

FANTASTIC CREATURES AND THEIR VALORISATION IN TOURISM: EXAMPLE OF ISTRIA

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Abstract

Modern tourism is a global phenomenon undergoing constant change. Tourism is now turning away from the classical concept of "satisfaction industry" and focusing on the concept of "experience industry". One of the new motives behind travel has become the need to escape, fantasise, undertake "mental and spiritual journeys into other worlds", expressed as an interest in experiencing the mystical, the fantastical and as fear of the unknown and of other possible worlds and beings. By applying a multidisciplinary approach, this paper intends to further the valorisation of these precious elements of traditional heritage – mythical creatures, fantastic beings, folk legends and myths – in tourism, thereby opening up possibilities of creating new, original, genuine tourism products.

The authors illustrate their hypothesis on the example of Istria. This region has a highly developed tourism in the classic sense of the word, but has also enormous potential to develop special interest tourism, based especially on its cultural wealth, which is reflected in various elements of (im)material cultural heritage. This paper singles out fantastic figures from folk tales, such as Jure Grando – the vampire from Kringa, the "oldest vampire in Europe recorded by full name". This paper intends also to encourage further research in this direction and in this respect advises the use of a multidisciplinary and trans-disciplinary approach.

Keywords: Fantastic creatures and their valorisation in tourism, preservation of traditional immaterial cultural heritage through tourism, cultural tourism

Introduction

„What matters are ideas. You can always find sufficiently qualified junior staff who can do the rest.“ (Michel Eisner, President and CEO of the Walt Disney Company).

Culture is an increasingly important part of the tourism product. Cultural tourism today accounts for 40% of all international tourism (Richards, 2007). Today, as a growing number of tourism destinations strive to attract high spending „cultural tourists“, they are using more elements of local culture in order to penetrate global tourism markets.

Growing competition in traditional tourism markets has caused a search for alternatives on the part of destinations worldwide. In the face of globalization, localities find it increasingly important to assert their identity. Localities need to use their cultural assets to generate distinction, in order to attract investment and people. In a globalising world, the „local“ is seen as more authentic (Richards, 2007).

With respect to tourism, consumers and the local community, cultural tourism offers several important advantages, in that it:

- creates respect for culture,
- helps protect culture,
- makes local people aware of their own culture (Richards, 2007).

In searching for alternative ways of vacationing, the tourism industry – understood here as "experience economy" – must take into account the way of life of modern man in the post-modern age, because modern living determines global marketing trends in the post-modern society, and they in turn generate ideas of the kind presented in this paper.

By using a multidisciplinary approach, the authors of this paper try to identify the boundaries of cultural tourism and the extent to which the potential of immaterial cultural heritage could be tapped into to create a story that could be used in tourism, thereby increasing consumption. Under the motto „*Add a story to a destination*“ (Jensen, 2007), the authors of this paper use the example of Istria to show that, in a world where new ideas must be incessantly produced to attract the increasingly demanding tourism market, considerable potential lies in the rich and insufficiently explored material and immaterial cultural heritage. Ideas must be relied upon to translate this potential from the past into the present and from content to form, so that it can be used in the context of tourism. In this respect, care must be taken to avoid the trap of "touristification" and "folklorisation" of the original cultural heritage (Páscová, 2002.).

With respect to the development of tourism, any research into tourism demand requires a multidisciplinary approach, this being the only method offering full insight into this phenomenon. Istria is the most developed tourist region in Croatia and is currently experiencing a decline of its tourism product owed to a pluricentennial exclusive reliance on sun and sea. The hinterland of the region has therefore been neglected for a long time, but recently it has begun to draw on the wealth of the rural areas, which, by promoting agrotourism as their basic product and by creating other niche products, are establishing themselves as authentic, complete and unique tourism destinations.

To prove this, suffice it to say that a special interest tourism has arisen from the least explored part of immaterial heritage – namely, tales and legends. One of the tourism products based on tales and legends is already generating the first results; the idea originated in a small Istrian locality, Kringa, which began to exploit for tourism purposes a mythical character and his way of life. Namely, the locality was allegedly the birthplace of the oldest European vampire, Jure Grando. **By using this example, it is the authors' intention to show that the valorisation of fantastic creatures (legends) in Istria can have a long-term impact on the quality of the tourists' stay and enrich the tourism offer of Istria.**

The story of this fantastic creature from Kringa is what is known as an "authentic situation" (Cohen, 1984), which is defined as "that (situation) which is accepted by tourists as such in objective, real time ". These are events that are organized outside of tourism destinations and off traditional routes (Štifanic, 2007).

Modern tourism as "experience industry"

Almost all types of tourism take a ritual form. These rituals typically involve the movement of the relevant congregation to a place away from the village or settlement to a special sacred place. These spaces are frequently on borders or margins or they may have some anomalous geographical or spatial feature. Once the ritual begins, the ritual subjects, those who are in the

process of transition and often the congregation who accompany them too, enter a liminal state: it is a time and place suspended in between states of being, between the old state of affairs and before the new state that is to emerge. Typically these rituals involve behaviour that is different to, opposed to or inverse from that of everyday life. There are examples of gender and status inversions, mockery of status, extremely free and liberal sexual practices, the use of intoxicants or narcotics to produce an altered state of consciousness; the use of music and dance, altered states of time and the production of ritual time. Once the ritual has been *performed*, things return to normal with the exception that the ritual subject(s) have been altered, typically elevated to a new and higher status.

Research shows that experiences as the one described above are followed by the tourist living in a "new state of consciousness" after returning to everyday life. This new state enables a new tourist, as well as a new post-tourist experience, which can also have a marketing effect, in that the tourists relay their impressions to friends and relatives (a marketing tool useful for the promotion of the tourism destination, see research by Krajnovic, Master's Degree thesis, Opatija, 2000).

Characteristics of the consumers in modern tourism

Philosophers of change have indicated the need to closely monitor demand and accept its qualitative evolution (MacCannell, 1976). In order to understand qualitative evolution, it must be placed in the context of the value system from which it arises. Therefore, the "strange world" (Riderstrale, Nordstrom) of today, where demand for tourism is continuously evolving, is defined by sociologists as "a world the value system of which is disturbed, upset, at a crossroads between modernism and post-modernism".

The value system of such a world is "not monolithic, integral or univocal, nor is it fully manageable, predictable or understandable" (Lammiman, 2005). These are the very characteristics of the new motives in tourism. These motives cannot be fully defined, systematized or compartmentalized. The consumer of tourism is on a search, which grows in extent and intensity and the solution to which is often sought in the tourism destination visited. This search is limited neither by space nor time and this is why it appears to be the most important basis on which to design new tourism products with ideas that will provide new experiences.

As is largely known, general motives, those at the root of global marketing and modern tourism, are determined by the perception of the modern world held by those who live in it and who make up the modern tourism consumers segment. Such a globalized world has characteristics which are also expected of the chosen tourism destination. This is a world with specific traits, some of which can be described as follows:

1. A world of alternative and virtual universes. The virtual universe is as acceptable as physical reality. Nowadays, people want to escape to a different universe, to the virtual worlds of fairy-tales, dreams and promises. Like when we were children.
2. A mobile world. There are no spatial or temporal barriers.
3. The "why-not" world. The message of the Walt Disney Company is: Let's dream together! Let's play, life is short anyway! The tourism destination therefore becomes a creative gaming space in which anything can happen.
4. We want to be different. There must be infinite variations of a tourism product. A tourism destination is required to have individuality, a strong "personality", "character". The *consumers of tourism* want individualized service, a tourism product which is completely unique and distinguishable from others.

Storytelling and tourism

The famous sociologist Jensen anticipates a complete turnaround in devising new strategies for tourism, which will also affect development strategies for tourism destinations – they are going to be based on stories. This is what is known as the ***Blue Ocean Strategy***, where ***Story Power*** offers key potential in tourism. „*In the world of superficial messages – the genuine wins – with passion.*“, writes Jensen. What is called for are genuine stories, rich with emotion and twists. Jensen also writes: „*We pay for the story – for the appeal to our emotions, to our heart.*“ The basic product (function) of tourism is already inherent („We take function for granted.“), so the classic tourism product, which was sold according to the formula "cost + service = price", must now be offered as "cost + service + story = price". Thereby the product draws on spirituality and tradition, which is in line with the above-illustrated concept of tourism as ritual and with the newest trends on the market.

The story should be told on the spot, in the locality where it came about, by applying the „do it yourself“ formula. The story must be "good", replete with emotion, and have a conflict („Perhaps there's a monster!“ – Jensen, 2007) – a process very similar to script-writing in the movie business.

The winning formula necessary to obtain an attractive and quality product and the motto for the further development of a tourism destination is therefore: „Add a story to a destination !“, which is, incidentally, the formula Jensen recommends for Istria.

Fantastic creatures - the unfathomable world of imagination

Fantastic creatures have existed for as long as man has had a spiritual life. Forces of nature, laws of nature incomprehensible and impervious to the limited knowledge man once possessed, storms, weather phenomena, sickness and health, safety and strength, are all concepts once seen by man as physical entities which could either threaten or preserve life and the human community, depending on the relations entertained with them.

Even after the establishment of organized religion, which has always presumed to provide the only possible and correct interpretation of all phenomena in life and the world, the common folk still felt that some areas had remained "uncovered". These grey areas were then filled with beliefs in fantastic supernatural beings beyond the boundaries of religious systems. With time, these stories, legends or tales (*“štorije or štorice”*, as they are called in Istria) of fantastic creatures have become, on the one hand, an incredibly rich body of oral folk literature and, on the other, these stories have become a didactic instrument, conveying either moral observations or mere warnings.

These fantastic creatures from Istrian folk tales found new life in modern-age art, when writers, painters, playwrights and other artists reinterpreted these stories and beings, thereby showing that they did not belong to a distant past, but can be used to cater to the curiosity, the thirst for knowledge or the need for entertainment of modern, educated, man, which is the first step towards interpreting this material as a new form of tourism offer.

Fantastic creatures in Istria

Traditional Istrian folk tales, myths and legends tell of the following fantastic creatures:

THE NIGHTMARE (MORA) is an evil force in the shape of a woman, at night it leaves the body of its "host" (who remains at home sleeping) and turns into a black fly, cat or chicken. The nightmare usually abuses children or makes people sick

THE OGRE (ORKO, MRAK OR BILFO) is a creature that appears in a form of donkey, dog, ram, sow, sometimes as a giant, and rarely as "half man, half ram". The ogre crawls under the victim's legs and takes them to a faraway place. The victim could also be left on a bell-tower or even never return. It is dangerous to step into ogre's track in the forest, because you can lose your way, "your world turns around".

HAGS AND WARLOCKS (ŠTRIGE AND ŠTRIGUNI) are similar to witches. Hags and warlocks drink blood, they are evil and very dangerous to people. Taking various animal forms, hags and warlocks have their gatherings at 11 pm at crossroads, near ponds or on mountaintops. There they fight each other (which common folk see as thunderstorms or gales); do evil to people and battle against their sworn enemies, the witch hunters (*krsnik*).

THE WITCH HUNTER (KRSNIK) is the enemy of hags and warlocks. He defends humans. Every night he goes to the crossroads to fight hags. During the struggle, he takes on the same shapes as witches and warlocks do (dog, cat, ox), but is white or multicoloured, whereas his opponents are black.

THE BREATH (DUHOVINA) is a mysterious and invisible force of evil, of undefined appearance – "something like a mist". The breath takes non-baptized children.

GIANTS are beings of human appearance, but of prodigious size. Legends describe them as living in the valley of the river Mirna, building ancient Istrian towns on hilltops or ploughing enormous grooves to make beds for Istrian rivers.

THE MACVALIC (MACMOLIC) is a dwarf with supernatural powers, who dwells in the house, in forests or mines. If shown respect and presented with gifts – mostly food – he is good, looks after people and their possessions, or takes care of safety in the mines; conversely, if ignored or insulted, he becomes malicious, makes pranks and causes damage.

ATTILA was the historic leader of the Huns, but in Istrian legends he is described as half man, half dog, which first barks and then speaks; he has one eye on his forehead and a vertical mouth. He destroyed the whole of Istria except – depending on the place where the legend originated – a certain hamlet, church or tree. Finally, an Istrian shepherd stopped Attila, and killed him by a slingshot in the forehead. Stone heads on the facades of many Istrian buildings allegedly depict Attila and protects from forces of evil.

FAIRIES in Istrian legends are builders. At night, they carry rocks from great distances and build in the dark because any man must not see them. They do not finish the work because the cock's crow always interrupts them, and that's why the Arena in Pula, being built by the fairies, left roofless.

VAMPIRES in Istria are described pretty close to vampires from Victorian literature, as a dead people rising from their graves and tormenting people. Most famous among them is Jure Grando from the village of Kringa.

GHOSTS AND APPARITIONS have occurred in various places in Istria at the sites of murders done long ago, or were developed from mass hysteria.

GODS AND SUPERNATURAL BEINGS FROM PRE-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS appear in single episodes of pre-Christian myths. The myth of Argonauts from ancient Greek mythology narrates that the Argonauts travelled through Istria to find their way back to the sea, defeated the Colchidians in the Kvarner Gulf and continued their journey. The vanquished Colchidians could not return home, so they founded the city of Pula on the southern tip of Istria. The same myth tells of the creation of Istria from the shield of the goddess Athens. Ancient Slavic mythology places in Istria and the Kvarner Gulf one of the final battles between the forces of light and darkness, and that's why some places in Istria were named after some Slavic gods.

Fantastic creatures and tourism

The experience gathered so far with the exploitation of themes and motifs from legends and tales for tourism has so far been modest in Istria, Croatia, but also in the world. This is a potential that is still being discovered and only beginning to be used in those kinds of tourism that seek new experiences, stories, cultural and spiritual enrichment rather than only sun and sea, passive holidays, high quality accommodation and pleasures of the table.

Although these themes have always existed in Istria as a resource that only requires acknowledgment and a little effort to be embedded in the existing offer, over the past decades very little has been done in this respect. The theme of fantastic creatures belongs rather to the domain of the spiritual than the material. Therefore, using this resource in the tourism offer requires more than just bringing tourists to visit the location, because the appearance of the location cannot speak for itself: only the story, when told (or interpreted by other means), can enrich the location and place the legend in its spatial context.

Over the last few years, the use of fantastic creatures in Istrian tourism has been prompted by the success of a number of events which, admittedly, occur once a year in a given place over a short period of time. Nevertheless, this is a new form of cultural tourism in which the most significant visitors – writers, actors and other artists – implement the programme themselves. Some of these events that have taken a different approach and devised programmes to promote Istrian fantastic creatures through cultural tourism are:

The science-fiction and fantasy convention **Istracon** in Pazin is one of the six established science-fiction conventions held in Croatia and also the youngest of them, launched in the year 2000. Over a period of three days (usually at the end of March) it offers roughly one hundred different programmes: popular-science and literary lectures, a book fair, meetings with writers, round tables, movie shows, exhibitions, workshops, entertainment and sports programmes, role playing games – RPG, live action role playing – LARP, costume fashion shows, etc.

The Festival of Fantasy Literature was established in 2002 as a spin-off or offshoot of Istracon. Usually held in August, it is an exclusively literary event the site and the topic of which change every year to accommodate the local heritage and the tradition of the locality hosting the festival.

Vampire Nights in Kringa is a one-day literary event, or rather horror-literature evening which serves as platform to present Croatian horror writers and their new books. This event was first organized two years ago, before the 5th Festival of Fantasy Literature, and continued after it, consecrating Kringa as the only place in Croatia where it is a matter of prestige to present every new work of Croatian horror literature. The event is also an opportunity for local producers to display their products drawing upon vampire legends, for example, souvenirs or specially prepared drinks, "Vampire Cocktails", brandy and wine.

Legend-Fest in Pican is held on the last weekend in July. It is a theatre festival showing plays using istrian mythological heritage and legends as their theme. In addition to rehearsed plays which are shown several times a day during the two-day event, the visitors can also attend workshops and take part in creating a play around a suitable mythical theme.

The Seven Days of Creation is a summer cultural festival held in Pazin at the beginning of June. It gathers approximately one hundred young artists from different fields, who work in creative workshops on various themes, including those deriving from Istrian folk tales. The results of these workshops – exhibitions, plays, musical and literary programmes – are presented on Pazin streets and squares on the final day of the festival.

Case study: “Jure Grando – the vampire from Kringa”

The inhabitants of Kringa, a small locality in the Istrian hinterland, perpetuate the legend of Jure Grando, the most ancient European vampire recorded by name. His name was set in writing in 1689 by the famous Slovene scholar Johann Weikard Valvasor in his work "The Glory of the Duchy of Carniola".

According to the same source, Jure Grando died in 1656 and for 16 years in a row he kept rising from his grave, harassing his widow and knocking on his fellow-villagers' doors. A few days after he had knocked on a door, a member of that family died, so that the population

lived in fear. The most affected by the persecution was his widow, Ivana, who reported the case to the prefect of Kringa, Miho Radetic. In 1672, therefore, Miho gathered the nine bravest men in Kringa and together they went to the cemetery, opened the grave, but fled the instant they saw Jure malevolently grinning at them. The story tells that Miho gathered them again, imbued them with courage from the best black wine he could find in Kringa, after which they went again to the graveyard. The second time around, the brave men did not panic at the sight of the fearsome vampire, they chopped his head off and from that time on, Kringa has lived peacefully for as many as 350 years.

Nowadays the vampire's birthplace is the site of various cultural events. There is even a small accommodation facility, "Grandova stancija", at the last dwelling place of Jure Grando. At the entrance to the village there is a small plaque identifying Kringa as the birthplace of the vampire. A coffee shop and bar, the "Vampire", offers cocktails named after themes from the legend of Jure Grando; there is a memorial plaque commemorating the "brave men" who in 1672 protected their village from the vampire. The nearby tavern "Danijeli" offers dishes inspired by the legend and, four or five times a year, on a regular basis, the village hosts "Vampire Nights" – literary evenings to which the organizers (the Tourism Board of Tinjan Municipality) invite horror writers from all over Croatia.

Going a step further than placing plaques, banks and mementoes to the brave men who in the second half of the 17th century vanquished the – as legend has it – "fearsome vampire", some inhabitants of Kringa and the surrounding area decided to use the legend of Jure Grando – the vampire from Kringa in tourism, making it into a tourism product. In addition to the already mentioned theme cocktails made in the "Vampire" bar (e.g. "Jure Grando", "Grando's Shriek", "Grando's Blood", "Vampire kiss") and dishes prepared by the tavern "Danijeli" (e.g. "Grando's Bile" noodles), the locals also offer a variety of red wine called "Jure Grando", made according to the same recipe used to produce the courage-infusing wine drunk by the brave men of Kringa before their final confrontation with the vampire. Besides wine, there is also a special brandy, the "Grandina", drunk by participants in the "Vampire nights" to find the necessary courage to listen to the "horrific" stories told by horror writers.

Every legend "dies" unless told, remembered from time to time, or passed on to those who were unfamiliar with it. For almost 350 years, the legend of Jure Grando was "dead", until a few enthusiasts "revived" it by retelling it and organizing various events presenting the legend of the Vampire from Kringa. As soon as the story – once used by parents to frighten their children – was given new life, there were many locals who said they knew it, but kept it to themselves believing that it was not worth mentioning. It is interesting to note that almost every family from Kringa and the surrounding villages has their own version of the story, but these versions nevertheless match to a great extent.

Once the story emerged from oblivion, the media (TV, national and foreign press, radio shows, drama groups, writers) took an interest in it and used it as motif in their cover stories, movies, literary and artistic work. Spread by the media, the story appealed to the public at large, especially after the newsagency AFP helped spread it throughout the world by publishing it on its portal; the feature was reprinted by newspapers in most countries.

One wonders whether the story spread because the vampire poses a major attraction to the "public and the media" or because it is the result of the work of a few enthusiasts who "revived" the forgotten legend. Regardless of the answer, the legend of Jure Grando is a considerable potential for tourism in Kringa and the Municipality of Tinjan. The inhabitants and the local authorities – Tinjan Municipality – now only need to devise even better programmes to maximise the exploitation of the legend in tourism.

The following tabulated items are showing the statistic data compiled in author's research and based on interviews with the owners of the catering establishments in Kringa and surrounding who had direct use of the valorization of the legend of Jure Grando.

Table 1: The benefits of the valorization of the legend of Jure Grando in the catering establishments in Kringa and surrounding

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Total income of Caffe bar „Vampire“ (in kunas)	130.000	180.000	270.000	300.000	350.000
Total income of Konoba „Danijeli” Annotation: opened in 08/2006 (in kunas)	-	-	100.000	400.000	600.000
Google search – number of web pages quoting Jure Grando	35	550	1.200	42.000	60.000
Entrepreneurs interested in building tourist infrastructure connected to the legend of Jure Grando	1	2	2	5	6

Source: Made by authors based on the compiled data and interviews

The tabulated items show that there is a constant growth of the incomes of the catering establishments in Kringa and surrounding and that in the same time the legend is spreading in the media (the data from Google search). With the spreading of the media attention to the legend there are more entrepreneurs interested and willing to invest in the tourist projects who base their services on the legend of Jure Grando.

Opportunities for the valorisation of fantastic creatures in tourism

Fantastic creatures are an inexhaustible and unexploited potential which can cater for even the most secret aspirations of tourists, such as the desire to experience something new, feel fear, excitement, live adventurously and give free rein to imagination. How can this potential be used? There are many good and original ideas, but what lacks are support and especially the necessary infrastructure. Here are some proposals of measures and activities that could optimize the valorisation of Istrian legends and myths in tourism:

Train entrepreneurs in tourism, tourist guides, and **educate** the local population and potential visitors about the wealth of Istrian myths and legends and their ability to enrich the tourism product in line with new trends in world tourism.

Provide the material basis for the interpretation of legends about fantastic creatures. This is necessary to make a place recognizable as the setting of an ancient legend or story. To put it simply, if we want to take tourists to a legendary site and interpret the legend, the site must appear likely to have been the setting of that legend. Folk tales do not describe the appearance of hags, but figurative artists could depict them and their works could then adorn information boards, sculpture parks, the facades of buildings or other places where they would provide useful information stimulating the curiosity to learn and research more.

The promotion of such content and form of the tourism offer intriducing the tourists to the world of fantastic creatures must be coupled with other forms of promotion in the tourism system. Although the mere mention of this topic arouses interest, other promotional activities, especially e-marketing initiatives, must be undertaken.

The living traditon is what makes legends of fantastic creatures in Istria not only part of history, but also of present-day life, regional and national spiritual wealth. To protect the immaterial heritage, mechanisms of preservation of that heritage as a living tradition must be put in place. For this reason, infrastructure and promotional material on the tourism offer based on legends about fantastic creatures must be accompanied by living and active narrators of these legends.

Based on the results of research and with the aim of improving valorisation of fantastic creatures in tourism, the authors suggest to undertake the following:

- Establish better connections with the tourism and public sectors;
- Identify the best organization structure to design this type of tourism product;
- Visit Romania (benchmarking) and on the basis of the Romanian positive experience and model devise own model;
- Maintain contact with the media which can serve as bridge between the legends and their valorisation in tourism;
- Establish relations with the movie industry which can introduce fantastic creatures into the film culture;
- Organize a yearly conference with the following topic: Ways to valorize immaterial cultural heritage in tourism;
- Systematically involve regional vocational schools, faculties and the Institute for Tourism into researching this subject-matter;
- Step up marketing activities and establish contacts with specialized tourist agencies in the world which organize theme holidays;
- Increase e-marketing.

Conclusion

The new entrepreneurship goes beyond the boundaries of the tourism destination, that is, the specific location of the heretofore exploited, but now well-worn myth, which still works, but not as it used to (Cohen, 1984). The new entrepreneurs move into the realm of a new professional service which facilitates the exploitation of hereto undiscovered resources by presenting them to the ever-evolving demand. These are the characteristics of the tourism offer in central Istria. This area continually creates and recreates new offers or offers elements which the consumer can put together or break apart in a given region or territory, no longer exclusively in a tourist locality (Krippendorf, 1986). Modern tourist demand is less about planning, bookings and fixed package purchases than interest in new options which existed even before, but were neglected and ignored.

By acknowledging the consumers interest in increasing the options at their disposal, a locality can build on its originality and quality.

The valorisation of fantastic creatures described here on the example of Istria and the experience gathered therefrom could not only provide the foundation for the future development of this concept, but serve as a model for other destinations, which – like Istria – boast a rich cultural heritage and therefore need not think up new ideas, but use their cultural wealth to shape these ideas and use them in the "tourism ritual". Romania, it seems, has advanced furthest on this path: this country has already developed specific offers – packages based on the life and "work" of two historical figures the mythical character of which is still being explored: Vlad Tepes, better known as Vlad Dracula, and Petar Toma, a *strigoi* (warlock) who lived in the Romanian locality of Marotin.

Tourism has become a "cultural laboratory" in which both consumers and creators of the tourism product experiment with new aspects of identity, social relations, relations with nature, the localities visited, the people, the heritage, the stories and the atmosphere of the place.

Looking into the future, we believe that the phrase *Tourism is culture* (Orlic) best describes what tourism already is. This is shown by the fact that any holiday traveller harbors – at least as a secondary motive, expressed as curiosity – the will to see new places and meet new people, the desire to see something as yet unseen and to feel something hereto unfelt. This trend is set to continue in the future with increasing intensity.

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