaviour” (Edvardsson 2005, p. 127). Moreover, it is assumed that the strength of emotional involvement (intensity of feeling) will predict the extent of satisfaction. Emotions, therefore, seem to have an impact on quality perceptions of services. This is in contrast to satisfaction research which, for a long time, focused mainly on visitor’s cognitive judgements of various tangible and intangible elements of a service setting. In this approach customers’ evaluation of service quality is a cognitive process where performance is measured against some ideal standards. Liljander and Strandvik (1997) point out that perceived service quality and satisfaction can be seen as distinct concepts because perceived service quality precedes satisfaction (p. 148). However, there are dimensions during the consumption experience which go beyond cognitive assessment (Edvardsson 2005) and customers’ conscious control. Therefore, satisfaction “is believed to contain an affective dimension too” (Liljander and Strandvik 1997, p. 148). Today, it is widely acknowledged that in order to explain tourist satisfaction with service experiences there is need for a combined approach including both, cognitive and emotional concepts (Liljander and Strandvik 1997, Zins 2002, Bigné et al. 2004, Edvardsson 2005). They are distinct concepts “having a separate influence on satisfaction formation” (Oliver 1993 quoted in Liljander and Strandvik 1997, p. 148).



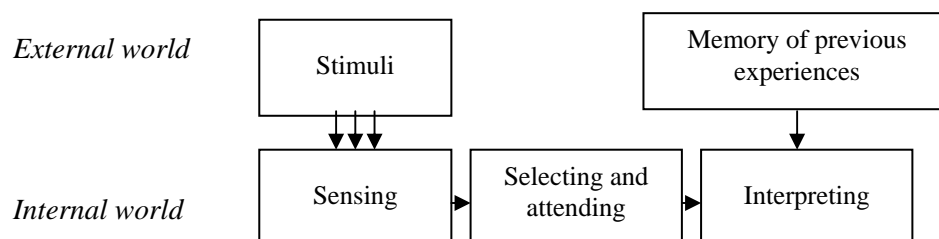
In the following, first human perception and sensory awareness is investigated as a prerequisite to understand experiences and their measurement. Then experiences are elaborated in general and psychological insights are outlined. Finally, focus is placed on the measurement of experiences and service quality.

### 3.1.6.2. Human Perception

Perception is preliminary to human experience. The Oxford dictionary defines “to perceive” as “to become aware of through the senses”. Human beings perceive the world through their senses (Murch and Woodworth 1977, Wendt 1989, Guski 1996). The sensory system picks up stimuli from the external world, which are then transmitted through the neural system to finally reach the human brain. Only when these signals reach the neural brain, the internal mental world, cognitive processing takes place and sensations/perceptions occur (Schöpflug and Schöpflug 1989). In this stage, prior experiences and knowledge (stored in the long-term memory) are crucial for interpreting the signals (Goldstein 1997).

The process of perception can be separated into the following three phases (Wilkie 1994) (see Figure 19): (1) Sensing a stimulus in the external world; (2) Selecting and attending to certain stimuli and not others; (3) Interpreting the stimuli and giving them “meaning”.

**Figure 19: The human perception process**



**Source: by the author**

Individuals are concerned with perceiving a “well-organised” whole (Wilkie 1994). Objective reality, however, can differ from subjective reality. Individuals may also interpret situations differently even when they pay attention to the same thing. Wilkie (1994) also points at the problem with perceptual constancy. This means that individuals strive to perceive the world as a relatively unchanging environment even though the sensory receptors are providing changing sensory impression. Past experiences have considerable influence on perceptions of the present and can cause cognitive dissonance.

The following two key factors determine what will be perceived and how it will be perceived:

- **Stimulus characteristics:** e.g. colour, size, photos, story, scent, loudness, design, music, to receive attention. Sensory cues can trigger sensory receptors, thus starting the perceptual process.
- **Consumer characteristics:** their physical and cognitive abilities (interpretation, memory, preconceptions, knowledge, self-concept).

### 3.1.6.3. Experiences and Emotions

Experiences have been defined as “the fact of being consciously the subject of a state or condition, or of being consciously affected by an event”, or it can also be “an instance of this”; “a state or condition viewed subjectively”; or “an event by which one is affected” (Oxford Dictionary 2007). Scannell (2001) suggests to distinguish between experience and experiences; i.e. between experience in general and particular experiences. Experience is something that accrues to us in time. He explains this as follows: “To begin with I am inexperienced and become experienced as I settle into it and ‘learn the ropes’” (ibid, p. 407). This is a process that takes place in and through time. Thus, Scannell (ibid.) argues

experience in general, is a cumulative thing that grows with passing of time, that develops in the course of my life and time. *An* experience, however, is a singularity, a

particular thing. It shows up as something that happens to me or that I make happen. Experience, as a particularity, is intrinsically tied to events.

An experience is a complex process dependent on a variety of elements. Central to any human experience is, on the one hand, the environment and its diverse stimuli and, on the other hand, the individual itself with its distinctive characteristics as explained above. Experiences occur “within any individual who has been engaged on an emotional, physical, intellectual, or even spiritual level” (Pine and Gilmore 1999, p. 12). “Each experience derives from the interaction between the (...) event and the individual’s prior state of mind and being” (Pine and Gilmore 1999, p. 12). How an experience unfolds within the individual is therefore varying and denotes that “no two people can have the same experience” (ibid.). They are inherently personal. Within the context of cultural attractions, this means that depending on the stimuli provided by the cultural attraction (natural or designed) and the processing of these stimuli within the visitors, with their different physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual capabilities, they will have different experiences.

Grötsch (2001) provides some insights into experiences from a psychological point of view (mainly referring to designed environments such as theme parks). He argues that central to the experience are the emotional impacts caused within the individual. Emotions are mental reactions characterised by strong feelings or affection and also physiological responses which prepare the body for a certain action. Experiences can provide spiritual-psychological “inputs” and somato-sensory “inputs” which can lead to feelings of desire, love, fear, happiness etc. The resulting reactions are crying, laughing, etc. or uncontrolled reactions like high blood pressure, adrenaline rush or “fight and flight”, perspiration, etc. Emotions are regarded as more intense than moods (Chamberlain and Broderick 2007). Poels and DeWitte (2006) have investigated the concept of emotion and propose to differentiate between different types of emotions. A

diversity of reactions exist which are regarded as an emotion, however, they involve different mental processes. More specifically, positive arousal can occur automatically or it can be determined by cognitive processes.

Akin to Pine and Gilmore (1999), Grötsch (2001) regards sensory interactions as key elements of experiences, because the more sensory an experience, the more memorable it will be. Experiences that cause high emotional affection lead to a strong desire to have them repeated. These emotions resulting from experiences can consolidate a stable attitude towards a certain attraction (brand, activity) and this is a decisive factor whether a particular site/attraction will be revisited or not. Grötsch (2001) goes on to argue that it is important to differentiate between *emotional moments*, which are brought about by sensorial impressions and experiences but only last temporarily, and the resultant mental state therefrom. The sum of the emotional experiences (e.g. fleeting moments of joy, sadness, etc.) transform into an *emotional state*, into a lasting feeling (Grötsch 2002). For example, tourists leave a destination or cultural attraction in a particular “state of mind”, which could be interpreted as a sort of preservable emotional state that will be anchored in the emotional memory. Perceptions and experiences are assessed through emotions they cause. Emotions can be regarded as appendages of thought; therefore the remembrance of experiences is connected with these feelings. The memory is another crucial point for Grötsch (2001) who differentiates between *personal* memory (short or long term) and the *collective conscious* memory of cultures. Regarding the latter he refers to C.G. Jung’s “*Universalgedächtnis*”, i.e. the universal memory, and the archetypes, which doze in the subconscious mind and can be retrieved through symbols, sensory stimuli, pictures, etc. They cause feelings and sentiments as they are often connected with primary instincts (e.g. hunt-instinct, competition, etc.) and other drives (e.g. thirst for knowledge).

Psychologists view an “experience” not as a particular condition or state but as a process consisting of the following eight phases (Schober 1993, pp. 137-138):

- (1) desideratum-tension, arising from unfulfilled or only partly fulfilled desires;
- (2) search for a suitable goal to satisfy the needs;
- (3) pleasant anticipation and general emotional activation;
- (4) overcoming of problems and difficulties and achievement of the goal after which the actual experience occurs;
- (5) intensification of the achievement of the goal causes an increased experience;
- (6) the typical feeling of experience unfolds for some time;
- (7) experience intensity is fading and a state of psychophysical satiation occurs;
- (8) the organism returns into its previous state of equilibrium.

Experience, however, does not stop with saturation because in the subconscious mind there are pictures of the (holiday)-experience which are retrievable at any time. Tourists thrive to have positive experiences and tourism managers of course want to provide satisfying experiences for their customers.

As already mentioned earlier, tourists’ judgements on whether or not an attraction is appreciated are global (Grötsch 2001). In most cases, tourists are not able to precisely point out elements of discontent with the attraction, because emotions cover a far bigger field of experience than the mind, however, are less precise. Arnould and Price (1993) for example investigated the “river rafting” experience and established that the experience itself was vividly recalled but difficult to describe because of its emotional content and perceived distinctiveness.

In summary, it can be said that emotions influence what we perceive, what we remember and emotional memories are distinct (Dasu 2007). However, there is ongoing debate about the interrelationship of cognition and emotion. There are basically two different schools of thought which discuss if cognition precedes emotion or vice versa (for more information on the former approach please refer to Lazarus 1999 and Lin

2004; for the latter please refer to Zajonc 1980, Izard 1993, and Zajonc and Markus 1984). The bottom line of these two opposing approaches is that cognition and emotions, or thoughts and feelings, are so interlaced that it is hard to separate one from the other. The interplay between emotions and cognition is still unresolved and needs further research and insights from neuroscience and psychology.

In this research emotions are measured by looking at the authentic experience and the depth of experience (intensity of feeling).

#### **3.1.6.4. Measuring Experiences and Customer Satisfaction**

The visitor experience is a combination and interrelationship of various factors. It arises from a combination of visitor emotions and attitudes and objective and subjective assessments of sites (Connell and Meyer 2004). However, the question arises how experiences can be operationalised and measured? So far research on experiences has been limited to mainly cognitive measurements of service quality. Examining consumers' emotional experience/affective responses in the consumption of services has only recently become part of investigations on consumer behaviour and satisfaction in tourism.<sup>39</sup> The concept of satisfaction for studying tourist/visitor behaviour is an important component of visitor attraction management. Bigné and Andreu (2004) argue that service providers can stimulate emotional experiences with the aim of maximising satisfaction. This means that visitors experience a site through a series of interactions with the service environment and personnel and these stimulate consumer emotions which in turn affect their satisfaction and behavioural intentions. Bigné and Andreu (2004, p. 685) highlight the fact that

[t]raditionally satisfaction was considered to be a cognitive state, influenced by cognitive antecedents (...). Recently, however, there is support for understanding

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<sup>39</sup> For example, Bigné and Andreu (2004) have successfully attempted to use emotions as a segmentation variable for tourists visiting attractions.

satisfaction from a more affective perspective, although together with the cognitive influences.

In the following paragraphs service quality research and cognitive measures of experiences are explored. Existing service quality models are illustrated and various instruments for measuring service quality and satisfaction are ascertained.

#### **3.1.6.4.6. The Service Quality Approach and Customer Satisfaction**

“A good quality service is one that offers users an experience with which they are satisfied” (Rowley 1999, p. 303). In such a view experiences have become the value added to services. This means that perceived service quality is increasingly influenced by emotions and experiences they provide. Chamberlain and Broderick (2007) argue that emotions are a central component of consumer responses to certain stimuli (e.g. service environment) and view emotions a key explanatory construct of consumer behaviour. Wong (2004) sees emotion as a fundamental attribute in satisfaction and uses the term “emotional satisfaction” in relation to service quality. An increasing body of studies is devoted to the role of emotions in consumption experiences and service quality. For example, White and Yu (2005) investigated satisfaction emotions in relation to consumers’ behavioural intentions. Mattila and Enz (2002) as well as Wong (2004) investigated the role of emotions in service encounters. Although there is great enthusiasm about emotions and their measurement in service settings it has to be acknowledged that customer satisfaction includes both, emotional and cognitive components (Liljander and Strandvik 1997). In the following, special attention is placed on service quality and cognitive measurements.

A variety of authors have conducted research in the area of service quality.<sup>40</sup> Early contributions of the American and Nordic school of research (e.g. Donabedian 1980, Zeithaml 1981, Grönroos 1984, Parasuraman et al. 1985, Garvin 1987) recognised the need to include subjective elements as defined by the customer and provided the basis for conceptualising service quality dimensions. Various dimensions of a service organisation have been identified which are seen to encompass the sum of product characteristics to be important for customers to evaluate service quality. However, “[u]nfortunately, quality in services cannot be objectively measured as the technical quality for manufactured goods and therefore it remains a relatively elusive and abstract construct” (Frochot and Hughes 2000).

Service quality comprises a series of interactions with the service provider, i.e. with personnel as well as with the tangible factors such as the physical environment. Beyond that, customer interactions do also take place with other customers (Frochot and Hughes 2000). The measurement of quality in service contexts includes the components of visitors’ experiences of cultural attractions and is therefore particularly relevant for the undergoing study. In the following, the various dimensions of service quality introduced by various authors are described.

Donabedian (1980) suggests a triangular model of service dimensions of quality: structural, process and outcome-related quality. The *structure* dimension refers to the potential quality of a service provider and includes personnel, equipment, buildings, record systems, finance, facilities, and supplies. Structure can be seen as a prerequisite for process and outcome-related quality. *Process* incorporates all aspects of the

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<sup>40</sup> Service quality research has seen its advent as customers became more discerning and when service organisations faced the challenge of controlling their services in order to achieve a competitive advantage over their competitors. With the rise of the tertiary sector service organisations faced increasing pressure to provide high-quality services not only to attract but also to retain customers. An increased focus on customers’ needs and wants emerged and early discussions embraced ideas in which organisations should assess customers’ expectations and satisfaction with a service.



performance, technical and interpersonal activities and *outcome* describes the results of the service. The model was mainly developed for health care services and was not extensively taken up for further research in the tourism literature.

The Nordic school represented by Grönroos (1982, 1984) introduced the “perceived service quality model” conceptualising features of services which should be measured with customer satisfaction with the service. The model contains *technical* or outcome quality (what) and *functional* or process quality (how) with the following criteria:

- *Professionalism and skills;*
- *Attitudes and behaviour;*
- *Accessibility and flexibility;*
- *Reliability and trustworthiness;*
- *Reputation and credibility;*
- *Recovery.*

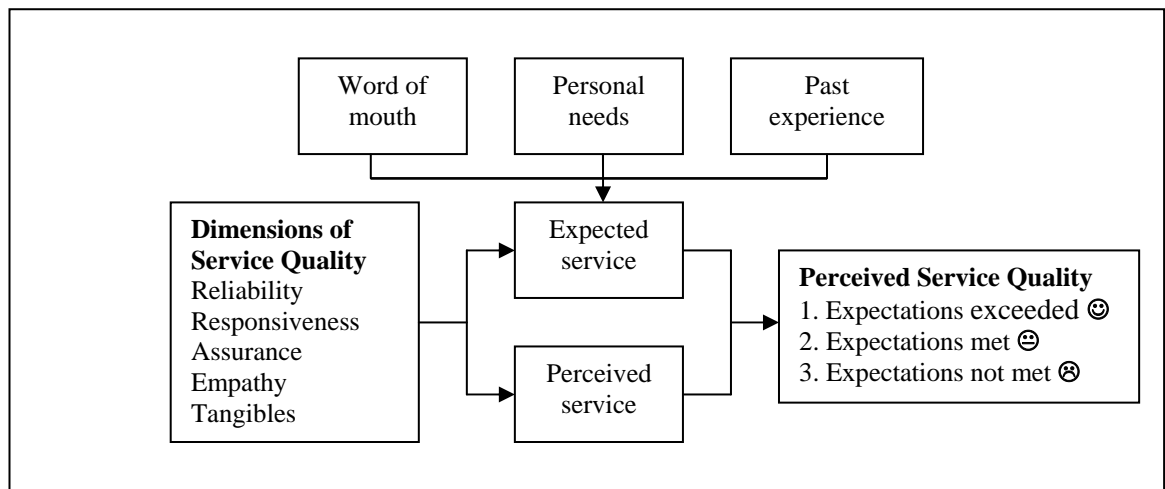
Grönroos has also included a dynamic aspect in his service quality model taking into account that customers bring their previous experiences and overall perceptions of a service provider to each encounter. Therefore, the *image* concept was incorporated as another important component in the “perceived service quality model” (Grönroos 2001).

Parasuraman et al. (1985, 1988, 1991) suggested the following five dimensions of service quality:

- *Tangibles:* physical facilities, equipment and appearance of personnel;
- *Reliability:* the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately;
- *Responsiveness:* willingness to help consumers and to provide prompt service;
- *Assurance:* knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence;
- *Empathy:* caring, individualised attention the firm provides its customers.

The service quality elements are measured as the difference between customers' expectations and perceptions of the service delivered, also known as the "disconfirmation paradigm". Expectations are based on word of mouth, personal needs, and past experience. The gap between expected and perceived service reveals negative or positive satisfaction with the service (see Figure 20).

**Figure 20: Perceived service quality**



Source: based on Parasuraman et al. 1985, p. 48

### 3.1.6.4.7. Instruments for Measuring Service Quality and Experiences

#### 3.1.6.4.7.1. SERVQUAL

Based on the disconfirmation hypothesis (expected minus perceived quality) and the five quality dimensions Parasuraman et al. (1985) have developed a measurement instrument called SERVQUAL which has been widely applied in diverse service organisations. However, this approach has received large criticism for its applicability to service contexts others than the ones upon which it was developed (banking, credit cards, repair services and telephone services). It has therefore seen considerable amendments to the different contexts of service organisations. In tourism in general, amendments to specific service contexts include winter resorts (Weiermair and Fuchs 1999), hotels (Ekinici and Riley 2001), travel agencies (Cliff and Ryan 1997, Bigné et al. 2003), and information services (Landrum and Prybutok 2004), to name but a few. In

the attractions sector, Frochot and Hughes (2000) have developed a new scale, which they termed HISTOQUAL, as a tool to evaluate service quality provided in historic houses and using the following dimensions:

- *Responsiveness,*
- *Tangibles,*
- *Communication,*
- *Consumables, and*
- *Empathy.*

In determining a museums' product quality Nowacki (2005) has used SERVQUAL and linked it with the main elements of a tourist attraction (access, exhibitions, catering, souvenirs, and toilet facilities). On the basis of SERVQUAL, Connell and Meyer (2004) have tried to identify visitors and managers expectations of the garden visit experience in Great Britain. Within the context of ecotourism Khan (2003) has developed an adapted version of SERVQUAL pertinent to ecotourists' quality expectations named ECOSERV. Finally, the instrument was adjusted to national parks by Akama and Kieti (2003). While some authors came to the conclusion that SERVQUAL is a valid and reliable instrument to measure service quality (e.g. Bigné et al. 2003), others have identified limitations (e.g. Ekinici and Riley 2001), and again others suggested to abandon the instrument altogether. Kang and James (2004) have criticised SERVQUAL for mainly focusing on the service delivery process (functional dimension) and regarded the Grönroos model as a more appropriate representation of service quality. The Grönroos model includes both, a service delivery process dimension and a technical quality dimension (encounter outcome). Many works have advanced the understanding of service quality measurement; however, no consensus has been reached regarding the nature and content of the service quality dimensions (ibid.).

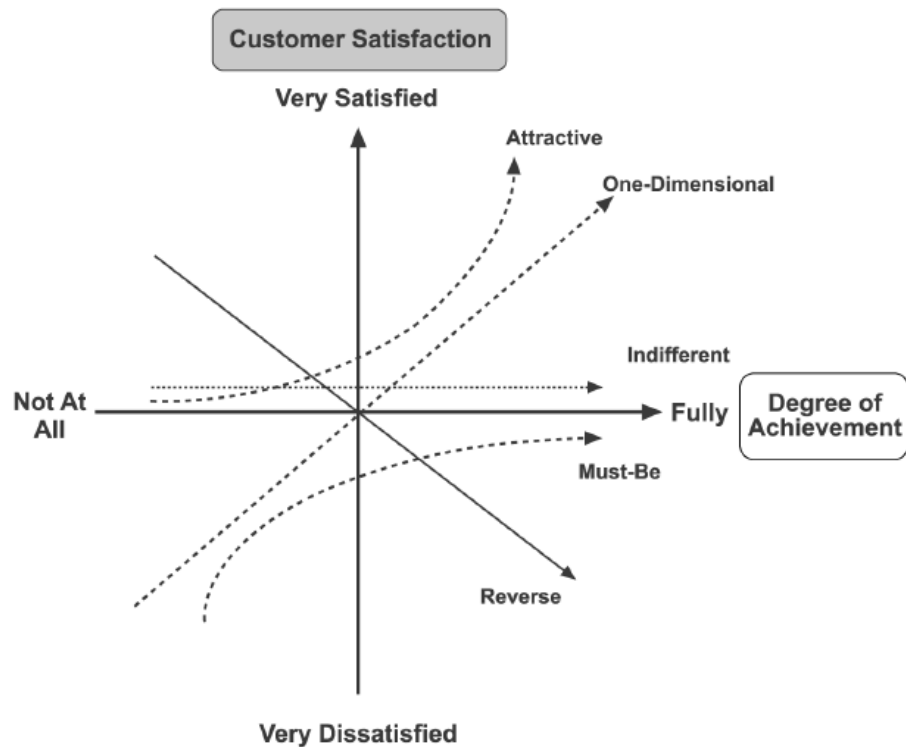
#### **3.1.6.4.7.2. Kano's Model of Attractive Quality**

Kano's theory of attractive quality has since its introduction in 1979 by Kano and Takahashi gained considerable acceptance, also within the tourism industry. Inspired by Herzberg's motivator-hygiene theory Kano et al. (1984) have introduced a model that "evaluates patterns of quality, based on customers' satisfaction with specific quality attributes and their degree of sufficiency" (Witell and Löfgren 2007, p. 56).

The relationship between the degree of sufficiency and customer's satisfaction with a quality attribute can be classified into five categories of perceived quality (see also Figure 21):

- *Attractive quality*: attributes which provide satisfaction when achieved fully but do not cause dissatisfaction when not fulfilled;
- *One-dimensional quality*: attributes which result in satisfaction when fulfilled and result in dissatisfaction when not fulfilled;
- *Must-be quality*: attributes which are taken for granted when fulfilled but result in dissatisfaction when not fulfilled;
- *Indifferent quality*: aspects which are neither good nor bad and do not result in either satisfaction or dissatisfaction;
- *Reverse quality*: aspects which result in dissatisfaction when a high degree of achievement is given and vice versa – hence, it takes into account that not all customers are alike.

The Kano model has received attention in tourism research in general, however, its application in the cultural attractions sector remains lacking.

**Figure 21: Kano's model of attractive quality**

Source: Witell and Löfgren 2007, p. 56

### 3.6.4.7.3. Qualitative Measurement Instruments

Research on customers' experiences with a certain service highlights the process character in service production. It supposes that certain incidents within the service delivery process can deliver valuable information about quality-relevant experiences. Central to this idea is the so-called "story telling principle" in which respondents are asked to tell their experiences with a certain service provider. Several instruments have been developed to operationalise this concept. The most important ones include (1) Sequential Incident Method, (2) Critical Incident Technique, and (3) Observations and Mystery Shopping, which are described below.

### **(1) Sequential Incident Method**

The Sequential Incident Method<sup>41</sup> is a technique that uses *blueprints* of the service delivery process as a basis to ask customers for incidents along this process (Stauss 1991). Fitzsimmons and Fitzsimmons (1998, p. 87) define blueprints as

(...) maps or flowcharts of all transactions constituting the service delivery process. (...) The line of visibility separates activities of the front office, where customers obtain tangible evidence of the service, from those of the back office, which is out of the customer's view.

The encounter between a service provider and the customer occurs above the “line of visibility”. This interaction has also been defined as “the moment of truth” because it is important for customers' perception of the quality of the service. In using such blueprints customers are asked by means of face-to-face interviews to describe their interactions with the service provider in the form of a story or key experiences (also describing their sentiments). An analysis of these reveal negatively and positively perceived quality attributes. Blueprints help managers to ensure the delivery of high-quality service. For example, Laws (1998) has used blueprinting analysis to conceptualise visitor satisfaction management in Leeds Castle, (Kent). This method helps to get an overview of all contact points in the service delivery process and visitors' experiences and satisfaction with them.

### **(2) Critical Incident Technique (CIT)**

The CIT is a method/instrument that uses standardised questionnaires with open questions to retrieve “critical incidents” in the service delivery process. Critical incidents are situations perceived by the customer as either particularly satisfactory/positive or unsatisfactory/negative (Bruhn and Strauss 1995). This means that, as opposed to the Sequential Incident Technique, only those parts of the service delivery process are focused on which induced exceptional satisfaction and vice versa.

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<sup>41</sup> translated by the author from German into English.

With this method critical factors for customers' experiences with a service can be revealed which can serve as a basis for service quality improvements. The critical incidents technique has been largely applied in the hospitality industry (e.g. Callan 1998, Stauss and Mang 1999, Chung-Herrera et al. 2004), however, application in the cultural attractions sector is relatively scarce.

### **(3) Observations and Mystery Shopping**

Instead of asking people to verbalise their experiences also “*observations*” have been used to receive information on deficiencies in the service delivery process. Observations can be conducted either through researchers who observe “moments of truth” in a service organisation or, alternatively, through the use of video cameras. The problem associated with this method is that customers might change their behaviour if they are aware that they are “observed”<sup>42</sup>. Moreover, only situational factors can be inferred and behavioural factors (e.g. affective, cognitive, social factors) can only be identified to a limited extent (Kaiser 2005). Within the field of cultural attractions observations have been used largely in museums to get insights into consumer behaviour, e.g. time spent at a particular exhibit, how visitors are traversing the facilities, and social experiences (Falk and Dierking 1994). In order to overcome some of the problems associated with observations, “*Mystery Shoppers*” can be applied. In this case anonymous experts assess the service delivery process by their own active involvement in the process and give comprehensive information about their subjective feelings, situational factors and experiences with personnel (Matzler et al. 2000). The “Mystery Shopper” concept has been widely applied in the hotel industry to evaluate service quality which, in a second step, is then often compared to those of competitors. Identified weak points are then subject to improvement programmes. However, if perceptions and experiences of professional people correspond with those of the ordinary customer/visitor is

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<sup>42</sup> Covert observations raise problems of ethics.

questionable (Stauss 1991). For monitoring the total customer experience in museums, Rowley (1999) has suggested to use “*Walk-through Audits*”, a similar concept to the Mystery Shopper. Walk-through audits can be conducted by managers and also by staff members. The aim of this method is to go through the customer experience stage by stage to examine the total experience with all sub-experiences (e.g. waiting lines, ambience, quality, speed of service). Despite the mentioned deficiencies both, mystery shopping and walk-through audits, can be valuable tools for cultural attractions to improve their experiences in combination with other research instruments.

There are various methods of measuring service quality including quantitative and qualitative ones. However, research on consumer satisfaction has been largely based on the “comparative approach”. This approach has been criticised for several reasons (Vittersø et al. 2000, pp. 433-434):

- (1) symbolic and emotional values of a tourism product are not considered - such values are related to the subjective meaning that tourists ascribe to attractions;
- (2) humans may experience their environment as a whole entity rather than the sum of a discrete set of attributes;
- (3) satisfaction has been regarded as a cognitive process leading to an emotional state which, however, may as well result from the product itself as from experiencing it,
  - negative emotions may occur due to other tourists’ undesirable behaviour;
  - humans may use different cognitive dissonance strategies to reduce negative inconsistency between expectations and outcome;
  - the baseline of comparison is an open question (ideal standard, equitable standard, or a minimum standard);
- (4) whether true satisfaction can be measured by means of self-avowals is questionable.

Despite conceptual and methodological difficulties of measuring tourists’ experience with (cultural) products it can be argued that there is need for such measurements.



The consumption of the service process is a critical part of the service experience. Nevertheless, Komppula (2006) argues that “in tourism the expected ‘outcome’ of the tourist experience is more often an expectation of a certain type of feeling or emotion” (p. 147). Service quality can be regarded as an important factor that influences customer value, but not the only. “In relation to tourist experience products, it may be that social and emotional aspects play more important roles than the technical and functional dimensions of service quality, which still seem to have a remarkable role in service quality models and theory” (ibid.). It can therefore be concluded that a combined model which encompasses both measurements seems therefore to be the best solution.

#### **3.1.6.5. Summary**

“Experience” has become an important term in tourism in general and cultural attractions in particular. Emotions can be regarded as important components of consumer experiences and satisfaction. Different models and instruments have been introduced by various authors to measure functional and technical dimensions of service organisations. However, they are not without limitations. It has become apparent that, although there are strong voices advocating the emotional approach, both sides have to come together to form an integrated model for measuring experiences at cultural attractions. Most of the measurement instruments introduced on measuring service quality have received relatively little attention within the field of cultural attractions. Overall, there seems to be a strong predominance of cognitive measurements.

### **3.1.7. Cultural Tourism in Ireland**

#### **3.1.7.1. Introduction**

The importance of tourism as a means of economic regeneration has been high on the agenda of the Irish government over the last two decades. Ireland draws substantial revenue from the tourist trade, making tourism a key sector of the national economy. Tourism supports one in 12 of all jobs in the Irish economy (Bord Fáilte 2002a).

The recent world-wide buoyancy in cultural and heritage tourism (the so-called heritage boom) has particular relevance for Ireland and is reflected in the growth of numerous museums and heritage centres as well as festivals and events throughout the country (Kockel 1994, Quinn 1994). Ireland's government became conscious of the countries precious cultural resources that can be exploited for tourism purposes. Considerable investment has been focussed on developing services, interpretative centres and appropriate marketing strategies to communicate and deliver this element of Irish tourism. The increased world-wide demand for cultural tourism was seen as a powerful political and economic justification to draw in substantial money from the EU to make Ireland's culture and heritage more accessible and attractive to overseas visitors.

The following section first gives an overview of the tourism development in Ireland and some of its key characteristics. Then the Irish cultural tourism product is explored and specific niche products in cultural and heritage tourism are introduced. Also, an insight into how the cultural tourism product is managed and planned is provided. Finally, the market for cultural tourism in Ireland is outlined.

### **3.1.7.2. Tourism in Ireland**

Regarding tourism in general, Ireland for a long time was the Sleeping Beauty of Western Europe. While to other European tourism destinations masses of tourists were already surging Ireland was reserved for those few travellers who were mainly coming for ancestry reasons due to the Irish Diaspora and stag parties held in Dublin. The rest, a small number of tourists, first had to be prepared to take the hurdle of restricted and high priced transport to encounter a service industry in its humble beginnings and not yet prepared to cater for the masses. The introduction of car ferries in the 1960s and developments (liberalisation) in air travel were significant for the expansion of the industry but was also related to positive developments of international tourism in general (Gillmor 1994). Substantial investments were directed towards the industry, including major EC funding under the Structural Programme for Tourism 1989-1993 and its successor, the 1994-1999 Operational Programme. Significant improvements in the tourism product resulting from the two Operational Programmes for Tourism together with considerable reduced access fares, improved frequency of air and sea carriers, and active promotion abroad conducted by Fáilte Ireland, has provoked that since the late 1980s visitor numbers have been rising rapidly (Gillmor 1994). In the years 1985-2000 tourism numbers climbed from under two million to well over six million (Bord Fáilte 2001b). While various causes have been attributed to the growth in tourism in Ireland, Deegan and Dineen (1997) suggest that Ireland was suddenly “discovered” by many European tourists over the period 1985-1990 (Lennon and Seaton 1998). Ireland has developed into one of the fastest growing tourism destinations of the world.

Several events in the year 2001, such as the Foot and Mouth Disease, the impact of the terrorist attacks in the US on September 11<sup>th</sup> and the global economic slowdown, brought to an end a trend in growth that had continued throughout the years. The

industry had experienced a difficult year in 2001 (Bord Fáilte 2002a)<sup>43</sup> but managed to attract increasing numbers of visitors in the following years (see Table 22). However, the British Market declined from 2003 to 2004 and from 2006 to 2007, and North American numbers declined from 2004 to 2005. Tourist numbers from Mainland Europe recorded considerable growth, driven not only by traditional markets such as Spain, France, Germany, Italy and the Nordic Countries but also by emerging markets such as Poland. Foreign exchange earnings increased only modestly from 2003 to 2004 but were on a continuously satisfactory uprise in the following years. Ireland's performance in terms of revenue generated by international visitors to Ireland in 2007 was estimated to be worth €4.9 billion (see Table 22). Despite the worldwide economic difficulties cautious estimates for 2009 signal that tourism numbers have again risen successfully.

**Table 22: Overseas visitors to Ireland**

|   | <b>2003</b>  | <b>2004</b>  | <b>2005</b>  | <b>2006</b>  | <b>2007</b>  |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>Total overseas visits to Ireland (000's)</b> | <b>6,178</b> | <b>6,384</b> | <b>6,763</b> | <b>7,417</b> | <b>7,739</b> |
| <b>Area of residence</b>                        |              |              |              |              |              |
| Great Britain                                   | 3,553        | 3,526        | 3,640        | 3,821        | 3,776        |
| Mainland Europe                                 | 1,484        | 1,582        | 1,903        | 2,252        | 2,577        |
| USA and Canada                                  | 892          | 956          | 937          | 1,034        | 1,071        |
| Other Areas                                     | 249          | 320          | 284          | 310          | 316          |
| <b>Total Foreign Exchange Earnings (€m)</b>     | <b>4,057</b> | <b>4,065</b> | <b>4,272</b> | <b>4,693</b> | <b>4,902</b> |

Source: Fáilte Ireland (2008e), *Tourism Facts 2007*

In terms of regional spread of tourism Dublin and the South West still hold the biggest share of the market. This reflects the fast growth in short breaks and the availability of easy and economical access to Dublin. The North West still suffers from its remoteness but also the Midlands/East is not as attractive for tourists as other parts of the country.

<sup>43</sup> All figures presented in this thesis refer to the Republic of Ireland.

Like many other destinations Ireland has been facing problems with seasonality. While the peak season has been significantly flattened in recent years, there is still scope to build up the “shoulder” (April, May, June, September, October) and “low” (November to April) seasons. To achieve this, the plan is to further develop selected long haul markets and less peaked market segments such as business/conference tourism and special interest and activities (Bord Fáilte 2000b).

Tourism figures show that the core tourism appeal of Ireland is characterised by the quality of sightseeing and scenery provided (see Table 23) which is in line with patterns of previous years. To experience Ireland’s culture and history was mentioned by one in ten visitors as their primary motivation to come to Ireland (Bord Fáilte 2003c).

**Table 23: Main motivations for choosing Ireland**

| in%                                  | 1997 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 |
|--------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Quality of sightseeing/scenery       | 25   | 23   | 22   | 24   | 22   |
| To discover a new destination        | 13   | 15   | 16   | 14   | 15   |
| To visit friends/relatives           | 12   | 12   | 12   | 16   | 14   |
| To have a restful/relaxing holiday   | 11   | 10   | 10   | 10   | 11   |
| To experience culture/history        | 10   | 10   | 10   | 10   | 10   |
| To visit country of ancestors        | 8    | 9    | 10   | 8    | 8    |
| Active outdoor pursuits              | 6    | 6    | 6    | 4    | 5    |
| Opportunity to mix with local people | 6    | 5    | 5    | 3    | 5    |
| Hobby/special interest               | 6    | 5    | 4    | 4    | 4    |
| Other                                | 3    | 5    | 5    | 7    | 6    |

**Source: Bord Fáilte (2003d), Visitor Attraction Survey 2002**

The Visitor Attitudes Survey 2002-2008 (Fáilte Ireland 2009b), a survey conducted on a yearly bases among overseas holiday visitors, revealed that Ireland continues to rate highly for the friendliness and hospitality of the Irish people and the beauty of its scenery when considering Ireland for a holiday. Other important destination issues included the natural, unspoilt environment and the easy, relaxed pace of life (see Table 24).

**Table 24: Importance of factors in choosing Ireland for a holiday<sup>44</sup>**

|   | in% | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 |
|---|-----|------|------|------|------|------|
| Friendly, hospitable people                   |     | 84   | 84   | 83   | 81   | 81   |
| Easy, relaxed pace of life                    |     | 69   | 71   | 68   | 62   | 62   |
| Beautiful scenery                             |     | 83   | 82   | 80   | 80   | 79   |
| Natural, unspoilt environment                 |     | 77   | 77   | 74   | 71   | 70   |
| Attractive cities/towns                       |     | 63   | 60   | 58   | 54   | 57   |
| Good range of natural attractions             |     | n/a  | n/a  | 69   | 66   | 66   |
| Good all round value for money                |     | 62   | 59   | 57   | 55   | 58   |
| Opportunity to meet/mix with local people     |     | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | 43   | 49   |
| Plenty of things to see and do                |     | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | 65   | 67   |
| Interesting history/culture                   |     | 61   | 61   | 59   | 63   | 64   |
| Good range of historical/cultural attractions |     | 58   | 56   | 56   | 54   | 56   |

**Source: Fáilte Ireland (2009b), Visitor Attitude Survey 2002-2008**

The level of satisfaction of visitor's experience in Ireland has been specifically high with elements like the beauty of the scenery and the friendliness and hospitality – nine in ten holidaymakers were very satisfied with these factors over the period 2004 to 2008. Many products across the industry, however, failed to reach a level of at least 70% very satisfactory performance. Nevertheless, the level of outright dissatisfaction in relation to quality and customer service is low for most products – rarely rising above one in ten. Of concern is the level of satisfaction with overall value for money. The deterioration in positive perception of value for money, is according to Bord Fáilte (2003c), also reflected in how overseas tourists see Irish prices in relation to their own country. The industry faces a major challenge in reducing customer dissatisfaction ratings as regards delivering good value for money in the light of competitiveness. Continuously mentioned disadvantages of Ireland include the weather, bad roads and high costs of living. However, despite these disappointing facts almost eight in ten holiday visitors would recommend a holiday in Ireland to a friend (Fáilte Ireland 2009a).

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<sup>44</sup> The full list includes 21 items of which only those were selected which are of direct relevance to this thesis. Items such as competitively priced air and sea fares are not displayed.

### **3.1.7.3. Ireland's Culture and Heritage – A Product Profile**

International tourists choosing Ireland as their holiday destination want to experience the real Ireland and want to find out what is unique about being Irish (Bord Fáilte 2000a). Although there is nothing such as a “pure” culture, as mentioned previously, important questions to answer are: What makes Ireland distinctive as a “cultural” destination as opposed to others? What aspects of Irish Culture are tourists attracted by in particular?

The geographical remoteness of Ireland from mainland Europe proved to be beneficial in many respects. Ireland holds one of the most untouched landscapes in Europe (e.g. bogland, picturesque coastlines, Killarney National Park), an astonishing man-made heritage along with vibrant cultural traditions (e.g. Irish Music, Irish Dancing, storytelling). Many of Ireland's most outstanding historical remnants date back to the Stone Age such as the Céide Fields (Co. Mayo) and Newgrange, Knowth and the Hill of Tara (Co. Meath). Many of Ireland's cultural sites are also directly linked with an age of myth and legend, the magic history of the Celts, and Celtic Christianity. Ireland's freedom from invasion by the Romans has preserved to great extent many of the visible signs of its early Christianity. There is also the remarkable part of Ireland's past where many of the population had to leave the country because of the Famine caused by the potato blight and the time under British rule from which “big houses” such as Powerscourt Demesne, Castletown and Westport House and Gardens in the country originate (Johnson 1996). Beside these tangible forms of the past, Ireland possesses a unique lyrical and literary heritage with a long list of Irish story-tellers and writers of international status (e.g. Yeats, Joyce, Beckett, Behan and Doyle). The Department of Tourism and Trade (1994) has acknowledged that not only do the celebrations of the past in their various forms but also present-day art, literature, architecture etc., contain important manifestations of Irish Culture. Ireland is renowned for its music. Both, Irish traditional and popular forms of music, have been spreading out through the world

through famous performers such as U2, the Cranberries, Hot House Flowers, Enya and many more (Department of Tourism and Trade 1994). One of the most significant elements of Irish Culture, however, are the people themselves. While this is not only true for Ireland, what sets Irish people apart from other cultures is their unique way of socialising and the Irish humour (and drinking in the Irish Pub). Living cultural heritage (Irish pottery, hand-made Aran sweaters) as well as the famous St. Patrick's Parade may be added to the above.

Distinctive elements of Irish tangible and intangible culture/heritage can be summarised as follows:

- Natural scenic beauty of environment with large variety of landscapes;
- Attractions with links to Irish myth and legends, the Celts and Celtic Christianity;
- Castles, houses and gardens from aristocratic Ireland;
- Lyrical and literary heritage (in English and Irish language);
- Irish traditional and popular music, musicians and story-tellers;
- Unique way of socialising and humour of the Irish people.

In the following, some specific niche markets are outlined. Some of these markets can be specifically regarded as having scope and potential for diversification and further development.

#### **3.1.7.4. Specific Niche Products**

##### **3.1.7.4.1. Visiting Gardens, Parks and Arboreta**

Garden visiting has become a favourite leisure activity and is of interest to a considerable number of holidaymakers. Visiting a garden combines a wide set of ideas, such as tranquillity, relaxation, aesthetics of the floral display, appreciation for the environment, spirituality, pleasure, creativity, and interest in gardening, to name but a few.



Besides Ireland's distinctive nature and wildlife flora, gardens form an important part of its history and character. Moist climate, warm temperatures created through the Gulf Stream and fertile soil makes Ireland a place particularly conducive to garden making. Many of Ireland's gardens were created by some of the most talented experts from around the globe. The offer of Irish gardens, parks and arboreta range from the small private ones to the formal grounds of big houses and the National Botanic Garden located in Dublin City. They include a rich variety of gardens drawn from different traditions. Mount Congreve located in the south eastern part of Ireland possesses one of the finest rhododendron collections in the world. Himalayan rhododendron forests can be found at Ard na Mona in Donegal. The tradition of wild garden has its roots in Ireland and lovely examples of this philosophy are the gardens of Anne's Grove in (Co. Cork), Mount Usher (Co. Wicklow), and Rowallane (Co. Down) (Heron 1996). Special forms include gardens such as baroque gardens (Killruddery in Co. Wicklow), formal gardens, Victorian gardens, Japanese gardens (National Studs in Co. Kildare), walled gardens, and decorative vegetable gardens. Heron (1996) outlines that Irish gardens have a certain distinctiveness in comparison with their cousins in England and other places:

Irish gardens have their own brand of magic, a certain romantic waywardness and colourfulness of expression missing from their more manicured counterparts elsewhere (Heron 1996, p. 1).

Heron (1996) also states that the Irish perception of the great gardens has gradually altered. While in the past they were seen as a legacy of ascendancy landowners best forgotten they are now appreciated as a valuable heritage resource. Most of the gardens are impressive legacies from the past. But there are also gardens born of a new wave of enthusiasm for gardening such as the creation at Butterstream (Co. Meath) (Heron 1996). Revolution in gardening design, especially in the US, characterised by the use of architectural plants, strong colour and modern materials such as steel, decking and glass (Drinkwater 2001) have not been fully established in Ireland. Those gardens which lean

more towards modern or even futuristic notions of design principles are a tiny minority. Gardens that are open for tourists range from those which are open daily to the public to smaller gardens attached to private houses, which often open their grounds to the public at selected times, or to groups by appointment. Over the last few years the garden theme has also become very popular for various festivals and events. Also garden trails, where small private gardens are open to the public for a certain period, are more professionally marketed and integrated into tourist packages.

Television gardening programmes and shows, festivals, conferences, magazines and the avalanche of gardening books has induced that the Irish garden industry is now blooming and horticulture has become a lucrative business (Drinkwater 2001). The number of gardens open to the public has risen considerably. In the 1993 guide "Irish Gardens" by Terence Reeves-Smyth 33 gardens found inclusion, in his latest guide from 2001 the number has risen to 109 (Drinkwater 2001). Under the "Great Gardens of Ireland Restoration Programme" under the ERDF grant, launched in 1994, some four million Pounds were allocated to the restoration of historic gardens. By the year 2000, 26 which had gone into decline have benefited from the scheme and were brought back to life. They are now rediscovered by many visitors. The gardens have to be self sustainable and will need managing to survive in the future as specific leisure spaces.

Garden visitors are not a homogeneous group. While for the majority of visitors, gardens in Ireland are more likely visited together with historical and cultural attractions, and are therefore often secondary to the visit to the house/castle, the garden enthusiasts, for whom visiting gardens would make up a significant part of their holiday, form only a small number of visitors (Bord Fáilte 2003a). The interest and expectations of a garden visit are diverse. Regarding expectations of a garden visit

Connell (2004) argues that they will vary “according to the type of garden, the seasonal changes, the reaction of accompanying visitors and the mood of the visitor” (p. 232).

Latest figures provided by Fáilte Ireland (2008c) show that garden visits have continuously been increasing over the last five years except for the year 2005. In 2007 768.000 garden visitors were registered. Britain, a nation of garden lovers, shows a totally different picture. There, the garden visiting sector is significant, showing a continued growth in recorded visitor numbers since the 1970’s, recently amounting to about 16 million each year (Connell 2004). However, garden visitors in Ireland showed an increased level of satisfaction with the quality of the gardens reaching 84 percent (75% in 2000) of visitors who were very satisfied in 2001, only one percent were not satisfied. Whereas 72 percent of the visitors to gardens in 2007 (in 2005 68%, in 2006 72%) were very satisfied with customer service at the gardens, only one percent was not satisfied (in 2005 3%, in 2006 2%). This shows that there was a major improvement in the gardens regarding quality and customer service. According to Fáilte Ireland (2008c) there is still scope to increasing facilities on site, which would improve the quality of the visit at some properties. But not only the facilities are of significance for the garden experience, in fact, very few gardens in Ireland sell detailed guides or catalogues of their plants and labelling is sometimes inadequate (Reeves-Smith 1994).

The Irish garden experience is promoted to overseas markets by institutions/groups, such as “The Houses, Castles and Gardens of Ireland” or “Heritage Island”. In Northern Ireland gardens are promoted by the “National Trust Ulster Gardens Scheme” and by the “Guide to Gardens and Historic Demesnes” provided by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board. These initiatives together with various guidebooks and leaflets have raised the awareness of Irish gardens as places to visit among tourists. There is strong believe among some enthusiastic horticulturists that there is scope for Ireland, in the

future, to become recognised as the garden of Europe. Evans (2001) states that the future for gardens is “certainly rosy” with the world-wide shift towards green lifestyles (Connell 2004).

#### **3.1.7.4.2. Genealogy**

Discovering ethnic origins has especially in Ireland become a special interest tourism product due to the millions of emigrations running through Ireland’s history for centuries. The 19th century saw the greatest mass exodus from Ireland to such places as America and Australia, caused by famine, poverty and disease. The Celtic tiger has caused the number of emigrants to decrease as especially younger people have increasingly been encouraged to stay because of more lucrative future prospects. However, there is still a considerable number of Irish people emigrating across the Atlantic as well as to neighbouring Britain. It is estimated that there are some 70 million people with Irish ancestors spread throughout the world (Bord Fáilte 2003c).

The National Library in Dublin together with other organisations such as Irish Genealogy Ltd.<sup>45</sup>, the General Register Office, and the National Archives hold a wealth of information on genealogical sources (e.g. parish registers) and also offer a genealogical advisory service. Many of these institutions can also be accessed through means of modern technology.

Genealogy, i.e. to search the family tree and origins through historic records, is an implicit motivation for many visitors coming to Ireland, most especially holidaymakers from the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand but also Britain, Europe and such distant places as South Africa and Argentina. In the year 2001 some 82,000

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<sup>45</sup> Irish Genealogy Limited is an umbrella organisation for genealogical services in the Republic and Northern Ireland. Irish Genealogy Limited was set up in 1993 to manage and market the Irish Genealogical Project.

visitors came to Ireland to trace their roots (Bord Fáilte 2003c) with over half of them were visitors from North America<sup>46</sup>.

To combine a holiday in Ireland with family history research and visits to places associated with family and ancestors has become an attractive theme used for marketing by several tourism organisations as well as Fáilte Ireland. The Irish Genealogical Congress, which is a weeklong congress, organised on a three- to four year basis, is aimed at promoting research of Irish family history.

#### **3.1.7.4.3. Literary Tourism**

Literary tourism can be regarded as part of the landscape of heritage tourism (Herbert 2001). Ireland is home to a rich and diverse literary tradition (Igoe 1994). Much that was written over centuries encapsulates themes that reach from the country's ancient history, the fights over territories but also about traditions and various places, their landscapes and cityscapes. The Irish literary tradition exists in two languages and was for a long time separated by two cultures. For centuries the native poets and writers writing in the Irish language were suppressed by the colonisers, hence their teachers were often forced to teach in hedge schools. Their literature survived largely through the oral tradition, the so-called storytelling. Storytelling was once a highly esteemed profession carried out by poets, bards and seanachai (storytellers). Through storytelling, many legends<sup>47</sup> have survived. The tradition of storytelling is particularly linked with places such as the Blasket Islands and the Aran Islands. Scholars visiting the Islands discovered that the Blasket Islanders had a stock of pre-Medieval stories, songs and poems. These scholars, such as Robin Flower who was specifically interested in the Irish language, encouraged the islanders to write what were powerful autobiographical

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<sup>46</sup> Unfortunately, genealogy as tourist motivation is no longer part of the Tourism Attitudes Survey and therefore no up-to-date figures can be provided in this thesis.

<sup>47</sup> Earliest Irish legends are grouped into four distinctive cycles: the Ulster Cycle, the Fenian Cycle, the Cycle of the Kings and the Mythological Cycle.

narratives dealing with the realities of island life. Irish language literature in English language has produced a long list of world famous authors and play writers, such as Swift, Yeats, Synge, O'Casey, Behan, Mary Lavin, MacNeice, Day Lewis, Nobel Prize winners Shaw and Beckett and many more. Joyce, one of the most renowned Irish writers, left the city to live in voluntary exile (Brown 1992). So did Joyce's scholar and friend Samuel Beckett. Each year, on the 16<sup>th</sup> of June, Bloomsday, Dublin celebrates in a Joycean manner. Also known the world over is the Irish novelist Bram Stoker (author of Dracula) as well as Jonathan Swift (author of Gulliver's Travels). Special literary locations in Dublin include the Dublin Writers Museum, the Joyce Museum, the James Joyce Cultural Centre, The House of George Bernard Shaw, and the Nora Barnacle House. Visitors to Dublin can also participate in a Literary Pub-Crawl as well as joining the Joyce Walk. There is also a number of specific Study Courses or Summer Schools linked to specific writers held throughout Ireland such as The Synge Summer School in Co. Wicklow, The Bard Summer School in Co. Mayo and the Joyce Brothers School in Co. Limerick, to name but a few. Beside serious scholastic study, many of these Summer Schools also offer a side programme of social events and exploratory excursions. Furthermore, a number of Arts Festivals with a literary content, such as the Dublin Theatre Festival and the Writers' Week in Listowel in Co. Kerry, take place throughout the year.

#### **3.1.7.5. Cultural Tourist Attractions in Ireland**

An audit of the Irish National Heritage in 1985 indicated the existence of 200,000 known archaeological sites and monuments and 60,000 buildings of architectural or historic interest (Page 1994). In the Republic of Ireland there are over 342 fee paying visitor attractions open to the public catering for approximately 10 million visits annually (Bord Fáilte 2003b). Further 163 attractions are in Northern Ireland (102 fee-paying, 61 admission free) with a total of 7,4 million visits in 2001 (Northern Ireland Tourist Board 2003). With the help of major EU funding numerous new heritage and

interpretative centres sprung up within the last 15 years. This all happened under the “National Development Plan”, where tourism was seen as economic remedy especially for rural areas in Ireland. Besides publicly owned cultural attractions there are a number of privately owned which have been made available to visitors.

Visitors to Ireland are attracted by both, national and local heritage sites. While national heritage values the “important” past, local heritage values the legacy of the ordinary, everyday past (CERT 1997, p. 109). Ireland’s most visited heritage sites are outlined in Table 25.

**Table 25: Ireland’s Top 10 Visitor Attractions in 2007**

| <b>Visitor Attractions</b>               | <b>Visitor Numbers</b> |
|--|------------------------|
| The Guinness Storehouse                  | 946,577                |
| Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience       | 940,455                |
| Dublin Zoo                               | 900,005                |
| The National Gallery of Ireland          | 740,407                |
| Book of Kells                            | 567,632                |
| National Aquatic Centre                  | 565,085                |
| Irish Museum of Modern Art               | 485,000                |
| National Museum of Ireland – Archaeology | 407,202                |
| Blarney Castle                           | 401,567                |
| St. Patrick’s Cathedral                  | 388,559                |

**Source: Fáilte Ireland (2008d), Visitor Attractions 2007**

### **3.1.7.6. Managing and Planning Cultural Tourism in Ireland**

Most of Ireland’s historic monuments and sites are owned by the public sector and are managed by Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. The Department’s function is to preserve the past and support the future of Ireland’s natural and built heritage. The Department cares for many of Ireland’s monuments, parks, gardens, inland waterways and nature reserves. The so-called “Heritage Council” acts as a cohort of all the bodies and individuals involved in the development and implementation of policies affecting Ireland’s heritage.

Over the years there a series of Government Acts and Development Plans which forced cultural product development and the promotion of Irish heritage products for tourism have been implemented (CERT 1997, p. 109):

- (a) In the 1952 *Tourism and Traffic Act* the Board's activities were enlarged to protect and promote Irish heritage i.e. historic buildings, sites, shrines and places of scenic interest and facilitate visitors access to such attractions.
- (b) Throughout the 1960s and 70s Irish culture and heritage played an important role in the Irish tourism product. In the 1964 *Local Government Planning and Development Act* guidelines were set up for development in areas of historic and cultural interest and for a greater onus on individual local authorities to protect their local heritage.
- (c) In the years 1975-1988 the distribution of the ERDF<sup>48</sup> assistance highlights the amount of expenditure devoted to projects with a cultural/historical theme (see figure 10). This can be seen as an early indication of the emphasis being placed on "culture" as an integral element of Irish tourism (Lennon and Seaton 1998).
- (d) In the 1987 *Programme for National Recovery* investment was encouraged by the application to certain tourism enterprises over the period 1987-1991 of the *Business Expansion Scheme*, providing tax relief or venture capital. Following this a number of new heritage tourism attractions were developed.
- (e) Irish Government endorsement of the importance of Irish heritage in the development of the Irish tourism industry found expression in the government *National Development Plan 1989-93* and, more specifically, in the *Operational Programme for Tourism*. The main aim of the Operational Programme for Tourism was to improve the competitiveness of the Irish Tourism industry via concentration on improvements in the quality of the product (Lennon and Seaton 1998). €62.5

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<sup>48</sup> European Regional Development Fund.



million were allocated to culture and heritage based attractions (McGettigan and Burns 2001).

- (f) In 1990 Bord Fáilte published an *Action Plan for Heritage Attractions*, an initial attempt to unify a very diverse and dispersed cultural tourism offer (O'Donnchadha and O'Connor 1996). Due to the fact that the quality of heritage attractions in Ireland was low by international standards, that there was a tendency to duplicate the same themes, and that little success was achieved in giving visitors a comprehensive understanding of Ireland's heritage, Bord Fáilte developed a coherent national scheme of interpretation in which duplication is avoided and networking of areas to present an overall theme was encouraged. The strategy involved clustering storylines under the five themes (i.e. Live Landscapes, Making a Living, Saints and Religion, Building a Nation, The Spirit of Ireland) where as each theme was intended to provide focus around which numerous storylines could be developed. For example, the storylines around the theme The Spirit of Ireland) included Literary Ireland, Language, Folklore and Legend, Art in Ireland, Famous Personalities, Irish Games and Sport, and Ireland Entertains. The storylines, however, are not exhaustive and new ones can be added under all themes (Phillips and Tubridy 1994).
- (g) The *Tourism Development Plan 1993-1997* emphasised the concept of sustainable tourism and Board Fáilte identified specific areas of Irish heritage for intensive product development.
- (h) Section 482 of *The Taxes Consolidation Act 1997*, provides tax relief to an owner/occupier of an approved building (including surrounding garden), or an approved garden existing independently, in respect of expenditure incurred on the repair, maintenance or restoration of the approved building or garden. As per 2001, 97 gardens/houses which have received tax relief were registered (Bord Fáilte 2001e).

- (i) In the *Operational Programme for tourism 1994-1999* natural and cultural tourism developments received € 117,5 million under ERDF funding<sup>49</sup>. Emphasis and funding was given to promote Ireland as a destination abroad. Four heritage marketing groups were established including Heritage Island, Great Houses, Castles and Gardens of Ireland, Heritage Towns, and Culture Ireland.
- (j) The *Business Expansion Scheme and Seed Capital Scheme 1984-2003* provided individual investors tax relief on investments they make in certain tourism companies. In 2003 two interpretative centres, the Eco Centre in Co. Kerry and the Marine and Seawatching Centre in Co. Cork, managed to get this tax relief.
- (k) The *Tourism Product Development Scheme*, funded under the *National Development Plan 2000-2006*, provided a total of € 130 million grant funding, including € 55 million support from the ERDF, to assist further tourism product development in Ireland. The overall objective was

(...) to develop the tourism product in a sustainable way that widens the spatial spread of tourism, diverts pressure from highly developed areas and increases under-performing Regions' share of overseas tourism revenue (Bord Fáilte 2000b, p. 3).

The strategy signals commitment to develop a sustainable tourism sector and a more pro-active approach to regional development issues in Ireland. In specific, there are two Regional Operational Programmes, the South and East (S&E) and the Border, Midlands and West (BMW) Regions. The funding was further earmarked by five specific project categories (sub-measures) of which the first three are of particular relevance to cultural tourism. These included (1) development of major attractors and clusters of existing attractors, (2) special interest pursuits, and (3) tourism/environment management.

- (l) In the years 2006-2010 one of the major goals of Irish Government is to secure sustainability across all industries, including culture and heritage. The strategy

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<sup>49</sup> By final completion an investment of over Punts 500 million across a wide range of tourism facilities and related product was made (Bord Fáilte 2000b).

2006-2008 of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government includes a wide-ranging review of archaeological policy and practice in Ireland as well as protection of the built heritage through the provision of a range of financial supports and successful nomination/management of World Heritage Sites.

### **3.1.7.7. Marketing Cultural/Heritage Tourism in Ireland**

Heritage was recognised by the Irish Tourist Board (former Bord Fáilte now termed Fáilte Ireland) as one of the core factors of the Irish tourist potential. Based on this fact Bord Fáilte emphasised culture and heritage as part of the tourism product in their marketing plan at a local as well as international level. Their aim was

[t]o develop an image as an uncrowded, relaxed island, of great scenic beauty, with a distinctive heritage and culture, a welcoming people, high quality facilities and a superb unspoilt environment for outdoor activity (Bord Fáilte 1994a).

In 1996 “Tourism Brand Ireland” (TBI) was launched for the promotion of Ireland as a brand and as an evocative repositioning strategy. Preceded by two years of research a brand positioning that reflects what Ireland as a holiday destination has to offer and which also strongly appeals to the discerning visitor was developed (Bord Fáilte 1996, p. 3). The initial positioning was set under “emotional experience” that aimed to redress apparent misconceptions and to move potential visitors into a more positive consideration set by developing the themes of activity, authenticity, culture, friendliness, and memorable personal experiences (Bord Fáilte 1996). The “emotional experience” positioning was followed by positioning as “people and spontaneity”. Along with golf, angling, walking/cycling, equestrian pursuits, EFL, conference and incentive/meetings, heritage remains central to the Irish tourism product and is marketed as a specialist product.

A major achievement in the marketing of cultural tourism in Ireland includes the implementation of the so-called “Heritage Card” which allows the purchaser unlimited free admission to all Heritage Sites managed by The Office of Public Works (OPW) and

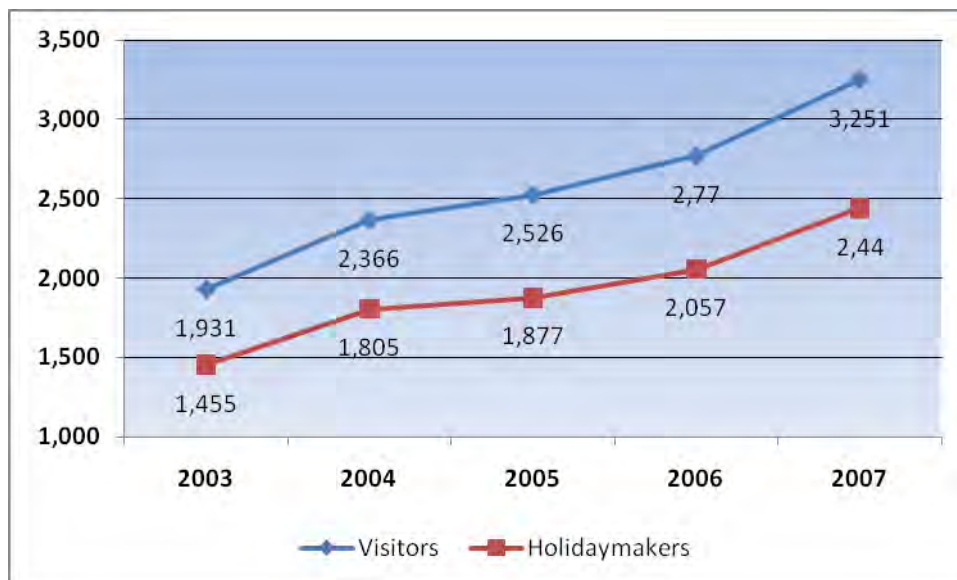
the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government for one year (Heritage Ireland 2009). The Heritage Card has been extremely successful and offers unparalleled opportunities to experience heritage sites all over Ireland including museums, castles, heritage centers, craft centers, big houses, gardens and arboreta, etc., including small sites as well as sites which are part of the world's heritage.

### 3.1.7.8. Existing Markets and Visitor Profile

#### 3.1.7.8.1. Participants in Historical/Cultural Activities

Research findings have consistently shown that cultural and heritage products are high on the list of activities engaged in by overseas holidaymakers to Ireland. As shown in Figure 22, visiting cultural attractions in Ireland has since 2003 continuously risen. In 2007 3,3 million visitors and 2,4 million holidaymakers experienced cultural attractions in Ireland.

**Figure 22: Overseas participants in historical/cultural activities (000s)**



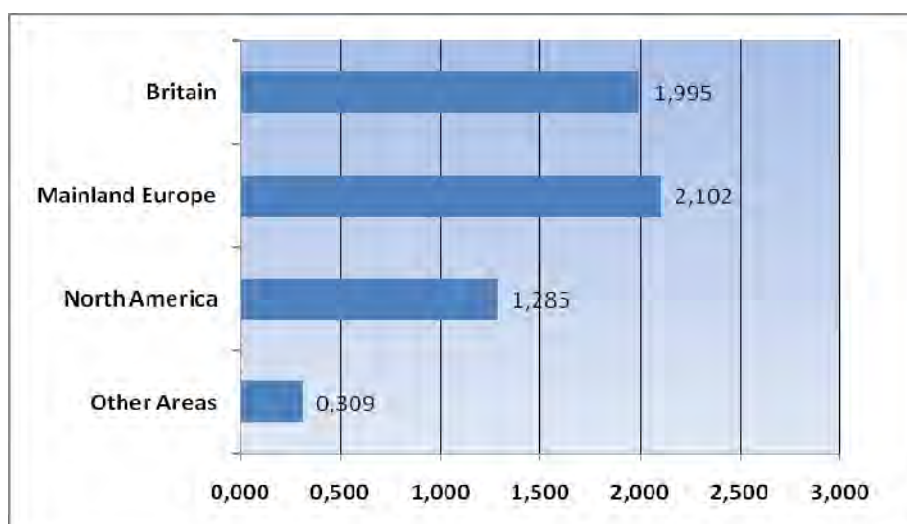
**Source: Fáilte Ireland (2008b), Tourism Facts Historical/Cultural 2007**

In terms of source markets British visitors continue to constitute an important market for visiting cultural attractions in Ireland only slightly behind visitors from mainland

Europe. However, also people from North America are among the group of people who engaged in visiting places of cultural and historical interest in Ireland (see Figure 23).

However, not only overseas visitors constitute an important market for visiting cultural attractions but also domestic visitors including main holidaymakers, short break holidaymakers, day trippers, school groups and local residents. The home market is particularly important in making an attraction viable on a year-round basis.

**Figure 23: Market origin of visitors who engaged in historical/cultural activities in 2007**



Source: Fáilte Ireland (2008b), *Tourism Facts Historical/Cultural 2007*

### 3.1.7.8.2. Profile of Visitors engaging in Cultural Activities

The following Table 26 provides a profile of holidaymakers<sup>50</sup> engaging in cultural/heritage activities in Ireland from the years 2005 to 2007. Overseas holidaymakers visiting cultural/historical sites are drawn from a wide span of ages. However, the majority is aged between 25 and 54. Visitors who are aged above 65 have slightly increased from 2006 to 2007. Overseas holidaymakers who visited cultural/historical sites are predominantly from the higher social strata and most likely travel as a couple. While those visitors travelling with another adult party has seen a

<sup>50</sup> Holidaymakers are defined as visitors who stated that their main reason for visiting Ireland was a holiday.

slight increase the number of those visitors who travelled alone slightly decreased. Figures also show that overseas visitors to heritage/cultural attractions in Ireland choose Dublin and the South-West as their favourite regions. The reason for these two regions to be high on the list with holidaymakers can be attributed to the fact that they have the highest number of cultural/heritage attractions on offer.

**Table 26: Profile of holidaymakers engaging in cultural/heritage activities**

|  | in %                          | 2005  | 2006  | 2007  |
|--|-------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>Age</b>                               |                               |       |       |       |
|  | 15-24                         | 17    | 14    | 14    |
|  | 25-34                         | 24    | 22    | 21    |
|  | 35-44                         | 18    | 20    | 15    |
|  | 45-54                         | 19    | 20    | 22    |
|  | 54-55                         | 14    | 16    | 17    |
|  | 65+                           | 8     | 8     | 11    |
| <b>Occupation</b>                        |                               |       |       |       |
|  | Managerial/Professional (AB)  | 22    | 27    | 23    |
|  | White Collar (C1)             | 65    | 60    | 62    |
|  | Skilled Worker (C2)           | 10    | 9     | 10    |
|  | Unskilled (DE)                | 3     | 4     | 5     |
| <b>Travel Party</b>                      |                               |       |       |       |
|  | alone                         | 20    | 18    | 17    |
|  | couple                        | 47    | 47    | 46    |
|  | family                        | 18    | 18    | 17    |
|  | other adult party             | 15    | 18    | 19    |
| <b>Regions Visited<sup>51</sup></b>      |                               |       |       |       |
|  | Dublin                        | 36    | 71    | 33    |
|  | Midlands/East                 | 4     | 10    | 4     |
|  | South-East                    | 7     | 22    | 7     |
|  | South-West                    | 24    | 45    | 27    |
|  | Shannon                       | 10    | 27    | 9     |
|  | West                          | 15    | 34    | 16    |
|  | North-West                    | 4     | 8     | 4     |
| <b>Type of Attraction Visited (000s)</b> |                               |       |       |       |
|  | Houses/Castles                | 1,989 | 2,066 | 2,474 |
|  | Monuments                     | 1,594 | 1,619 | 1,974 |
|  | Museums/Art Galleries         | 1,275 | 1,351 | 1,643 |
|  | Heritage/Interpretive Centres | 1,160 | 1,212 | 1,537 |

Source: Fáilte Ireland (2006a, 2007a, 2008b), Historical/Cultural Facts 2005, 2006, 2007

<sup>51</sup> In the year 2006 Fáilte Ireland seems to have used different measurements in this category, which does not comply with the previous and following year. However, no detailed explanations are provided for the different calculation.

In terms of the types of attractions visited houses and castles are high on the agenda followed by monuments and museums and art galleries. The number of visitors to Heritage and Interpretive Centres has slightly increased.

The Visitor Attitude Survey 2002 (Bord Fáilte 2003c) revealed differences in tastes within the European market. Heritage and interpretive centres appear to appeal more to the Northern European temperament, with German, Netherlands and Scandinavian visitors clearly keener on these experiences than their French or Italian counterparts. Italian visitors show an above average interest in museums and art galleries, houses and castles, monuments and gardens.

#### 3.1.7.8.4. Satisfaction with Quality and Price

The satisfaction with the quality of the various visitor attractions can be regarded as being rather high (see Table 27).

**Table 27: Satisfaction with the quality of various attractions**

| in %                                 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
|--------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| <b>Houses/Castles</b>                |      |      |      |      |      |
| Very Satisfied                       | 59   | 61   | 61   | 63   | 64   |
| Fairly Satisfied                     | 38   | 37   | 37   | 35   | 33   |
| Not Satisfied                        | 3    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    |
| <b>Museums/Art Galleries</b>         |      |      |      |      |      |
| Very Satisfied                       | 54   | 61   | 61   | 64   | 62   |
| Fairly Satisfied                     | 40   | 36   | 35   | 33   | 35   |
| Not Satisfied                        | 6    | 3    | 4    | 3    | 3    |
| <b>Heritage/Interpretive Centres</b> |      |      |      |      |      |
| Very Satisfied                       | 56   | 60   | 59   | 60   | 63   |
| Fairly Satisfied                     | 39   | 37   | 37   | 37   | 35   |
| Not Satisfied                        | 5    | 3    | 5    | 3    | 2    |
| <b>Monuments</b>                     |      |      |      |      |      |
| Very Satisfied                       | 58   | 62   | 61   | 61   | 66   |
| Fairly Satisfied                     | 39   | 36   | 36   | 37   | 32   |
| Not Satisfied                        | 3    | 2    | 3    | 2    | 1    |

Source: Fáilte Ireland (2008b), **Historical/Cultural Facts 2007**

Most notably, the level of satisfaction with houses and castles in Ireland has been continuously growing over the last five years. However, satisfaction with the quality of museums and art galleries has gone down slightly from 2006 to 2007. Also Satisfaction

with heritage/interpretive centres as well as monuments shows an increase from 60% to 63% and from 61% to 66%. Satisfaction with admission charges ranges between 30% and 40%, reflecting the more widespread criticism of value for money (Fáilte Ireland 2008a).

### **3.1.8. Cultural Tourism in Austria**

#### **3.1.8.1. Introduction**

Austria is one of the top tourism destinations in Europe. Latest figures from the World Tourism Organisation (2008) show that Austria is also among the top ten tourism earners drawing substantial revenue from tourism. Hence, tourism constitutes one of Austria's most important economic sectors. This is particularly true for Alpine areas such as the Tyrol, Salzburg, Carinthia and Upper Austria where most of the revenue is generated during the winter season. Although summer tourism, especially in Alpine areas, has suffered for a long time because of harsh competition with sun and beach related holidays it has recently been rediscovered. Security, value for money, climate reasons and the international economic crisis has induced many Austrians to vacation within their home country. With their recent slogan "wo Österreich doch so nahe liegt" ("because Austria is so near") also the Austrian National Tourism Board (ANTO) has been putting greater emphasis on marketing activities within the country.

Despite the fact that Austria is a well known winter tourism destination and is primarily associated with skiing, culture and heritage are an important element of the Austrian tourism product. The variety of cultural attractions is vast and includes tangible and intangible ones. Cultural tourism in Austria, however, is mainly concentrated in cities such as Salzburg and Vienna.



In the following sections, first a brief overview of the development of tourism in Austria and some of its key characteristics is provided. Then the Austrian cultural tourism product is explored and specific niche products in cultural tourism are highlighted. Finally, the market for cultural tourism in Austria is outlined and Vienna and its position and characteristics regarding culture and heritage is discussed. It should be noted that statistics and figures about tourism in Austria, especially cultural tourism, are not free of charge like in Ireland. Therefore, only those statistics can be presented in this thesis which are available for the public.

#### **3.1.8.2. Tourism in Austria**

The beginnings of Austrian tourism can be traced back to the so-called “Sommerfrische” (i.e. summer vacation or summer retreat) when mainly German people travelled to Alpine regions and lake areas within Austria at the turn of the century. The Alps were considered to be “the playground of Europe”. During the Belle Epoque the Alps became an attractive place for wellness tourism in its earliest forms. After World War II tourism numbers started to grow massively and winter tourism developed as a key area of Austrian tourism. Due to its diversity regarding landscape Austria has been offering different sorts of activities including winter and summer sports. Other important segments of Austrian tourism include city tourism, congress tourism, agrotourism, wellness tourism, and cultural tourism.

Tourism arrivals and overnight stays have been continuously rising over the last five years resulting in one of the best “tourism” years Austria has ever recorded in 2008 (see Table 28). The major source countries for Austria remain Germany and the Netherlands followed by the United Kingdom and Switzerland. The geographical vicinity to Germany remains one of the key advantages for Austria to stay attractive for this tourism market.

**Table 28: Arrivals and overnight stays in Austria**

| (in mn.)                     | 2004         | 2005         | 2006         | 2007         | 2008         |
|------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>Total arrivals</b>        | <b>28,5</b>  | <b>29,3</b>  | <b>30,1</b>  | <b>31,1</b>  | <b>32,6</b>  |
| <b>Total overnight stays</b> | <b>117,2</b> | <b>119,2</b> | <b>119,4</b> | <b>121,4</b> | <b>126,7</b> |
| <b>Area of residence</b>     |              |              |              |              |              |
| Germany                      | 51,0         | 51,0         | 48,8         | 48,1         | 50,1         |
| Netherlands                  | 8,5          | 8,7          | 8,8          | 9,1          | 9,5          |
| United Kingdom               | 3,4          | 3,6          | 3,8          | 3,9          | 3,9          |
| Switzerland                  | 3,6          | 3,5          | 3,6          | 3,7          | 3,6          |

**Source: Statistik Austria (2009)**

In terms of seasonality and regional spread Austria is split into two parts: the west (alpine regions) and the south and east. While the west is dominated by the winter season the south and the east have the strongest summer seasons with most tourist arrivals. Both parts try to increase tourism in lower seasons with offers like festivals and events and try to appeal to tourists through more activity-related offers.

### **3.1.8.3. Austria's Culture and Heritage – A Product Profile**

The Austrian cultural tourism product includes a variety of different attractions including small scale and world heritage sites, heritage and contemporary attractions, and tangible and intangible attractions. Austria has quite a diverse landscape, reaching from the Alps in the West to lowlands in the East yielding astonishing scenic attractions. Many of Austria's outstanding historical remnants are connected with Austria's imperial past including Schönbrunn Palace in Vienna, Belvedere Palace and Schloss Hof. But Austria has also a vivid cultural traditions such as folklore music and heritage festivals and events all over the country.

Distinctive elements of Austrian tangible and intangible culture and heritage can be summarised as follows:

- Natural scenic beauty of environment with large variety of landscapes;
- Attractions with links to Austria's imperial past;
- Classical music and festivals;
- Architecture and arts;
- Austrian cuisine and wine and coffeehouse tradition.

Some of these elements will be elaborated in the following section.

#### **3.1.8.4. Specific Niche Products**

Austria is strongly connected with classical music as several of the world's most renowned composers and musicians were born or have lived in Austria. Vienna is known as the world's music capital. Several attractions related to composers and musicians can be found across the country including the Mozarthaus in Salzburg, the House of Music in Vienna, and the Beethoven-Pasqualati House in Vienna. Classical concerts and operas are staged at the Vienna State Opera, the Vienna Concert Hall and the Vienna "Musikverein" and attract tourists from all over the world. During the summer seasons it has become popular to stage operas and operettas on open-air in places such as Bregenz (Vorarlberg) or Mörbisch (Burgenland). In 2006 Austria celebrated the 250th anniversary of Mozart with live performances and special events all over the country. Another year-round celebration is dedicated to 200th anniversary of the death of Joseph Haydn in 2009.

Vienna is also famous for art niveau (Jugendstil) which attracts tourists from all over the world. Painters, architects and designers created fascinating art which today are among the most precious in Austria. The so-called "Secession" is one of the most famous art nouveau buildings dating from around 1900. At the Belvedere palace famous paintings by Gustav Klimt (1862 – 1918) such as "The Kiss" and other important works by Schiele and Kokoschka are exhibited. Other important art nouveau sites include the Church am Steinhof and The Stadtbahn Pavilion both designed by Otto Wagner.

Another important aspect of Austrian tourism is culinary tourism which is interlaced with wine tourism. Over the last five to ten years this element of Austrian culture has celebrated phenomenal success and numerous wine tourism attractions have been rejuvenated or newly built. One particular example is the so-called "Loisium" in Lower

Austria which can be regarded as a modern type attraction that aims to provide an experience that addresses all human senses including a wine tasting session at the end of the tour. Although Austria's export on wine is very limited as compared to other wine producing areas Austria produces one of the finest wines worldwide (e.g. Veltliner, white wine). Wine tourism destinations in Austria include Lower Austria, Vienna, Styria and the Burgenland. Due to its unique geographical location Austria's cuisine can also be regarded as a melting pot of different culinary influences (from Italy to Bohemia and Hungary). Although Austria has a high number of star-rated restaurants (i.e. gourmet restaurants) eating out in a so-called "Gasthaus", where traditional Austrian food is served at reasonable prices, is very popular among tourists. Another important element of Austria's living cultural heritage are the coffeehouses where usually different types of coffee are served together with Austrian pastries. Coffeehouses have always been important places for socialising and this tradition is meticulously upheld by Austrian people.

Garden tourism is a new area of Austria's cultural tourism product and has been specifically promoted in Lower Austria. Lower Austria's strategy is to become "the garden of Austria" (Natur im Garten 2009). Huge investments have flown into rejuvenating old gardens and to cultivate new ones. Different types of gardens are offered for visitation including herbal gardens (e.g. at Zwettl Monastery), arboreta (e.g. Grafenegg Castle), vegetable gardens (e.g. Arche Noah), and rose gardens (e.g. Rosenschlössl). In Lower Austria a big garden exhibition is organised on a biannual basis (e.g. Garten Tulln in 2008). Gardens are marketed by two different organisations, namely the so-called "die Gärten Niederösterreichs" (i.e. gardens of Lower Austria, including 26 gardens) (Die Gärten Niederösterreichs 2009) and "Natur im Garten" (i.e. nature in the garden, including 103 gardens also in Lower Austria) (Natur im Garten

2009). The former try to market gardens together with the culinary aspect in Lower Austria.

### 3.1.8.5. Cultural Tourist Attractions in Austria

As already noted previously, Austria offers a great variety of cultural attractions. There are approximately 1.800 museums in Austria open for visitation (Kaindl 2009). It has to be noted at this stage that, unlike in Ireland, all National Museums in Austria charge admission fee. As can be taken from Table 29 below Schönbrunn Palace is Austria's most visited cultural attraction closely followed by the Schönbrunn Zoo. Most of the top 10 visitor attractions are located in Vienna.

**Table 29: Austria's Top 10 Visitor Attractions in 2007**

| Visitor Attractions                         | Visitor Numbers |
|---|-----------------|
| Schönbrunn Palace                           | 2,590,000       |
| Schönbrunn Zoo                              | 2,453,987       |
| Basilika Mariazell                          | 1,500,000       |
| Fortress Hohensalzburg                      | 970,000         |
| Großglockner Alpine Road                    | 835,723         |
| Grazer Schlossberg                          | 711,000         |
| Swarovski Cristal Worlds                    | 650,000         |
| Imperial Palace/Apartment/Silver Collection | 625,000         |
| Giant Ferris Wheel                          | 620,000         |
| Museum of Fine Arts (Main Building)         | 619,318         |

**Source: TourMIS (2008), Attractions Austria 2007**

### 3.1.8.6. Marketing Cultural Tourism in Austria

There have been a number of marketing activities which have a strong focus on the cultural aspect of Austria. The most recent is "Creative Austria" emphasises contemporary aspects of Austrian culture including hip places to see, modern architecture and contemporary arts and artists. With this marketing campaign Austrian National Tourism Board tries to attract a more younger generation. Another important marketing initiative refers to the introduction of the so-called "Vienna Card" which provides reduction or benefits at 210 museums and sites, theatres, concerts, shops,

restaurants, cafés and Heurigen (wine taverns). They are valid on day of issue and the following three days (Vienna Tourism Board 2009).

### 3.1.8.7. Existing Markets and Visitor Profile

#### 3.1.8.7.1. Participants in Historical/Cultural Activities in Austria

15% of all holidaymakers in Austria define their holiday as a cultural one (ANTO 2008). Cultural tourism in Austria, unlike in Ireland, is split up into a summer and winter season. Especially in the summer season cultural tourists combine their holiday with active sports activities such as hiking, climbing, mountain biking, and bathing in lakes. In contrast to this, cultural tourists who visit Austria during the winter season can be described as typical “sightseers” who rarely combine their holiday with winter sports activities such as skiing and mainly visit urban areas such as Vienna or Salzburg. The difference between summer and winter cultural tourists is also revealed in the figures shown in Table 30 below which outlines the top 10 criteria for destination choice. While landscape/nature is important for cultural tourist in the summer season, the offer on arts- and culture in Austria is an important criteria for cultural tourists in the winter season.

**Table 30: Top 10 criteria for destination choice**

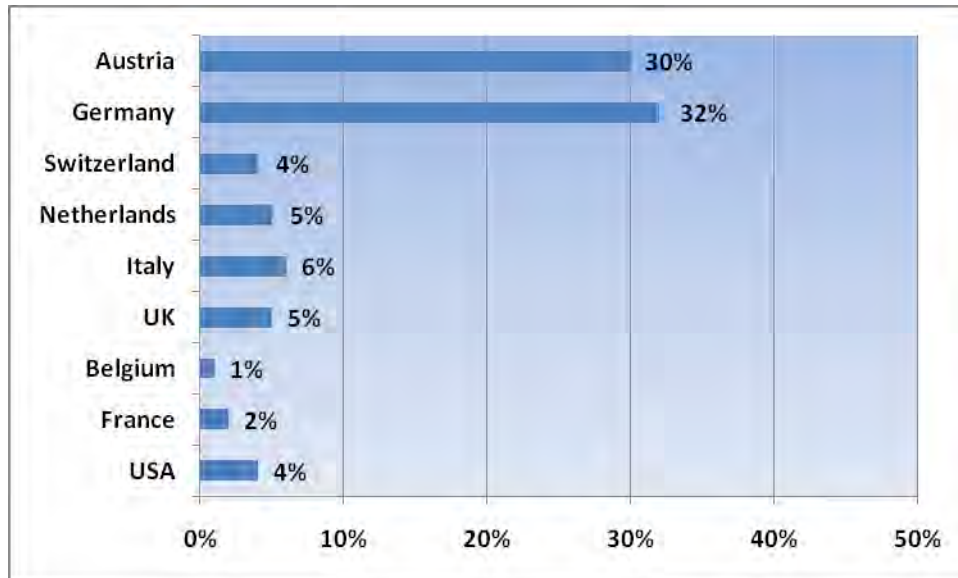
| in %                         | Winter | Summer |
|------------------------------|--------|--------|
| Landscape/nature             | 20     | 62     |
| Offer on arts- and culture   | 76     | 59     |
| Cultural attractions         | 60     | 59     |
| Variety of cultural offer    | 55     | 55     |
| Destination image            | 52     | 52     |
| Atmosphere/Flair             | 59     | 50     |
| Clean air/climate            | 9      | 48     |
| Possibilities for recreation | 26     | 44     |
| History of the region        | 46     | 40     |

**Source: ANTO (2009), T-MONA Kultururlauber 2008/09**

In the tourism year 2008/09 (see Figure 24) Germany was the main source market for cultural tourists in Austria. But also Austrians themselves constitute an important market for cultural tourism in Austria. About one third of the overall cultural tourists in Austria came from mainly mainland Europe, including Italy, Switzerland, the

Netherlands, Belgium, France, and the UK. Other smaller markets include Japan and Spain.

**Figure 24: Market origin of cultural tourists in 2008/09**



Source: ANTO (2009), T-MONA Kultururlauber 2008/09

### 3.1.8.7.2. Profile of Visitors engaging in Cultural Activities

The following Table 31 provides a profile of cultural tourists in Austria. Cultural tourists in Austria can be found in all age groups. However, the main group of cultural tourists is aged between 30 and 59. The average age of Austria's cultural tourist in the year 2008/09 was 45 years. Occupation wise cultural tourists in Austria are mainly from the higher social strata and most likely travel as a couple. This is in line with findings from Ireland.

**Table 31: Profile of holidaymakers engaging in cultural activities in Austria**

|                     | in %                         | 2006/07 | 2008/09 |
|---------------------|------------------------------|---------|---------|
| <b>Age</b>          |                              |         |         |
|                     | 14-19                        | 2       | 1       |
|                     | 20-29                        | 13      | 11      |
|                     | 30-39                        | 19      | 24      |
|                     | 40-49                        | 20      | 25      |
|                     | 50-59                        | 22      | 23      |
|                     | 60-69                        | 16      | 13      |
|                     | 70 plus                      | 8       | 3       |
| <b>Occupation</b>   |                              |         |         |
|                     | Managerial/Professional (AB) | 29      | 28      |
|                     | White Collar (C1)            | 33      | 36      |
|                     | Skilled Worker (C2)          | 4       | 6       |
|                     | Unskilled (DE)               | 2       | 2       |
|                     | retired                      | 20      | 15      |
|                     | Housewife                    | 5       | 7       |
|                     | Student/Scholar              | 6       | 5       |
|                     | unemployed                   | 1       | 1       |
| <b>Travel Party</b> |                              |         |         |
|                     | alone                        | n.d.a.  | 9       |
|                     | couple                       | 70      | 42      |
|                     | family                       | n.d.a.  | 19      |
|                     | other adult party            | 19      | 29      |

Source: ANTO (2008), T-MONA Kultururlauber in Österreich 2006/2007, ANTO (2009), T-MONA Kultururlauber 2008/09

In terms of activities cultural tourists most often engage in, again, a differentiation between the summer and winter season needs to be made (see Table 32). While sightseeing, tasting typical Austrian dishes and drinks, visiting museums and exhibitions, and attending classical music events are activities which seem to be more appealing during the summer, visiting coffeehouses and Christmas markets are typical activities during the winter season.

Remarkable differences can be noted between cultural tourists in urban and rural areas in terms of expenditure. In the year 2006/07 city cultural tourists have spent 60% more than rural cultural tourists (ANTO 2008). Cultural tourist's average overall satisfaction with their holiday on a rating scale between one and six was 1.5 and 94% would recommend a cultural holiday in Austria to friends and relatives.



**Table 32: Activities of cultural tourists in Austria in 2008/09**

|                                  | in % | Winter | Summer |
|----------------------------------|------|--------|--------|
| Typical dishes/drinks            |      | 75     | 86     |
| Sightseeing                      |      | 78     | 86     |
| Visiting coffeehouses            |      | 89     | 84     |
| Strolling around                 |      | 81     | 84     |
| Walking (nature)                 |      | 51     | 67     |
| Visiting Museums/Exhibitions     |      | 49     | 67     |
| Doing nothing                    |      | 36     | 64     |
| Shopping                         |      | 48     | 59     |
| Excursions                       |      | 20     | 58     |
| Bathing in the lakes             |      | 0      | 52     |
| Nightlife                        |      | 39     | 43     |
| Attending festivals/events       |      | 20     | 35     |
| Attending folklore events        |      | 8      | 31     |
| Attending classical music events |      | 11     | 23     |
| Visiting Christmas markets       |      | 21     | 0      |

**Source: ANTO (2009), T-MONA Kultururlauber 2008/09**

### 3.1.8.8. Summary

Cultural tourism constitutes an integral part of tourism in Ireland. The core appeal of Ireland as a holiday destination is characterised by sightseeing and the scenery provided. Many Government Acts and Developments Programmes have been set in place in order to make this element of Irish tourism more attractive to overseas tourists. Apart from distinctive elements of Irish tangible and intangible culture and heritage such as castles and big houses or the unique way of socialising of the Irish people many niche products can be identified. Visiting gardens, parks and arboreta which originate from aristocratic Ireland, tracing ancestors as well as literary tourism can be seen as specific niche products of tourism in Ireland. In contrast to Ireland, cultural tourism in Austria needs to be divided into summer and winter cultural tourism. While cultural tourism during the summer months is often combined with activity-related holidays such as mountaineering, bathing in lakes or biking, winter cultural tourists are typical sightseers, spent their holidays mainly in urban areas and therefore rarely combine their cultural tours with winter sports activities. Specific elements of the Austrian cultural tourism product include attractions of Austria's imperial past, classical music festivals

and events, architecture and art nouveau, Austrian cuisine, wine and coffeehouses, and as a quite new development also gardens in various types.

Figures from both countries show that the cultural tourists can be found in all age groups but are mainly aged between 30 and 50. They like to travel as a couple and are of the higher social strata. While in Ireland cultural tourists favour Dublin and the South-West of Ireland in Austria cultural tourists like to visit such cities as Vienna and Salzburg but also like to engage in folklore and classical festivals and events during the summer months. In both countries the domestic market plays a significant role in cultural tourism. In Ireland the level of satisfaction with attractions visited has been continuously growing over the last five years. In Austria overall satisfaction with a cultural holiday is above average.

## **3.2. AUTHENTICITY**

### **3.2.1. Introduction**

Philosophers, anthropologists and sociologists can look back on a long tradition of research on the notion of authenticity while investigating the issue from different angles. When first signs of mass tourism emerged academics of various disciplines were also concerned with the phenomenon of authenticity in theoretical approaches to the study of tourism (Boorstin 1964, MacCannell 1973, 1976). Industrial capitalism and increased leisure time prompted the expansion of travel and tourism. As tourist numbers started to grow massively there has been increased concern about the impact of tourism on host cultures and problems associated with the host-guest relationship (Cohen 1988, Smith 1989, Poon 1993). Changes that tourism brought to destinations due to its intrusive nature was seen as a threat to local/indigenous cultures and the authenticity of tourist sites. At the same time, cultural products increasingly became staged and commodified for the tourist gaze. Burnett (2000) argues that, even at the beginning of mass tourism, “tensions emerged from within the experience” (p. 44). These tensions are also associated with the changing nature of tourists motivations, often described as a shift from “modern” to “post-modern” tourists. Modern (western) tourist motivations differ significantly from post-modern tourist ones as their emphasis has been mainly on the fulfilment of the “Self” through an engagement with “otherness” and “difference” to escape from everyday life. The experience with the “other” implied finding a “real” or “true” culture and “authentic experiences” of a different way of life (Burnett 2000, p. 44).

The issue of authenticity has been a common theme throughout tourism debates. Ever since early discussions brought forward by Boorstin (1968) and MacCannell (1973, 1976) different and more advanced concepts of authenticity focussing on diverse areas in tourism have been introduced by various scholars (e.g. Moscardo and Pearce 1986, Handler and Saxton 1988, Cohen 1988, 1995, Bruner 1989, 1994, Harkin 1995, Selwyn

1996a, Daniel 1996, Salamone 1997, Wang 1999, Goulding 2000b, Graham 2001, Halewood and Hannam 2001) yielding diverse and at times ambiguous meanings of “authenticity” and the “authentic experience”.

Authenticity is a term originating from the Greek term “authentēs” which means originator or creator (Oxford Dictionary 2007). By definition something that is authentic is genuine, real, and true in substance as opposed to something imaginary, pretentious, simulated or forged. This, or a similar definition, can be found in any dictionary whereby the meaning is often made more clear by giving the contrasting word. Scannell (2001, pp. 406-407) describes an authentic experience as follows:

An authentic experience, whatever it may be, is something that is mine, that belongs to me, that is my own, that is part of my ownmost (inner) self. As such, it is a cherishable, a memorable aspect of ‘the me that I am’, the real, true, authentic me. An authentic experience is so because I own it, and thus I can claim it as my own experience and not anyone else’s. [...] that experiences (unlike information) are not transferable. I can tell you about a memorable experience that I have had, but that does not mean that you can or could share (‘have’) that experience. If this is so then it indicates something of the inwardness of experience as something that pertains to the inner life of the modern person.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore various approaches applied to the study of authenticity. First, an overview of the various study areas in relation to authenticity in tourism is provided. Then, building on Wang’s (1999) framework, the main ideological positions regarding “object authenticity”, namely the modernist, constructivist and postmodernist approach, are introduced. This is important not only to get insights into how the concept has developed over time, how it has been defined and applied in tourism, how tourists’ “quest for authenticity” has changed, but also to see that authenticity is far from being a uniform concept. Thereafter, the concept of “existential authenticity” is investigated. The two concepts of “object authenticity” and “existential authenticity” are then explored more deeply in the context of cultural tourism. Important clarifications on the term “authenticity” referring to the authenticity of objects and

experiences as well as the “authentic experience” are discussed. These theoretical investigations provide the basis for the development of hypotheses and a model which measures “perceived” and “experienced” authenticity at cultural attractions.

### 3.2.2. Authenticity and Research Areas

The issue of authenticity has been investigated in different contexts, dimensions, and from different perspectives (supplier versus tourist). Table 33 provides an overview of studies concerning perceptions of authenticity and the authentic experience.

**Table 33: Overview of authenticity investigations**

| <b>Topic</b>  | <b>Authors</b>  |
|---|---|
| Destination   | Waller and Lea 1999; Graham 2001; Kontogeorgopoulos 2003; Mehmetoglu and Olsen 2003; Damer 2004; Tasci and Knutson 2004; Yeoman, Brass and McMahon-Beattie 2007 |
| Presentations of historical districts and cultural quarters | Vesey and Dimanche 2003; Naoi 2004  |
| Folk villages   | Xie and Wall 2002; Wang 2007; Cole 2007   |
| Heritage tourism  | Waite 2000; Halewood and Hannam 2001; Chhabra, Healy and Sills 2003   |
| Heritage attractions  | Handler and Saxton 1988; Bruner 1994; DeLyser 1999; McIntosh and Prentice 1999; Goulding 2000b; Boyd 2002   |
| Museums   | Chhabra 2008  |
| Literature and literary tourism sites                       | Cohen-Hattab and Kerber 2004; Herbert 2001; Fawcett and Cormack 2001  |
| Historic theme parks  | Moscardo and Pearce 1986; Halewood and Hannam 2001  |
| Crafts and souvenirs  | Cohen 1988; Littrell, Anderson and Brown, 1993; Asplet and Cooper 2000; Medina 2003; Revilla and Dodd 2003  |
| Accommodation   | Salamone, 1997  |
| Themed restaurants and bars                                 | Lego et al. 2002  |
| Food and wine   | Lu and Fine 1995; Hughes 1995; Scarpato and Daniele 2003; Beverland 2005  |
| Performances, historical re-enactments                      | Crang 1986; Bagnall 2003; Chhabra, Healy and Sills 2003   |
| Heritage festivals  | Feifan Xie 2004   |
| Traditional music   | Stevenson 2003; Knox 2008   |
| Dance   | Daniel 1996   |
| Pilgrimage  | Kelner 2001b; Belhassen, Caton and Stewart 2008   |
| Service encounter   | Grandey et al. 2005   |

**Source: by the author**

As opposed to tangible forms, such as presentations of historical districts and cultural quarters, museums and heritage attractions, souvenirs, and themed bars and restaurants, ideas of authenticity have also been explored with respect to intangible forms of tourism products such as cultural performances and historical re-enactments. A further

dimension of authenticity in tourism is of interpersonal nature and concerns the host-guest relationship and service encounters. Authenticity, however, is not bound to perceptions of tangible and intangible forms of tourism products or relationships between people; it also includes experiences resulting from participation in tourism activities such as dancing, hiking or pilgrimage.

### **3.2.3. Concepts of Authenticity**

#### **3.2.3.1. Modernist Approach**

One of the earliest researchers to scientifically raise the issue of authenticity in tourism was Daniel Boorstin (1964). His work mainly concentrated on the change of motivation and role from pre-modern travellers as they become modern tourists (Cohen 1995, p. 12). When analysing mass tourism, Boorstin (1964) very critically argued about this phenomenon as he noticed a detachment of the tourism experience from the local environment and local people. Expressing this detachment from the outside world Boorstin (ibid.) coined the term “environmental-bubble” in which tourists find themselves and in which they enjoy experiences especially designed for their entertainment. According to him the “tourist seldom likes the authentic [...] product of the foreign culture; he prefers his own provincial expectations” (Boorstin 1964, p. 106). The tourist “finds pleasure in inauthentic contrived attractions [...] disregarding the ‘real’ world outside” (Urry 1990, p. 7). Hence, the tourist is not able to experience authentic foreign cultures. For Boorstin (1964) mass tourism commodifies cultures and generates “pseudo-events”, which are homogenised and standardised experiences in “contrived” tourist attractions. He argued that the tourist “is prepared to be ruled by the law of pseudo-events, by which the image, the well-contrived imitation, outshines the original” (Boorstin 1964, p. 107). He further states that tourists themselves cause “pseudo-events” since their presence in masses destroys the authenticity of a place.

Dean MacCannell's work on tourist motivation and authenticity is arguably one of the most influential in the academic literature on tourism. MacCannell (1973, 1976) criticised Boorstin's idea of "pseudo-events" for being too simple to explain the motivation of mass tourism. For him the emergence of "pseudo-events" emanate from social relations of tourism. Both authors are of the same opinion as regards the issue of "touristic arrangements", however, Boorstin's "intellectual elite" attitude is denounced by MacCannell as only expressing a dislike for other tourists, which he regards as an attitude "that turns man against man in a they-are-the-tourist-I-am-not equation" (MacCannell 1973, p. 602). Boorstin's "pseudo event" conception was judged by MacCannell (1976) as an attitude that "is part of the problem of mass tourism, not an analytical reflection of it" (p. 104). MacCannell (1973) instead saw similarities of the modern tourists motives with that of pilgrims in their quest for authentic experiences (p. 589). For him modern tourists' search for authenticity parallels concerns for the sacred in primitive society (p. 590). MacCannell (1973) ascribed the cause for searching authentic experiences to the modern condition. The modern condition represents a state of differentiation that creates a false freedom in which choices are forced upon the individual (Olsen 2002). For him (1999, p. 11 quoted in Olsen 2002, p. 161) this differentiation is "[...] the primary ground of the contradiction, conflict, violence, fragmentation, discontinuity and alienation that are such evident features of modern life". The result of this differentiation is a longing for stability and a quest for wholeness and the authentic. Tourism then becomes a ritual that attempts to overcome these contradictory forces (Olsen 2002). Therefore, for MacCannell (1976) modern tourists seek authentic experiences due to the inauthenticity of modern life and their alienation from it. They lack such experiences in their routine and shallow daily lives. He stated that "for moderns, reality and authenticity are thought to be elsewhere: in other historical periods and other cultures, in purer, simpler life-styles" (MacCannell 1976, p.

3). Hence MacCannell's tourists are in pursuit of the authentic "Other" sought in other "times" and other "places" (ibid., p. 148).

MacCannell (1973) recognised the everywhere appearance of "touristic space" which he viewed as characteristic for the industrial society. In using such examples as the "New York Stock Exchange" and "Disneyland" he tried to demonstrate how more or less purposefully the display is worked up for sightseers (MacCannell 1973, p. 597). As a more helpful way of approaching the same facts as in Boorstin's studies he suggested to take Goffman's (1959 cited in MacCannell 1973, p. 590) concept of "front versus back region". Host populations, often bombarded with huge numbers of tourists, create back stage areas and shield them from the tourist gaze. These are their private places where they try to protect their local culture and practice their local traditions. The structural division into a front, which is purposely set up for tourists, and a back stage entails that tourists desire to explore back regions for they are viewed as socially important places and taken to be intimate and more "real" (ibid., p. 591). Urry (1990, p. 9) argued that they possess a reality which is often hard to discover in tourist's own lives. However, the answer to tourists' fascination of looking behind the curtains has been that fronts are often decorated with reminders of back-regions to create a sense of "real". This implicates some mystification, often a "strained truthfulness" or a "little lie" as MacCannell (1973, p. 591) argued. Therefore, what tourists get presented at the "front" and "what is taken to be real might, in fact, be a show that is based on the structure of reality" (ibid., p. 593). It is a "staged authenticity" which differs from the back stage, the "real" world behind it. Tourists then, in their desire to see life as it is really lived are deprecated for always failing to achieve this goal (ibid., p. 592). In this sense tourists are "unknowing victims" (Burnett 2000, p. 45) of staged authenticity in contrast to Boorstin's "foolish tourists" who are prepared to embrace an inauthentic experience. However, it is often not so easy to realise that the "experience" is inauthentic in fact



(MacCannell 1976, p. 579). In his earlier work he talked about superficiality which is not always perceived as such (MacCannell 1973, p. 595). For the tourist gaze everything is done to make the “front” look even more authentic or real than the “real” thing ever could be. This is often done in overexpressing their underlying structure (ibid., p. 599). He also asserted that even the “back stage” is not invulnerable to staging. But when it comes to staging of back regions he denoted that “a false back is more insidious and dangerous than a false front, or an inauthentic demystification of social life is not merely a lie but a superlie, the kind that drips with sincerity” (ibid.).

MacCannell (1976) distinguished between a pristine authentic culture and an inauthentic and contrived form performed for tourists. He saw globalisation and commodification to demolish local authenticity. For tourists to experience authentic foreign culture he claimed that they have to turn their back on main streets, shopping centres, and attractions because only staged authenticity can be found there.

Though Boorstin and MacCannell have initiated the debate over authenticity and that which is “pseudo” or “staged” in tourism, their views have been questioned by other authors (e.g. Moscardo and Pearce 1986, Cohen 1988, Bruner 1989, Urry 1990, Wang 1999, Goulding 2001, Jamal and Hill 2002) because the concept of authenticity was seen to have much broader connotation. Wang (1999) and also Jamal and Hill (2002) argue that in MacCannell’s work the relationship between the authentic object and the authentic experience remains vague. This differentiation is viewed as one of the keystones for understanding and researching authenticity in tourism today. MacCannell and Boorstin applied an objectivist and museum-linked conception of authenticity when they referred to “pseudo-events” or “staged authenticity” and therefore have not captured the diversity and complexity of touristic experiences. Nevertheless, MacCannell’s concept of “staged authenticity” has up until today not lost on significance as staging has in many places been brought to an extreme where, to put it in

Boorstin's (1964) words, "the stage or the paramount copy can outshine the original" (p. 107). Today, we live in a world of "hyper-reality" (Eco 1998) where authentic and inauthentic are no longer asymmetrical counter-concepts per se (Olsen 2002). This issue has been dealt with by many postmodernist writers.

### **3.2.3.2. Constructivist Approach**

Opposing to modernists, constructivists (as well as postmodernists) deny an objective reality that can be the standard against which to assess authenticity. They see authenticity as a socially constructed interpretation of the genuineness of observable things rather than an immanent feature of objects or relations that can be determined objectively. In constructivist ideology, reality depends on one's constructions and interpretations. In this perspective, objective knowledge and truth is the result of different opinions and perspectives that gain acceptance. Therefore, knowledge and truth are created, not discovered by mind in reality (Reisinger and Steiner 2006a, p. 70). For constructivists authenticity of an object is constructed depending on context, ideology, and time (Reisinger and Steiner 2006a).

A general constructivist perspective is applied by Eric Cohen (1988) and Edward Bruner (1994). Cohen (1988) supports the idea that authenticity is *negotiable*. This implies that what is taken as authentic, what can and what cannot be accepted as truth, is established in and through the process of negotiating (or sometimes authoritatively imposing) (Van Leeuwen 2001). Cohen (1988) argues that the concept of "authenticity" as an originally philosophical concept was uncritically introduced into sociological and tourism studies where it has been used as a criterion of evaluation applied by social analysts and tourists. In contrast to MacCannell, who did not raise the possibility of different understandings of authenticity, Cohen (1988, p. 374) suggests that it is a "socially constructed concept and its social (as against philosophical) connotation, is therefore, not given [...]". Cohen (1998) further indicated that tourists and intellectuals

(experts such as curators or art historians) might entertain different concepts of “authenticity”. For him anthropologists “appear to entertain more rigorous criteria of authenticity than do ordinary members of the travelling public” (ibid., p. 376). Professional views, he claims, have often to do with their alienation from modern life. But not all individuals feel themselves equally alienated from modernity and therefore it depends on the degree of alienation from modernity how strict the criteria are in what they conceive as authentic. For him alienation and the quest for authenticity appear to be positively related (Cohen 1988, p. 376). Cohen (1988) makes reference to his earlier typology of “modes of touristic experience” to outline that it depends on the deepness of the experience the tourist seeks as to how strong he tends to embrace the “Other”. With the salience of the “Other” the concern with its authenticity will grow proportionately and this “will induce the tourist to adopt stricter criteria for the judgement of authenticity than do those tourists for whom the experience is less salient” (Cohen 1988, p. 376).

In his anthropological study on New Salem, an authentically reconstructed village and outdoor museum in Illinois where Abraham Lincoln once lived, Bruner (1994) came to the conclusion that authenticity has four different meanings (pp. 399-400):

- (1) looking credible and convincing today;
- (2) genuine, historically accurate, and immaculate simulation of as it once was;
- (3) original as opposed to a copy;
- (4) authorised, certified, or legally validated by legitimate institutions.

By this Bruner was able to free the concept of authenticity from the object and transcending the binary of authentic or not – understood as original or copy - that was previously attached to the concept of authenticity. For him, in the authentication of objects authority and power plays an important role. In line with Cohen’s (1988) notion that authenticity is negotiable he claims that ideas of authenticity are “multifarious/multi-layered” apprehended differently by different groups when arguing

that “[m]useum professionals are the producers, whereas tourists are the consumers, and they do not approach the site in the same way” (Bruner 1994, p. 406). In a constructivist view (e.g. Bruner 1991, Silver 1993) authenticity is a projection of tourist’s own beliefs, expectations, preferences, stereotyped images, and consciousness onto toured objects. Culler (1981) developed the idea of “symbolic authenticity” denoting that tourists often regard toured objects as authentic because they are symbols of authenticity but not because they are originals. For example, from Ireland tourists take home tea towels with Celtic design on them and in Vienna they buy “Sisi” teacups, because for them they represent authentic evidence of these destinations.

Concluding the above it has to be mentioned that Cohen’s assumptions about alienation were met with opposition as for example by Selwyn (1996b), who argues that such notions are no longer applicable in a postmodern world. Nevertheless, the value of Cohen’s and Bruner’s work regarding authenticity is that they freed the concept from the object and situated it in the meaning making process of contemporary culture. Hence, people hold different conceptions of authenticity. Bruner (1994) suggests that the concept of authenticity is “heteroglot”.

Constructivists view on the authenticity of objects can be summarised as (1) Authenticity is a fluid concept - it is a social construct and therefore open to change; and (2) Each individual has its own conception and interpretation of authenticity and therefore, expectations and experiences of authenticity vary.

### **3.2.3.3. The Postmodernist Approach**

The discourse on postmodernism pervades a wide field of academic studies, however, it does not represent a unified and well-integrated approach (Wang 1999). Issues like the “real” and “fake”, “hyper-reality” and “simulacrum”, and “parody” and “pastiche” are key debates in postmodernist theories. For Wang (1999) postmodernism is characterised

by deconstruction of authenticity, the death of the real, and justification of the contrived, the copy, and the imitation. Postmodernists do not consider inauthenticity a problem.

Jameson (1990) argues that postmodernism was born out of

the shift from an oppositional to a hegemonic position of the classics of modernism, (...), into the 'canon' and the subsequent attenuation of everything in them felt by our grandparents to be shocking, scandalous, ugly, dissonant, immoral and antisocial (p. 45).

Modernism is marked by a deep suspicion of all things popular and postmodernism in part was first a populist attack on the elitism of modernism. Storey (1993, p. 158) sees postmodernism as a generational refusal of the categorical certainties of high modernism, a celebration of the everyday, a collapse of the distinction between high and popular culture. For him "postmodernism signifies a culture of kitsch, when measured against the 'real' culture of modernism" (Storey 1993, p. 156). Lyotard sees (1984) the popular culture of the postmodern condition as an "anything goes" culture where taste is irrelevant and money the only sign of value.

Eco (1998) and Baudrillard (1978) argue that "hyperrealism" is the characteristic mode of postmodernity. Eco (1998), a semiotician, on a trip around the United States of America (USA) in the 1970s visited several cultural highlights documented in his book "Travels in Hyper-Reality". What he was confronted with were presentations which assured a 100% authentic experience. However, in their attempt to produce the absolute real these sites evoked the absolute fake. Eco (1998) characterised them as being "hyper-real" – since they tried to be "more" than real. Also in the 1970s Jean Baudrillard's (1978) influential work "Agony of the Real" tackled the same question from a philosophical point of view. For Baudrillard (ibid.), postmodernism is a culture of the "simulacrum" (borrowing that concept from Plato). A simulacrum can be defined as an identical copy without an original. In the process of simulation, he maintains, the

very distinction between original and copy is destroyed. For both writers “Disneyland” is the shining example of their thoughts. Baudrillard’s (ibid.) argument is that the USA needs Disneyland, which is created out of fantasy and imagination, to make the impressions that everything else in America is real. But America is not real anymore as it belongs to an order of the “hyper-real” and “simulation”. For him the USA have longest become “hyper-real” but, as Römer (2001) has noticed, where paradoxically a particularly cult of “the real thing” is practised (p. 11). Baudrillard (ibid.) argues that it is no longer a question of a false representation of reality (ideology), but of concealing the fact that the real is no longer real. Both authors assert that the boundaries between the real and the fake, between reality and simulation, become blurred with the result that that reality and simulation are experienced as without difference. Baudrillard (1978) claims that it is a situation in which simulation becomes more real than reality, where simulations can be experienced as more real than the real thing itself.

Stefan Römer’s (2001) work on “Fake” seems particularly enlightening in relation to cultural presentations and provides insightful examples. Römer (2001) discusses the notion of “fake” in the area of the arts noticing that the moral of the original seems to be outdated. In general it can be said that “fakes” represent a threat and cognitive dissonance for the ordinary consumer because they put the existing order into question. From an artistic perspective the notion of “authenticity” and “fake” is however treated differently. What started in the United States of America in the 1970s has reached Europe in the 1990s: in the arts “fake” has become presentable and is more than just a copy. Römer (2001) points out that the term “fake” has to be revised in its cultural usage since museums consciously exhibit fakes and by doing this securing them a certain institutional function. Römer (2001) describes a new cultural period or epoch where the fake takes the place of the original – a paradigm change from modernity and its ethics of originals to post-modern “fakism”. Aesthetic reproductions of pop art which

since the 1960s attacked traditional authenticity and which are best exemplified by works of Andy Warhol are a case in point. Since the 1970ies artistic practices have deliberately used fakes in such a way that very often neither the artistic origin nor an original can no longer be determined. This means the end of referentiality as there are no originals as referentials anymore. According to Römer the conception of fake is an artistic strategy, which from the beginning itself constitutes as fake. As examples Römer (2001) cites the American artist Sherrie Levine who photographed photographs from Walker Evans and exhibited them as her own and independent pieces of art. Or Elaine Sturtevant who used Andy Warhol's silk-screen-machine to exactly repeat his "Flowers" and asserting the genuineness and originality from this work she called "Warhol Flowers" which she signed as her artistic work. Her intention was an artistic gesture. Another example Römer (2001) gives is Mr. Wilson's cabinet of wonder: the Museum of Jurassic Technology in Los Angeles where curiosities like pronged ants, horned humans and mice on toast are displayed. These curiosities are displayed in stands, visitors are provided with information brochures and acoustic guides. In short, everything is done to provide an authentic atmosphere. The conception of the museums is referred to the visitor and his reception of the fake, which as such, is not immediately identifiable. The museum is a staged systematic irritation of the usual glance of a curiosity cabinet (ibid., p. 265), a museum institution artistically satirised. In all these examples Römer (2001) points out their inherent double status, being "fake" and "original artistic work" at the same time.

Baudrillard (1978) argues "when the real is no longer what it used to be nostalgia assumes its full meaning. There is a proliferation of myths of origin and signs of reality...a panic stricken production of the real and the referential" (p. 46). For Baudrillard hyperreality calls into question the claims of representation. Storey (1993)

raises the question “if there is no real behind the appearance, no beyond or beneath, what can with validity be called a representation?” (p. 165).

Frederic Jameson (1990) maintains that postmodernism is a culture of pastiche<sup>52</sup> – the complacent play of historical allusion. For him the moment of individual style has passed. He argues that a world in which stylistic innovation is no longer possible, all that is left is to imitate dead styles. It is therefore not a culture of pristine creativity. It is a culture of “flatness or depthlessness, a new kind of superficiality in the most literal sense” (p. 78). Similarly, Baudrillard (1978) argues that postmodernist culture is a culture of the present made from fragments of the past. For Hannabuss (1999) the heterogeneous variety where equal value is placed on anything and everything comes together as “bricolage”. He maintains that the bricolage appears to undermine and celebrate the differentiations we make between objects. In architecture for example, different styles come together to create new (and de-differentiated) architectural forms.

For Jameson (1990) postmodernism is a hopelessly commercial culture that “replicates and reproduces – reinforces – the logic of consumer capitalism” (p. 16). With advanced production systems it was made possible to reproduce artefacts in thousands of identical forms (everyone can have a reproduction of a Picasso or Rothko in their living room), with the inevitable effect of devaluing their uniqueness. Such developments have made it possible that cultural products can be consumed by a mass audience, and as Hannabuss (1999) points out, technology (e.g. film and television) is used to achieve it.

Jameson’s claim goes beyond the collapse of the distinction between high and popular culture, for him it is a collapse of the distinction between the realm of culture and the realm of economic activity. Therefore, it is no longer credible to see culture as

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<sup>52</sup> Pastiche is often mixed up with parody, however, pastiche can be defined as a “blank parody” or “empty copy” (Storey 1993).



ideological representation, it is a reflection of the hard economic reality. In this sense postmodernism can be regarded as a critique on capitalism and the culture industry.

Different themes introduced by postmodernist theorists are of direct relevance to cultural tourism and the issue of authenticity. Regarding the representations of culture and heritage many examples can be found where the cultural/heritage experience is a tantalising synthesis of the authentic and the artificial (Hannabuss 1999). And consumers, as Hannabuss (1999) acknowledges, “have an appetite to experience, to take part in the authentic knowing that it is artificial, and finding no cognitive difficulty with the paradox” (p. 296). For him, the ambivalence of the mixture of real and fake, this pluralism, is embraced as natural and inevitable (Hannabuss 1999). The postmodernist society is described as being in constant search for stimulation through events and images (Venkatesh 1999). As consumers’ quest for stimulation continues to grow the boundaries between fiction and reality dissolve (Lego et al. 2002).

Also Cohen (1995) suggests that the post-modern tourist is characterised by less concern with authenticity and the hierarchy of attractions and a predisposition for “playfulness”. For him, tourists care less for origins of an attraction as long as the visit is an enjoyable one (ibid., p. 16). This indicates a changed mode of experiences desired by today’s tourists. Postmodern tourists are portrayed by Cohen as “sophisticated individuals, who choose not to discern, though they are aware of the possibilities of distinction” (ibid., p. 25). For him, the culturally sanctioned ludic attitude to attractions and the aesthetic enjoyment of surfaces may in future overshadow the serious quest for authenticity.

Dealing with reality gets a new dimension in “contrived attractions” and their application of advanced simulation technologies. The threat Cohen (1995) notices is that artificial environments might provide experiences approximating “reality” (p. 23),

where it gets ever harder to distinguish between “real” and “simulated” experiences (ibid., p. 24).

#### **3.2.3.4. Wang’s Concept of “Existential Authenticity”**

Selwyn’s (1996b) and Brown’s (1996) notions of authenticity provided the basis for Wang’s concept of existential authenticity. Selwyn (1996b) found MacCannell’s and Cohen’s work on the nature of authenticity to be inadequate insofar as they use authenticity in different semantics – as *feelings* and as *knowledge* (Selwyn 1996b, pp. 6-7). Thus Selwyn (1996b) makes a clear distinction between the authentic referring to “feelings, or projections of feelings, of social solidarity pursued by tourists” (ibid., p. 7) and authenticity as “the knowledge (about, for example, the nature, culture and society of tourist destinations) which is both sought by tourists and presented to them” (ibid., p. 7). Handler and Saxton (1988) outlined that “an authentic experience [...] is one in which individuals feel themselves to be in touch both with a ‘real’ world and with their ‘real’ selves” (p. 243 cited in Wang 1999, p. 351). This assertion encompasses what Selwyn termed “hot authenticity” expressing the emotional experience, the feeling of the “real” self, versus “cool authenticity” expressing the experience of a “real” world. When MacCannell (1973, 1976) refers to his social relation and sociability seeking tourist-pilgrim or Cohen (1988) to his alienated intellectuals drawn to the authentic, then this falls according to Selwyn under “hot authenticity”. However, when their argument is about “staged authenticity” (MacCannell 1973, 1976) as the encounter with contrived performances and “pseudo-events” or “explorers” and “drifters” who travel to northern Thailand, which is presented to them as if they were primitive and remote although they have become very well integrated into the Lowlands (Cohen 1989), than “cold authenticity” is addressed (Selwyn 1996b, p. 7).

Brown (1996) with his contribution “genuine fakes” in Selwyn’s book shares the same line of thought when highlighting that in addition to authenticity in the Other, it is also

sought in the Self. The quest for the authentic Self he refers to as having an authentic “good time” (ibid., p. 37). He argues that “‘the good time’ may also be inauthentic [...]. Authentic pleasure [...] may lie in the very inauthenticity of a tourist attraction” (ibid., p. 38). In quest for the authentic Self the tourist may seek out the inauthentic Other. Participating in the game in the fashion of “never mind that it’s an act, so long as it’s a good one” and enjoying everything as a spectacle, however, can lead to the opposite effect that tourists reject the attraction as too inauthentic and desire to go back to the “real” (ibid., p. 38).

Selwyn’s and Brown’s distinction between different aspects of authenticity were groundbreaking, making a more differentiated analysis of tourist experiences of cultural attractions possible. The concept of “hot” versus “cool” authenticity is particularly valuable for analytic explorations on the authenticity of cultural tourist attractions and tourists experiences thereof. Brown’s assertion of an “authentic good time” implicitly contains the notion of tourist’s readiness for the playful enjoyment as supported by Urry (1990) and Cohen (1995). On these basic assumptions Wang (1999) was able to build his concept of “existential authenticity”, which is introduced in the following paragraphs.

“‘Existential authenticity’ denotes a special state of ‘Being’ in which one is true to oneself” (Wang 1999, p. 359). Taking Turner and Manning’s (1988) idea of applying philosophers’ ontological notion of authenticity to tourist experiences Wang (1999) has developed this further and has claimed to explain with his concept of “existential authenticity” a wider spectrum of tourist experiences than the conventional concept of authenticity does. The distinction between the “authenticity of toured objects” and the “authentic experience” is crucial for him to introduce what he views as an alternative source of authentic experience, namely “existential authenticity”.

Wang (1999) suggests the following classification of three types of authenticity in tourist experiences, whereas the first two are object-related and the last one activity-related:

**(1) Objective Authenticity:** This conception refers to the authenticity of the originals such as the toured objects. Wang (1999, p. 351) explains that “the authentic experience is caused by the recognition of the toured objects as authentic. As such, there is an absolute and objective criterion used to measure authenticity”. For him, authentic experiences in tourism are equated to an epistemological experience of the authenticity of originals (ibid., p. 352). He argues that Boorstin and MacCannell used an objectivist conception of authenticity when they refer to “pseudo-events” and “staged authenticity” (ibid., p. 353).

**(2) Constructive or Symbolic Conception of Authenticity:** Perceptions of authenticity is the result of social constructions. “Constructive authenticity refers to the authenticity projected onto toured objects by tourists or tourism producers in terms of their imagery, expectations, preferences, beliefs, powers, etc.” (Wang 1999, p. 352). The key point here is that there are different perspectives of authenticity of the same object (ibid., p. 352) what Cohen (1988) expresses as negotiable. Wang argues that “[...] authentic experiences in tourism and the authenticity of toured objects are constitutive of one another” (ibid., p. 352). Referring to Culler (1981) he introduces the term “symbolic” authenticity as tourists experience toured objects as authentic not because they are originals or reality but because they are perceived as the signs or symbols of authenticity. This perception is closely linked with stereotype images held within tourist-sending societies, largely coined by mass-media and tourism marketing documents. In this sense, the authenticity of toured objects is in fact symbolic authenticity (Wang 1999, p. 352., p. 356).

**(3) Existential Concept of Authenticity:** The above conceptions involve “whether and how the toured objects are authentic” (Wang 1999, p. 351). “Existential authenticity”, however, refers to the feeling of the authentic self of the tourist “activated by the liminal process of tourist activities” (ibid., p. 351) and therefore can have nothing to do with whether toured objects are authentic or not (ibid., p. 352, see also Brown). Wang takes Daniel’s (1996) findings on tourists participating in rumba dance performances in Cuba to exemplify “existential authenticity”. Rather than being only spectators of the dance performance which would refer to the notion of “objective authenticity” as the exact re-enactment of rumba dancing, through engagement in the dance as a tourist activity tourists feel themselves more authentic and self-expressed than in everyday life. The non-ordinary activity, the new elements and the creativity, even though it may be inauthentic then, generates a sense of existential authenticity. Wang (1999) sees Selwyn’s (1996b) “hot authenticity” as an expression of his existential version. Wang’s (ibid.) notion of existential authenticity is connected with postmodernist thinking of deconstruction on consumers’ quest for pleasure and fun. It is this activity driven and consumers feel released from control. Thus, consumers are in search of their “real” selves and find adventures which support self-creation and realisation.

**(4)** Wang (1999) suggests the following two types of “existential authenticity”:

- *Intra-Personal Authenticity* referring to bodily feelings and self-making, involving physical (i.e. relaxation, reinvigoration) and psychological (i.e. self-discovery, self-realisation) aspects; and
- *Inter-Personal Authenticity* referring to social authenticity and the collective sense of self, respectively (i.e. family ties and touristic communitas). In this view, an object/setting or experience serves as “a tool to bring individuals together for authentic interpersonal relationships” (Leigh et al. 2006). In essence, it is the joint participation in an experience and the sharing and communication of the enjoyment

of it that marks this type of authenticity in which individuals may experience their true selves.

With his advanced concept of authenticity Wang (1999) points out that holiday activities have become an opportunity for people to rediscover themselves again which seems to be lost for many within the constraints of everyday life situations. He argues that post-modern conditions can only explain a limited range of tourist experiences, whereas existential authenticity, the search of the authentic self, is germane to the explanation of a greater variety of tourist phenomena. His new concept is a re-justification of authenticity seeking as the foundation of tourist motivations, as he asserts (Wang 1999, p. 365).

### **3.2.3.5. The New Authenticity Debate**

Reisinger and Steiner (2006a, 2006b) have made thorough investigations into scholarly approaches to “object authenticity”. In view of the numerous, contradictory, and irreconcilable concepts, values, and perspectives on the authenticity of objects and activities they conclude that the conceptualisations are ontologically unsound and that there is no common ground to continue these discussions. They suggest that scholars should abandon the concept of “object authenticity” and the term altogether. They argue that

the notion of authenticity is too unstable to claim the paradigmatic status of a concept. As a result, the concept-free term authenticity should be replaced by more explicit, less pretentious terms like genuine, actual, accurate, real, and true when referring to judgements that tourists and scholars make about the nature and origins of artifacts and tourism activities (Reisinger and Steiner 2006a, p. 66).

As a way to conceive of “object authenticity” that can accommodate the views of the three predominant ideologies they follow the philosophy of Heidegger, which is indeed a very challenging one.

Although it has to be conceded that past conceptualisations of “object authenticity” are ontologically problematic it is a fact that such conceptualisations are alive and not only well in the minds of many tourists but also tourism brokers and members of host communities (Belhassen and Caton 2006). It has to be agreed that the extreme heterogeneity of usage of the term authenticity is not supportive for productive research in this area. However, as suggested by Belhassen and Caton (2006) “scholars in this area should be reflexive about their understandings of authenticity and communicate their positions clearly, with respect to the positions taken by earlier researchers” (p. 854). This can be taken as a fruitful way to continue the research on “object authenticity” and perceptions thereof by tourists and professionals. The concept is still highly relevant in tourism studies and should therefore not stopped researching it.

Reisinger and Steiner (2006a) see Wang’s (1999) notion on existential authenticity as inadequate because it “simply transfers the essence of the concept of object authenticity (genuineness, realness) to human authenticity so that the self becomes just another object that can be real or not” (p. 302). They say that the existential self is experience-based and therefore transient. Referring to Heidegger (1996) they suggest that “there is no enduring self like an object” (ibid., p. 302) because one can only momentarily be authentic in different situations. Some tourists might prefer to be authentic most of the time and inauthentic at times or vice versa (ibid., p. 303). Thus, it is wrong to talk about authentic or inauthentic tourists as, in their eyes, this would oversimplify some of the most complex debates in philosophy (ibid.). They also point out that people have different opportunities in their lives depending on their heritage and destiny. So, people have unique perspectives and unique possibilities based on “how they project their selves into the world” and how they “open themselves to it” (ibid. p. 304). People can project themselves differently each time. “When people project different identities or senses of self, they bring to light different possibilities which grant different

experiences” (p. 306). In this context, again referring to Heidegger’s philosophy, they differentiate between a “they-self” (*das Man*) and a “my-self”, whereas the former is regarded as a conformist self, an inauthentic self where individuals are not fully themselves, because in this case individuals pursue the possibilities of anyone; and the latter is regarded as their authentic self, because in this case individuals will have unique experiences which are different from anyone else (*ibid.*, p. 306). In this view, authentic experiences are a choice that people can make “when circumstances allow or when they feel courageous enough to do so” (p. 309). Not all tourists are interested to derive meaning from e.g. visiting a cultural attraction, and this is their choice too (*ibid.*, p. 312). In terms of Wang’s (1999) intra- and interpersonal forms of existential authenticity Heidegger (1996) has another interesting notion to offer: to leap in (regarded as inauthentic) and to leap ahead (regarded as authentic) (*ibid.*, p. 308). This means that when people deal with others and leap in for them they take away their possibilities for example by trying to solve their problems - even if this happens with good intentions. By leaping ahead (i.e. to show that they have choices and possibilities) the other’s possibilities are encouraged because the other’s essence as a human being is brought to light.

### **3.2.3.6. Summary**

Ever since early discussions and arguments by Boorstin (1964) and MacCannell (1973, 1976) the concept of authenticity has attracted much academic debate in tourism. Concepts of authenticity have been changing from modernist researchers to post-modern ones by introducing more differentiated views. The concept of authenticity has become more holistic. Postmodernist writers have noticed that “authenticity” is not a matter of black or white (Wang 1999). A groundbreaking distinction was made between the “authenticity of the real world and its objects” and “authenticity as feelings” highlighting that authenticity does not only refer to the object but also to a state of Being (Handler and Saxton 1988, Selwyn 1996b, Brown 1996, Wang 1999). Modernist



writers did not raise the possibility of different understandings of authenticity. Later authors although argue that the recognition of the real world and its objects as authentic is “negotiable”. This can be described as a change from objectivism towards constructivism. Tourists can have different perspectives on authenticity and they use different traits to authenticate cultural products (Cohen 1988). In a similar vein, Wang (1999) talks about “symbolic or constructive” authenticity referring to the “authenticity projected onto toured objects by tourists or tourism producers” (Wang 1999, p. 352).

Postmodernism has also brought significant changes in tourist’s attitudes towards the authenticity of attractions (postmodern turn). Some authors see a declining importance of authenticity culminating in arguments about deconstruction of authenticity. Reasons for this are seen in the changed mode of experiences and non-serious tourist behaviour. For an authentic feeling (having an authentic good time) the attraction does not have to be necessarily authentic. The good time may also be inauthentic in the sense that the authentic pleasure may lie in the very inauthenticity of a tourist attraction (Brown 1996). Boorstin’s “foolish tourists” and MacCannell’s “victims of staged authenticity” have become tourists who simply decide not to discern though they are aware of the possibilities of distinction (Cohen 1995).

In the postmodern condition, described as an “anything goes culture” (Lyotard), as a culture of the “simulacrum” (Baudrillard 1978) and “hyperreality” (Eco 1998), the boundaries between the real and the fake (reality and simulation) become blurred. With advanced modern technologies the issue of (in)authenticity and “reality” has gained a new dimension. Experiences in artificial and simulated environments have become more realistic. It is argued that simulations can be experienced as more real than the real thing itself. Table 34 summarises the main concepts of authenticity in tourism studies.

The question arises where this thesis is located regarding the above ideologies on “object authenticity”. The work itself is clearly positioned in post-modernist times and therefore has to deal with such notions as simulacra and hyper-reality. Furthermore, “pastiche” and “bricolage” is evident in the proliferation of many cultural attractions such as museums, heritage centres and cultural presentations. As regards tourist’s perception and experience of the authenticity of cultural attractions a constructivist point of view is applied.

**Table 34: Summary of key authors and their concepts of authenticity**

| Author                              | Concept   | Tourists   |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| Boorstin (1964)                     | “Pseudo events”: contrived tourist attractions by which the image, the well-contrived imitation outshines the original.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tourist foolishly finds pleasure in inauthentic contrived attractions disregarding the “real” world outside.</li> </ul>   |
| MacCannell (1973, 1976)             | “Staged authenticity”: what tourists get presented and what they take as authentic is only staged authenticity which differs from the real world behind it.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tourists seek authenticity in other places and other times due to their alienation with modern life.</li> </ul>   |
| Cohen (1988, 1995)<br>Bruner (1994) | Authenticity is negotiable.<br>Nivellation of attractions: natural and contrived, realistic or fantastic, historical or futuristic, original or recreated. There is a shift from natural and authentic to artificial and contrived attractions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Postmodern tourists have become less concerned with the authenticity of the original and the hierarchy of attractions.</li> <li>▪ Shift from “search for authenticity” to “playful search for enjoyments”.</li> <li>▪ Authenticity is now a matter of technique and reality depends on how convincing the presentation is.</li> </ul> |
| Selwyn & Brown (1996a)              | “Hot” and “cool” authenticity: differentiation between authenticity as “feeling” and authenticity as “knowledge”.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In addition to the authentic Other, authenticity is also sought in the Self.</li> <li>▪ In quest for the authentic Self the tourist may seek the inauthentic Other.</li> </ul>  |
| Wang (1999)                         | “Existential” authenticity (and intra-personal authenticity and inter-personal authenticity) as an alternative source of the authentic experience.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ With the search for authentic Self a greater variety of tourist phenomena can be explained.</li> <li>▪ Re-justification of authenticity seeking.</li> </ul>   |
| Reisinger & Steiner (2006)          | Reconceptualisation of “object authenticity”.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Concept of “object authenticity” should be abandoned because of irreconcilable perspectives.</li> <li>▪ There can be no single concept or term for the authenticity of all tourism objects</li> </ul>   |
| Steiner & Reisinger (2006)          | Reconceptualisation of “existential authenticity”.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Existential self is experience-based and therefore transient</li> <li>▪ Authentic experiences are a choice that people can make.</li> </ul>   |

Source: by the author

### **3.2.4. Object-related Authenticity and the Authentic Experience**

#### **3.2.4.1. Introduction**

Due to its complex nature the term “authenticity” has been used differently by philosophers and scientists from various disciplines resulting in a somewhat ambiguous expression or meaning (Golomb 1995, p. 7). The aim of this section is to provide some clarifications on the term definition and its application with particular reference to cultural tourist attractions and its visitors. Wang’s (1999) previously introduced concept is used as an overall framework for this investigation. First, authenticity is illuminated as regards the object/exhibit. In this respect the museum will be the centre of attention as the museum is the cultural institution that by definition works with authentic objects. Then, the spectrum of cultural attractions is explored to provide insights regarding their different orientations on authenticity. Within these discussions the individual perception of authenticity from the visitors’ perspective is continuously addressed in order to get an understanding of their meaning making process and the “authentic experience”.

#### **3.2.4.2. Authenticity of the Object: Term Definition, Application and Delimitation**

As already stated previously in this thesis, by definition something that is authentic is genuine, real, and true in substance as opposed to something imaginary, pretentious, simulated or forged. However, a number of authors have attached different meanings to authenticity. Trilling (1972) and Taylor (2001) connect authenticity with “sincerity”. Boorstin (1964) and Eco (1988) equate authenticity with “originality” (Moeran 2005). In everyday language something that is authentic is often associated with being reliable and believable. According to Trilling “authenticity” was first used in the realm of the museum to

test whether objects of art are what they appear to be or are claimed to be, and therefore worth the price that is asked for them – or (...) worth the admiration they are being given (Trilling 1972, p. 93).

Wang (1999) argues that in the sense of this museum-linked usage, authenticity has found its way into tourism by accepting “products of tourism such as works of art,

festivals, rituals, cuisine, dress, housing, and so on (...) as ‘authentic’ or ‘inauthentic’” (p. 350). The decisive factor of this distinction is whether they are really made or enacted “by local people according to custom or tradition” (Sharpley 1994, p. 130). Sharpley (ibid.) connects authenticity with certain requirements and criteria. However, there are more issues that have to be considered with the terms’ application which are elaborated in the following.

**(1) Authenticity needs to be brought into context**

The above mentioned products of tourism as such are neither authentic nor inauthentic but they can be authentic according to particular custom or tradition or for particular people. Equally, e.g. the stone circle in Stonehenge can be authentic in various respects: authentic as a circle of megalithic stones, authentic for a particular group of people and their rituals, authentic as regards a particular time period. One can also imagine the authentic signature of a composer on an authentic piece of paper from a particular time period, which bedecks an authentic letter of the composer to his beloved. The “touristic framework” in which the encounter of the visitor and the object takes place could be an exhibition under the title “signatures of famous personalities”, “exhibition on composers” or “love letters once and now”. This implies that authenticity depends on the particular *question* one asks – in what respect/context is something supposed to be authentic?

**(2) “Authentic” is an extrinsic quality in contrast to “original” being intrinsic**

There is a basic difference between the characteristics “original” and “authentic”. The former refers to an object itself, to its intrinsic features, whereas the latter comprises extrinsic qualities (Ritter 1971, 1984). The distinction between the characteristic of something being original and authentic can be exemplified by e.g. a collection of arms displayed in the “Museum of Military History” in Vienna: The arms themselves are all originals (proved material), however, they are authentic as an inventory of the Roman

Empire. “Original” is an inherent quality whereas the characteristic of being “authentic” is assigned (often by those who have the authority to do so) and is therefore an intellectual quality. Authenticity is therefore an externally ascribed status (Jamal and Hill 2002, Xie and Wall 2003). Consequentially, an “original” is not necessarily authentic and a “non-original” (e.g. reproduction, fake etc.) can be authentic. This may sound paradoxical but can be illustrated by the following example: Disneyland as a “cultural” tourist attraction harbours reproductions of famous cultural sites such as the Eiffel Tower. These reproductions placed amidst a bopping around Mickey Mouse parade would for many European visitors be regarded as inauthentic and kitschy. In fact, they are not the originals and in this respect they are not regarded as authentic. This implies that fake is for the ordinary (European) consumer equated with inauthenticity. Moreover, these replica are situated in a fantasy world which clashes with the common (European) understanding of authenticity. However, Disneyland with its reproductions can be viewed as an authentic reflection of American Culture. Thus, in some cases kitsch/fake can be authentic. In the orthodox museum however, “primary authenticity” is required. Here, authenticity and the original are intensely intertwined.

According to Waidacher (1999) the special purpose of a museum lies in retaining remembrance. This is achieved with the aid of various objects - real, material and tangible (Waidacher 1999, p. 7). The strength of a museum therefore lies in the “authenticity” of its objects – in its “originals” (Lötsch 1999). Waidacher (1999) argues that communication through presentation of ascertained authentic objects is the original way of museum<sup>53</sup> expression, it cannot be replaced and it’s quality cannot be achieved through any other way of intermediation (p. 7 et sequ.). In a similar vein, Seipel, former Director of the Museum of Fine Arts in Vienna, says that museums are places of preservation and encounter with the authentic original, which in its “originality” and

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<sup>53</sup> Translation by the author from the German term “museal”.

material reification cannot be replaced by any perfect (virtual) reproduction (Seipel 2002, p. 17). For this reason the Museum of Natural History in Vienna now displays its most impressive 25.000 year old statue “Venus from Willendorf” – a fertility goddess, which during the 90 years since its discovery has rested in the safe keeping of the museum. Because of the “aura of the original” (Benjamin 1963) the copy was substituted by the original and fascinates visitors which come from all over the world just to see the “Venus”. It’s authenticity and the aura of the “real” constitute the affect this has on visitors.<sup>54</sup> Thus a dialogue with the artefact is only possible when visitors are assured that it is an original. Seipel (2002) reported about a visitor who was emotionally so touched when seeing the original work papers of Mozart that she started crying. Needless to say that in this context she would not have had the same experience with seeing a copy. Authenticity leaves a feeling of uniqueness (Benjamin 1963) and fascination (Seipel 2002) behind.

On the other hand, it can be argued that an “authentic reproduction”<sup>55</sup> is legitimate at sites such as the Altamira Caves in Northern Spain where visitors’ evaporations would otherwise destroy the famous rock paintings or because the original does not exist anymore as it is the case with the famous “Bernstein-chamber” which disappeared during World War II. In all these cases reproductions are a way of making objects and sites visible and tangible, thus keeping them alive in people’s memories. In the National Museum of Archaeology in Madrid an exact copy of the tomb of Sethos I. from the 13<sup>th</sup> century BC is to be developed, which is the longest, deepest and most accomplished tomb of the valley of the kings. A substitute equal in temperature and smell to the original will be generated which since 1980 had to be locked away because of danger of

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<sup>54</sup> Aura is not something adherent to the object, it is created by the observing person, it is a subjective emotional category. To be accurate originality is implicit intrinsic, authenticity is implicit extrinsic, aura is explicit extrinsic.

<sup>55</sup> The term “authentic reproduction” is a typical oxymoron as a reproduction is by definition the opposite of an authentic object. However, the term is widely used in the literature.

decomposition similar to the “Altamira Caves” (der Standard 2002). Also the “Bernstein-chamber” is going to be meticulously reconstructed on the basis of the original sketches, plans and pictures. Lötsch (1999) asserts that a reproduction which is constructed under such strict scientific control can claim to be authentic, however, not in the sense of the aura of the original. Cohen (1995), however, notes that although they claim to be “authentic reproductions” they are not “neutral” reproductions for they embody values, perspectives and different interests of their creators (Cohen 1995, p. 20)<sup>56</sup>.

There is a role for reproductions in that they serve to protect the “original” and also so that visitors can handle and touch them. Reproductions are also important as educational tools. The question to be asked hereby is whether the visitors could gain anything extra from the original that they wouldn’t get from the reproduction/copy. In terms of learning it is not going to be much different, but mentally and psychologically it may. The emotional request for “authenticity” is clearly lost in the reproduction. Hall (2007) regards replications not as intrinsically bad. He, however, emphasises the different experiential depth between an original and the replication. He states that “[i]n some cases [...] replication may be the only way that the visitor can actually have an experience, albeit limited, of the original” (ibid., p. 2)

On the other side, it cannot be denied that so-called “authentic reproductions” have become very popular for visitors, even if many of them serve sheer commercial purposes. Although reproductions and recreations of the past have been widely attacked over recent years because of their often dubious authenticity, Holtorf and Schadla-Hall (1999, p. 230) say that they “would not have occurred unless there was a demand on the part of the public”. Moreover, referring to Löwenthal (1985) they argue that “[e]ven

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<sup>56</sup> Cohen (1995) articulates their double nature in the sense of being staged and authentic (in the sense of “accurate reconstructions” of the past) at the same time.

when artefacts are known as non-originals [...], public interest is not always reduced” (p. 237). Löwenthal (1992), in a critical vein, asserts that the skill and ease of replication make authenticity all the more elusive today. He argues, “as fakes and replicas become harder to tell from originals (if not more attractive than them), other traits – uniqueness, symbolic association, historical credibility – gain canonical authentic status” (ibid., p. 188). For him, today the factitious is for many as appealing as the authentic (Orvell 1989 quoted in Löwenthal 1992, p. 189). At the same time, he argues that “in a world shown up as so meanly malleable makes us hunger for firm truths” (Löwenthal 1992, p. 188).

**(3) Authenticity is determined by particular criteria: objective (scientific) and subjective (personal)**

An important question to be answered is: Who defines authenticity or Who is the arbiter to grant or reject the authenticity claim. Peterson (2005, p. 1090) argues that “[w]orks of art or archaeological artefacts may be more difficult to authenticate, but experts of any given time agree on the appropriate procedures to be used in testing for authenticity”. In the process of authentication certain objects (artefacts, relics, documents) or processes (festivals, dances, rituals, music) can according to certain criteria be approved and accepted as objectively genuine and truthful otherwise they will be rejected as a forgery, counterfeit, sham, copy or fake<sup>57</sup>. For example, in the Catholic Church Law a legal instrument called “*authenticae*” (lat.) is embodied, which is the formal evidence of the genuineness of a relic. Evaluation catalogues can also be found e.g. in law publications. In the realm of the museum there are clear guidelines for evaluation if an artefact can be counted as “authentic”. Cohen (1998) reports that due to commodification guidelines of what can be regarded as an authentic artefact became more strict over time (pp. 374-375). An exhibit must e.g. be authentic with respect to the facts for which it is

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<sup>57</sup> All these are not exclusive categories.



referenced. Direct evidence is only what was part of a process and/or concept and what ontically complies with it (Waidacher 2002)<sup>58</sup>. The exhibit must bear witness to itself and over temporal and locally distant processes (Weschenfelder and Zacharias 1992). In the museum context authenticity is scientifically determined. However, insights can change as can be illustrated by the following example: In the village Rechnitz in Austria archaeologists found a pipeline dating back to the Roman Empire. This pipeline was identified as an authentic water pipeline. Years later, however, the pipeline turned out to be a wine pipeline because scientists discovered particles of wine under their microscope when analysing this artefact. For objects of art, however, different qualities of authenticity apply. In the arts the “original” is inseparable from the artist and is therefore unrepeatable in its singularity (Seipel 2002) as for example Michelangelo’s “David” or Da Vinci’s “Mona Lisa”. A piece of art goes beyond the sheer purpose of use. However, also in the arts the authenticity seal does not always hold. Holtorf and Schadla-Hall (1999) argue that a number of authenticated objects are potentially fakes. Recently British experts identified a famous Van Gogh painting<sup>59</sup> in the National Gallery of Australia as a counterfeit with the result that this painting, if it turns out to be really a counterfeit, loses its value (ORF 2007). This implies that authentication of works of art such as paintings is important to demonstrate both, artistic and financial value (Holtorf and Schadla-Hall 1999). Referring to ancient art and monuments, Holtorf and Schadla-Hall (1999) state that authentication includes scientifically gained dating. Among archaeologists, “authenticity has usually been understood as the material integrity of the object itself” (ibid., p. 232). This suggests that “modern repairs, where they are necessary, must not distort the overall impression but ought to be clearly distinguishable from the authentic remains themselves” (ibid.). That is to say that

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<sup>58</sup> To find out if an object is authentic is incumbent upon the museum professional such as the curator. The evidence of authenticity can be provided on several levels: a) personal reference (photograph, document), b) a report (of witnesses) and c) historical evidence of different nature (letter, report).

<sup>59</sup> The painting is called “Kopf eines Mannes”.

restoration or reconstruction must stop at the point when speculation would start. Today, for conservation and preservation of historic remains/arts “codes of ethics” such as the “Venice Charter” from 1966 by ICOMOS exist and are universally accepted.<sup>60</sup>

It is the function of the curator/museum professional/archaeologist to assign/attest or to deny the characteristic of an exhibit/ancient monument etc. to be authentic. The recognition of the authenticity of artefacts therefore prerequisites particular (scientific) knowledge. Without knowing the “code” (having the knowledge) the visitor cannot recognise the authenticity of the object. This implies that without any authoritative marking the visitor is not able to identify authenticity. Visitors, in most cases, do not possess specialist knowledge and are therefore not in a position to be able to judge the “objective” authenticity of an object/setting. At this point Cohen’s (1988) argument, mentioned in the previous chapter, that tourists entertain concepts of authenticity that are much looser than those entertained by intellectuals and experts such as curators, anthropologists, or archaeologists, should be remembered. In a similar vein, Holtorf and Schadla (1999, p. 229) argue that “the public does not necessarily put the same value on genuineness as do archaeologists”. Urry (1990) points out that visitors often ask for an authenticity which is true to their own nostalgic cravings for the past rather than to any version nearest to reality that museums can make it. How “authentic” for instance an historic site appears to be is “an evaluation made relative to a concept the tourist holds of what it might possibly have looked like back in the time period this historic site (via its markers) purportedly depicts” (Jamal and Hill 2002, p. 97).

A qualitative study carried out by DeLyser (1999) on Bodie, a Californian gold mining ghost town, gives some insights into how authenticity is constructed on a personal level.

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<sup>60</sup> Holtorf and Schadla-Hall (1999) point at the problem that seeing “authenticity” only through the lens of the genuineness of the original material and some of its properties [...] turned out to be a relatively narrow concept.

DeLyser (1999) argues that “in the ghost town of Bodie the concept of authenticity enables visitors to experience the past as they imagine it” (p. 624). Bodie evokes images that visitors are well familiar with from Western movies. These images are so pervasive and powerful that “many visitors (...) experience not Bodie’s actual past, but filmic notions of the mythic West inspired by and projected onto Bodie’s landscape” (p. 611). Bodie’s artefacts show the signs of age and wear, it appears frail, and this “natural” look is what meets visitors held images of a ghost town. However, as DeLyser (1999) explains, “the appearance of dust enhances Bodie’s air of authenticity, while dissuading visitors from the reality that many of these artefacts were actually arranged by the Park staff” (p. 616). “As long as artifacts display signs of age and wear [...] visitors accept them as authentic” (DeLyser 1999, p. 621). Perceived authenticity in this context is then “a vehicle through which [visitors] can experience a fantasy past that may never have been, but that nevertheless holds meaning for each person who imagines it” (DeLyser 1999, p. 626).

The above described example referred to the past, or at least to some version of it. There are, however, also attractions which are based on sheer fiction. Grayson and Martinec (2003) provide insights into such environments. They have investigated visitors’ assessment of authenticity at two tourist attractions in England: the Sherlock Holmes Museum and Shakespeare’s Birthplace. Both attractions are associated with a well-known character, however, they are different from one another as Sherlock Holmes is a fictional character whereas William Shakespeare was a real person. In their study they refer to Kozinets (2001, p. 84) observations of Star Trek fans live with respect of authenticity. Perceptions of authenticity are therefore not limited to offerings that are historically or factually true. Grayson and Martinec (2003) investigated if visitors perceive things associated with Holmes as being just as authentic as things associated with Shakespeare. Although there was no evidence that any informant believed that

Holmes actually existed they were able to confidently identify and describe authentic and inauthentic site features. Respondents assessed authenticity at both sites in similar ways. However, they all evaluated authentic features according to their individual templates. With these findings Grayson and Martinec (2003) see proof that in consumption experiences fantasy and reality are blending and that imagination may play a role in this blending process. Imagination, they argue, can create a bridge that allows something as being indexical with a fictional person/world, and thus blend fantasy and reality. Imagination also influences the perception of authenticity in relation to historical facts. Grayson and Martinec (2003) suggest that e.g. “a consumer’s belief that a quill pen is evidence of Shakespeare’s existence appears to depend in part on his or her ability to imagine that Shakespeare used the pen” (p. 29).

Herbert (2001) has studied two literary places in England that have been developed for tourists and that formed the settings for stories/novels. They are therefore on the one side connected with the writer itself, the place where he/she has worked and lived and may create a sense of nostalgia. On the other side, these sites are also connected with the writers’ major literary figures. Herbert (2001) argues that it is the merging of the real and the imagined that often gives such places a special meaning. Tourists may be less concerned with distinctions between fiction and reality than with what stirs their imaginations and raises their interests (Herbert 2001). It is these affective qualities where the visitors derived their meanings. Visitors are transported into the worlds in which the writers had lived and have written their stories/novels. The items on display strengthened an emotive experience. “Places acquire meanings from imaginative worlds, but these meanings and the emotions they engender are real to the beholder” (Herbert 2001, p. 4).

Zacharias (1992) highlights another important point, namely that in the perception process authenticity can experience partial disregard if compensated through fantasy (p.

77). This fantasy, he argues, can in turn be correlated with the authentic object or be inflamed by it. Authentic artefacts trigger feelings and fantasies, “they evoke chains of ideas and images that lead far beyond their initial starting point in the artefacts themselves” (DeLyser 1999, p. 624). Visitors identify with the objects and make imaginative journeys to the past. The concept of authenticity therefore allows the visitors “to make a jump from the visible and the tangible, to the invisible and the experiential” (DeLyser 1999, p. 626).

Besides visitors imagination and fantasies there are other factors that shape their demand and experience regarding the authenticity of a site/object. Heather Zeppel (2002) has examined visitor responses to cultural presentations and their authenticity at the “Cowichan Native Village” on Vancouver Island in Canada, a tribally owned cultural attraction. The study found that 43% of visitors at the Native Village had visited other native cultural attractions in British Columbia, mainly museums, galleries, native villages, and powwows. The experiences with other sites can be seen as having an influence on forming their expectations and so do their sources of information, which were mainly travel guidebooks and word of mouth through friends and family members.

Another study was carried out by Prentice and Andersen (2003). They investigated the “Edinburgh-Festival” which featured various elements of Scottish culture. They found that the “Royal Mile”, the main street in the medieval Old Town,

is made to look Scottish to tourists by the retailing of iconic experience. This mix includes pipers dressed in tartan playing their bagpipes for money, ‘Scottish’ shops selling tartan, whiskies and reproduction weapons, and clothes retailers selling ‘Scottish’ woollens and Highland dress. (...) In essence, retailers collectively create a genre scene in the enclave of the Royal Mile which tourists expect, and have been led expect. It is an example of where authenticity and realism part company in ‘tourist realism’ (pp. 9-10).

They concluded that tourists were consuming something that was real to them. Overseas tourists to Scotland were more likely than others to consider the culture to be traditional and authentic. However, repeated experience of Scottish culture has changed impressions of authenticity and traditionalism. The Scottish case can make one assume what happens with many festivals in general.

In a study on Chinese restaurants, Lu and Fine (1995) asked consumers whether they wanted authentic or Americanised Chinese food. A large majority selected the former. However, many were unable to ascertain how authentic the food was. Most consumers are not highly conscious of authenticity and their consumption of these westernised Chinese restaurants only has to fit the criteria of exotic cuisine. Moreover, “authentic” food would often not be conformable with western tastes. Over the last ten years the concepts of “reality engineering” and “theming” have been used to support the ethnic dining experience. “Eatertainment” is often part of this concept recognising that customers desire more than just food when frequenting restaurants (Lego et al. 2002). Lego et al. (2002) argue that “consumer’s experiences within these themed environments have become highly orchestrated, stylized and even exaggerated to the extent that daily life has evolved into one in which fantasy and spectacle are accepted as normal” (p. 4). Many of these styled environments work with symbols that can be easily recognised by the consumers and imply ethnicity. However, most of these environments are exorbitant at such a rate that one would have to look for a long time before finding the like in the culture which they are trying to represent. Referring to Belk (1996), Lego et al. (2002) conclude that these environments as well as the food are a sanitized version of the authentic but consumers take them as “real” unless they are connoisseurs.

From these studies it can be concluded that visitors to cultural sites apply a “personal” catalogue of criteria when they assess authenticity. Visitors are influenced by literature,

the media, and word of mouth in the formation of their belief structures. They have their own notions of what authenticity means and let their fantasies and imagination play. They assess authenticity before they believe it. Visitors are strongly influenced by how something looks, i.e. how artefacts/sites are presented. They are often looking for easily recognisable symbols and signs (visual clues and markers) (Romeiss-Stracke 2000) and this is often enough for the “authentication of the product as a whole” (Cohen 1988, p. 378). This explains why tourists are frequently prepared to accept commercialised objects or replications of local customs as “authentic”. Visitors also compare sites when making judgements, i.e. they draw on past experiences in similar places. Furthermore, first-time and repeat visitors seem to evaluate authenticity differently. Their sensibility for authenticity changes when they become more acquainted with a culture. Repeat visitors are much more critical as to how they assess authenticity. There is also a difference between locals and visitors from abroad. This is in line with the findings from the empirical study at “Ceol”-The Irish Traditional Music Centre at the outset of this research. It was revealed that people from the area being familiar with the culture were much more critical consumers than foreigners. Moreover, authenticity means different things to people with different cultural backgrounds, e.g. what Europeans perceive as authentic differs from what Americans view as authentic. This means that the cultural distance plays an important role in the perception and experience of authenticity. Besides cultural background other demographics such as age and cultural capital have to be mentioned. The type of cultural tourist (see section “the cultural tourist” of this chapter) and his motivation, attitude and seriousness of visiting a cultural attraction is another important factor that has to be taken into consideration.

According to Cohen (1988) visitors use their own individual cues to authenticate a “product”. Cohen (1988) argues that judgements on authenticity will differ according to the number and kinds of traits visitors apply and what authenticity they demand.

Therefore, it can be concluded what a single individual regards as “authentic” varies (Moscardo and Pearce 1986). In other words, authenticity is constructive (see also Wang’s symbolic authenticity), it is a social construct and negotiable (Cohen 1988), it is in the eye of the beholder (Lego et al. 2002).

**(4) Fakes, reproductions, fantasies can cause a “Quasi authentic experience”**

According to Wang (1999) an “authentic experience” can result from various sources. It can follow from the epistemological process when recognising e.g. an object as authentic. This perception can have very subjective elements as adumbrated above. Knowledge has been identified as an important factor to perceive “objective” authenticity of an art object/exhibit. However, if the individual does not know that the object is *not authentic* it hypothetically could cause an “authentic experience”. Many examples can be found where museums exhibited paintings which at a later stage turned out to be fakes. The question arises, did visitors have an authentic experience of looking at these fake artefacts? Various studies carried out in heritage attractions (Moscardo and Pearce 1986, DeLyser 1999) have supported this idea. They affirmed that visitors to these attractions regard them as authentic despite the fact that they are reproductions. Also, if the visitor does not have the possibility to see the real (e.g. in the case of the Altamira Caves) and therefore has no frame of reference something inauthentic can be taken as authentic. The *effect* of a replica can be authentic and therefore it is possible that visitors have something like an authentic experience out of something inauthentic. To be more specific, the recognition of a replica or simulation/simulacra can cause a “quasi authentic” experience. The “quasi authentic experience” can come very close to an “authentic experience”, in fact it can be equal. Also, history in the form of fiction, as discussed before, can be experienced as authentic if the visitor does not feel himself disturbed in his self-concept. Again, the personality level and the motivation is the decisive point.



Jamal and Hill (2002) criticise that the tourism literature is replete with ambiguity and debate about authenticity with respect to built attractions and destinations, such as Las Vegas and Disney World, or reconstructed heritage sites. They suggest a similar distinction as outlined above, however using a different terminology:

- *de dicto* (i.e. ‘of what is said’ or ‘of the proposition’) experience of X; and
- *de re* (i.e. ‘of the thing’) experience of X.

A *de re* experience can be exemplified by an individual experience of the Mona Lisa in the sense of observing Leonardo’s masterpiece in the Louvre. The focus here is on “the relationship between the agent and the *thing* experienced” (Jamal and Hill 2002, p. 90). Observing the Mona Lisa directly means that the Mona Lisa is the cause of the experience. A *de dicto* experience can be described as focusing on the character of the experience rather than on the cause of the experience. They argue that

one’s experience in the presence of a highly accurate reproduction of the Mona Lisa, a ‘fake’, in a mock-up of the Louvre in Las Vegas may be identical, or nearly so, to the character of the experience one may have in the Louvre gazing at the actual Mona Lisa, it may be ‘as if one were really there’. Thus, so long as the character of one’s experience in some situation is similar to what one may experience in the presence of some actual object or event X, one can still be said to have an experience of X. This is the *de dicto* sense of an experience of X. Thus, it is possible to have a *de dicto* experience of X without having a *de re* experience of X (ibid., p. 90).

Thus, two different situations of authentic experiences arise. On the one hand, for an experience of the Mona Lisa to be authentic one must be in the Louvre gazing at the actual painting, the Las Vegas simulacrum will be inauthentic. On the other hand, in another sense of authenticity, only the character of the experience matters and a Las Vegas experience is an authentic experience of the Mona Lisa. Jamal and Hill (2002), however, posit that *de dicto* authenticity comes in degrees. They further argue that

the degree of *de dicto* authenticity to an experience of X depends on the extent to which that experience is similar to the character of the experience one would have in a *de re* experience of X. Hence, the story, narration, the interpretation of the attraction is a crucial aspect of the experience, because the quality of the *de dicto* experience is in part

influenced by tourists' perceptions, evaluation and comparison of the storied object or event to their own cultural and historical frames (ibid., p. 90).

Jamal and Hill (2002) raised an important issue in the discussion of authenticity and the authentic experience, namely that interpretation of the object/attraction plays a crucial role for the visitor experience. This aspect was also confirmed as being fundamental by the two focus group discussions (see findings of focus group chapter II). This implies that the authenticity claim goes beyond the authentic object. Therefore, experiencing a cultural site and its authenticity has to be seen as having many dimensions and further facets such as interpretation, intermediation, and the way artefacts or other remains from the past are presented have to be taken into consideration when finding out when or if visitors experience a cultural attraction as authentic. These are important aspects which Wang (1999) failed to take on board and which will be elaborated in more detail in the subsequent multimedia section.

##### **(5) Authenticity of culture is an emergent concept**

For museum artefacts the authenticity can be established according to strict scientific rules but when it comes to questions regarding the authenticity of a culture (destination) matters become more complex. Employing the “museums-definition” of authenticity, i.e. looking at origins, to whole cultures (and their traditions and cultural practices) as the embodiment of cultural authenticity is misplaced (Meethan 2001) because culture is a dynamic concept. “Irish Dancing” is an excellent case in point to show the dynamic of a cultural practice in the context of Ireland. What started in France in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century as medieval form of set dancing was exported to Ireland. Over time it has become integrated in Irish culture, i.e. internalised and made their own, and has become part of what is regarded as authentic for Irish folklore. Furthermore, various regions have developed their own versions and styles of Irish dancing. Eventually, Irish dancing

has become commoditised in various shows like “The Riverdance” and “Lord of the Dance” which have been successfully performed all over the world.

Numerous other examples of cultural practices and emergent authenticity which were researched by various authors can be found, which will be illustrated in the following.

Indigenous societies are widely reported to be involved in a struggle for cultural survival. They are not passive respondents to external forces such as tourism<sup>61</sup>, globalisation and mass media, and changes in their lifestyles occur. Hinch and Butler (1996) argue that “unique indigenous culture is constantly evolving in the face of change within the environment in which it exists” (p. 13). Greenwood (1982), in a similar vein, points out that “viable cultures are in the process of ‘making themselves up’ all the time” (p. 27). The problem lies according to Grünewald (2002, p. 1004) in the fact that

commercial interactions in tourism arenas, are not automatically legitimated by the common sense that still hopes to encounter in indigenous societies the cultural elements that have not been updated historically.

Referring to the Pataxó Indians in Brazil, he argues that the incorporation of cultural elements from other populations does not remove their authenticity as “legitimate Indians”. However, if indigenous societies are moving forward, the tourist’s perception is often that they are too “civilised” and show a lack of authentic traditions (ibid., 2002). Tourists, to a large extent, want to have their stereotypic image of the “wild savage” fulfilled and strive to see the “unblemished native”.

Also, festivals and public rituals have always absorbed outside influences as Quinn (2004b) exemplifies by the “Galway Arts Festival” in Ireland, which was established in

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<sup>61</sup> Tourism (with its commercial interests) is accounted as one of the major agents for this change. Harron and Weiler (1992) however claim that the effects of tourism are difficult to isolate from the broader effects of modernisation and development.

1978 and since its beginning demonstrated openness to change. Moreover, many festivals have also changed through endogenous powers of local residents, elites and entrepreneurs. Local cuisine is another case in point that undergoes constant change. For example, many of the dishes that are part of what constitutes typical Austrian cuisine today actually stem from somewhere else such as the Bohemian and Hungarian cuisine. Also, ethnic cuisines have often over time blended with the host culture (e.g. Creole cuisine in Louisiana) that authenticity is no longer a consideration. Authenticity is also a moving target in the case of music as Peterson (2005) and others have shown. Before World War II many critics and intellectuals asserted that only blacks could play jazz properly and had the right to play jazz. Today, it is generally agreed that anyone who is trained in the tradition and has the skill to play well has an equal right to play jazz. This example highlights the fact that also the salience of authenticity in particular creative fields may change over time.

Cohen (1988) (based on Graburn 1976) introduced the term “emergent authenticity” – a process in which contrived cultural craft products or events over time can come to be regarded as authentic. Löwenthal (1992) suggests that even “what begins as blatant invention may at length acquire an authenticity of its own” (p. 189). Similarly it can be argued that new elements, which are brought into a culture through such forces as globalisation and modernisation previously alien to a culture, can be integrated and by-and-by become authentic parts of a culture. Culture is not frozen in time, it is continuously evolving and developing. Destinations, cities, places, etc. have always been in a process of renewal and differences only occur in the speed of this renewal.

The above examples show that looking for an original moment of authenticity is quite problematic. Also memories change from generation to generation. Therefore, Vesey and Dimanche (2003) argue, what is authentic in some environments may change and

be perceived as synthetic by elders, but newly authentic by those in younger groups. In a similar vein, Meethan (2001) points out that “authenticity needs to be seen as a category that is created and recreated in contingent circumstances” (p. 90). Vesey and Dimanche (2003) maintain that because of the changing nature of culture “it is difficult to determine in historic destinations what is an authentic portrayal of the destination and what has been altered to accommodate modernity” (p. 57). Meethan (2001) also highlights that concerns with authenticity are a critique on modernity based on “a false dichotomy between the non-modern, viewed as the authentic, and the modern viewed as the inauthentic” (p. 90). Moreover, as shown earlier, the culture of a people has many dimensions. Making blanket judgements about whole cultures and their authenticity should therefore be avoided. In this respect, the Scottish Case has received much attention. Yeoman et al. (2007), had a new vision for Scottish Tourism based on the notion that tourists are looking for authentic experiences in their holidays. Their aim is to position and market Scotland as an authentic experience, which should be: ethical, natural, honest, simple, beautiful, rooted, and human. However, their ideas were met with scathing criticism. King (2007, p. 3) says that

[p]ositioning Scotland as a destination offering authentic experiences has some alignment with consumer trends, but many contradictions on the supply side. [...] to deliver consistent ‘authentic’ experiences would require a high level of agreement about what constitutes ‘authenticity’ and the development of appropriate criteria.

However, what is often presented as “authentic Scottish experience” can be contrived (ibid.). Also Hall (2007, p. 2), responding to Yeoman et al.’s ideas, states that

[t]here is no problem in searching for authenticity but in the belief that ‘the authentic tourist’ can be satisfied with a consumerist holiday package from Visit Scotland or whichever. [...] [experiences] cannot be manufactured through promotional and advertising deceit or the ‘experience economy’ [...] which is inherently grounded in fakery [...].

Jamal and Hill (2002) used performance theory to investigate the authenticity in a touristic space (the destination/attraction as a space with all the elements of a staged

production that impact on its authenticity, from the physical, objective props to the actors and directors who construct a performance, to the audience). Such a view

helps to avoid totalizing destination spaces and attractions as ‘authentic’ or ‘inauthentic’ [...] for within the overall destination space or within the particular attraction [...] may lie specific places, objects and events of authenticity and inauthenticity (ibid., pp. 101-102).

In this section the term “authenticity”, its application and delimitation was elaborated. Several case studies from the literature were used to explore how expectations in respect to authenticity are formed and on which basis visitors make their judgements. It has become clear that authenticity is a complex interwoven construct not only dependent on the authenticity of the object/setting but also what the visitor brings with him/her and how s/he can interpret and experience it. The criteria visitors use for the authentication of an object/setting are very personal and are strongly related to their self-concept. But with respect to cultural attractions there are some further important issues that need to be discussed. In the “classic” museum it can be assumed that the visitor enters the museum with the expectation that exhibits are “original” and “authentic”. However, it has to be born in mind that there are many different types of cultural attractions with different degrees of authenticity and that the institution museum itself has also many variations (e.g. historic house museum, living history museums, industrial heritage parks, folk parks). In the following therefore, first an overview of cultural attractions and their relation to authenticity is discussed. Furthermore, interpretation and intermediation were identified earlier as having a major influence on how visitors experience cultural attractions. Therefore, also interpretation and intermediation and their relation to authenticity and the authentic experience are investigated. Moreover, it was concluded that what visitors perceive and experience as authentic is manifold. However, what visitors regard/experience as inauthentic is still open questions. Hence there is need to explore visitors and their meaning making process also in this direction.

### 3.2.4.3. Cultural Attractions and Authenticity

#### 3.2.4.3.1. Types of Cultural Attractions and Authenticity

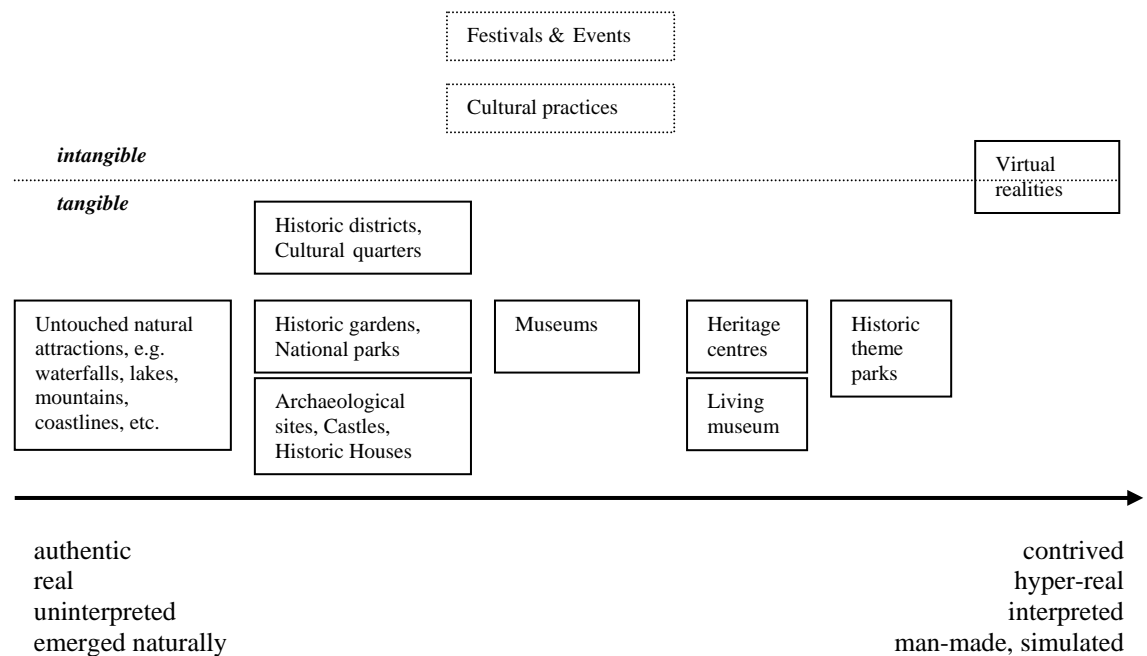
The range of cultural tourist attractions (see Figure 25) leads from pristine and uninterpreted natural environments such as untouched natural attractions (e.g. waterfalls, mountains, lakes and forests) and historic landscapes such as gardens and national parks to destinations like cities and their cultural quarters or little villages, archaeological sites, castles, historic houses; museums; heritage centres, living museums; historic theme parks, culminating in virtual realities. All of these cultural attractions, except virtual realities, are tangible forms of cultural attractions. Beside these tangible forms there are also intangible ones such as festivals and events and cultural practices. Virtual realities are located in between. “Natural” attractions can be described as “sites which have not undergone any intervention – physical or symbolic – to make them more appealing, accessible, or even more easily noticed by tourists” (Cohen 1995, p. 15). “Contrived” sites, in contrast, are “specifically created for touristic purposes and are wholly artificial in character – that is, they do not contain any ‘natural’ elements” (ibid.). While natural attractions such as untouched landscapes are authentic in themselves, archaeological sites, castles, etc. are man-made attractions, which originally were not designed for tourism but which now constitute major tourist attractions (Swarbrooke 2001). They can be seen as authentic akin to museum artefacts. Museums are “artificial” environments where authentic objects are displayed as metaphors of the time.<sup>62</sup> Museums, are man-made attractions which from their beginnings have been serving as an educational tool and which are nowadays purpose-built to attract tourists (e.g. Guggenheim Bilbao). Heritage centres occupy a position which concerning their authenticity is regarded by many experts as controversial as they rely to a large extent on reproductions and use an entertaining style in intermediation.

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<sup>62</sup> Many museums from the past, the buildings themselves, can nowadays be regarded as authentic.

Moreover, they are mostly built to attract tourists<sup>63</sup>. Theme parks, in general, are not object oriented and therefore bear no relation to reality (Baudrillard 1988). Historic theme parks are also simulated environments where in most cases little “real” can be found. Finally, virtual realities are electronically generated worlds (of illusion), i.e. worlds of manipulated images. Festivals and events and other cultural/folkloristic practices were originally not performed or carried out for touristic purposes but have increasingly been opened to a wider audience for commercial purposes.

**Figure 25: Range of cultural tourist attractions**



**Source: by the author**

In Figure 25 cultural tourist attractions are placed along a continuum from purely “authentic” to purely “contrived”. The further one moves to the right of this continuum an increasing predominance of reproduction and the “hyperreal” can be noticed. This means not only that the “real” becomes less important and that there is a declining object orientation, but also that the specific preparation for the visitors experience through for example “staging” and “imagineering” is increasing (Romeiss-Stracke

<sup>63</sup> Many examples can be found in Ireland, where heritage centres are built in remote places to bring tourists there, e.g. Céide Fields and The Blasket Centre).



2000). As far as the presentation venues are concerned (including interpretative centres), many of today's cultural attractions fulfil tasks of a museum. However, the way in which many of them impart knowledge is evocative of theme parks (Friebe 2002). As a consequence, many of today's cultural attractions cannot be clearly positioned on such a continuum as they often constitute an amalgamation of a scientific institution, an educational and an experience (adventure) site.

Between the poles of "authentic" and "contrived" attractions many mixtures of natural and artificial elements can be found. Cohen (1995) notices a "trend towards 'nivellation' of attractions, natural and contrived, realistic or fantastic, historical or futuristic, original or recreated" (p. 16). Finally, festivals and events and cultural practices as intangible forms of cultural attractions also have to be considered in terms of the above continuum. Since they are so manifold in their themes and performances and versatile regarding their degree of change, it is even more difficult to assign a clear place at any specific moment.

The issue of contrived attractions was already raised previously when discussing replica and reproductions (e.g. Altamira Caves, Bernstein Chamber). It was concluded that they have an important role insofar as they serve to protect vulnerable sites by keeping visitors away from these environments. Contrived attractions can also be seen as increasingly becoming substitutes for "natural" attractions as ever fewer natural environments remain pristine and untouched (Cohen 1995, p. 18). For Cohen the tendency for "contrived attractions" to take the form of reconstructions emerges most strongly in representations of the past (ibid., pp. 18-19). He argues that their growing popularity is partly due to tourists nostalgic cravings for the past satisfying tourists search for authenticity (Cohen 1995, p. 20).

Cohen (1995) also brought in the notion of modern technologies into the discussion of authenticity and anticipated their growing importance in the tourist experience. For him, technology has become more sophisticated and the experience in artificial and simulated environments more realistic (Cohen 1995, p. 22). These new attractions seem to occupy a location between natural and contrived and "they therefore appeal simultaneously to the culturally sanctioned modern as well as post-modern touristic motivations" (ibid., p. 20). The "show-factor" these new attractions offer (high-technology simulations of either futuristic or fantastic environments) bespeaks "the tourist's predisposition for playfulness, his or her readiness ludically<sup>64</sup> to accept 'contrived' attractions as if they were real" (ibid., p. 20). Hence, it is for the enjoyment that tourists accept contrived attractions as real – although not wholly seriously. Cohen (1988, p. 383) sees the post-modern tourist participating in an "as if" game where they pretend that a contrived product is authentic although they know or are not convinced that it really is (ibid. 1995, p. 22). This has implications for the growing popularity of these places.

#### **3.2.4.3.2. The Issue of Commodification**

Despite the fact that culture is a dynamic concept there is a wide ranging tourist attitude that spaces of cultural purity and authenticity are those which have not undergone transformations through modernisation, globalisation, tourism, and commodification and which are seen to be found only outside the Western world. Commodification of culture and its past and the consequences on the tourist experiences is an ongoing debate in tourism and has been discussed at length in the literature (Cohen 1988, Smith 1989, De Lyser 1999, Hannabuss 1999, Goulding 2000b, Shepherd 2002).

Tourism is often accused of bringing cultural change to destinations and commodifying culture for the tourist gaze, thus destroying its authenticity. The familiar story goes that once there was a pristine and natural place outside the West; then tourism arrived; now

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<sup>64</sup> Playfully.

what was once pure and authentic has become spoiled and commodified (Shepherd 2002). Commodification means that things (and activities), which were previously not part of market logic, are turned into commodities for sale on the marketplace. In this process they acquire value and can be exchanged for profit (ibid.). For culture and heritage this means that they come to be evaluated primarily in terms of their exchange value in a context of trade (Goulding 2000b).

Bound in the overall commodification of tourism, culture and heritage have undergone a process of industrialisation. With regard to heritage the commodification hypothesis suggests that the past is popularised and those versions and images of history that have broad market appeal are presented, hence credibility is sacrificed, culture becomes popular culture, and a staged authenticity occurs (Goulding 2000b). Teo and Yeoh's (1997) study of a Singaporean theme park is instructive for exemplifying commodification of heritage. The original Haw Par Villa, an eclectic collection of sculptures of various cultures in an especially designed garden, had also been open to locals. The garden was then turned into a theme park in using Disneyland as a benchmark. This "Disneyfication" of the park is seen as having caused inauthenticity. The original park is regarded as authentic despite of its "strange" eclectic nature. Hence, commodification of a cultural site can have serious consequences on visitors perception of authenticity. As cultural products increasingly became staged and commodified for the tourist gaze this very often emptied their meaning (Urry 1990) for both, tourists and locals alike (Cohen 1988). Many locals don't value their cultural treasures anymore because they have been opened for tourist consumption. One of the most influential example of commodification of a local culture was provided by Davydd Greenwood (1989). In his anthropological study on the Basque *Alarde* Festival he showed that tourist authorities have turned an authentic and meaningful local practice into a spectacle for tourists with the result that locals lost the interest in performing it. The

festival was a statement of historical identity of people from Fuenterrabia, an “affirmation of their belief in their own culture” (Greenwood 1989, p. 178). Greenwood (1989) argues that with turning a cultural tradition into a commodity the tourist authorities have deprived locals of the meaning they had used to organise their lives. As the ritual has become a performance for money the meaning was gone for those who once believed in it. When the meaning is gone for the locals its authenticity is compromised, hence it remains only a staged performance for tourists. Visitors to most festivals are overwhelmingly local (Crompton and McKay 1997). Their celebration of culture and tradition means something different to them than for tourists and so does the impression of the realness. Selling community based festivals as “tourist attractions” does not fit easily with their *raison d’être* from a local perspective (Quinn 2004b). For locals, festivals constitute a “vehicle for expressing the close relationship between identity and place” (Quinn 2004a, p. 4). The presence of tourists often shifts community based festivals “from celebrations to spectacles” (Ravenscroft and Mateucci 2003, p. 4) and economic considerations overweigh the social functions of the festival (Quinn 2004b).

Tourists are susceptible to portrayals of a time gone by with the consequence that cultural attractions and whole historical districts are manipulated by present generations for commercial purposes. In order to make it attractive to outsiders, local culture is transformed into commodified tourism products. These transformations often result in superficial and inaccurate presentations. Economic interests and culture are therefore perceived as competing characters which compromise authenticity (Naoui 2004).

In fact, it is often the absence of “obvious” commodification and “Disneyfication” that makes destinations and cultural sites appealing for tourists. DeLyser’s (1999) study of “Bodie” provides further insights into visitor perceptions on authenticity. For example, one young woman visiting Bodie with her husband, compared Bodie with another ghost

town in Virginia City (Nevada) and explained: “Bodie is so much better. This isn’t commercial. Over there, every time you walk into a building, somebody’s trying to sell you something.” DeLyser (1999) reports that many other visitors thought that those places were “just for tourists” or “too commercial”. DeLyser (1999) argues that commercialisation detracts from the ghost-town experience because it interferes with the visitors’ ability to imagine life in another time (p. 617). It distracts from getting an idea what it might have been. Furthermore, commercialisation is seen as negative because the ghost towns atmosphere is lost. Bodie’s policy of arrested decay and lack of commercialism persuades visitors of the Park’s authenticity. In her study at the Cowichan Native Village, Zeppel (2002) reports about one local visitor (female, age 28, teacher) who argued that “how can it be genuine when we are surrounded by gift shops and pay admission?” (p. 98). Commercialisation often undermines the value of authenticity to visitors/consumers. Grayson and Martinec (2001) argue that this is in part because

authenticity is fundamentally associated with evidence and truth, and consumers can therefore become circumspect if they discover that the standards for authenticity have been manipulated for the purpose of making a profit (p. 32).

In contrast to the above, various scholars (e.g. Cohen 1995, Greenwood 1989) argue that commodification does not lead to meaninglessness of cultural products per se. Some cultural traditions would not be existent anymore without the interest of the tourists since tourism can also lead to re-invention of local traditions. Greenwood (1989) contends that “the evaluation of tourism cannot be accomplished by measuring the impact of tourism against a static background. Some of what we see as destruction is construction” (p. 182). Proponents therefore argue that tourism can stimulate revival of local interest in culture and can therefore acquire a new meaning for its producers. This line of argumentation, however, requires more detailed analysis which is not yet apparent in the literature.

### **3.2.4.3.3. Object Authenticity and the Presentation and Interpretation of the Past**

According to Uzzell (1989a) interpretation commenced with storytelling as one of the oldest practices for cultural transference in existence (p. 2). Stories about what is meaningful to people were passed on over generations and involved multiple forms of expression like mine, gesture, dance, music as well as verbal narrative. At the same time, these stories were always affected in several ways by the storyteller himself who might have shaped the story pursuant to his audience. And of course there has always been bias of objectivity by the storyteller himself. The “Weltanschauung” - how things are seen through one’s subjective lenses - has influence on the way a story is told. The interpretive planner can be seen something similar to a storyteller when e.g. telling the story of artefacts/sites. Different planners might tell stories in a different way. Also, archaeologists, curators, historians etc. often present those things they think the visitor is interested in (Davis 1989). In such cases the themes and messages are a very subjective selection. According to a constructivist view every interpretation is coloured by personal view. The playground in encoding a historical message is huge, because one can focus totally on facts with very little extras or one can focus more on entertainment where the “story” becomes more important than the real facts. Furthermore, objects displayed in a museum or other cultural attractions are mostly detached from their original environment and can therefore be portrayed with a different meaning. The key issue however is that the facts and the historical truth must not be distorted.

Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996) recommend asking the following important questions when it comes to (heritage) interpretation: whose heritage is being interpreted, by whom and for what purpose? They have introduced the term “dissonant heritage” arguing that heritage must be dissonant as it derives from a range of interpretations, many of which may be in conflict. For example, at sites of “dark tourism”, also termed as “thanatourism”, various stakeholders may have divergent views on whose heritage is

being presented resulting in different, often incompatible, interpretations of the history of a particular site (Goodall and Beech 2006, p. 495).

A plethora of criticism can be identified in the literature regarding heritage presentation and interpretation in relation to authenticity. Löwenthal (1992) argues that false public images of the past may demand that truth be compromised. Löwenthal asserts that there is a tendency within the “heritage industry” to improve the past and that idealised versions of earlier times are used (Löwenthal 1996, p. 153). It is an idealised past rather than an actual one. This line of thought is shared by many other authors, above all Hewison (1987) with his critical writing about Britain and its presentation of heritage. He argues that Britain is in a climate of decline by exploiting the economic potential of British culture. For Hewison (1987) “the heritage industry” creates fantasies of things that never were. Burnett (2000) argues that “history [...] is often ignored, hidden or improved upon for the sake of a more palatable, entertaining or marketable narrative” (p. 43). Some authors have even come to term this new wave of heritage interpretation as “bogus history”. Heritage is often “manufactured” for commercial consumption with the effect that cultural aspects are reduced to their basic representations. In such a vision, AlSayyad (2001) points out,

all icons of culture, such as architectural styles, building typologies, and spatial configurations, simply become the cultures that they are meant to represent. Authenticity here is desired, and is achieved through manipulation of images and experiences (p. 9).

History is often used to create a “dream landscape” (AlSayyad 2001) and is trivialised in order to meet consumer’s stereotypical images of the past and make a visit enjoyable regardless of the cost of misrepresentations. For Hewison (1987) such new approaches to displaying the past undermine an understanding of history.

Another criticism on heritage presentation and interpretation highlighted by various authors (e.g. Handler and Saxton 1988, Goulding 2000b, Burnett 2000) is that the history of certain groups (e.g. slavery) is often suppressed. Moreover, there is a tendency to feature the more impressive works of man which leads to an exaggeration of the prominence of past environments (Löwenthal 1975, p. 29 in De Lyser 1999, p. 606). Heritage interpretation can therefore be regarded as a politicised process as through

the choice an attraction makes in how it sells itself [...] creates the possibility of facts and experiences to be ignored, shaped or enhanced in order to present a particular discourse of “truth” or “reality” (Edensor 1997, p. 176 quoted in Burnett 2000, p. 42).

According to Herbert (2001) heritage managers and conservationists re-invent the past.

Löwenthal (1996) suggests that heritage interpretation is an active process which is tintured by present day tastes and desires and that these preferences change through time and space. DeLyser (1999) explains this phenomenon in the context of historic sites and places of memory as follows:

[They] are, at least ostensibly, landscapes of the past, but such landscapes, and the artifacts that are part of them, are seldom truly left to the ravages of time. Rather, they are more often expressly set up to be interpreted by visitors in the present. But as these artifacts and landscapes are reinterpreted by each generation of viewers, they can convey new meanings and new associations far from what their original users had in mind (DeLyser 1999, p. 606).

Therefore, DeLyser (1999) reasons that e.g. living history museums convey not the past per se, but how people in the present think about the past. With reference again to Bodie (a gold mining ghost town in California, USA), she underpins this as follows:

During its heyday, then, Bodie was well-maintained and intensely commercial. But today, in order for visitors and staff to experience that time, Bodie must look worn, dilapidated, and free of commercial operations. It may seem paradoxical then, that by making Bodie look less like it was during its heyday [...], visitors and staff feel that Bodie looks *more* like it was “back then”. The very authenticity they seek in the ghost



town of Bodie is precisely what would have made it inauthentic as a nineteenth-century mining camp in the nineteenth century (DeLyser 1999, p. 622).<sup>65</sup>

In his study on the Abraham Lincoln outdoor-museum Bruner (1994) demonstrated how the idea of authenticity and interpretation of history was continuously constructed in social processes. Authenticity is a cultural value constantly created and reinvented in the social process (Olsen 2002). Meanings about historical sites are constructed in a certain period of time and we are continually reconstructing and rewriting history. For Holtorf and Schadla-Hall (1999, p. 235) “authenticity can mean many different things in different contexts of time and space”. They say that “[a] monument may be considered authentic if it closely resembles an ancient structure in form and design, or if its spirit and feeling is that of an ancient building” (ibid.). Hence, authenticity is often “staged” for visitors. Burnett (2000) puts forward that for the purpose of awakening the past in the present there is a need to rearrange time and space. This goes along with displacement of original artefacts/settings and therewith constructing a new past and giving them a new meaning. This so-called “de-contextualisation” of objects is, however, regarded negatively by many critics.

Re-invention of the past is not restricted to museums, heritage centres, historic houses and the like. Vesey and Dimanche (2003) have investigated Bourbon Street, New Orleans’ major tourist attraction, and illustrated how history has been revived and transformed into a tourism product that is based on nostalgic and idealised images of the past. On Bourbon Street, the Storyville district, which is New Orleans’ former red-light district, is utilised as an image to elicit nostalgia of a period no longer actively incorporated in the cultural fabric of the city. The authors argue that what is presented to

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<sup>65</sup> This is not a contradiction if authenticity is understood as a socially constructed concept that holds different meanings for different people, in different times, and in different places. What appears authentic in the ghost town of Bodie in the 1990s may not have appeared authentic in the mining town of Bodie in the 1880s. [...] But visitors to Bodie, [...], develop a notion of authenticity that is specific to ghost towns, and in some cases, specific to Bodie (p. 622).

tourists is a commercial image of the past and its reputation, rather than an accurate portrayal of New Orleans either yesterday or today. Similarities to this study where the image of the place rather than the reality of day-to-day life of the host destination is consumed by the tourist can be found in many other destinations.

For heritage destinations, tourism images conjure up romantic and nostalgic portrayals of unique aspects of history and culture. Images are created to represent romantic concepts of what communities allegedly ought to have been in the past (ibid., p. 56).

However, since it is not possible to experience the past in the present history is recreated, although in a stylised version. “Historical” tourism is then a process “where culture is created based upon the reputation of a historical moment which people romanticise or have a connection with through personal history or intellectual interest” (ibid., p. 57). “While nostalgia is used by tourism destinations to draw visitors, at the same time it impacts how destinations are perceived over time” (ibid., p. 67). The contrived image based on nostalgia eventually becomes known as authentic (ibid.).

Burnett (2000) noticed that the heritage attraction sector is quite a contradictory entity in terms of their orientation on authenticity (Burnett 2000). Some forms of heritage attractions operate in the name of conservation, preservation and education and therefore occupy the “high moral ground”, she maintains. In this case, heritage is presented as “historically accurate” in order to satisfy the authenticity test. Other forms of heritage attractions, however, appear to operate with a different value system. In this type of heritage there is less concern over what is “authentic” in any accurate historical sense and greater emphasis is given to what is “attractively authentic” (Burnett 2000, p. 40). The whole point is to create an illusion of authenticity of original ambiances and looks (Löwenthal 1992) also if this adds up to defamation of the site in the eyes of many experts. It is the demand of the powerful heritage industry “not to present the ‘real authentic’ but to present the spectacle and sensation of the authentic” (Burnett 2000, p. 51). Nevertheless, it is important to note that heritage as a spectacle and fabricated past

“can provide the consumer with the possibility of learning, stimulation and a thirst for a deeper knowledge through other avenues and channels” (ibid., p. 51). Today, many of the cultural attractions find themselves in a highly competitive and privatised sphere which forces them to seek to attract visitors from all backgrounds and of all persuasions. Thus Burnett (2000) argues, many heritage attractions support the idea that it is a combination of both of these stances: being truly authentic and following the demand to be entertaining. Given the many different forms of cultural attractions (tangible and intangible ones) and their different orientation to authenticity it has to be concluded that authenticity is bound to the specific site.

### **3.2.5. Existential Authenticity and the Authentic Experience**

#### **3.2.5.1. Introduction**

In contrast to the application of authenticity as regards objects and processes, existentialist philosophers used authenticity with regard to human beings as they pursued the question of the authentic “Self” referring to a particular state of Being. What differentiates these two uses of the same word is that for objects and processes certain criteria can be established for authentication. For human beings, however, the issue becomes much more intricate. Jacob Golomb (1995) investigated the philosophical understanding of “authenticity” and outlines that the term resists definition because of the philosophical nature of its meaning. He argues that “the notion of authenticity [...] signifies something beyond the domain of objective language” (Golomb 1995, p. 7). In a philosophical sense authenticity is associated with a deeper existential meaning related to personal meaning and identity. Existential authenticity signifies “being one’s true self or being true to one’s essential nature” (Steiner und Reisinger 2006a, p. 299). To be oneself existentially is “deeper than being oneself behaviourally or psychologically” (ibid., p. 303).

As outlined earlier, the post-modern society has been described as being in a constant search for stimulation, which, however, leads to identity confusion and fragmentation of the self. Referring to Berger (1973), Reisinger und Steiner (2006a) say that individuals who are “authentic” act in a way in which they are true to themselves as “opposed to becoming lost in public roles and public spheres” (p. 301). Therefore, “authentic experiences allow for self-realization and for escaping from role-playing” (p. 302). For Wang (1999) an authentic self is a state of Being that transcends everyday social norms and regulations. Today, holidays have also become important for many tourists to be free from everyday constraints, to explore their inner potential, to get in touch with one’s true self and to satisfy inner needs of harmony, spirituality, self-actualisation, or just to feel oneself again (Yeoman et al. 2007). This is often found through undertaking

creative activities (painting, bird watching, dancing, learning a skill) or engaging in unusual sports activities leading from very dangerous ones such as canoeing to unmediated experiences like “just me and the mountain”. For Reisinger and Steiner (2006a) tourism provides an excellent opportunity to foster existential authenticity. For them “even the most banal, mundane, depthless and fun aspects of tourism have the potential to facilitate existential authenticity” (Pons 2003 cited in Reisinger and Steiner 2006a).

“Existential authenticity”, also referred to as “personal authenticity” (Jamal and Hill 2002), is perhaps the most intricate of all the dimensions of authenticity examined in this work. Many tourism studies have focused on experiences as object-related authenticity, however, little research exists on “existential” authenticity. Thus, there is still a lack of understanding as to how an experience may be “authentic” in an existentialist sense. The question is what leads to this particular state of Being and how can the authentic experience best be described? This section attempts to shed some light on this opaque matter. First, differences between authentic experiences, the widely quoted “flow experience” and “extraordinary experiences” are pointed out. Then, the “authentic experience” is explored with focus on the human being and how experiences are triggered. This incorporates an investigation of ways that cause authentic experiences other than the authentic object.

#### **3.2.5.2. Flow-, Extraordinary- and Authentic Experience**

“Experience” has become one of the buzzwords in the tourism industry. Over the last few year a plethora of different types of “experiences” have been discussed. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) has been studying states of “optimal experiences”, those states when individuals report feelings of concentration and deep enjoyment during their experience. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) has revealed that a particular state of consciousness called “flow” makes experiences genuinely satisfying. An experience of

flow Csikszentmihalyi (1990) defines as a state of perfect equilibrium. In the state of “flow” both sense of time and emotional problems seem to disappear and there is a feeling of transcendence. Individuals typically feel strong, alert, in effortless control, unselfconscious, and at the peak of their abilities. Important to flow experiences is challenge, which individuals try to meet. Csikszentmihalyi’s (1990) concept of the flow experience has become very popular and also widely cited in the tourism literature. The “flow concept” is based on Maslow’s (1968) theory on “peak experiences”. However, both approaches have been criticised for their lack of empirical evidence. “Flow” is a metaphorical description and hard to pin down. Arnould and Price (1993) used the term of “extraordinary experiences” and found some similarities with descriptions of Csikszentmihalyi’s flow experiences. However, by contrast with flow, they argue, extraordinary experiences are triggered by unusual events and are characterised by high levels of emotional intensity and experience. The question arises what differentiates an “authentic experience” from the above mentioned experiences? As such the expression “authentic experience” is misleading because in general it can be said that every experience is authentic, no matter if the experience is a positive or negative one. Every experience is genuine. Brown (1996) talks about an “authentic good time”. Theoretically one could also have an “authentic bad time”. In tourist studies the “authentic experience” has a positive connotation and expresses sort of unique experience combined with strong emotive feelings and sensations. However, one has to differentiate between different causes that provoke an “authentic experience”. The “authentic experience”, on the one hand, describes an experience that occurs in the cultural exploration of a tourist either in the form of viewing a particular genuine artefact/sight of historical significance (e.g. seeing the Mona Lisa) or a pristine regarded elements of the cultural product (e.g. landscape). However, it is hypothesised that authentic experiences can also derive from imagined worlds and simulacra in the sense of perceiving them “as if” they were real. This means that the authentic experience may

not require authentic objects. For this first type of “authentic experience” the epistemological process, the recognition of the authentic/genuine is significant. Another type of the “authentic experience” is referred to as a particular state of Being in the sense of feeling authentic personal existence deriving from certain activities (as bodily feelings) or from being part of interpersonal ties and touristic *communitas* (Wang 1999). For Wang (2000), this constitutes not a search for the authentic “Other” but this search is in, among, and between the tourists themselves.

### **3.2.5.3. Forms of Existential Experiences**

Wang (1999) introduced sources/forms of authenticity referring to intra- and interpersonal authenticity. For Wang (1999) existential authenticity is activity-related, (relating to “first-hand” experiences and active rather than passive reflection). It can be manifest in bodily feelings/sensations, self-making (creating self-identity) and also in social connectedness.

Kim and Jamal’s (2007) research is particularly enlightening regarding “existential authenticity”. These authors have investigated tourists who participated in the Texas Renaissance Festival (USA), which they describe as a constructed site of carnivalesque play in which the performers dress in period costumes and speak in a way that matches the characters they portray. Tourists voluntarily dress in such costumes or are just spectators. Through in-depth interviews and participant observation they found out that tourists felt themselves to be liberated from the conventional social and moral norms and regulations of everyday life. Through *bodily feelings* like public nudity, binge drinking, fun flogging, etc. they gained *intra-personal authenticity*; whereas *self-making* and *inter-personal authenticity* was achieved through costuming (which allows a change of physical appearance and mindset), taking on a fictitious name, role-playing (which allows for alternative self-identities), and belonging to a specific group. This supports Wang’s (1999) idea that a sense of inauthentic self can arise when rational factors such

as norms and regulations over-control non-rational factors such as emotions, bodily feelings and spontaneity. These people felt free to express what they really feel (something they cannot do in their working environment) and the unrestrained bodily pleasure and being part of the community enabled them to gain an authentic sense of self and partly led to self-transformation. Kim and Jamal's research therefore corroborates Wang's (1999) notion of existential authenticity (intra- and interpersonal). Kim and Jamal (2007) also highlight that object-related authenticity was not an important issue for the festival respondents. "They were primarily concerned with fun, play, self-making, developing friendships, and participating in social communities" (ibid., p. 197). The findings also established that, although the festival is a commercial tourism event, which are widely assumed as generating superficial or inauthentic experiences, tourists gained "self" authenticity despite adopting "virtual" or "phantasmagoric" roles (ibid.).

In the following, intra- and inter- personal authenticity are further substantiated in the context of cultural attractions. When discussing bodily feelings Wang (1999) only referred to the activities within the liminal process of tourist activities. Here, a much broader perspective is applied which includes sensory stimulation.

### **3.2.5.3.1. Intra-personal Authenticity**

#### **3.2.5.3.1.1. Stimulation of Senses – Bodily Feelings**

When regarding the human being as a sensing individual, an authentic experience can be caused or reinforced by sensory stimulation. In the cultural attractions sector various examples can be found where it was recognised that sensory experiences are important in the presentation and interpretation of a site. When visiting the "Schönbrunn Palm House" in Vienna one can hear birds singing which makes the visit more authentic although one will not spot a single bird there. At The Guinness Storehouse in Dublin various smells are applied to help the visitor to immerse himself in the experience of



beer brewery. The “Dublin's Viking Adventure” allows the visitor to experience, in an exciting and interactive way, the sights, smells and sounds of Dyflin. The “House of Music” in Vienna invites its visitors to a tonal, visual and oral experience of music and makes music tangible to all senses. In the “Jorvik Viking Centre” archaeological evidence is used, complete with the sights, sounds and smells of the time” to recreate Viking-Age Jorvik. In Germany visitors to the “Archaeological Museum” in Herne can participate with all senses on the exciting discoveries in Westphalia. The Royal Armouries Museum in Leeds has brought out a new brochure advertising “to see the splendour, touch the reality, hear the stories, smell the fear and taste the victory” in order to increase visitor numbers (Voase 2003).

The stimulation of various senses can augment the experience of the site. To the mental (intellectual) experience comes the sensory experience. Through the senses we experience our world just as we experience ourselves through them (Kükelhaus 1978, Lindenberg 1980, Kükelhaus and zur Lippe 1982). When visiting a museum or other cultural attraction we perceive their forms, colours, materials, light – the whole presentation. This is done with our senses. Very often we do not separate between different senses and probably we are not conscious about our senses and their activity. As outlined above, many cultural attractions of late try to allure visitors through “holistic experiences” thereby not only affecting and stimulating the visitors’ intellect but also his/her senses and feelings. Such experiences go beyond the mere utilisation of the visual sense. Many cultural attractions nowadays try to address “all” human senses and offer hands-on experiences (sense of touch), employ sounds (sense of hearing), smells (olfactory sense) and regarding the sense of taste the visitor is often invited to taste food or drinks related to the cultural attraction.

### **3.2.5.3.1.2. Activity-related Authenticity**

Wang (1999) argues that an authentic experience can have nothing to do if the objects are real or not, it refers to the authentic Self activated through the liminal process of the activity. When engaging in such tourism activities individuals feel more authentic and more freely self-expressed than in everyday life. In such situations they feel free from the constraints of daily life. A number of examples where visitor activities are incorporated can be found in versatile cultural attractions. This leads from re-enactments in which visitors become the heroes or heroines of a mythical saga or an event such as a battle long past to versatile hands-on and creative experiences. By delving into creative activities and expressing themselves, people can derive authentic feelings, i.e. they feel themselves more authentic. In this case, authenticity refers more to the human being itself rather than to authentic presentations of a culture. Furthermore, with learning a skill which is endemic to a particular culture, people can connect with the place and get in with the “natives”. This can satisfy tourists’ desire for an experience of “genuine” culture. In the National Museum of Dublin, in combination with particular exhibitions, activities and courses are offered such as traditional Irish basket weaving. Such activities allow the visitors to connect with a particular cultural tradition and bygone time.

### **3.2.5.3.2. Inter-personal Authenticity**

People can feel inauthentic if they fail to connect with others. More specifically, such people feel like “not knowing who I am”, “not being able to be oneself”, or “not being known by others” or “living behind a mask” (Menziez and Davidson 2002, p. 44). As a result, these people feel disconnected, hopeless and despairing. Disturbances of identity, feelings of alienation and not belonging are well known phenomena among psychotherapists. Menziez and Davidson (2002) see such feelings to be brought about by migration and assimilation into an alien culture or when a child’s true self is not attuned to in the family. They argue that feeling inauthentic are often “defences to

protect us from the overwhelming anxieties of reality, anxieties that are psychological, social and existential” (ibid., p. 54). To feel authentic is often expressed as “to have the ultimate freedom to act any way we choose, our ultimate ownership of our actions and our ultimate responsibility even for who we are” (ibid., p. 45). Menzies and Davidson (2002) describe different degrees of false self that people can develop. These range from a minor to a more consciously known one to adopted for the purposes of social etiquette or community living. People who feel inauthentic may search for conditions which allow the true self (as opposed to the false self) to develop.

Most visitors to a cultural attraction come with their partners, families, friends, etc. A visit to a cultural attractions is therefore in many cases a collective experience. Even if people do not come with companions or families they meet people who happen to be there at the same time (vom Lehn et al. 2005). Through their action and interaction visitors stimulate each other and these social interactions can be crucial to people’s experience of objects/sites. The cultural attraction, however, may only be the backdrop for families to experience “authentic togetherness” or “emotional bonds”. Therefore, attractions need to provide the necessary prerequisites for experiencing “authentic togetherness”. A very sensitive area in this regard is overcrowding since it can compromise an “authentic experience” in both senses, related to the object and existentially.

#### **3.2.5.4. Existential Authenticity and Interpretation and Presentation**

For Reisinger and Steiner (2006b) interpretation and existential authenticity are to some extent incompatible. For them existential authenticity can only be achieved if individuals are allowed to make up their own minds about “how they experience and interpret the toured world” (ibid., p. 481). In their study they focused on the role of tour guides in authentic tourism und suggest a reconceptualisation of interpretation as a tour guide responsibility. In previous sections it was established that interpretation of

information is particularly important for tourists since it allows them to gain deeper insights and better understanding of the culture/cultural attraction they visit. Many studies have revealed that learning effect among visitors is greater when specific learning and interpretive programmes are proffered rather than a sheer exposure to exhibits (e.g. Moscardo 1996, De White and Jacobson 1994). Interpretation is also an important ingredient for visitor satisfaction (Moscardo 1998). Although it is widely acknowledged that the interpretive skills of tour guides can enhance the quality of tourists' experiences (e.g. Ap and Wong 2001), Reisinger and Steiner (2006b), however, have shown that not all tour guides are successful in "good" intermediation. Interpretation is often laid out for mass consumption, are conformist and politically "correct" narratives, and the widely applied costume interpreters serve more for an overall atmosphere than learning. For them interpretation seems to be manipulating denying that visitors are not capable to work out themselves what things mean or to come up with the "right" interpretation. Drawing on Martin Heidegger's philosophical ideas about how human beings understand and interpret experience, they posit that more reflection and less information supports experiences and understanding. For tourists, they suggest to engage with things rather than look at them (to participate, to discover and explore without being instructed and directed) and to see things in their connectedness and their context of significance. Furthermore, they recommend to open oneself "to the personal experience offered by the being of what is being 'consumed' rather than imposing a preconceived interpretation on what is being experienced" (p. 492). Hence, guides should be "facilitators of authenticity because their role is not to stop their tourists thinking for themselves but rather to give them the insights they need to do so" (Reisinger und Steiner 2006b, p. 494). For them, an acceptable interpretation should aim for "mind-opening insights and questions that encourage tourists to find their own significance in what they experience" (ibid.). They see the style of guiding as making the difference and advocate a style which "help tourists find meaning in what

they see” (ibid. p. 494). Thus, for tour guides to encourage authentic experiences knowing historical facts is insufficient. They also have to be psychologists and sociologists in a certain way to understand tourists motivations, cultural backgrounds and desires. Reisinger and Steiner (2006b) state that “[t]he role of such a tour guide is not education but lighting the way” (p. 495). The same notion can be applied to all sorts of interpretation, also when it comes to the application of modern technologies. In essence, the authors warn tourists not to consume preconceived notions of culture and heritage but to make their own conclusions. But it also demands a certain *openness* to the situation and *active participation* in order to gain authentic experiences.

In cultural attractions, in order to gain an authentic experience (existential), visitors should be encouraged to participate. Ways of achieving this were already discussed previously (e.g. suggestions put forward by Tilden (1957) or Moscardo (1996)) such as to personalise an exhibit, involve visitors, or to let indigenous culture interpret their history and heritage (in a “sincere” way as Taylor 2001 termed it) and involve them so that people can ask them questions which are personally relevant to them. Steiner and Reisinger (2006a) do not see staging pseudo-events for tourists causing inauthentic experiences, because such events can “in fact, be expressions of host authenticity in deciding how to present themselves to others” (p. 310). They argue that it should be remembered that “it is always about free choices, not about maintaining traditions or being true to some past concept of individual, social, or cultural identity” (ibid., p. 311). They go on to argue that

authenticity always is a self-judgment. It can never be made from the outside for or about someone else. It is no one’s business to decide what constitutes authenticity for a host community except the local residents. All are free to define themselves, determine their own identity, discover their own meaning and respond to the world in their own way, not as others expect-claiming and exercising that freedom is the ultimate expression of existential authenticity (ibid., pp. 311-12).

This is in line with Cohen's (1988) notion, discussed earlier, that tourism is not always a bad thing to cultures as it can stimulate local identity and revival of cultural practices. Cultures are entitled to change in response to changing circumstances. Equally, the practices of interpretation and intermediation of culture change and multimedia has already become an important part of it.

### 3.2.6. Summary

There are a range of meanings that have been attributed to the concept of authenticity in the tourism literature. Based on Wang's (1999) seminal clarification on definitional approaches this chapter has shown that the term has been used without elaborating whether it is the object or the activity/experience that is the source of authenticity. In the realm of the museum authenticity of the objects is the *conditio sine qua non* and a very strict definition of authenticity applies. The term authenticity has special characteristics and has to be marked off towards the characteristic original. The former refers to an assigned quality of an object, the latter to an inherent. Through their authenticity/originality and uniqueness objects are often attributed with an aura and therefore have a strong affect on the visitor. Opposing to authentic objects there are so-called "authentic reproductions" and reasons for their legitimating are manifold. It is, however, argued that with "authentic reproductions" the irrational effect of authenticity is lost, as if these objects had no soul. Authenticity can be evaluated by using scientific criteria on the part of the curator. The visitor in most cases, however, does not possess this knowledge. What s/he applies are subjective criteria which can have nothing to do with those applied by the curator. It is the job of the curator to find the best way of the visitors' encounter with an exhibit. That means to provide the proper style of framework for the intermediation of authenticity, to incorporate visitors' expectations, and to provide an orientation guide to make authenticity accessible for the visitor. In general, an exhibit can be authentic in various respects what, however, is relevant is authenticity

in its pure meaning as being the real, such as in the case of the arts where authenticity couples originality.

However, beside the authentic object/exhibit itself there are further factors that have to be considered, such as stimulation of senses, setting factors, presentation, interpretation, which can have significant influence on the “authentic experience”. This has important implications for cultural attractions and their development because it implies that there are several ways to authenticate the experience. The stimulation of senses through various presentation (aesthetics) techniques and through diverse activities offered in the cultural attraction are further means to augment an authentic experience. Wang’s (1999) “existential version” has important implications for experiencing cultural attractions. The philosophical meaning of authenticity – to find one’s true Self – goes far beyond Wang’s explanations. So far, relatively little knowledge exist on existential authenticity in tourism studies in general and in cultural tourism in particular. However, it can be argued that one might have moments of experiencing its true Being in the context of cultural attractions/certain masterpieces/events (ritual). Some of these experiences could also be described as spiritual experiences or experiences of transcendence and awakening which have a long-lasting effect on the individual and eventually transforms his/her life.

### 3.3. MULTIMEDIA

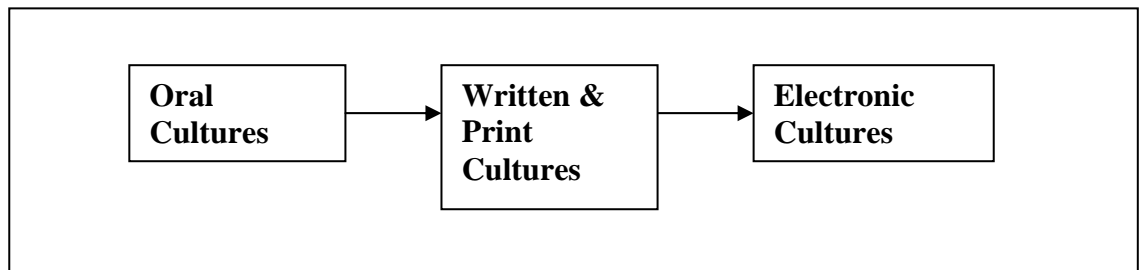
#### 3.3.1. Introduction

Point of departure of this chapter is an historical overview of the development of media as well as a definition of multimedia, introducing terms such as “hypermedia”, “hypertext”, and “Virtual Reality” and explaining how these terms are connected with each other. Different types of media and their roles are then introduced and discussed. Focus is then placed on what multimedia can do and on challenges and threats of multimedia application at cultural sites. There is also a short discussion on the “Virtual Museum”. Multimedia are is then linked with issues and questions regarding authenticity. This discussion constitutes the remainder of this chapter.

#### 3.3.2. Development of ICT – New Media of a New Culture

In order to understand media in their versatile forms, applications and perceptions today (and their application in cultural attractions) first of all a glance at the history of media and media revolutions in the past is essential. Historically the development of media can be seen as a sequence of three major phases: from oral cultures built around oral media, to written and print cultures, and finally electronic cultures (Hodge 2003) (see Figure 26).

**Figure 26: Development of media**



**Source: by the author**



The first big phase was dominated by what Faulstich (1997) terms “human” media<sup>66</sup> where ritual and mythical narratives as well as theatre play<sup>67</sup> were deployed. Then the invention of the letterpress by Gutenberg launched a new era of information and communication. Writing and reading became a common practice and newspapers provided information on a daily basis. The coming of print and its 400 years of dominance ended with the introduction of the new media such as photography, telephone, sound broadcasting, film<sup>68</sup>, and television (TV). The advent of electronic media denoted a decisive leap forward. In this context, McLuhan (1964) was the first to realise that electronic media would create a “global village” in which the world shrinks to village size. At the same time, he described computing as an extension of the human sensory system meaning that our central nervous system gets extended by giving us electronic “eyes” and “ears” through e.g. TV cameras, radio microphone or satellite imager. After the age of TV came the age of multimedia, bringing together writing and speech, moving and still images, spearheaded by personal computers (PCs). Just about ten years ago PCs started to become a tool for everyone in the Western world. The introduction of the PC had large-scale consequences and can be seen as an attempt to approach the dream of humankind to create a machine that can do everything (Wohlfromm 2002).

As computers have become commonplace (in the Western world) also the demand of using the Internet has been increasing. The inception of the Internet opened up totally new dimensions in communication, as it is organised in a new mode that allows many senders and many receivers as opposed to TV that is organised as one sender and many receivers (Negroponte 1996). At the beginning the Internet was a tool for scientists to

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<sup>66</sup> Translated from the German term “Menschmedien” by the author.

<sup>67</sup> The Greek Theatre displaced ritual and mythical narratives which meant a radical change from sacral ritual to theatre play with changing roles and mimesis of the artists. Later, in mediaeval times then the touring minstrels were “journalists of their time” transmitting news and entertaining people at the same time.

share research. It was then opened up to the public but still remained a tool to search and exchange information. With the implementation of faster broadband connections which signified increased speed and accessibility, also the type and scope of applications and services available have been improving. The Web as an information platform has over the last few years been continuously extended by entertainment, transaction and socialising tools. The 2006 Mediascope research carried out for EIAA (European Interactive Advertising Association) revealed that social networking and establishing personal connections via internet phone calls, instant messaging<sup>69</sup> and online forums<sup>70</sup> will continue to drive internet growth (EIAA 2006).

The Web has achieved high significance in many people's lives, especially for young people. It has become an integral part of their social life as the following examples show: they send and receive e-mails, book concert tickets over their mobile phones, take pictures with their mobile phones, tag<sup>71</sup> and upload them to their personal blogs<sup>72</sup>, thus sharing them with their friends. Companies like MySpace<sup>73</sup>, YouTube<sup>74</sup>, Flickr<sup>75</sup>, and Skype<sup>76</sup> are just a few of the most popular Internet sites providing services in the field of communication and social communities. All these services mentioned affect the way these youngsters (aged 12-28) organise their lives. As more of them will enter the workforce and start to occupy decision making positions it can be anticipated that

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<sup>68</sup> 1936 Walter Benjamin bemoaned the degeneration of the "aura" in photo and film vis-à-vis painting and theatre.

<sup>69</sup> "Instant messaging is a form of electronic communication which involves immediate correspondence between two or more users who are all online simultaneously". [www.krollontrack.com/legalresources/glossary.asp](http://www.krollontrack.com/legalresources/glossary.asp), access: 28.12.2006

<sup>70</sup> "An Internet forum is a web application which provides for discussion, often in conjunction with online communities. (...) [F]orums are available for any number of different topics". [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Online\\_forum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Online_forum), access: 18.12.2006

<sup>71</sup> Tags are provided with keywords to describe the underlying content, such as photos, videos, blogs or entire websites. Tags are comparable to labels for making the content easy to find later.

<sup>72</sup> Blog is short for Weblog meaning a Web site containing an online personal journal with reflections, comments, and often hyperlinks provided by the writer.

<sup>73</sup> MySpace is an online community platform, see: [www.myspace.com](http://www.myspace.com)

<sup>74</sup> YouTube is a videosharing platform, see: [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

<sup>75</sup> Flickr is a photosharing community platform, see: [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com)

<sup>76</sup> Skype is a communication platform enabling VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) calls, see: [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com)

their expectations, attitudes and familiarity with the Web will shape the future environment (Little 2006). When it comes to the application of various electronic/digital tools<sup>77</sup> a differentiation between two groups can be made: “*digital natives*” – those who are grown up in the digital age and who see it as natural to work with and use digital tools, and “*digital immigrants*” - older people who acquire the skill to use functional tools like E-Mail but basically feel alien to the digital age (Moorstedt 2006). The use of the Internet is increasing rapidly and the increased social usage of the Web remains one of the most significant developments. However, despite the fact that the contemporary period is built around electronic media, print media are far from being dead (Hodge 2003). Hodge (2003) argues that “the electronic revolution does not cancel out other media, it weaves them together” (p. 345). Looking back at previous ages it can be noticed that the print age included graphical forms from the outset. Also the art of speech did not die but took on new forms, influencing and being influenced by print forms (ibid., p. 346).

McLuhan notes that new media always offer some advantages, but also always fail to accommodate some functions of earlier modes, which therefore always return in some form. That is, (...), the full extent of all previous media co-exist in every era, but are differently organised into a distinctive economy (p. 346).

Therefore, “old” and “new” media exist side by side and build a systemic relationship (Berghaus 1997). Multimedia does not displace TV and other “older” media but “old” media are orientation and supply entities of “new” media (ibid.). However, nowadays boundaries between so far different media decline. We are talking about media bundles which integrate the achievements of previous media phases (Berghaus 1997, p. 79).

It is important to note that also people’s perception practices have changed. Movies, for example, are cut differently nowadays and pictures change ten times faster as at

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<sup>77</sup> Digital tools is another expression for digital devices characterised by electronic and computerised technology. The term is often meant by the prefix “e-” as in e-mail even though not all electronic systems are digital.

their beginnings. This is why movies from the 70ies or earlier often seem to be boring nowadays. Scenes change much faster nowadays which have forced people to align their perception practices. However, newly required perception practices, as it is the case when playing computer games, can lead to perceptual overflow and so-called “Cyber Sickness”.

Each period was revolutionary in its own sense and was accompanied by radical changes in perceptual practices and social relations. At the same time, each phase in the history of media revolutions was accompanied by euphoria on the one hand and resentment and criticism declaring “culture shocks” on the other hand (Faulstich 1997). Electronic media have globally been criticised as destroyers of culture, especially mass media (ibid.). Some examples are rationalisation and (industrial) efficiency claims of every day life, endangerment of social communities, social isolation, information overload, heteronomy through economical advertisements, and an absolute dictation regarding entertainment. Berghaus (1997) argues that for the short-term multimedia is building borders in the society separating multimedia competent people from incompetent ones. Negroponte (1996) regards this problem solely as generation determined, as a gap between young and old people. Another common criticism is that multimedia applied at cultural attractions are destroyers of authenticity. This, however, is investigated in more detail in the dedicated sub-section.

### **3.3.3. ICT at Cultural Attractions**

Advances in the field of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) have also affected cultural attractions. Since the mid-1980s, electronic media have assumed an ever greater presence in various types of museums (Griffiths 1999) and other cultural attractions. Nowadays, visiting a cultural site has in many places become a “multimedia” experience (e.g. Jorvik Viking Centre in York, House of Music in

Vienna, Neanderthal Museum in Germany, Volcania in France, The Guinness Storehouse in Dublin, etc.). For example, the recently opened “Imperial War Museum” in Manchester designed by Daniel Libeskind represents itself as follows:

An audio-visual presentation drawn from the Museum's extensive sound and image archives, where 60 projectors on 20 screens of around 5 metres in height are applied.

Also smaller museums and heritage centres see in multimedia application an advantage in order to compete with other leisure attractions (e.g. Dublin Writer’s Museum). This shows that the application of modern technology plays an integral part in the make-up of many cultural sites. This can go in some cases even so far that original authentic objects are replaced by their virtual counterparts as it is the case with Virtual Museums. Another case in point is the Vienna Opera Festival, which takes place every summer, where famous operas are shown every evening on a giant screen in front of Vienna’s city hall. Many festivals and events could not do without applying huge screens to support live shows and make them visible for everyone.

In 1995 the CIDOC/MMWG, which is a group that works for ICOM (the International Council of Museums) confirmed the following two distinctive roles of multimedia in the museum context:

Multimedia is used as a communications tool, interpreting museum artifacts and collections, both within the institution [...] and through distribution mechanisms [...]. Multimedia is also being used as a documentation tool, building integrated museum databases that record information about collections. [...] (Davis and Trant 1996, CIDOC/MMWG, p. 3)

As regards communication multimedia has implicitly also opened up a new world of education, entertainment and advertising. Beside the enormous amount of data that can be stored nowadays, this can be done in a much faster (high processing speed) and cheaper way. This enables museums to digitise cultural artefacts and store vast

amounts of information on culture and heritage and to share these primary sources with other institutions, museums professionals, and also visitors.

New media technologies offer a number of advantages as compared to conventional media. Through multimedia there are new possibilities in the presentation of culture and heritage which has impacts on the experience of the cultural site, i.e. how visitors can consume and experience a cultural attraction. Dierking and Falk (1998) argue that “visitors to science museums and science centers are increasingly expecting to encounter some type of media experience at a museum (IMAC film, computer interactive, or a videodisk)” (p. 66). The new generation of visitors, especially children and young adults, favour an “up-to-date” presentation and interpretation and are enthusiastic about interactive exhibits (Dierking and Falk 1998). Therefore, the motivation to apply multimedia at cultural sites ranges according to Wohlfromm (2002, p. 53) between compulsion and pioneering spirit. While many museum professionals embrace the new possibilities given by multimedia, critics (e.g. Hewison 1983, Uzzell 1983) notice that technology is often used to pep up tired cultural sites to make them more attractive to visitors. In a negative sense, curators worry about “technophobia” that multimedia is applied for it’s own sake or as an easy solution to deal with complex issues (Doyle 2003).

The increasing predominance of multimedia at cultural attractions, especially museums, has also provoked a new debate on the authenticity of the museum artefacts and their ownership (Bolz 1994, Weibel 1995, Hennig 1997). The combination of information and entertainment or education and entertainment, known as “infotainment” and “edutainment”, have come to be closely linked with multimedia. Griffith (1999) argues that there is fear among museum professionals that the shift towards more popular exhibition techniques risks blurring the boundaries between the

museum as a site of moral and social uplift and rational learning and other less reputable cultural sites focussing on amusement and spectacle (p. 1).

As the area of multimedia is such a broad one not all issues related to this topic can be addressed in this thesis. Therefore, for the subsequent sections the following issues are not subject of discussion:

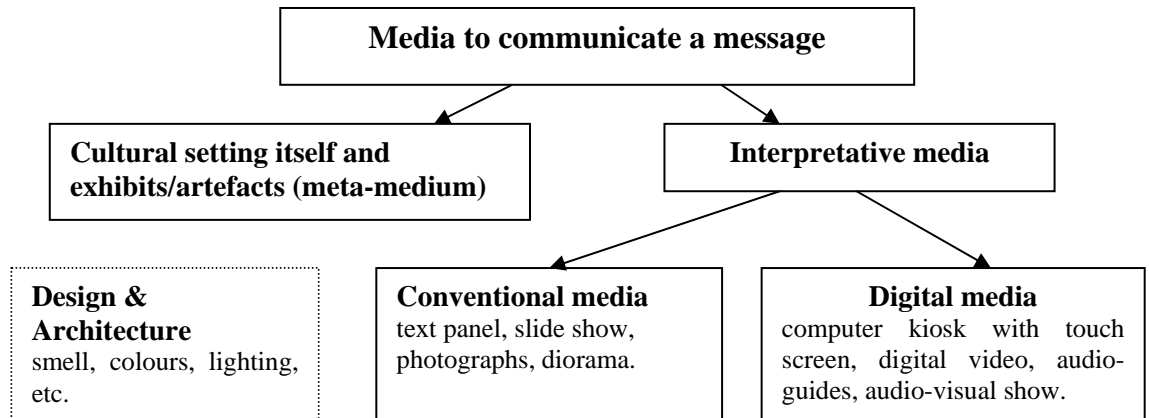
There are several contact points of multimedia and cultural sites. One is the World Wide Web. “Museums on the Web” has grown to a study area on its own attracting ample academic research at present. This issue will only be investigated where it is related to “Virtual Museums”. Furthermore, multimedia application can also refer to artistic work in using computers for exhibitions and “electronic art”. This will not be examined in the following. As the focus of this study is on the visitor experience of authenticity at cultural sites and the effect of multimedia upon this, also the role of documentation is not central and will only be addressed as regards digitisation of artefacts and texts and associated problems with authenticity. Finally, technological aspects of the information sector will not be considered, except where they have an impact upon “museum” practice.

### **3.3.4. Definition of Multimedia**

There is much academic debate over the definition of multimedia (Hein 1989) as the whole area of ICT has grown so complex and for non-experts often non-transparent. Wohlfrohm (2002) points out that the term multimedia is used inflationary for all kinds of appearances between slide show and mobile phones. Therefore, the products falling under the umbrella term “multimedia” vary considerably (Economou 1997) and it can be anticipated that the terms’ meaning will continue to expand as technology evolves. Generally, media are particular means of communication (Oxford Dictionary

2001). The term multimedia, therefore, describes a number of diverse media for the purpose of communication. Communication in turn is the transfer of information.<sup>78</sup> As regards cultural sites there are various forms of media applied to communicate a message and to provide information respectively (Figure 27).

**Figure 27: Various media used for communication at cultural sites**



**Source: by the author**

On the one hand, the setting itself (e.g. museum, heritage centre, historic house etc.) as well as the objects displayed are media in themselves containing messages. They are, however, meta-media (Waidacher 2001). On the other side, there are media which are used for the purpose of interpretation and presentation of these objects. These days computerised multimedia systems form part of a long tradition of interpretative and explanatory technologies and techniques that have grown from slide shows, text panels, and dioramas. Therefore, if nowadays we talk about multimedia application at cultural tourist attractions we think less about conventional forms of mediation rather than computer technologies and digital media. This depicts the general understanding of multimedia application at cultural sites. Yet, stricter defined “multimedia results when two or more digital media are combined to provide information about a subject” (Davis and Trant 1996, CIDOC/MMWG 1996, p. 4). Digital media have the potential

<sup>78</sup> Communication is the imparting, conveying, or the exchange of ideas, knowledge, information, etc. (whether by speech, writing, signs). Hence (often *pl.*), the science or process of conveying information, esp. by means of electronic or mechanical techniques (Oxford English Dictionary 2001).



to integrate text, images (still and moving), video, sound, and graphics in a single medium (usually a computer), which can be randomly accessed by the user and which will react to the input by the user. In essence, these media are integrative and interactive.

According to the Davis and Trant 1996 (CIDOC/MMWG 1996) multimedia applications at cultural attractions encompass “interactive multimedia, hypermedia, imaging applications, digital video, computer graphics, virtual reality, and computer-controlled interactive displays and participatory exhibitions” (p. 3). Interactive multimedia in cultural attractions can take the form as interactive touch-screen kiosks, digital orientation centres and audio-guides. Also CD-ROMs are often offered in the museum shops as supplements to the visit. Imaging applications feature large-screen installations and video walls.

In the following, further explanations of the terms “interactive multimedia”, “hypermedia” and “virtual reality” used by CIDOC/MMWG are provided and supported with illustrative examples.

#### **3.3.4.1. Interactive Multimedia**

Patten (1996) describes interactive multimedia as “the combination of text, graphics, audio and video displayed by computer under the control of an individual or group of people” (p. 11). To interact means to act reciprocally. Interactivity, therefore, refers to a two-way flow of information between the computer or electronic device and the user. The user can “make choices, ask questions or define search criteria to activate the system and retrieve information from it” (Davis and Trant 1996, CIDOC/MMWG 1996, p. 4). However, it is important to notice that “multimedia is not by definition

interactive; it can be presented as a linear performance like a slide show with additional effect. On the other hand, interactive media is not necessarily multimedia; it can be based on a single media such as text” (Davis and Trant 1996, CIDOC/MMWG 1996, p. 5). Hennig (1997) points out that on a low level interactivity is limited to retrieve data on pressing a button as it is the case with the World Wide Web. However, this seems to be not so much different from what one can expect from a washing machine. Hence, the question arises if a washing machine is already interactive? On a higher level interactivity allows the recipient to immerse in the particular context and therewith increases the experience and information potential of the museum visit (Wohlfromm 2002, p. 77). The exhibition MACKE LABOR in the “Kunstmuseum Bonn” is a case in point. Martini (2003) describes the novel technology and new interactive experience as follows:

An innovative audio technology was developed, one which makes possible by means of radio headphones to experience fascinating acoustics that are comparable to surroundings of real sound. That which is heard depends entirely upon one’s movement through the room and the direction of one’s gaze at any given moment. The actions of walking around and observing combine images, auditory events and spatial spectacle into a total sense-impression which is intended to promote an enjoyable but also critical perception of art.

#### **3.3.4.2. Hypermedia**

With *hypermedia*<sup>79</sup> information is presented in such a way that various bits of it are related to each other in a non-linear manner allowing for almost infinite cross-referencing. With the potential for graphic images, audio, video and sounds, hypermedia is more relevant to multimedia than *hypertext*. Hypertext is the very earliest version of hypermedia which dealt specifically with text application (Patton, 1996, p. 6). The idea behind hypertext (click-and-go) was that of crossing boundaries

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<sup>79</sup> The prefix “hyper” means extended. Hyperspace for example is space extending beyond three dimensions.

and of freer association of information and concepts (Economou 1997). Both, hypermedia and hypertext do not impose a unique, pre-designed path through data. They try to allow the user to decide upon the way of traversing the available information (Economou 1997). However, with this attached “freedom of choice” comes more complexity. The disadvantage of hypertext include disorientation and cognitive overload (Hein 1989). Another characteristic of hypermedia is transparency, which means that the user should be able to interact with the systems without seeing the way it works or being distracted by the mechanics of interaction (Economou 1997).

People freely mix the terms hypermedia and multimedia with preference to the latter. However, there is a basic difference between the two: hypermedia is by definition interactive, multimedia systems are not necessarily user-controlled. For the purpose of this study the general term multimedia will be used referring to systems that integrate various media and are interactive, i.e. they are organised in a non-linear form, as well as linear forms of presentation such as audio-visual shows.

#### **3.3.4.3. Virtual Reality (VR)**

Multimedia bears also reference to “*virtual reality*”. VR is a technology that simulates reality and convinces the participant to be actually in another place by substituting the primary sensory input with data produced by a computer. The substitution is usually done through three-dimensional graphics and input-output devices<sup>80</sup> (Hein 1989, p. 221). The definition of VR includes the three key factors of immersion, interactivity, and information intensity (Hein 1989). Immersion creates the sense of being present in a virtual world. The depth of the immersion is conditional on how open the border

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<sup>80</sup> The most common input-output devices are gloves, which transmit information about the participant’s hand (position, orientation, and finger-bend angles), and head-mounted displays, which give the user a stereoscopic view of the virtual world via two computer-controlled display screens, as well as providing something on which to mount a position/orientation tracker.

between the real and imaginary world is. This means how far the user's fixedly defined position can be left in order to become a real actor in the virtual world. The border between real and imaginary is apparent if a monitor is used as interface<sup>81</sup> and the primary world is still visible. The computer screen marks this border (on-screen virtuality). This border although becomes blurred in full immersion. In this case, the user is directly located in the virtual world, reference to the primary world vanishes because there are no visible interfaces anymore – the primary world is shut out. Full immersion can only be achieved through peripherals which move beyond the mouse, keyboard and screen. Virtual environments do more than just re-presenting an environment, they allow the user to have the feeling to be actually present in them. Hein (1989) describes this as “you-are-there experience” (p. 17) or “the feeling of plunging into another world” (p. 18).

Total immersion allows us to experience all the sights and sounds of another place and even join people to interact with the things in that virtual place. Total immersion is the holy grail of VR, the equivalent of the Holodeck from *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (Hein 1989, p. 196).

Interactivity in VR means that the displays react to the user's actions without delay just as the user reacts to the displays. This is made possible through the computer's lightning calculations.

Real environments in the primary world do not present themselves for our amusement nor can they be switched on and off like the situations in movies or television shows. Real environments are anything goes and messy. They have no pause, no fast forward, and – most important – no rewind. Our actions can affect what happens next. So anything that simulates a real environment must have something of that spontaneous, improvised feel of real environments (Hein 1989, p. 11).

VR which can be experienced through tools of hypermedia cause a change of reception practice of human beings. So far, humans were used to linear information processing

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<sup>81</sup> Interface designates the connecting point between human and digital machine.

(e.g. when reading a book) and a fixed position. With the use of hypermedia the recipient has to adapt his learnt passive reception practices to participating ones, i.e. to engage with medial processes (Bolz 1994). Beside this active engagement of the user computerised technologies introduce also a new principle of perception (Wohlfromm 2002). The change of perception practice relates to the perspective, namely insofar as the user becomes an internal rather than external observer. With entering a “virtual room” a shift from central to peripheral focus comes along (Hein 1989, p. 179).

At present, an experience of a VR in the strong sense is rare among the general populace but according to Hein (1989) we can expect a widespread and growing experience of VR in a variety of contexts. Wohlfromm (2002) talks about a paradigm shift from description of reality to creation of reality also in the museum context (p. 72). The following is a vision of what’s coming in museums in this climate of fast development of technological possibilities: wearing a helmet and walking through old Rome, step into XY shoes and listening to a conversation with Plato.

### **3.3.5. Different Types of Multimedia Application at Cultural**

#### **Attractions**

Initial efforts of using various techniques of multimedia in museums were more single-purpose interpretive or educative projects. First generation products had “the form of an in-gallery kiosk (offering orientation to an institution or exhibition) or a publication (distributed on videodisc or CD-ROM)” (David and Trant, ICOM/MMWG 1996, p. 2). “These first forays into interpretive multimedia exploited its interactive potential to offer a personal view of often complex and ‘multi-layered’ subjects” (David and Trant, ICOM/MMWG 1996, p. 2). The use of multimedia at museums was at the beginning more for the educative purpose of interpretation pioneered in the US (Light 1995, p. 132). However, since then multimedia has been developing further acquiring

additional roles. In stimulating and arousing visitors' imagination and entertainment multimedia application can make a cultural/heritage site more exciting, easier to absorb and more meaningful for them. E.g. instead of reading text panels many visitors prefer listening to a story told by a professional narrator (on screen or audio guide), which could be for example the fabulous voice of a famous actor/actress in connection with suitable sound settings for various situations.

### **3.3.5.1. The “World Wide Web” and “Virtual Museums”**

Waidacher (1999) asserts that computers and the on-line world will dramatically change museums and work in museums. There is an increasing number of museums and cultural sites that use the “World Wide Web” as a platform to provide information on their localities as well as their exhibits. The first contact of a visitor with a cultural site might therefore be through the Web. Computers bring potential visitors closer to many places of cultural interest which means that the next cultural site might be just a click away. Waidacher (1999) argues that museums have now the possibility to be able to operate with a wider-ranging audience across borders (p. 88). Perlin (1998) points out that “works of arts, their contexts, and their display arrangements are being electronically transported out of exhibit spaces to be examined and visited in homes and other settings by individuals who may never enter the art museum” (p. 84).

The recent set-ups of “Virtual Museums” have also encouraged a new debate over authenticity and the threat that museums themselves are getting redundant. The “virtual museum” in its pure form is a museum that only exists on the Web having no physical counterpart in the museum building. The perception of the “virtual museum”, therefore, requires a disentanglement of the hitherto association of a museum as a physical building with exhibits (Wohlfromm 2002). With digitisation the museum as a place disappears, the physical object is reproduced and existing information is

transferred in an electronic form (Müller, 2002, p. 22). Müller (2002) points out that in such an understanding virtual appears as the opposite of real. But he sees in digitisation more than a reproduction technique and, therefore, for him its meaning goes beyond technological definition. For Müller (2002) it is a new way of exhibition practice. Virtual Exhibitions can be integrated in the real museum and entered through a computer in the museum. Recent examples are the “Karlsruher Türkenbeute” in the “Badisches Landesmuseum”<sup>82</sup>, the “Erich Kästner Museum” in Dresden<sup>83</sup>, and the “National Museum of Ireland”<sup>84</sup> in Dublin. In other cases Virtual Exhibitions can be entered also externally and globally for those visitors who can’t visit the real museum. Also, this new exhibition practices makes it possible to see artefacts which are stored in the museums archives and where visitors usually do not have access to.

### 3.3.6. Characteristics of Multimedia

There are several reasons why ICT nowadays plays a crucial role in the provision of cultural products. Moscardo (2000, p. 14) points out that visitors may arrive with increasing experience of interacting with information through media such as the World Wide Web and therefore expect greater sophistication and flexibility in their experiences of the site. Nowadays, the attractiveness of a cultural site lies to a great extent in the style of presentation (Boniface 1995). It is important to communicate through media, which a present day audience not only finds approachable but also appealing. Beside information, which is important for the learning experience of a site, many of the new technological devices also contain entertaining elements. It is argued that in entertaining they also inform (Boniface 1995). These new product developments are also seen as necessary in order to create a more active participation. After all, the ultimate aim is to increase the quality of the visitor experience at cultural

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<sup>82</sup> see: [www.tuerkenbeute.de](http://www.tuerkenbeute.de)

<sup>83</sup> see: [www.erich-kaestner-museum.de](http://www.erich-kaestner-museum.de)

<sup>84</sup> see: [www.museum.ie](http://www.museum.ie)

sites and it is claimed that the use of technology enhances the visitor experience (Richards 2001). Multimedia highlights new ways of presentation with the potential to attract additional target groups in the cultural arena.

Multimedia offer a number of advantages as compared to conventional media as regards the experience of a cultural site. This issue will be elaborated in the subsequent paragraphs.

#### **3.3.6.1. Information**

Various media such as computer terminals give the visitor access to more information of a site/subject/exhibit than could be made available through simple graphic or text-panels (Patten 1996, p. 12). Various media are primarily applied at cultural tourist attractions to provide information on a subject/artefact. As a customer segment, cultural tourists show specific characteristics as opposed to other visitors (McLean 1997). They might be unfamiliar with the country's culture, therefore, they need information about history and meaning of the site. Multimedia helps in the process of acquiring this information. Tourists have different levels of knowledge hence they need various levels of information to enjoy what they see (Boniface 1995). A big advantage in applying multimedia at museums and heritage centres is that they have different roles and can be tailor-made for different people (Light 1995, p. 146) with the effect of providing the possibility of individually tailored visitor experiences. One can only be superficially deal with it in getting a quick overview and pressing a few buttons and the specifically interested visitor can spend a long time in getting particular information on a certain topic in going through different layers of deepness in the information provided. Above this, visitors in most cases have the choice whether or not to use interpretations provided by multimedia.



### **3.3.6.2. Interactivity**

Interactivity, as already outlined before, implies a non linear communication. That means that input from the user, his/her active involvement, is required. In this communication process between the multimedia system and the user, “the user controls the sequence of presentation and speed of information. This is in contrast to a film, for instance, which is linear and meant to be seen by a passive viewer from start to finish” (David and Trant, CIDOC/MMWG 1996, p. 4).

### **3.3.6.3. Reduction of Complexity**

Multimedia can be seen as a tool to communicate ideas about complex situations (using most of our senses) as well as a tool for managing complexity in compressing large amounts of information (Cotton and Oliver 1992). What in reality is complex and confusing in times can through multimedia be symbolically “shortened” and condensed to a “topic”. In its artificial reduction and reconstruction this can be consumed less strenuous than its multifaceted counterpart in reality (Romeiss-Stracke 2000 p. 62). This concept enables visitors to experience a cultural topic in different speeds and different depths of perception. Tourists with limited time need strong and easy recognisable symbols for e.g. Renaissance such as sculptures, typical architectural forms etc. The more time a tourist has, the more differentiated the symbolic can be offered. The more in depth one is going the more “fine-grained” the symbols have to be (ibid.).

### **3.3.6.4. Transcendence of Time and Space**

Prevailing over the limitations of time and space remains a constant human desire. In the museum context virtuality is of particular relevance because of its potential to overcome time and space. Museums normally have not more than 5% of their holdings in their exhibitions. With digital media the museum can offer the possibility to make

the total of knowledge kept in these institutions available to the interested public. This also means that with multimedia a new museologic room is established and objects can be placed into their “original” context (Müller 2002).

### **3.3.6.5. First Person Narrative and Individualised Access**

With the aid of multimedia a variety of viewpoints can be provided (McLean 1993 cited in Griffith, 1999, p. 1) and narrative access in the form of first person narration can be used to personalise a story. At the same time, an otherwise static exhibition can be made more dynamic with sound and animated images (ibid.).

## **3.3.7. Threats and Challenges of Multimedia Application**

### **3.3.7.1. Technical Liability**

Each of those visitors who have experienced non working technical devices when visiting a cultural site know how off-putting this can be. For example, touch-screens sometimes fail, become dirty and insufficiently sensitive when pressed. Also mice, keyboards, joysticks and other devices are prone to failure. With self-guided audio-visual tours (where visitors get headphones) sensors often do not work properly when standing in front of a particular exhibit and visitors do not receive the necessary information. Malfunctioning multimedia can lead to frustration, can negatively influence the quality of the visit and consequently leaving a poor impression of the cultural site (Fahy 1995). A curator from a British museum reported that visitors often do not handle the technical devices with care, especially children, and that they face severe problems with that. They often spend nights to get the computers working again for the next day. Therefore consideration must be given to the robustness of both hardware and software to cope with heavy usage (Fahy 1995). When multimedia is implemented at a cultural attraction the tools should work perfectly in a technical sense and longevity should be guaranteed.

### 3.3.7.2. Dissolution and Disembedding

Many of today's cultural attractions put staging and installations to the forefront, objects become secondary and serve only as a piece of evidence. This can be exemplified for instance by "Volcania" (Parc Européen du Volcanisme) in France:

Installations, special videos, video projections with acoustic irradiation, models, graphics and computer terminals dominate. Real objects are rare. 1:1 rebuilds of geysers and cooled down stream of lava. The primary information medium is the computer. To each topic short info texts are available complemented with animation and/or movie sequences as well as photographs of suitable volcanos. On certain terminals also verbal information in several languages over headphones are available. There are 3D-movies with glasses and polarisation filters. Particularly individual visitors made ample use of the computer-terminals. Paradoxically real objects were found least approval. This site can be regarded as a serious competitor of conventional museums (Friebe 2002).<sup>85</sup>

Though "multimedia sites" have the advantage of speaking the "lingua franca of tomorrow" to use Wallace's words (1995, p. 109), there is also danger of dissolution. Wallace (1995) argues that "cutting loose from objects might put an end to museums; even theme parks might melt into air" (p. 109). Wallace's (1995) vision and that of others (e.g. Cohen 1995, Romeiss-Stracke 2000) is that in future one may just stay at home and plug into the information grid. Wallace (1995) points out that this is probably why:

some worried museologists advocate the opposite reaction to mediatization – insisting on the absolute primacy of objects. Some believe that in an era of infinite reproducibility people will become repulsed by inauthenticity, wary of endless fraud; that they will be drawn inexorably to the aura of artefacts which provide tunnels in time back to actual human actors; that they will thirst for old objects which, blessedly, were not made and 'patinaed' last week. That they will seek the *frisson* of contact with museum-certified originality (Wallace 1995, p. 109).

Putting objects and whole museums on-screen means also erosion of public space

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<sup>85</sup> Author's translation from German into English.

which has social consequences (Wallace 1995, p. 109). Lötsch (2001) argues that computer installations in museums cause autistic experiences. Through the computer interaction possibilities between visitors, however, are missing. The same is true with audio-guides. The collective experience which is e.g. important for family visitors is lost in such cases.

### **3.3.7.3. Amount of Multimedia Applied**

Technological possibilities have led to a shift in emphasis. Many of today's curators and museum professionals have a word of warning here. "Multimedia should not overwhelm it's setting" (Blockley 1996, p. 5). They are keen to argue that media in interpretation should serve rather than dominate. "Multimedia should be the servant rather than the master" (Youel and Ween 1996, p. 30). To get the right balance between computer generated interpretation and the "real thing" is therefore crucial (Blockley 1996, Van der Starre 1997). Technology should be used to enhance the visitor experience but not dictate the experience (Patten 1996).

### **3.3.7.4. User-friendliness**

The critical issue on the use of multimedia in cultural attractions is that they are only as good as they can easily be handled by visitors. Success is therefore not only dependent on the content but also the user-friendliness of the various media. The challenge lies in making media user-friendly for all different types of visitors the cultural site is frequented by. In our new information age it is a matter of fact that the use of computers and other media becomes more important in everyday life and especially younger generations are all computer literate. But there are still people who are afraid to get in touch with different media tools, especially elderly people. Multimedia shouldn't be a barrier for these people to enjoy a visit of a cultural site.

### 3.3.7.5. Costs

Costing of localising software to different capabilities at cultural sites is hugely expensive. Further costs, once multimedia is installed, include maintenance costs. At many cultural attractions the implementation and maintenance of multimedia tools are outsourced, i.e. it is left in the hands of the experts in that area. In such cases, multimedia application is often offered as an additional option which the visitor can make use of, however, has to pay separately for (e.g. audio-guides in the Albertina in Vienna provided by a company that is specialised in acoustic guides). If multimedia organisation and maintenance cannot be outsourced an important question is how technology needs can be balanced with the rest of the museum's duties and expenses.

### 3.3.8. Multimedia and Authenticity

The use of technology in museums and other cultural attractions is nothing new. There have always been technical innovations which have found application in museums. Yet, advances in technology are making the experience in artificial and simulated environments more realistic (Cohen 1995). Bennett (1999), although, holding a contrary position points out that “there are problems associated with [...] technology, the most important one being the inability to replicate history in an authentic manner” (p. 85). Brown (1995, p. 74) argues that

Postmodern museums [...] are characterised by the abandonment of traditional display cases, silent contemplation and the aura of priceless authenticity, and their replacement with an anti-elitist emphasis on participation, involvement, sound and lighting effects, performance and the creation of spectacular multimedia experiences. This tendency is epitomised in heritage centres [...]. Everything is meant to be authentic but, like the perfect simulacra that they are, nothing actually is, not even the smells.

The intersection of multimedia application and notions of authenticity in the museum can be attributed to several issues. However, differentiation is necessary whether multimedia is used to assist in providing information/interpretation about an

object/setting or if original authentic objects/settings are presented by their virtual counterparts (on screen, projections, virtual reality, etc.). Therefore, in the following, these two issues are clearly separated and discussed in a subsequent manner starting out with multimedia providing additional information about an object.

“Authenticity” is an impregnable quality of an object/exhibit and, therefore, multimedia used to provide information about an object has no influence on the “authenticity of the object” itself (in the sense of Wang’s “objective authenticity”). However, multimedia can affect the quality of the information transfer through e.g. narrative and individualised approaches. The knowledge/insight gained is crucial for the visitor to promote understanding of and to penetrate to the authentic object/setting. This has consequences on how visitors experience an object/setting. The sheer exposure to objects is usually not enough to guarantee that the visitor will experience them. As discussed earlier, objects placed in a museum are alienated from their original setting. Therefore, interactives can be used “to evoke the object’s origins, to give contextual information and to approach the object from unusual perspectives” (Hickey 2005, p. 46). She goes on to assert that technology could also “create new contexts for the exploration and juxtaposition of objects” (ibid.). Furthermore, sounds, smells and other effects can be applied to enliven certain settings or to make an object come “alive”. Such effects support the sensory experience and can help to authenticate the experience. Multimedia offers a multitude of staging/animation possibilities which go beyond traditional forms of staging. In terms of interpretation of an object/setting multimedia can therefore assist in having an authentic experience. The “authentic experience” unifies the intellectual act of meaning making, the epistemological process of recognising the object as authentic, with existential dimensions such as emotional and sensory (bodily) experiences. Multimedia should enhance visitor’s understanding of objects/exhibitions/settings, should stir their creative imagination and should

support an immersive emotional experience. However, as outlined previously, multimedia should not take on/adopt self-reality.

A different situation arises when the collections visitors engage with are digital in format. In this respect an array of problematic issues occur in relation to authenticity. Digitisation refers to the reproduction of physical objects in an electronic form. Digital reproductions, presentations of museum artefacts on computer screens, are no copies of the real thing, they are electronically produced images and are therefore open to all kinds of manipulation. Van der Starre (1997) points out that

computer presentations propagate the appearance of being comprehensive and truthful although in reality they are not. Objects are presented in a way that the digital truth may be seen as the real truth. The image of a painting displayed on a computer screen resembles in no way the original work because the image is not life-size, has no true depth or true colours. Yet users – in most cases not being familiar with the original work – tend to consider these images as the real truth (p. 2).

In such cases Van der Starre (1997) admonishes that “the essence of an object, the responsibility of the museum to present the objects to the public in a meaningful and truthful way is under threat” (p. 2). In a similar vein, Hein (1989, p. 47) argues that the concept of authenticity is put into question with the potential of manipulation of the objects through hypermedia. Digitisation can be regarded as the successor of photography and similar discussion have occurred in relation to photography in the age of photoshop:

Despite the fact that photography has been designed to record what really exists and really happens in a scientifically objective and incontrovertible way, it has now become clear that photography as such cannot be a guarantee of the truth of the image. Our judgement of the truth of a photographic image depends on the look of photographic images and on norms for interpreting it. When such norms are changing, different judgments become possible” (Leeuwen 2001, p. 396).

Despite the prevalent enthusiasm to digitise objects for various purposes, with showing

digitised collections in the museum itself or on the World Wide Web, museums have to be exceptionally prudent. When digital representations act as a surrogate for real objects/sites new questions as regards authenticity arise because it is the new media and the hand of the “author” that shape these representations (Knell, 2003). Similarly, Wallace (1995, p. 113) argues that interactive displays can foster the illusion that a “machine” is providing value-free interpretations when of course it is presenting pre-programmed perspectives. Therefore, a crucial point is the ethos with which multimedia presentations and simulations are produced and interpreted.

Nevertheless, as Knell (2003) points out, even if such dimensions such as haptic experiences are added to digital objects “the emotive experience of seeing the real thing requires the real and no surrogate will do” (p. 140). This is not to say that e.g. simulation cannot have a useful function in the presentation and interpretation of objects. It can provide valuable insights into how artefacts/monuments/buildings *may* have looked back in time (see Figure 28) and, therefore, can stir visitor’s imagination and fantasy.

**Figure 28: Simulation of a monument at “Carnuntum Archaeological Park” in Austria**



Source: retrieved from [www.carnuntum.at](http://www.carnuntum.at) [17.06.2009]



In such cases, the professionalism with which such presentations are created is crucial. Perfect simulations that come close to reality (at least we suppose that they do so), and technology to produce such simulations is continuously advancing, can therefore cause “quasi” authentic experiences.

Other aspects that are associated with authentic experiences in the museum or other cultural attractions refer to Wang’s “existential authenticity”. Most museum visitors come with their partners, families, friends etc. to a museum. A museum visit is therefore a collective experience. Even if people do not come with companions or families they meet people who happen to be there at the same time (vom Lehn et al. 2005). Through their action and interaction visitors stimulate each other and these social interactions can be critical to people’s experience of objects/sites. However, in terms of the collective experience the application of multimedia still constitutes an unsolved problem. Overall it can be said that at present multimedia tools do not support collective experiences to a great extent. However, it has to be noted that there is a broad range of multimedia tools which are applied at cultural attractions and it would be necessary to discuss this issue in relation to every single tool (e.g. computer terminals, audio-guides, etc.) to come to a conclusion on this matter.

On a more general level multimedia installations in their various forms can conflict with the traditional notion of an “authentic museum”. The two terms “infotainment” and “edutainment” have come to be closely linked with multimedia. In this context Griffith (1999) argues that there is fear among museum professionals that

the shift towards more popular exhibition techniques risks blurring the boundaries between the museum as a site of moral and social uplift and rational learning and other less reputable cultural sites focussing on amusement and spectacle (p. 1).

This attitude, however, does not stand criticism as entertainment and education are not mutually exclusive categories. It is more a question of finding the appropriate number and forms of installations, developing an appropriate and professional content, thus blending into the overall structure and spirit of the exhibition. One of the main issues is the content itself. The use of entertaining elements should not end in trivialising certain topics/contents but should enrich the learning- and the authentic experience. As regards the right “match” of technologies with the historical and architectural context of museums there is a further aspect of authenticity that has to be considered. Museums of an “older generation” have over the years acquired a status of uniqueness in terms of their historical values of the buildings and interiors. Multimedia application could intrude on the “authentic ambience” in there and, therefore, constitutes a real challenge for exhibition and experience design. This problem does not arise with new museums where multimedia application can be planned from scratch together with the overall exhibition which is in most cases very modern anyway.

### **3.3.9. Summary**

Multimedia is a very broad and unspecific term. It is often used synonymously with hypermedia, although multimedia is not necessarily imply interactivity. This leads to confusion of the term and ambiguities. The integration of multimedia tools into the traditional functions of museums opens great opportunities for preservation, presentation and interpretation. Multimedia assists in providing information on a subject/exhibit which can be tailor-made for various types of visitors according to the level of knowledge they bring along. Complex issues can be reduced to make them easier and also faster to consume. Through the use of multimedia a new kind of display is possible, which is seen as attractive and more appealing to many visitors. Especially younger visitors have come to see multimedia as an integral part of the museum visit. Computerised multimedia systems are applied for educative purposes to elucidate

objects, explicate contexts but also to involve the visitor. A museum visit has become an active and interactive rather than a passive engagement. With respect to interaction two different levels exist. On a basic level, interaction can be in getting information, on pressing a button, as is the case with the internet. On a higher level are Virtual Realities where the user plays an active role and becomes immersed in the artificial environment. Virtual museums create space to exhibit works when there is no physical room to exhibit. They can have the form of in-house virtual museums such as computer kiosks which can only be entered in the museum. Another possibility is that they can be entered from the visitor's home through the World Wide Web allowing to overcome time and space. In their extreme form Virtual museums only exist on the Web. Problems associated with application of multimedia at cultural attractions include dissolution and danger of erosion of public space (in the case of Virtual Museums), technical liability, lacking user-friendliness, and high implementation and maintenance costs.

Application of multimedia tools also raises questions of authenticity. However, a clear differentiation needs to be made between multimedia used for interpretation of a real object or multimedia used to present objects in their digital formats and simulations. Referring to the former type of application multimedia tools can be seen as valuable sources to provide visitors with additional information. In the process of receiving such information the visitor acquires knowledge and acquires a better understanding of the objects on display. Hence, in such situations multimedia tools can be seen as supporters of an authentic experience. In the latter case a different situation arises. There is fear among museum professionals that visitor's might take objects on display as the real truth although in reality they are manipulated. Moreover, it is argued that such presentations are not value-free. With respect to simulations, which have also

been largely criticised, it is important to recognise that they can provide “quasi” authentic experiences as technology is advancing. Simulations can be perceived by visitors as valuable contributors to their overall experience at cultural attractions. Finally, multimedia is often seen as supporting the individual experience but fails to be commonly experienced by for example families or groups. This can be seen as a problem with respect to existential authenticity.

