

## THE POWER OF TRAVEL TO EXPAND TIME BY ENHANCING POSITIVE EMOTIONS AND MEMORIES

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**Book Review: The power of time perception: control the speed of time to make every second count**, by Jean Paul Zogby, London, Time Lighthouse publishing, 2018, 247 pp., ISBN-10: 0995734771

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I began reading this book starting from the need to understand and define as accurately as possible the term *leisure*, in fact, that aspect without which tourism cannot exist. "Free time is sometimes harder to enjoy than work!" (p. 86), says the author. However, what particularly caught my attention was the following statement that Jean Paul Zogby borrowed from the French novelist Jules Renard: „On earth there is no heaven, but there are pieces of it everywhere” (p. 215) and which made me view the book *The Power of Time Perception* as a necessary one for tourism, as it urges the exploration and recreational use of every available second: „The world is full of sensations waiting to become memorable reminiscences, marvellous encounters waiting to be experienced, and spectacular wonders waiting to be observed.” (p. 215)

The book whose review I am developing in the following lines *is not* in the true sense of the word one about or dedicated to tourism, vacations and travel. However, reading it, readers will be able to notice, "reading between the lines", that the author urges readers to travel more than he probably intended. Zogby did this by citing (mainly) neuroscientific, psychological, and psychosociological studies. Some readers may question this observation, even the title of this review, as the author aims to provide some methods of time psychology, useful in solving the pitfalls of the *time crisis* and the *loss of time* in which more and more individuals are beginning to be trapped. However, as I will show below, Zogby repeatedly appeals to many of the concepts needed to study tourism in general and the geography of tourism in particular, such as: time, leisure, space, place, attractions, recreation, travel, vacations, motivations, emotions, feelings and activities. With all these concepts used in the study of the psychology of time, I can't help but think if Zogby didn't want to send another message: if you want to win time ... then travel! And, in order to strengthen the argument that this book *becomes* a necessary reading for understanding tourism and that it stimulates the appetite for travel, I will add that the author appeals, not infrequently, to tourism studies: „A study on vacation provides evidence for the role of novelty on time perception” (p. 170), „Research on how people enjoy their vacation has concluded that...” (p. 217) or „research has shown that anticipating a future vacation will ... slow down the time” (p. 216). So, in order to better understand the context and content of this interesting and intriguing book, below I will present the essential aspects addressed by the author in each part of the paper.

*The Power of Time Perception* is structured in four parts. In the first part, the foundations are laid for understanding the time and the way people experience it. In the second part, the author describes the factors that influence the experimentation of time. Thus, after laying the foundations for understanding and experiencing time, he goes on to the third part, where he deals with the way in which the past and the future are perceived. Finally, in the fourth part, which is the least extensive, Zogby aims to answer the question: how to make every second count?

In fact, in order to expose as accurately as possible the content of the book, I will detail each part mentioned above by pointing out those elements that attract the attention of the public. From the first part, which contains five chapters that follow logically from the psychology of perception of time and reality of time as "ultimate illusion" and ending with the distortion of time, the author is forced to integrate in his analysis spatio-temporal elements. Among them is the *sense of time* which he says "is surely ... related to the rate of change experienced by our minds" (p. 34) and which is an indispensable feature of the way the world is perceived. The previous idea, reinforced by the fact that individuals are "immersed in time" from birth, is a validation - if necessary! - of the way in which Tuan (2018) treated

the geographical concepts of *space* and *place* in relation to the time and experiences gained with its flow. In addition, he dedicates a subsection of chapter one to the relationship between space and time, because “we cannot think of time without thinking of space” (p. 39) and because the meaning of time cannot be fully understood “without using physical notions” (p. 39), in this case, without geography.

At the end of the first part, the author states that “There is obviously nothing we can do to change the real speed of time but we can control our experience of time” (p. 73). Thus, the second part strengthens the perception of the role that this book has in the relationship of psychology with leisure and the need for travel. Moreover, the author borrows methods of tourism sociology to treat concepts in contact between psychology, sociology and tourism. In fact, the titles of the subchapters “living in the moment”, “time in slow motion” and “taking control” suggest that new techniques in behavioural sciences can help individuals perceive their lives as being accessorized with more positive aspects and successfully control events that induce negative emotions.

And because we have reached the subject called *emotions*, and emotions together with feelings and memories are the ultimate reverberations and the desideratum of tourist products, we cannot fail to appreciate the classification of emotions that Zogby exposes in chapter seven: (1) high intensity and unpleasant (fear, anger, and anxiety), (2) high intensity and pleasant (love, passion, and awe), (3) low intensity and unpleasant (shame, guilt, sadness, and disgust) and (4) low intensity and pleasant (satisfaction, pride, and hope). The author anticipates the idea of such a subject as early as chapter five, when he says that encouraging the beneficial flow of time is determined by motivations, goals and challenges and presents in great detail, using suggestive examples, the role of some of the most intense emotions. This is the point where the psychological and neuroscientific studies and research on which the author's argument is based reach the highest density.

In this context, important from a tourist point of view is the appreciation according to which fun is the result of two types of motivational intensity: *low-motivation* and *high-motivation*. The first type is specific to individuals who prefer *passive fun*, characteristic of relaxing at the beach and enjoying the gaze of a soothing natural landscape, and the second, those who prefer *active fun*, where hobbies, sports and adventure activities are predominant. The author's conclusion is that leisure time is an active high-motivation that expands time and creates great memories. In addition, the pun used in the book to express the perceptual extent and contraction of time allows a useful parallel with geography. Zogby pays tribute to geography and geographical scale by stating that: „natural time is not measured in seconds and minutes but, rather, in sunrises and sunsets and in the change of seasons ... at ... a grand scale” (p. 120).

If I were to say that in the third part Zogby deals only with *the past* and *the future*, I would be doing him an injustice. The theme extends beyond these two aspects. *Location*, after being defined using visual examples, is used by the author to place the past in a human, social and even ethnic and cultural context, and at the end of chapter 10 he points out an essential aspect: the holiday paradox. Not many have thought (or have an answer!) why holidays are consumed so quickly and why every work week is unnaturally long. Zogby, through the parallel he makes between routine activities and vacations, dispels the fog of paradox. In short, his arguments are that holidays are long awaited and therefore “seem” to pass in an instant, while repetitive activities (e.g. the job of most individuals) do not introduce any novelty in people's lives and therefore are perceived as moments of time expansion. On the other hand, even if consumed quickly, holidays imprint in the memory a lot of novelty, many details that turn into positive memories and, therefore, viewed retrospectively, become longer in duration. Routine, on the other hand, determines the opposite.

Although little applicable on a macro scale, the author urges us to think about combining work and vacation to increase productivity, avoid routine and accumulate memories that extend time: “imagine another day at work ... in a training seminar in a mountain ski resort” (p. 169). Such approaches, which are essentially pleasant, are what make this book one of those of personal development and try to propose methods, often impractical and inapplicable, to those who want to make a change in their personal life.

The last part is composed of a single chapter and is intended to be a guide to expanding time. Here is the best feature of a personal development book, but what I find constructive is the frequency with which the author urges readers to travel, to visit new places to offer them memorable experiences and memories

so that the brain can process them as memories full of details. The "building anticipation" section is exclusively dedicated to suggest that individuals must plan their holidays (early), because only in this way emotions can be intensified and the speed of time will slow down.

However, after reading this intriguing and fascinating book, I cannot say that it is a text to be used as teaching material, but it can give thought to tourism specialists and pave the way for new research opportunities.

### **References**

Tuan, Y.-F., 2018. *Space and place: the perspective of experience*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.