

# Heritage entertainment and the arts tourism essay

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Critically evaluate the contribution of heritage to the UK tourism industry

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Year 3  
20/02/2013  
Word count: 2131

Just like in any economy, there are many industries in the UK that help the country sustain its high standard of living. Even though the current Prime Minister, David Cameron, states that 'tourism is another industry we're getting behind; the rewards for growth are huge' (Cameron, 2011), according to the 2010 Heritage Lottery Fund report, tourism remains the UK's fifth largest industry. Heritage represents a main factor in the success of British tourism. The Heritage Lottery Fund also pointed out that in the UK heritage tourism makes more than a 20 billion pounds contribution to the economy. (HFL, 2010)

Timothy and Boyd (2003) define heritage as tangible resources both 'immoveable' like monuments, buildings, waters and 'moveable' like objects of a historic or cultural importance in museums, galleries or libraries. In addition, heritage can also be perceived as an intangible resource "such as values, customs, ceremonies, lifestyles, and including experiences such as festivals, arts and cultural events." (Timothy and Boyd, 2003, p3). This essay evaluates from a critical point of view the way heritage contributes to the British tourism industry, emphasising the advantages of heritage in the UK. British Tourism Framework Review (2011) revealed that a third of the tourists in the UK intended to visit cathedral and churches, monuments, castles and historic buildings. Therefore when looking at heritage it is important to review the historical context, its purpose in society and to assess its value using records and numbers. Throughout the years, various heritage sites have been visited by a huge number of people, looking for the traditional English experience. According to Davies and Prentice (1995), heritage tourism includes more than just buildings (like <https://assignbuster.com/heritage-entertainment-and-the-arts-tourism-essay/>

London's legendary Westminster Abbey, House of Parliament and London Bridge) and sites (like the historic towns of Bath, York and Edinburgh). In fact, there are various ways that can challenge and excite the visitors culturally, like festivals, which emphasise the local tradition and heritage (for example the Canterbury Festival attracts 70, 000 individual of all ages). In addition, heritage tourism also includes holidays (the sea-side resorts in the south, like Brighton with its Pavilion) and journeys to historic sites (for example Stonehenge), places connected with famous people (like Shakespeare's country, Stratford-upon-Avon) and traditional, historic and cultural events. Heritage is considered to be vital for the British brand and is a key point in the tourism industry. The ANHOLT Nation Brand Index (2007) found that heritage is the highest rated element when considering the UK as a touristic destination. The Heritage Lottery Fund aims to boost the heritage tourism by using the maximum potential of the assets of the nation that involves those of a cultural and historical nature. The UK has many advantages which work in their favour when expanding and promoting the heritage tourism. This can include various things like the transport, history, international relation, the global knowledge of the English language, food and accommodation (Boyd, & Timothy, 2003). The HLF aims to use these to build an industry which will last for generation to come and expand at a significant rate over the years. There are various positives impacts that heritage has on tourism. On one hand, there are the direct advantages like insurance for local businesses, featuring tourism services and products. The Deloitte Report (2008) the total value of the heritage contribution to the economy, through direct benefits reaches £52 billion. This includes revenue from tourism related services including those beyond the gates of the main

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attracting, for example restaurants, shops or hotels. This is 3.7% of the gross domestic product. The report reveals that in 2007 there are 1.36 million jobs provided by the tourism industry. (Deloitte Report, 2008) On the other hand the indirect benefits consist of the help and support towards businesses in tourism. Lastly, the Deloitte Report (2008) underlines the importance of 'spill over benefits' like retail, life and health, which enable visitors to have a safe and lively stay. Every customer has different needs and wants and each visitor is the same way. Every tourist desires different things from his or her holiday, which is why this requires the host to adjust in order to meet the requirements of everyone. Museums, holiday agencies and destinations tailor the heritage tourism in various ways to ensure the every individual is charmed. There have been three ways in which heritage tourism is separated, depending on the type of the visitor. The first are the people who travel by themselves. The second consists of groups who have a common interest in heritage and combine their journeys. And the last one refers to groups who even though they travel together they have no shared interest in heritage. Coming up with methods that make the attractions appeal to these different market segments as well as preserve the traditions and environments, to the extent that is permitted, was not easy. This had a major impact on the development of tourism, creating services and products targeting each group. According to Nuryanti (1996) heritage tourism appeals to millions of tourists from other countries and generates work places and increased revenue for the local population. Another benefit of significant importance is the fact that through its contributions to economy it generates revenue that can be used in the local area for expansion as well as conservation. For example in Canterbury, some of the revenue gathered by <https://assignbuster.com/heritage-entertainment-and-the-arts-tourism-essay/>

the Canterbury Cathedral has been used for renovation on the building, sandblasting the stone blocks in order to bring back its initial look and charm. The HLF has been taking part in the expansion of tourism in the UK. As mentioned before, the massive contribution towards the GDP, puts heritage tourism in front of other service industries like car manufacturing, advertising or filming. This shows the necessity for a better investment. This will generate an even better return. The potential of heritage can be used to aid a country's development and progress. Nevertheless this also stresses the importance of a sustainable development, which aims to preserve the environment including heritage. A sudden growth can in some cases lead to a fast modernisation. So far the UK has preserved its heritage sites and has imposed various rules and regulation to prevent an over-modernisation of a heritage destination or site. With more than 10 million holidays made each year by tourists from other countries, 4 out of 10 individuals said heritage was the main point of their visits. According to the HLF (2009), the visitors spend £12. 4 billions on heritage site. This includes everything that they spend on their holiday like shopping, meals, entrance fees, and accommodation. UK residents also participate in this massive industry, with 60% of the income from heritage sites comes from domestic tourism. This type of tourism is usually carried out through daily visits. (The Deloitte Report, 2008). Around £7. 3 billion has been spent back into the heritage industry in various projects like renovations, maintenances and buildings, in various places around the UK like parks, museums and touristic towns. According to Timothy and Boyd (2003, p. 270) " domestic tourism to sites associated with national heroes, strategic battlefields, or other locations deemed important to the development of the state is often loaded

information that endows these places with 'national soul and memory for a unique purpose.' This heritage places, artefacts, and tourism are employed as media that uphold national identity, legitimize governments in power and reaffirm national ideologies." (Timothy and Boyd, 2003 p. 270) The seaside city of Swansea is one of the most populated places in the UK by residents, introducing its visitors to ship building and a more than 900 years castle. When looking at the way heritage contributes to tourism, we have to take into account the salaries of the people employed in this industry and the income and profits of the businesses tourism related. According to the Deloitte Report (2008) this is estimated £7.4 billion each year, which go back into the British economy, help fund new touristic projects, protect the environment or the country's infrastructure, without which a proper tourism industry would not be possible. This revenue can be expanded in the future simply by taking advantage of the huge potential of heritage tourism and bring more investment in. Nonetheless this requires the government to collaborate with the tourism departments to create projects and plans to secure funding to expand tourism in various places (Nuryanti, 1996). Even though tourism is growing at such a fast paced rate, the uniqueness of heritage tourism can not only expand, but it will remain a certain source of income for many generations to come and it will endure against many negative factors, over-population, modernisation, globalisation (The British Tourism Review, 2009). According to Visit Britain (2013) there are certain needs for security which are required in the heritage tourism especially due to new current factors like globalization, modern society and advances in technology. With the increase of terrorist activities (London tube bombings in July, 2005) and other threats from various groups, security has become a

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concern. Suicide bombing occurred worldwide and were targeted towards developed countries, which stress the importance of the safety of the tourists. So while heritage forced the tourism industry to adjust its safety measures to protect itself and its visitors, it is mainly due to past incidents which harmed various heritage sites. War and conflicts let many sites be destroyed by opposing forces. According to Timothy and Boyd (2003, p. 28) "some countries are burdened with chronic conflict - civil wars or hostilities between neighbors. These wartime conditions are especially damaging to heritage sites and archaeology and cause irreparable damage. War affects heritage in many ways (Timothy and Boyd, 2003, p. 28) historic remains are often targeted intentionally by warring factions as a way of destroying morale and injuring the other party's sense of national pride" (Talley, 1995, quoted by Timothy and Boyd, 2003, p. 29) An example in the UK would be the city of Bath which during World War Two underwent three air raids that devastated more than 19, 000 buildings, including the south side of Queen Square (World Heritage Site, 2013). Heritage tourism enable the town to reconstruct some of the buildings destroyed and work still continues to this day. Another benefit of heritage is its effect on the tourists themselves. Especially due to its relation with history and culture, one can learn a lot from a visit about history or for example art. Thus people from lower social classes can become educated in a way that appeals to them and in many cases it is unlikely that they will see it as education. A segmentation of the tourist products is necessary to help people from different social backgrounds visit the sites. Clearly the heritage tourism industry should not be affected in the process. As one of the advantages that heritage has on tourism, can be the fact that a heritage site can often provide a springboard

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for places with little or no other touristic potential. There can be small towns which rarely have strong and durable resources. In such a case, heritage can bring in tourists which can contribute to the local economy and eventually promote growth in the local area. Just like in any other industries there are certain aspects which provide a challenge. The British Tourism Review (2009) underlined several issues which stand against the expansion to a certain level of heritage tourism like visitors tax, seasonally employed customer representatives and transport infrastructure. (The British Tourism Review, 2009) To put it in a nutshell, the impact of heritage on the tourism industry is beyond any shadow of a doubt immense, with many benefits. Since the forecasted growth rate in tourism until 2018 is of 2.6% per year. (Deloitte, 2008), clearly tourism is in itself a long-lasting industry. Nevertheless, according to Russo (2002) "tourist attractions in heritage cities are to a great extent hardly reproducible and concentrated. The quality of the visitors' experience is deteriorated not only by congestion and stress, but also by a decline in the quality of the environment context, in which the act of consumption takes place, and in the quality of the auxiliary tourist facilities." (Russo, 2002) Therefore there is a need to make more efforts to ensure that the tourism industry remains preserved and develops sustainably. This in fact is a vital aspect as the whole idea of heritage tourism is that the tourists come for the local experience and traditional lifestyle and surrounding. Heritage tourism can be extremely beneficial especially if promoted and preserved correctly. The tourism industry in the UK is in fact greatly dependent on it and it will continue to do so. The country's responsibility is to maintain the real and beautiful aspects of heritage tourism.