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ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE AND MODERN SPECTACLE AS CULTURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP EXPERIMENT

ABSTRACT

Although some conservative scholars believe that science should only deal with the scientists, it is proved that science is a genuine cultural need of human society. The popularization of science in this sense represents a two-way street. On the one hand, it raises the educational level of non-scientific audience, and the other increases the degree of financial autonomy of scientific projects. It turned out that the popularization of science is of particular importance to the so-called non-profit research among which those archaeological undoubtedly occupy a leading position. Historic character of the archaeological heritage and the changed nature of the contemporary reception of the audience under the influence of modern media, film and information technologies have created a fertile ground for the use of modern spectacle in order to popularize the archaeological heritage. This paper analyzes that relationship with its benefits and side effects as an experiment within the cultural entrepreneurship.

Keywords: heritage, spectacle, cultural entrepreneurship, media, communication, benefits, side effects.

The usual interpretation of the notion of spectacle in modern culture is primarily associated with a particular kind of Hollywood production movies, which usually include sumptuous production design, special effects and scenes involving many people (Priatelj 2010: 53). Of course, such visual framework includes the so-called lofty themes and scenario based on important historical and religious events. The content itself is sufficiently immense, so it goes well with a glamorous, somewhat pretentious phenomenal form that will successfully entertain a wide audience with a two-fold objective - to provide entertainment and education. Although contemporary critics of mass culture, this often unjustly identified with a media spectacle, think that the

Hollywood approach to history, archeology and art directly threaten the traditional understanding of individual experience and ontological cognition of the essence of cultural heritage (Božović 2010: 15-16), the fact is that new mechanisms of global communications stipulate new ways of presentation of heritage. Among these new ways, the modern spectacle is the most complex form of effort to “revive” the artistic, and primarily archaeological heritage, and to be interpreted in a way that is understandable to the general cultural audience. At the same time, the form of the spectacle is the most complex and the most attractive mechanism of presentation, promotion and marketing of cultural heritage, that tends to transform the mere observation of the work of

art into a kind of virtual experience on the edge between the empirical “participation” in a particular episode, or into any of the forms of cultural history from a long gone era (Sandell 2007: 120–125). From simple animations with the help of effective illustrations, mini-trailers based on the combination of documentary and feature film, perfect 3D reconstructions, through archaeological parks with adequately costumed curators and guides, thematic workshops and video games, and reality shows with a simulation of life conditions in a certain era – a modern spectacle as one of the key mechanisms of the new museology and heritology represents a sort of a “tool” of cultural entrepreneurship (Kotler N. i Kotler P. 1998: 41). When it comes to the archaeological heritage which can be a particular semantic, semiotic and visual riddle for laymen, mechanisms of spectacle (Martinović 2010) can be an ideal means to “tell” and interpret the content to interested audience, and at the same time to make it look attractive enough to potential audience.

The fact that we live in a world of a new techno-cultural reality (Kellner 2003: 12) that functions through mechanisms of spectacle based on a combination of information and entertainment as premises of postmodernist *online* and digitized society, sets up a wide range of communication rules within the unified public space that for several decades now tends to sublimate different public and social categories. In this, global milieu, science and culture have long ceased to be an isolated island populated by selected individuals with the holy task of cognition and interpretation of new knowledge. Information technologies, through networking mechanisms of fantastic databases, have directly caused their accessibility by targeting any human activity within the field of global communication, presentation and marketing. Culture is in that way democratized to the limit, and the popularization of science, art and heritage became an issue of sustainability of entire cultural and research systems, and with the expansion of the global economic crisis an issue of its justification in terms of institutional investment.

According to the data of Europe’s Conference for Culture in 2010, the Union allocated only



Fig. 1 Society of spectacle – audience with completely changed perception and expectations

1% of the total funds for investment in culture with the announcement of important restrictions within that modest budget in the future.¹ To the protest of workers and cultural professionals was answered with the expert advice in the field of cultural entrepreneurship as the youngest among the private management initiatives. At a conference held in Brussels in October 2011, the primary topic was the digitization of culture with unambiguous tendency of its globalization, market positioning, and increase of real potentials of self-sufficiency, and definition of projects, programs and activities that produce their own finances.² All of these elements, as well as the realization of the need for better positioning and modern presentation of heritage stipulated the need for redefining and reviewing various models of animation and communication of wide audience as consumers of cultural con-

¹ The percentage is given approximately, since an EU fund for culture covers as well recreation and education. (for more information see http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/General_government_expenditure_statistics).

² Selected papers from Brussels Conference 2011 you may find on http://ec.europa.eu/culture/events/forum-2011_en.htm



Fig. 2 Two sides of medal - Archaeological park in Viminacium without guides-animators



Fig. 3 ...and with them dressed as Romans

tents. Having in mind that the reception of that audience is for more than half a century conditioned by standards and amenities that are dictated by electronic and visual media, then a well designed simulation, visual effects, adrenaline timed activities and dynamics appear as prerequisites of successful operation within a successful cultural entrepreneurship that in addition to exhibitions and promotional contents includes cultural tourism.

Did the spectacle at whole came to archaeological and artistic heritage with Indiana Jones and Lara Croft or for the attractiveness of the cultural heritage are more important ideal, often animated 3D reconstructions, video games and historical fiction novels, are interesting phenomenological issues in the cultural history of the late 20th century, although it is the fact that the spectacular archaeological discoveries such as Schliemann's at Hissarlik or Carter's in the Valley of the Kings are



Fig. 4 Popular films about archaeology, art and history change the interest and expectations of audience

older than the age of motion pictures, television, Big Brother and Facebook. It seems that the magic of spectacle as both epic and cultural category, is historically caused by factors of understanding of the divine and sublime in the distant past, so the reciprocity of archeology and a sort of public performance with elements of theater, is a kind of



Fig. 5 Digital animations and games introduce teenage and younger audience with heritage in an attractive way



Fig. 6 Living history concept is one of the most popular educational approaches in communication with audience

continuum inside which is only needed to find the right balance in terms of presenting proven facts in an interesting way. Otherwise, archaeological finds, especially those within the archaeological field, and even well-designed archaeological parks like Viminacium (Serbia) would not be interesting to a wide audience that carries the financial power that is of great importance for new research, and for store and maintenance of existing sites, galleries and museums.

Thinking of a spectacle as a category that makes an observer's role passive (Božović 2010: 27) from the point of museology and heritology has long been untenable because it is in a direct contradiction with the fundamental starting point for the revival of the past that is based on interactions with the aim of increasing the understanding of museology and heritology contents. In order for an archaeological heritage spectacle to be successful in terms of interpreting the thematic defined content, the audience must not be passive. Sensation, directly provoked by the appearance of conceptualism in contemporary art that using staging, multimedia techniques, direct communication, animation and other, often cinematic and theatrical means provokes the audience to interact, has violated as a whole the ideal of cultural heritage as a cultural content that is classy and in festive silence "consumed" by se-

lected cultural elites.

The idea of heritage that requires specialized knowledge, study and special preparation in order to be contemplated in a 1:1 ratio between observer and work, in conditions of changed perception and new means of communication, has become unsustainable. Heritage, whether it's museum item, archaeological sites or intangible heritage, must adopt the principles of the spectacle culture in order to communicate with a new audience. Above all, it must be sure to which target group is addressed, what is expected of the "dialogue" that will be lead both with the local community that represents the primary group that makes regular visitors, but also with other potential consumers of services offered, for cultural entrepreneurship as a special task to itself sets the animation and design of that part of the audience who might never would have chosen art or cultural heritage as a priority interesting content.

What are the benefits and what the negative effects of the interaction between heritage and spectacle?

The fact is that museums, galleries and archaeological sites on a global level, in recent decades record level of attendance that could not be imagined in the period between the two world wars. Also it is a fact that the new museum audience knows no class, social, religious or other dif-



Fig. 7 Crowded museums and archaeological sites are possible side effects of new way of communication with audience of all ages, classes and origins

ferences, or more precisely that the concept of mass culture when it comes to museology and heritage received the most positive possible meaning. Stimulating, creative mechanisms through various interactive workshops and entire shows that are played in museums, archaeological parks and similar areas dealing with the cultural heritage, are of incalculable importance for raising the level of education in the widest possible audience, and for initiating creative processes of individuals. Institutions that carry out such contents directly benefit the local and wider community, by improving economic and social infrastructure, and also by representativeness in terms of prestige, which has never been of secondary importance in the culture.



Fig. 8 Nobody complains because too many people visit museums and sites

And although this illustration might seem too perfect to be real, besides undoubtedly good effects of connection between heritage and spectacle, this interaction has potential negative effects. First among them is related to, let's use an expression peculiar to the theater, the possibility of "false playing" of the content, or the oversized, and therefore false, unscientific display of facts in order to achieve greater sensation. In these situations, it often happens that the archaeological and museum objects are installed or used outside of the scientifically based and professionally justified context in order to make the content that is directed toward the audience more interesting, more sensational and more challenging. Interpretation, scenic and digital effects, costumes which are increasingly being used to enhance the understanding of the effect of a previous era, they are all "tools" that should be handled carefully and skillfully.

The second, today a real measurable negative effect of the interaction of heritage and spectacle, is enormously increased number of visitors to certain museums and archaeological sites. No matter how paradoxical it may sound, but too many people inside a museum or an archaeological park directly affect the microclimate changes in those areas which physically endangers the

museum objects and archaeological excavations at the sites. A large number of visitors set new requirements to conservators and restorers, and especially to the management of institutions involved in the presentation, promotion and preservation of cultural heritage. Each innovation of security services increases the cost of presentation of work of art. However there is no data that any museum or archaeological park in the world complains because there is an enormous number of visitors, because the museum without a great audience is only a large, modern equipped warehouse of old, interesting items.

The fact that the culture of spectacle in the 21st century has become an indispensable part of the new ways of communication and presentation of heritage clearly suggests that it is a key tool of cultural entrepreneurship. Although still in the experimental stage, because it involves training particular profile curators, animators and demonstrators, as well as a distinction of desirable uses of spectacle in relation to “false played” scenarios and kitsch, spectacle has proven that its dispensed, selectively designed application in museums and archaeological parks had a positive, multi-disciplinary effect. As if an entire industry based on the modern idea of big profits found reference system of high-profile, educational, yet exciting themes to create on a principle of interactive games a space in which learning becomes a top-notch entertainment.

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REZIME

ARHEOLOŠKO NASLEĐE I MODERNI SPEKTAKL KAO EKSPERIMENT KULTURNOG PREDUZETNIŠTVA

Ključne reči: nasleđe, kulturno preduzetništvo, medij, komunikacija, benefit, negativan efekat.

Činjenica da je kultura spektakla u 21. veku postala nezamenljivi deo novog načina prezentacije i komunikacije baštine jasno sugeriše da je ona i ključni alat kulturnog preduzetništva. Iako još uvek u eksperimentalnoj fazi, jer podrazumeva obuku naročitog profila kustosa, animatora i demonstratora, kao i jasno razgraničavanje poželjnog načina upotrebe spektakla u odnosu na “preigrana” scenarija i kič, spektakl je dokazao da njegova dozirana, selektivno oblikovana primena u muzejima i arheološkim parkovima ima izrazito pozitivan, multidisciplinarni učinak. Kao da je čitava jedna savremena industrija utemeljena na ideji velikih profita pronašla referentni sistem visokoprofilisanih, edukativnih, a opet uzbudljivih tema kako bi na principu interaktivne igre stvorila prostor u kome učenje postaje vrhunski zabava.