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Habits of Thought, Commodification, and Tourism: *Mark Twain's Tour of the Middle East*[1]

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ABSTRACT
In the late 1860s, acclaimed American author Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens) toured the Middle East and the Holy Land, recording his adventures in Innocents Abroad: or the New Pilgrim's Progress. Extrapolating how the "habits of thought" embraced by travelers led to distinctive examples of what John Urry calls the "tourist gaze" Twain's travelogue provides insights of value to today's tourism specialists regarding (1) the dichotomy between "tourism assets" vs. "tourism products" (2) with reference to the subjective feelings of travelers, the information available to them, and the commodification process.

Keywords: Cultural Tourism; Habits of Thought; Tourist Gaze; commodification; Middle East; Holy Land.

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the commodification of tourism and the implications of this process have been widely discussed. In addition, attention has focused upon how the preconceptions, beliefs, and attitudes of travelers impact (1) the subjective ways in which their experiences are perceived and interpreted, (2) how they process the information available to them, and (3) the process of commodification. Those participating in the tourism industry need to consider the consequences and interrelationships of these phenomena from both strategic and theoretical perspectives.

To provide a greater historic depth regarding these influences, Samuel Clemens' (pen name Mark Twain) *Innocents Abroad: or the New Pilgrim's Progress* (1869) is discussed. A classic travelogue, Twain's account chronicles the history of a group tour that visited parts of Europe and the Middle East (especially the Holy Land) in the middle of the 19th century. Because Twain wrote in an era before the current trends in tourism theory, scholarship, and strategic response, his work provides perspectives of an observer who was free of 21st Century philosophical, practitioner, and theoretical orientations.

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MARK TWAIN AND HIS TRAVELOGUES

Mark Twain, one of the highest regarded American literary figures, is the acclaimed author of *Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885). Recognized as a keen observer and an important social critic of the latter 19th and early 20th centuries, his *The Gilded Age* (Twain and Warner 1876) exposed the greed and corruption of the post-Civil War era in the United States. The novel's depiction of Washington, D. C. (and the interrelationships between money and power politics that run through the plot) demonstrate how little has changed since the years immediately following the Civil War. In *Huckleberry Finn* (1885), Twain emerged as a strong critic of racism and slavery, even though some critics complain that his book (written in the vernacular) uses the taboo word "Nigger" on several occasions. His social consciousness is also articulated in his travel writing, especially *Following the Equator* (1897) where he has harsh criticism for the colonial empires.

In addition to his fiction, Twain is remembered for publishing multiple travelogues, and is recognized as a master of the genre (Melton 2002). These accounts are informed and witty (even if ethnocentrism and bias sometimes creep into his descriptions.

In 1865, at the beginning of his literary career, Twain gained fame by publishing a short story "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County" The success of this humorous account prompted, the *Sacramento Union*, a California newspaper, to send him on a tour of Hawaii to write "human interest" pieces about this tropical paradise. Ultimately, 25 letters appeared in the newspaper, although they were not published in book form until the 1940s. (In 1975, the University of Hawaii Press released an edition that remains in print). After his Hawaii excursion was successful, Twain received an assignment from a San Francisco newspaper, the *Daily Alta California*, to join a cruise that toured parts of Europe as well as the Middle East and the Holy Land. After his accounts appeared in the newspaper, Twain reworked and expanded his contributions into a travelogue *Innocents Abroad: The New Pilgrim's Progress* (1869). The book's runaway success encouraged Twain to produce additional travelogues including *Roughing it* (1872), *A Tramp Abroad* (1880), *Life on the Mississippi* (1883), and *Following the Equator* (1897).

Thus, Twain was an accomplished and prolific travel writer. *Innocents Abroad*, however, is generally acknowledged as his masterpiece of travel literature. An analysis of his work provides useful insights regarding cultural commodification, preexisting perspectives held by travelers, and the ramifications of turning tourism assets into tourism products.

COMMODIFICATION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

The term "commodification" refers to the process by which cultural traditions and artifacts (often including aspects of an ethnic or spiritual heritage) are transformed into products and/or services to be bought and sold (Cohen 1988). Many critics have complained that when the tourism industry encourages commodification, the potential exists for (1) a precious heritage to be degraded through

catering to the demands of the market (2) in ways that often cause the traditional value and significance of this heritage to be tarnished or undercut. Embracing such a perspective, for example, Elkhdar (2012), writing about tourism in Morocco, complains that "The local pure culture becomes, in my view, like an old whore…When the cultural value is being transformed by a commercial one, the meaning of culture is lost and the pure past is re-told aloof from the original version!... In a nutshell, tourism is bad! Our 'cultures are endangered'." Other observers, as we shall see, temper such an assessment by suggesting that tourism can help restore cultural traditions, build pride among local peoples, and facilitate outsiders understanding and appreciating the communities they visit.

On many occasions, unfortunately, those who provide commodified tourism goods and services are ill informed and, perhaps, have a jaded view of the people or heritage they are introducing. In this regard, George Gurdjieff (2010) recalls his youthful days in the Middle East when "I had earned my living by showing tourists…the sights…and giving them the customary explanations. In short, I have been a professional guide…Soon after my return to Egypt I decided to take up the same profession…In a few days I had learned everything that a guide needed to know and began, along with the slick young Arabs, to confuse the tourists."

Cohen (1988), however, reminds us that the process of commodification does not inevitably result in a debasing or destruction of a cultural heritage, even if such damage potentially occurs. My experiences mirror Cohen's observations. I, for example, worked with the Festival of American Folklife (now known as the Smithsonian Folklife Festival) for 7 seasons helping people portray their heritage in an authentic and empowering manner. In doing so, I saw members of participating cultures gain the admiration of others while bolstering their self-respect through a positive showcasing of their way of life. Although presenting a cultural heritage as a commodity sometimes proves to be hurtful, equitable ways of serving the interests of all relevant stakeholders can be developed.

Nevertheless, the potential exists for a cultural heritage to be transformed by the marketplace and manipulated into a product that is merely bought and sold. Tourism specialists often complain that commodification can lead to a lack of authenticity and/or a diluting of important cultural and spiritual characteristics. As a result, cultural brokers need to act with care and sensitivity (See Kurin 1997).

Du Cros and McKercher, (2020 12) remind us that "tourism assets" are uncommodified cultural resources or traits that have not been manipulated and altered by those involved with the tourism industry. "Tourism products", on the other hand, have been transformed for consumption. With this dichotomy in mind, it can be argued that cultural tourism tends to commodify "cultural assets" into "cultural products" in strategic ways that are aimed at satisfying consumer expectations and demands.

In any event, commodification and its implications are important issues that those evaluating, developing, and/or implementing tourism strategies need to address. Such an analysis can be facilitated with reference to the concepts of "habits of thought" and the "tourist gaze (as well as the implications that can be drawn from them).

HABITS OF THOUGHT AND THE TOURIST GAZE

The ways in which tourists think about the people and places they visit have a significant impact upon their expectations and how their travel experiences are perceived, chosen, and mentally processed. Those involved with tourism need to be aware of these influences and how to strategically deal with them. Walle (1996) demonstrates this reality by examining four 19th century travelogues concerning American Indians. Each writer possessed distinct expectations and predispositions. Their preexisting views, in turn, greatly influenced the distinctive ways in which these writers interpreted their experiences. Walle refers to such mental gymnastics as "habits of thought".

John Urry's (1990, 2011) concept of the "tourist gaze" presents a similar perspective by emphasizing that what tourists perceive is influenced by their culture, experiences, expectations, etc. Thus, "The concept of the [tourist] gaze highlights that looking is a learned ability and that the pure and innocent eye is a myth" (Urry and Larcen 2011 1). This is because "Gazing at particular sights is conditioned by personal experience and memories and framed by rules and styles…" (Urry and Larcen 2011 2).

Expanding upon these perspectives, Caletiro (2019) observes, "that our desires to visit places and the way we experience those places are not simply individual and autonomous but are socially organized…"For tourism, this means that we learn to appreciate certain places and to ignore or even despise others – the tourist gaze is selective" Caletiro (2019). Such ideas, of course, parallel and fit well with Walle's "habits of thought" paradigm.

A synthesis of these perspectives can facilitate thinking in terms of the component parts of tourist perspectives including (1) Preexisting patterns or habits of thought, (2) Various descriptions and interpretations to which travelers are exposed and (3) the Process of commodification that seeks to transform characteristics and assets into marketable products capable of attracting and satisfying travelers. Each is discussed below.

Preexisting Thought: Individuals (or groups of people with similar backgrounds, interests, and so forth) possess distinctive habits of thought. These mental characteristics influence the individual's priorities, interests, and world view.

On many occasions, those involved with the tourism industry want to exploit an existing positive image. When doing so, they build upon what already exists. On other occasions, in contrast, preexisting views might need to be altered, changed, or transformed. I was raised in the Southeastern region of the United States. When I was a child, many tourism businesses exploited the image of "Hillbillies" (Appalachian mountain people) by portraying them as lazy, incestuous, moonshining, white trash reminiscent of Erskine Caldwell's novel *Tobacco Road*. Although tourism products that catered to such ideas might have generated economic activity, many people from such communities loathe such stereotypes.

Those involved with the tourism industry need to be conscious of the prevailing views that potential target markets possess regarding an attraction or destination. On some occasions, the goal might involve building upon a preexisting positive impression; in other situations, public opinions might need to be transformed. In any event, being aware of the habits of thought that influence people is vital when tourism initiatives are being planned, transformed, and/or implemented.

Established Portrayals: Pre-existing portrayals that predate a tourism initiative can provide assets capable of being transformed into tourism products.

In the late 1980s, for example, Dyersville, Iowa was a small rural farming community in the American corn belt. Nothing about the place made it a candidate to emerge as a lucrative tourist destination. That was until actor Kevin Costner starred in the movie *Field of Dreams*, a fantasy film about baseball stars from the past reemerging as ghosts who haunt a baseball field that the protagonist has built. To facilitate filming, the director, Phil Alden Robinson, gained access to a farm owned by Don Lansing and used it as a filming location. To facilitate production, a baseball diamond was constructed adjacent to the farmhouse and bordering on a cornfield. After the movie was completed in the summer of 1988, Lansing initially believed that things would get back to normal and plans were made to remove the baseball diamond.

But that did not happen. The film caught the public's imagination, and the free publicity it generated created a demand to see the filming location. As a result, the Lansing farm has emerged as a major tourist attraction for the region. In this regard, Ebsworth-Goold (nd) observes: "thanks to the 1989 blockbuster *Field of Dreams*, starring Kevin Costner as farmer-turned-baseball field architect Ray Kinsella, the *Field of Dreams* [filming site] in Dyersville, Iowa, has become an enormous tourist attraction, drawing movie and baseball fans alike and routinely hosting celebrities and sports stars"

Sandra Friend (2015), echoing Ebsworth-Goold notes that the film transformed "this piece of Iowa soil…into a movie set for a film that resonates with people to this day…the dirt parking lot was packed with cars, with license plates hailing from as far away as Texas, California, New Jersey, and Florida…Fathers and sons (and fathers and daughters) pitched to each other on the great grassy

expanse in front of the old farmhouse. Asked about his motive, one visitor responded, "I saw the movie," he said, "and I wanted to be here." Another couple came all the way from Japan. "We had to see it," they said. "It was worth it."

Thus, the publicity created by the film gave a generic place a significance that transformed it into a tourist destination. The publicity was inadvertent, although once it made an impact, the owners acted to reinforced the windfall. Today, the Lansing family has developed a website promoting the location (https://fieldofdreamsmoviesite.com/) and a wide variety of events are scheduled throughout the year. In 2021, for example, a regulation major league game was played at the Lansing farm.

Commodification: In 1847 American author Henry Wadsworth Longfellow published his poetic saga *Evangeline* that tells the story of a woman who is separated from Gabriel, her fiancé, when the British expelled the Acadian French from what is now Nova Scotia during the middle of the 18th century. Among other achievements, the poem drew attention to the early contributions of the French in the area: influences that had been largely ignored by English speaking historians who tended to emphasize the British point of view. In the poem, Evangeline, the title character, embarks on a lifelong search for Gabriel that spans the length and breadth of North America. Working as a nurse, she finally finds Gabriel on his deathbed and he dies in her arms.

Not only was *Evangeline* a poetic achievement that continues to be read to this day, its depictions helped the descendants of these refugees to envision themselves and their history as distinctive. Eventually "Acadian" was corrupted into "Cajun": the name of the ethnic group that emerged when many of the French speaking exiles settled in and adjusted to what is now the state of Louisiana.

Because of the popularity of the poem, and its role in helping the Cajun people to define themselves, many tourists became interested in visiting the locations where the story was purported to have taken place. This interest led tourism professionals to consciously develop destinations that travelers could visit. One example of doing so is the Windsor and Annapolis Railway's "land of Evangeline" promotional campaigns (MacDonald 2005). "The goal was to attract tourists to the region by way of the railroad and the means to this end was to exploit the Evangeline story" (158). The railroad went to great lengths in this regard including hiring noted authors to produce guidebooks, installing signage, and the like. Doing so, of course, is a clear example of a member of the travel/tourism industry (the railroad company) consciously pursuing strategies to systematically commodify historic and cultural assets in a campaign that provided financial benefits.

Not only did the tourism industry of Nova Scotia exploit the Evangeline legend, the people of Louisiana responded in a similar fashion in campaigns that continue to this day. St. Martinsville

and the surrounding area is representative of those who are involved with such tourism activities. Since the late 19th century, tourists have been visiting the Evangeline Oak, an ancient tree and the supposed meeting place of a couple that so closely resembles Evangeline and Gabriel that their stories have been merged. Travelers can also view a statue of Evangeline, visit the Longfellow-Evangeline State Historic Site, and so forth.

Thus, those who are involved with tourism often need to consider preexisting thought, established portrayals, and commodification efforts that are designed to transform assets into marketable products. Doing so is graphically portrayed in Table 1.

Table 1. Habits of Thought: A Strategic Perspective

ISSUE	**DESCRIPTION**
Thought	Individuals or specific groups tend to possess ideas, attitudes, and so forth regarding people, places, and phenomena that make existing assets appealing tourism destinations or attractions. Such characteristics often form the foundation for campaigns that promote tourism. In other situations, the views that people possess need to be transformed so they better mesh with a tourism or recreational initiative.
Portrayals	Specific assets are sometimes inadvertently transformed into tourism products by unplanned publicity. Under these conditions, those in the tourism industry potentially gain windfall benefits. To fully benefit, however, those promoting the tourism product need to strategically build upon and reinforce the publicity or events that makes the phenomena an attractive tourism product.
Commodification	Those involved with tourism often seek to consciously develop an asset into a marketable product. Doing so typically involves overt and strategic efforts that build upon and reinforce existing thought and/or prevailing descriptions.
ANALYSIS	
Those who are involved with the tourism industry need to be aware of how people think, what influences their views, and how perspectives can be manipulated in strategic ways. By doing so, tourism assets can be more effectively transformed into viable and sought-after tourism products.	

Envisioning tourism assets and how they can emerge as marketable tourism products is of vital importance to the industry. Various components (including preexisting thought, available descriptions, and commodification efforts) need to be considered when strategies and tactics are developed and implemented. Such processes will be discussed through an analysis of Mark Twain's *Innocents Abroad*, a famous 19th century travelogue.

TWAIN'S *INNOCENTS ABROAD*

As mentioned above, Mark Twain's *Innocents Abroad* is a classic 19th century travelogue that is notable because in addition to describing and critiquing the destinations visited, Twain analyzes his fellow travelers, how they thought, what they did, and why. As a result, the reader is able to extrapolate what the tourists brought to their journey, how they respond to their experiences, and ways in which the tourism industry catered (or did not cater) to the needs of guests. With these elements in mind, Twain's account is analyzed with reference to such issues and, where appropriate, how they compare to situations that exist today.

Preexisting Thought

In Innocents Abroad, Twain describes his shipmates, their thoughts, opinions, and actions. Twain also reveals aspects of his own feelings and judgements. These descriptions provide clues and perspectives of value to the travel industry. Because Twain's cruise to the Middle East was costly, the participants tended be affluent. Twain observes that few were young; thus, he was "greatly surprised to see so many elderly people — I might almost say, so many venerable people. A glance at the long lines of heads was apt to make one think it was all gray. But it was not. There was a tolerably fair sprinkling of young folks, and another fair sprinkling of gentlemen and ladies who were non-committal as to age, being neither actually old or absolutely young". (1869 32).

In addition, the passengers tended to be educated and professional. Twain recalls that his shipmates included "three ministers of the gospel, eight doctors, sixteen or eighteen ladies, several military and naval chieftains with sounding titles[…and] professors" of various kinds" (32). Apparently, many were religious because early in the voyage (32) "a large majority of the party repaired to the after cabin…a handsome saloon fifty or sixty feet long, for prayers. The unregenerated called this saloon the 'Synagogue'" (39). Because of this religious response, it can be assumed that many of Twain's companions possessed tendencies typical of the pious Christians of the era.

Living in an age of social Darwinism, furthermore, one might expect that the travelers would exhibit a degree of chauvinism regarding the West and the modern world. Even Twain himself (whose later travelogues, such as *Following the Equator*, demonstrate a strong progressive streak) occasionally reveals a degree of prejudice, especially regarding those who can be dubbed "primitive". Complaining about the people he met in the Azores, for example, Twain notes, "The community is eminently Portuguese — that is to say, it is slow, poor, shiftless, sleepy, and lazy…. The people lie, and cheat the stranger, and are desperately ignorant, and have hardly any reverence

for their dead. The latter trait shows how little better they are than the donkeys they eat and sleep with" (55).

Although sometimes ethnocentric and prejudiced, on other occasions Twain expressed more humane and enlightened sentiments such as "Why shall we not say a good word for the princely Bedouin? The only crime that can be brought against him is that he was unfortunate" (493).

In spite of possessing a tendency towards ethnocentrism, Twain and his companions hoped to experience new things and mingle with the exotic. Regarding such goals, Twain recollects that "we have found foreign-looking things and foreign-looking people, but always with things and people intermixed that we were familiar with before, and so the novelty of the situation lost a deal of its force. We wanted something thoroughly and un-compromisingly foreign" (76). As a result, Twain concludes that "Alexandria [Egypt] was too much like a European city to be novel, and we soon tired of it" (614).

Ultimately most of Twain's companions adjusted to their new surroundings quite well; he observes, "We are getting foreignized rapidly, and with facility. We are getting reconciled to halls and bed-chambers with unhomelike stone floors, and no carpets — floors that ring to the tread of one's heels with a sharpness that is death to sentimental musing" (98.)

Indeed, over time, most of Twain's companions learned to act in accordance with the local sense of decorum and began to look with disapproval at those who violated local norms. Thus, "We were troubled a little at dinner to-day, by the conduct of an American, who talked very loudly and coarsely, and laughed boisterously where all others were so quiet and well-behaved" (99).
Nevertheless, there was a tendency for some of the travelers to violate the regulations and norms of the countries being visited. Many of Twain's companions, for example, acquired the habit of plundering the ruins they visited by breaking off and stealing souvenirs. On one occasion, they were forced by governmental officials to give up their ill-gotten artifacts. Twain concludes that the governmental strictness was "a wise, a just, and a well-deserved rebuke" (480), although his companions complained that they were being singled out because of "Ottoman hatred of Christians" (480). Twain, in contrast, concludes that "The truth doubtless was, that the same precautions would have been taken against any travelers" (481).

Some of Twain's recollections could be used to describe tourists that can still be met today. He refers, for example, to one companion as the Oracle an "old ass who eats for four and looks wiser than the whole Academy of France…and never uses a one-syllable word when he can think of a longer one, and never by any possible chance knows the meaning of any long word he uses, or ever gets it in the right place: yet he will serenely venture an opinion on the most abstruse subject"(69).

Twain also acknowledges that his intuitive views of Palestine were significantly different from reality. Thus, his preexisting habits of thought did not reflect what he saw. Twain, for example was struck by the fact that is Holy Land is small: "One of the most astonishing things that have yet fallen under our observation is the exceedingly small [size of the Holy Land]… Instead of being wide apart… the places [visited by] …Christ are nearly all right here in full view…he spent his life…within a compass no larger than an ordinary county in the United States. It is as much as I can do to comprehend this stupefying fact. (502).

Today's travelers, of course, are nested in the contemporary world just as 19th century travelers lived in their era and their interests reflect those times, its environments, and the currently available knowledge. Nevertheless, parallels exist; many of today's people who visit the Holy Land do so because of their interest in religion, just as Twain's companions. Like Twain and his fellow tourists, it is easy for such modern-day travelers to possess a view of the Holy Land that is bigger than life.

In addition, many of today's travelers who embark on lengthy and expensive trips are mature people with significant discretionary resources and, perhaps being retired, are in a position to travel. Adventurous souls who are willing to invest in lengthy and expensive foreign excursions, furthermore, often seek the exotic just as Twain's companions did. Thus, in many ways the thinking of Twain's shipmates possesses significant similarities to many of those who visit the Holy Land today.

Travelers and their habits of thought are products of their time and place. In addition, they often reflect demographic, cultural, and financial characteristics that those in the tourism industry need to evaluate and respond to. That was the case in the 19th century and it continues to be true today.

Existing Descriptions

The Middle East, of course, is a Holy Land for three great religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam). All three traditions deserve our attention. Twain's companions, however, were Christian. As a result, this paper will primarily focus upon descriptions of interest to Christian travelers and broader discussions will be avoided.

Twain was aware of a travel literature involving the Middle East and the Holy Land that stretches back to classical times. And he bemoans that this legacy detracted from his experiences, complaining, "I have conceived a sort of unwarrantable unfriendliness toward Pliny and St. Paul, because it seems as if I can never ferret out a place that I can have to myself. It always and eternally transpires that St. Paul has been to that place, and Pliny has 'mentioned' it." (515). Thus, Twain resents that these early accounts create habits of thought that prevent him from looking at what he sees with fresh eyes.

During the era of the late Roman Empire Christians were already making pilgrimages to the Holy Land for religious reasons (Hunt 1982). Pilgrimages by Christians, furthermore, were popular and relatively safe during the era of the Crusades when Christians armies were a powerful force in the Middle East. This situation changed after Moslem forces regained control of the region. Although during the era of the Ottoman Empire religious travel by Christians was reduced, by the time of Twain's excursion, opportunities were opening up as demonstrated by an account of the French historian and writer Ernest Renan whose *Life of Jesus* (*Vie du Jesus*), published in 1863 provides descriptions of various places mentioned in the *New Testament*. This work came out only a few years before Twain's trip.

Twain overtly addresses how the popular travelogues of his time influenced his companions. This tendency emerges as an issue of concern because many of these accounts contained significant errors. Thus, when commenting upon the responses and opinions of a fellow traveler, he divulges that, "I saw he had been deceived by a carelessly written sentence in the Guide Book" (70).

Twain found the reliance upon these resources to be unfortunate because their descriptions created and/or reinforced habits of thought and a tourist gaze that prevented his companions from forming their own opinions. He laments "travelers borrow ideas from other writers…They borrowed the idea — and the words — and the construction — and the punctuation — from [others]. The pilgrims will tell of Palestine, when they get home, not as it appeared to them, but as it appeared to [those who had published the guide books they read]" (512).

Twain is annoyed because many travel writers provided inaccurate depictions such as portraying sites and locations as more beautiful and colorful than they really were. Accounts regarding the Sea of Galilee demonstrate this tendency. Twain describes it as "not so large a sea as Lake Tahoe… And when we come to speak of beauty, this sea [cannot compare to Tahoe]…dim waters…low, shaven, yellow hillocks of rocks and sand, so devoid of perspective, cannot suggest the grand peaks that compass Tahoe… Silence and solitude brood over Tahoe; and silence and solitude brood also over this lake of Galilee. But the solitude of the one is as cheerful and fascinating as the solitude of the other is dismal and repellant… No ingenuity could make such a picture beautiful" (507).

Twain. However, is quick to point out that travel writers tend to paint a different picture. He observes: 'C. W. E.,' in Life in the Holy Land) provides the following description, "A beautiful sea… The azure of the sky penetrates the depths of the lake, and the waters are sweet and cool. On the west, stretch broad fertile plains; on the north the rocky shores…" Twain goes on to protest that although the author admits the area is currently desolate, his description creates an inaccurate impression.

Twain concludes that taking such liberties is a common practice that needs to be rectified. He tells us, "Nearly every book concerning Galilee and its lake describes the scenery as beautiful (510)…I claim the right to correct misstatements" (509).

Twain goes on to grumble that on many occasions the errors do not merely result from ignorance, carelessness, or the urge to depict a pleasant landscape. He reports" "I am sure, from the tenor of books. I have read, that many who have visited this land…were Presbyterians, and came seeking evidences in support of their particular creed; they found a Presbyterian Palestine, and they had already made up their minds to find no other, although possibly they did not know it, being blinded by their zeal. Others were seeking Baptist evidences and a Baptist Palestine. Others were…[pursuing] a Catholic, a Methodist, an Episcopalian Palestine" (511).

Twain observes that although "these…[writers'] intentions may have been [good], they were full of partialities and prejudices, they entered the country with their verdicts already prepared." Twain then laments that such travel literature profoundly affected his companions. "Our pilgrims have brought [these writers]…verdicts with them. They have shown it in their conversation ever since we left Beirut. I can almost tell, in set phrase, what they will [say]… Lesser men follow and see with the author's eyes instead of their own", 511-2).

Today, a much wider assortment of popular travel literature (ranging from religious guides for the pious to secular backpacker guides (such as Lonely Planet) are available, as well as the fruits of scholarship and archaeological campaigns. Some of this material is religious; others are secular. A dichotomy, for example, exists between "Biblical archaeology" that focuses on religious themes and sites in a rather narrow manner vs. "Levant archaeology" that deals with a wider range of topics within the region and does so without an overt or overarching concern with verifying Biblical accounts or a specific dedication to exploring religious themes.

Biblical archaeology, as it has developed, began in earnest in the mid-19th century around the time of Twain's trip. When Twain traveled, however, few reports regarding these sites were available. In the 20th century, in contrast, Biblical archaeology, and especially the influence of William F. Albright (Running 2007) linked accounts in the Bible with the archaeological record. These efforts have exerted a great influence. Although many of their claims have been challenged in recent years, Biblical archaeologists continue to gain financial support from religious institutions and they continue to link the Bible with the archaeological record.

After the establishment of Israel in 1948, furthermore, many archaeologists from that country have sought evidence regarding the historic connections between the Jews and Palestine (Encyclopedia.com 2020). As a result, a large literature has grown up which, like the travelogues that Twain describes, centers on partisan religious themes and topics. As a result, the religiously minded have a rich array of resources to consult, while the more secular-minded (who are

interested in Greek, Roman, or other influences within the region) can turn to the works of Levant archaeologists and gain a wealth of knowledge of interest to them.

Although, when compared to the 1860s, a much richer and varied array of information is currently available, this contemporary reservoir of knowledge tends to serve a similar role as the more limited resources available to Twain and his companions. Both yesterday's and today's resources are capable of reinforcing and/or molding habits of thought and the tourist gaze that travelers possess.

Commodification

The cruise that Twain participated in was planned, organized, and marketed as a product promoted and designed as a long and informative tour of parts of Europe and, especially, the Holy Land. As a result, it was conceived as a commodity.

When visiting specific destinations, furthermore, Twain and his companions were able to purchase the services of individuals who served as guides, rent horses or donkeys, arrange excursions to historic places such as religious sites, and so forth. At a very basic level, therefore, a degree of commodification existed to aid tourists who were touring the Holy Land. Nevertheless, minimum adjustment to specific target markets appears to have been made and little tailoring and adjustment, so common in the commodification process, had taken place.

Although Twain provides no indication of what other travelers did with their free time when traveling off the ship, he records his own adventures that often involved exerting significant effort and tolerating substantial discomfort, risk, and pain when pursuing the sites he visited. In all likelihood, the efforts expended were beyond the capabilities of many of his fellow travelers, especially those who were old and relatively infirm.

In any event, the traveling conditions, and difficulties that Twain endured were severe and challenging: hardly what most of today's visitors to the Holy Land are willing to tolerate. Regarding a typical day's agenda, Twain recollects, we "broke camp at 7 a. m., and made a ghastly trip through the…valley and the rough mountains — horses limping (454). Twain acknowledges his misery when he grumbles, "I never shall enjoy a meal in this distressful country. To think of eating three times every day under such circumstances for three weeks yet — it is worse punishment than riding all day in the sun (455).

Occasionally, as in Damascus, the travelers gained a short reprieve from their hardships. Twain recalls, "Through a kind of a hole in the wall [we] entered the hotel…with flowers and citron trees about us…We crossed the court and entered the rooms prepared to receive…us. In a large marble-paved recess…was a tank of clear, cool water, which was kept running over all the time…Nothing,

in this scorching, desolate land could look so refreshing… Our rooms were large, comfortably furnished, and even had their floors clothed with soft, cheerful- tinted carpets" (458).

Nevertheless, conditions for most of this side trip were harsh and primitive. The target market of those who are willing to accept these hardships is quite limited, although some of today's "backpacking crowd" might consider such an excursion to be an adventure worth taking if they could be whisked back 150 years.

Not only were traveling conditions primitive and uncomfortable, the sites that the travelers visited were undeveloped compared to the well-maintained archaeological attractions that are available today. In this regard, Twain grumbles, ."The ruins are not very interesting…trees and branches grow above many of these ruins now; the miserable huts of a little crew of filthy Arabs are perched above the broken masonry of antiquity, the whole place has a sleepy stupid…look about it (471). As a result, the environment failed to make the impression that a polished, manicured, and maintained archaeological site might have inspired. Twain acknowledges that the sites fail to trigger awe or catch his imagination when he confesses that "It seems curious enough to us to be standing on ground that was once actually pressed by the foot of the savior" (472).

Thus, when the promotors of Twain's cruise designed the voyage and its itinerary, they created a commodity. As is true of cruise ships today, when the travelers arrived at specific destinations, they found people willing to serve as guides and facilitators to show them the local sites. Such effort, of course, constitute commodified services. Nineteenth century conditions, however, tended to be primitive and the commodification process was not tightly tailored to suit specific target markets. The archaeological sites, furthermore, existed but they had not been developed into tourist-oriented products. Instead they stood as pathetic piles of rocks that were unable to generate admiration and insight. In short, although a degree of commodification existed when Twain visited the Holy Land, it was minimal by today's standards.

Today, of course, the situation is very different. Professional archaeologists have excavated numerous sites of interest to those visiting the Holy Land. Many of these sites have been groomed for visitors and they are carefully maintained (and described with aids such as signposts and placards) that cater to tourists. Well trained guides are available to provide informative commentaries and interpretations. The transportation system has been improved so tourists can move about quickly and comfortably. A range of inviting accommodations serve travelers (ranging from cost-conscious "backpackers" to the affluent who insist upon fancy Westernized hotels).

Thus, both in the 19th century and today, tourists visiting the Holy Land possess(ed) preexisting thought, had access to sources of information, and dealt with a tourism industry that provided commodified goods and services. Such characteristics are depicted in Table 2.

Table 2. Biblical Tourism: Yesterday and Today

ISSUE	TWAIN'S COMPANIONS	TODAY'S TRAVELERS
Preexisting Thought	Since most travelers were mature and affluent, their thought reflected certain demographic characteristics. Most were interested in religion.	Wider array of travelers (ranging from backpackers to those demanding fancy hotels). Wider range of age. Interests expand beyond religion.
Available descriptions	A smaller range of literature, although much of it was tailored for specific target markets. Religious focus commonplace. Some inaccuracies	Broader literature. Wide variety of sources including the internet. Tourism companies provide promotional literature. Wide variety of target markets catered to.
Commodification	Voyage was a semi-planned tour. Services and guides were available, but primitive, generic, and basic. Many important tourism assets had not been developed into tourism products	Products and services more tightly focus upon specific target markets. Wide variety of tours, lodging, etc. Assets (such as archaeology sites) developed into products. More aggressive commodification.
DISCUSSION		
Comparing 19th century and 21st century trips to the Holy Land, similarities and differences are noted. Travelers from both eras were influenced by their particular habits of thought. Although the information available to these groups of travelers varied, in both cases, what people read influenced and reinforce their existing habits of thought and vice versa. In modern times, a significantly greater degree of commodification has taken place to make the tourism experience more rewarding as well as insuring safety and comfort.		

Thus, a comparison of tourism in the Holy Land during the mid-19th century and the early 21st century demonstrates both significant differences and similarities. These variations and parallels were explored using a model built upon Walle's habit of thought paradigm (1996) coupled with Urruy's Tourist Gaze formulation (1990). The resulting model facilitates a useful comparison based upon the variables of (1) Preexisting thought, (2) Available descriptions, and (3) the degree of Commodification.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Tourism scholars and practitioners are interested in how travelers and tourists choose what they do with their leisure time and how they relate to their experiences. Such issues are usefully dealt with using models such as Walle's habits of thought (1996), and (2) Urry's tourism gaze (1990). that deal with the perspectives people hold and how they influence the tourism experience.

Such issues are usefully addressed by breaking habits of thought and their implications into a number of component parts. One way to do so involves focusing upon three subcategories of influences including (1) Preexisting thought, (2) Available descriptions, and (3) the Commodification process. Although researchers are encouraged to include additional variables as appropriate, hopefully applications of the model will not become unwieldy and unworkable.

A sample application of this method involves the analysis of a trip to the Holy Land in the 1860s written by noted novelist, essayist, and social commentator Mark Twain. Comparing Twain's observations and experiences with those of 21st century travelers, both differences and similarities emerge.

In both cases, travelers possessed preexisting habits of thought which predisposed them to view the world in specific ways and relate their experiences such paradigms. These tendencies resulted in what Urry refers to as specific examples of the tourist gaze. Such patterns of thought are deeply seated in people's minds and exert complex influences regarding how they choose to spend their leisure time as well as how they interpret and evaluate what they do and see.

Secondly, when people are traveling (or choosing to pursue specific leisure activities), they typically consult sources of information that are available to them. In the 19th century and today a variety of reference materials were available and specific examples tended to overtly cater to specific target markets. Not only does such literature provide useful information, it can also influence how people relate to and understand their experiences. When habits of thought combine with sources of information that reinforce preexisting tendencies, the resulting synergism forms powerful mental patterns that significantly influences the tourism experience.

Strategists in the tourism industry need to be aware of the habits of thought that people possess and how the sources of information they consult reinforce what they envision and what they do. By acting in accordance with such insights, tourism professionals develop tactics of commodification that tailor tourism assets into tourism products that are designed to attract the touring public or some segment of it. These strategic considerations are addressed in Table 3.

Table 3. Strategic Consideration

ISSUE	DESCRIPTION	STRATEGIC ISSUES
Preexisting Thought	People come to tourism with specific interests, beliefs, predispositions, etc.	By understanding how target markets think, tourism professionals are better able to cater to their wants and needs.
Available descriptions	Specific sources of information typically present a particular point of view. People often consult sources that reflect their preexisting thought.	What people read can be predicted. Promotional literature can be an important source of information that strategists can control.

Commodification	Effective tourism converts existing assets to tourism products that reflect the preexisting thought of travelers and the sources of information they consult.	By converting assets into products that cater to target markets, the touring public is more effectively served and develops greater loyalty.
Other	Additional considerations that are relevant when designing tourism strategies aimed at target markets can be factored into such an analysis.	Other characteristics or variables potentially play a role in attracting tourists and satisfying their demands. Such elements should be acknowledged.

DISCUSSION

An expanded and itemized application of the Habits of thought/Tourism Gaze models provides a method for those in the tourism industry to more effective respond to the needs and demands of tourists. A straightforward method of responding and implementing appropriate strategies has been discussed**.**

Such an assessment provides a (1) systematic method of analysis (2) a strategic way to evaluate and respond to the needs and demands of specific target markets. Hopefully, such thinking will prove useful as those in the tourism profession blend the commodification process with the characteristics of specific target markets.

In the 1860s noted author Mark Twain embarked on a legendary tour of the Holy Land that is chronicled in his *Innocents Abroad*. Despite profound differences between Twain's era and our own, similarities remain. By concentrating upon these similarities and differences, those in the tourism industry can better appreciate the strategic issues that need to be confronted and how to deal with them.

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