

**The Image of Tourism Destinations:**

**A Case of Dracula Tourism**

**By**

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## **AUTHOR'S DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

## **ABSTRACT**

Destination image is a concept created by different demand and supply agents. The balance between what is expected and what is being delivered is essential in promoting the destination. The main goal of this study is to describe the different destination images related to Dracula tourism in Transylvania. This is accomplished by looking at the Western tourists' expectations and demands as expressed in their travel blogs, and by analyzing the supply side through the elicitation of information from locals and Bran Castle tour guides through qualitative interviews.

Qualitative content analysis was used to analyze the content, visual and audio information on sampled blogs and interviews. This method identified 11 different themes which captured the overall destination image. The themes focused primarily on historical and fictional images of the destination, on the type of tourists visiting Bran Castle, but also on the locals' image and response to Dracula tourism.

The findings of this study reveal that the majority of Western bloggers visit Bran in search for Count Dracula; however, the Bran Castle tour guides focus on presenting the historical truth. Local residents, although seeing Dracula as a national hero, sometimes adopt the mythical image as a marketing or product development tactic in selling to visitors. Nevertheless, the stakeholders involved in the creation of the image each fit into different destination image frameworks, allowing for the creation of an overall destination image based on historical and fictional elements.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

Destination image is one of the most researched topics in tourism due to its power to invoke certain images into tourists' minds. The value of the destination image to the local destination marketing organizations and other destination promoters is uncontested due to its power to attract more tourists to the area. Fakeye and Crompton (1991) note that images are of paramount importance to destinations because they have the power to change and rearrange the tourists' impressions and perceptions of a destination and "give him or her a pre-taste of the destination" (p. 10).

The traveler's image of a destination is built not only on past experiences and marketing communications, but also on non-promotional media. These include films, novels, and television shows. Squire (1996) notes that literary tourism – a form of tourism inspired by novels and poetry - "is premised upon the public's desire to experience a version of the past (or imagined present) and to make connections between past and present, fact and fiction. It therefore trades in images and expectations of people, places and particular historic periods" (p. 129). The image of a destination can therefore be based on images being portrayed in movies and novels, but also on the tourists' interpretation of these images and their expectations of these images to be seen at the destination.

When literary images are based on historical events, they tend to blur fact and fiction. For example, Robb (1998) mentions that, in England, "the myth of King Arthur

flourishes in a non-place realm, furnishing visitors with popular pre-visit images and expectations . . . [and] attempts to tie him to identifiable sites” (p. 581). These images and expectations are built on literary and film productions that have been inspired by the historical King Arthur. Historical figures have always been at the center of many movies and novels, creating images of bravery and heroism. Tourists who visit the destination associated with these figures often share their experiences and images of the destination with others.

The destination images held by consumers are so powerful that they can either benefit the country or have a negative impact. In order to benefit the destination, images have to be distinctive, appealing, simple, and most importantly, believable and should be based on reality (Kotler & Gertner 2004). However, because authenticity is a widely subjective concept, any image can be perceived as authentic depending on whom the viewer is.

## **1.2 Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this case study is two-part: (1) to describe the different destination images related to Dracula tourism in Transylvania, and (2) to find out how the locals and tour guides respond to these images. This is achieved by looking at the difference and similarities between the Western tourists’ images of Dracula as expressed on their blogs and that of the locals, and by examining the Bran Castle tour guides’ response to tourists’ demands.

For this study, Western tourists are represented by British, American and Canadian tourists who have visited Bran Castle and have documented their vacations on

the Internet through the use of a personal web page and blogs; while the locals are identified as residents of Brasov, the capital of Brasov County where Dracula's Castle is located.

### **1.3 Research Goal, Objectives and Questions**

The main goal of this research was to examine the Western tourists' and the locals' image of Dracula, and to see how both the locals and the Bran Castle tour guides respond to the Western demands.

In order to accomplish the research goal, four objectives were developed:

1. To find out the locals' perceptions of Dracula
2. To find out Dracula's image as portrayed by Western tourists on their blogs
3. To find out how the Bran Castle tour guides have responded to Dracula images and Dracula tourism
4. To compare the western images of Dracula with the history accepted by the locals

The following research questions guided the study by answering issues relevant to the main objectives and narrow down the findings to accomplish the research goal:

1. What is the Western image of Dracula?
2. What does Dracula signify for the locals?
3. What Dracula images are being promoted at Bran Castle?

## 1.4 Significance of Study

A country's image held by outsiders can impact its people and culture. This study is aimed at describing the issues between the supply and demand sides of destination image formation in the hope to help the image represent the destination more accurately. When talking specifically about Dracula tourism, Light (2007) notes that:

Faced with a form of demand that generated foreign currency, yet collided with the country's identity as a socialist state, Romania adopted a strategy for almost three decades of reluctantly tolerating Dracula tourism, while doing nothing to encourage it. As such, there was (and is) a fundamental incongruity between the expectations of Western Dracula enthusiasts and the unwillingness of the Romanian authorities to cater for them (p. 760).

By addressing the difference between the images projected by the Western Dracula enthusiasts and those of locals from Transylvania, the overall image of Dracula can be revised to make sure that it illustrates the reality and the demands of the tourists. The results of this research can provide DMOs and other tourism agencies with valuable information and tools for better creating and managing a destination image by taking into consideration both the supply and demand sides represented by the local tourism agencies and the western tourists blogging their experiences over the Internet. Furthermore, this study addresses the issues of authenticity of images in that it is intended to portray the differences between the real historical image of Dracula and the romanticized image of a vampire, which can be authentic in the eyes of the Western bloggers.

While destination image is a concept that has already been studied by many researchers, there seems to be a lack of studies that link destination image with the concept of authenticity. Pine and Gilmore (2008) note that today many people choose to spend their money based on how real they perceive an attraction or image to be. In the

case of Dracula images, it is important to see if a mismatch between the historical reality and the fictional images cause visitor dissatisfaction, and what are the reactions of the locals to the westerners' misperceptions of Dracula. Therefore, this study will add knowledge to the concept of the authenticity of the destination image and how it affects both the visitors and the locals. A comprehensive literature review follows in the next section, highlighting the main concepts that will be used to guide the research and accomplish the main goal.

## **1.5 The Study Context**

### ***1.5.1 Historical, Literary, and Film Background***

In Western culture, Transylvania has long been a place of profound images related to vampires and dark forces. These images have resulted in the portrayal of a beautiful Romanian region as one of the most sinister and mysterious regions in Europe: Transylvania, the land of Dracula.

As supernatural as some might think Dracula is, he was a real person - a ruler in Wallachia, now a province of Romania called Muntenia. Born circa 1430 in Sighisoara, Romania, Vlad Tepes was the son of Vlad Dracul, the ruler of Wallachia (Newman, 2004). He sometimes assumed the name of Dracula, which in Romanian means son of Dracul (Dragon). This name came from The Order of the Dragon, an order created to fight the Turks, and invested by a Hungarian king upon Dracula's father (Florescu and McNally, 1973, Light, 2007, Iordanova, 2007).

As a prince, Dracula "generally resided at the court of Targoviste" (Florescu and McNally, 1973, p. 50) located in Wallachia. His strong overpowering personality had

influenced him to “settle a personal grievance against the boyars class, to avenge the brutal slaying of his father and the burial alive of his brother Mircea” (Florescu and McNally, 1973, p. 59). Acts of brutality against Turks and boyars have been used by Dracula in an attempt to keep traitors away and discourage the Ottoman Empire to fight over his territory. Dracula’s massive killings were not necessarily what shocked the society; “he gained notoriety for his exceptionally harsh rule and his practice of impaling both lawbreakers and his Ottoman enemies on wooden stakes” (Light, 2007, p. 750). In 1476, Dracula was defeated and killed in a battle against the Turks and boyars whom he fought so intensely during his reign (Florescu and McNally, 1973). Today, “Romanians are most likely to regard Vlad Tepes as a national hero who fought against the Turks and freed the country from the rule of the Ottoman Empire” (Muresan and Smith, 1998, p. 76).

However, a novel written in the 19<sup>th</sup> century would change the historical figure into a mythical vampire. Bram Stoker’s novel, written in 1897 in London, England portrays a Victorian vampire able to keep itself immortal by drinking the blood of humans (Ronay, 1972). Stoker gives his character a Transylvanian identity and endows him with vampire like characteristic such as “pointed ears and protruding canine....coarse, broad hands with squat fingers – as werewolves are described. His palms, too, are hairy and the nails cut to a sharp point. His eyes glow red” (Leatherdale, 1987, p. 105).

It is not his appearance that transformed a legend into a vampire, but the thirst for human blood. One of the most important historical sources of vampirism can be traced back to the early 1600s when Elisabeth Bathory, a Hungarian countess living in a hidden

castle in the Carpathian Mountains in Transylvania, used the blood of 650 virgins as a beautification liquid (Ronay, 1972). Bram Stoker's connection between Bathory's desire to stay forever young by bathing in blood, and that of Count Dracula's immortality reached by drinking human blood, is inevitable due to his attraction to the vampire theme which gave him the opportunity to "create one of the most powerful Gothic horror tales in the entire history of literature" (Florescu and McNally, 1972, p. 152).

The film industry has also played an important role into the creation and promotion of mythical Count Dracula. "Universal had made several Dracula movies with Bela Lugosi between 1930 and 1960. Bypassing all real historical prototypes and Stoker's character, Universal now claimed it had in fact developed and respectively patented Dracula's image with the black cape, the deathly pale skin, and the fangs" (Iordanova, 2007, p. 56). The historical Vlad Tepes has undergone many changes throughout the decades, and sadly his image changed from that of a hero to a vampire thirsty for human blood.

Both the national hero and the vampire are images being marketed for tourists in Romania. Despite never being the residence of Vlad Tepes, due to the demand and increase in international tourists to Transylvania in search of Dracula, the Romanian Ministry of Tourism has promoted Bran Castle as Dracula's Castle and included information on the legend of Dracula in its promotional written literature on Romania (Muresan and Smith, 1998). The Castle, located just 27 kilometers south-west of Brasov, was built around 1212 with the original purpose to serve as a gate between Transylvania and Wallachia, and an obstacle against foreign invasion (Muresan and Smith, 1998).

Today, Bran Castle is open as a museum, and has become the focus of the tourist exploitation of the Dracula myth.

### ***1.5.2 Dracula Tourism***

Early Dracula enthusiasts who traveled to Transylvania “found little to cater to their interests, not because of hostility from the socialist authorities but simply because the Western Dracula myth was virtually unknown to Romania” (Light, 2007, p. 753). Just about over a decade ago the majority of ordinary Romanians, and particularly the inhabitants of Transylvania, were unaware of the international infamy of Vlad the Impaler and his literary counterpart, the chilling Count Dracula (Iordanova, 2007). However, after the 1989 Revolution, post-communist Romania emerged as a global marketplace in which tourism has been identified as one means for establishing a new national identity and for establishing competitive advantage in the regional and international economy (Jamal and Tanase, 2007).

Muresan and Smith (1998) categorize Dracula tourism as a form of literary and film tourism in which tourists desire to see the places connected to a novel or a writer, and to search a reality based on fiction. Tourists travel to Transylvania in hopes to discover the real landscapes described by Stoker and the surroundings where the themes of more than 1000 vampirism novels take place (Light, 2007). The film industry has also played an important role into the creation and promotion of Dracula images. Although Universal had made several Dracula movies with Bela Lugosi between 1930 and 1960, the Hollywood-style Dracula began to grow in post-communist Romania only in 1992 when the movie *Bram Stoker’s Dracula*, directed by Francis Ford Coppola, was released



to Romanian viewers (Iordanova, 2007). As a result, Iordanova (2007) mentions that the local entrepreneurs gradually internalized the western idea in order to achieve a steady cash-flow, while the local people “were carving a niche of ‘diversity’ that was created for the sake of the cosmopolitan...it was compliance with the ‘tourist gaze’” (p. 58). Further, she notes that while the Dracula attractions are valuable to the local economy, the locals treat Dracula traffic and attractions with “scorn and ridicule” (p. 59).

Although Transylvania is the best-known Dracula destination, the main attraction within Transylvania is Bran Castle. Because Vlad Tepes’ real castle, located in Poienari, is in ruin today; Bran Castle has become the focus of Dracula tourism for a number of reasons: its accessibility and location near the town of Brasov - the second largest tourist destination in Romania, and its medieval look which falls along the descriptions of Count Dracula’s castle (Muresan and Smith, 1998). The castle, built in 1377 was initially constructed as a protective fortress for the inhabitants of Brasov Province; however, it later became the royal residence ([www.brancastlemuseum.ro](http://www.brancastlemuseum.ro)). In 1947, when King Mihai I abdicated from the throne, Princess Ileana along with her family left Romania, leaving the castle in the state’s custody. Because today Bran Castle is considered a national heritage attraction by the Romanian Ministry of Tourism, tourists visiting the castle are being exposed to two different marketing strategies: the tourism agencies’ fiction-oriented approach and the Government’s fact-oriented policy (Light, 2007). Due to the duality in images regarding Dracula and Bran Castle, the research done by Muresan and Smith (1998) at Bran Castle revealed that the majority of tourists were aware that Dracula legend had no connection to the castle, however, many thought that the castle should develop a Dracula theme with images based on reality and not myth.

Around the castle, “tourists...may spend the night at ‘Count Dracula’ Motel and Restaurant situated nearby, may taste Dracula’s Red Wine, and whether or not they believe in the legend, one look at the castle is enough to convince even the most doubting that sometimes fact and fiction do well to go hand-in-hand” (Mureasan and Smith, 1998, p. 82). In the case of Romanian exploitation of Dracula, “one knows that the real thing and the imaginary have little in common, nevertheless a mercantile interest thrives, building on the fascination with the imaginary” (Iordanova, 2007, p. 58).

Tourists’ desires to discover Dracula at Bran might come into reality as early as Summer 2009. Dan (2009) reports in the national newspaper *Adevarul*, that the official verbal agreement of restitution of Bran Castle to the Habsburg regal family took place on Monday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2009. The actual legal retrocession happened in May 2006, the castle now belonging to the archduke Dominic Habsburg-Lothringen, the son of Princess Ileana of Romania. Although the new owner’s plans are unknown so far, the castle has already undergone changes, with the large furniture pieces belonging to the state being moved out of the museum into the Medieval section of the castle, while the small artifacts being packed and deposited in storage (<http://adevarul.ro>). This development offers the new owner an open gate to promoting Bran Castle to the world. Whether he decides to promote the historical nature of the castle, or the mythical vampire, it is unknown. No matter what the future entails, Transylvania as a destination does not lack fame.

Transylvania’s image has been further influenced by the proposal made by the Romanian Ministry of Tourism to develop a Dracula theme park in Transylvania (Iordanova, 2007, Light 2007, Jamal and Tanase, 2005). After deliberations and consultation with PricewaterhouseCoopers in 2002, the project which has been estimated

to cost \$31.4 million was doomed unfeasible due to “serious doubts as to the park’s chance to offer something that would not already be available at more accessible locations in the West and that would prompt masses of Western tourist to take the trip to Romania” (Iordanova, 2007, p. 52). However, maybe the biggest realization of this project was that even if Dracula is marketable, there is no existing demand for the product within Romania’s domestic market that views Vlad Tepes as a national hero and Bran Castle as a medieval heritage site (Iordanova, 2007, Muresan and Smith, 1998).

The myth of Dracula will always put Transylvania on the tourism map because to its internationally recognizable image. Due to the literary and film works and the annual world Dracula congresses, Dracula tourism will always raise curiosity and interest amongst Western tourists (Muresan and Smith, 1998).

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Destination Image**

Tourism is often used as the driving force for regional development, and it has been generally accepted in the literature that destination image has influenced tourists' behaviors (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Etchner and Ritchie, 1993; San Martin, Rodriguez and Bosque, 2007). Tourists make their choices of where to travel based on the destination images being portrayed by the destination marketers but also based on their own images of a destination that come from many different sources, including – sometimes – past experiences with a destination. Chen and Tsai (2006) note that the evaluation of a destination is based on the perceived quality, value and overall satisfaction with a destination. Destination image can influence the tourists' future intentions to visit and their willingness to recommend the destination to others. Thus, destination image is a concept which tourism managers and DMOs recognize as being one of the most important factors in destination marketing.

##### ***2.1.1 Definition***

Destination image influences tourists' decision-making in regards to where they will spend their vacation and money. The importance of the destination image for the consumers allows us to think of any destination from the consumer's perspective in terms of how they sense, understand, use and connect to the place (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2004). Kotler and Gertner (2004) define a destination image as:

The sum of beliefs and impressions people hold about place. Images represent a simplification of a larger number of associations and pieces of information connected to a place. They are a product of the mind trying to process and pick out essential information from huge amounts of data about a place (p. 42)

Because there is no single, accepted definition for “destination image”, San Martin and del Bosque (2008) have compiled a table in to show the main similarities among definitions (Table 1). Ratkai (2004) has also looked at how destination image has been conceptualized by earlier researchers, and came to the conclusion that, while many studies failed to define destination image, defining the concept has been difficult making it a subjective and abstract subject. However, most of the definitions found in San Martin and del Bosque’s (2008) and Ratkai’s compilations include terms such as “impression” and “perception” of tourists to describe the concept of destination image. The repetition of these terms reinforces the idea that the tourists are ultimately the ones who influence the way a destination is viewed by the world. Based on their personal impressions and perceptions, tourists have the power to influence the tourism flow to any destination. San Martin and del Bosque (2008), in their explanation of how destination images are formed, noted that the consumers’ perception of a destination is based on information from different sources over time, which is selected, elaborated and embellished in order to have a meaningful existence.

From San Martin and del Bosque’s (2008) compilation of destination image definitions, one has particularly stood up due to its applicability to the case study presented in this research. Murphy, Pritchard, and Smith (2000) have defined destination image as a sum of associations and pieces of information connected to a destination,

which would include multiple components of the destination and personal perception.

The associations and information relevant to the case of Dracula tourism in Transylvania are largely based on induced images created by the literary and film creations involving Dracula. Based on these images which are often connected to Transylvania, consumers form mental images, perceptions and expectations of what they would encounter if they travel to Transylvania. In order to better understand how these images are formed, a closer look to numerous image formation frameworks is required.

Table 1  
Definitions of destination image

Author/s	Definition
Lawson and Baud-Bovy (1977)	An expression of knowledge, impressions, prejudices, imaginations and emotional thoughts an individual has of a specific place
Crompton (1979)	Sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a person has of a destination
Assael (1984)	Total perception of the destination that is formed by processing information from various sources over time
Phelps (1986)	Perceptions or impressions of a place
Gartner and Hunt (1987)	Impressions that persons hold about a state in which they do not reside
Moutinho (1987)	An individual's attitude toward the destination attributes based on their knowledge and feelings
Calantone et al. (1989)	Perceptions of potential tourist destinations
Embacher and Buttle (1989)	Ideas or conceptions held individually or collectively of the destination under investigation
Chon (1990)	Result of the interaction of a person's beliefs, ideas, feelings, expectations and impressions about a destination
Echtner and Ritchie (1991)	The perceptions of individual destination attributes and the holistic impression made by the destination
Dadgostar and Isotalo (1992)	Overall impression or attitude that an individual acquires of a place
Milman and Pizam (1995)	Visual or mental impression of a place, a product, or an experience held by the general public
MacKay and Fesenmaier (1997)	A composite of various products (attractions) and attributes woven into a total impression
Pritchard (1998)	An visual or mental impression of a specific place
Baloglu and McCleary (1999a)	An individual's mental representation of knowledge, feelings, and global impressions about a destination
Coshall (2000)	The individual's perceptions of the characteristics of destinations
Murphy, Pritchard and Smith (2000)	A sum of associations and pieces of information connected to a destination, which would include multiple components of the destination and personal perception
Tapachai and Waryszak (2000)	Perceptions or impressions of a destination held by tourists with respect to the expected benefit or consumption values
Bigné, Sánchez and Sánchez (2001)	The subjective interpretation of reality made by the tourist
Kim and Richardson (2003)	Totality of impressions, beliefs, ideas, expectations, and feelings accumulated towards a place over time

Figure 1 - Definitions of Destination Image

(San Martin and del Bosque, 2008)

### ***2.1.2 Frameworks of Destination Image Formation***

In order to better express and visualize the formation of a destination image, Baloglu and McCleary (1999a) created a framework of destination image formation based on the interactive relationship between the destination image and the personal and stimulus factors (Figure 3). The personal and stimulus factors act as forces upon the destination image. The personal factors include the psychological factors, represented by consumers' values, motivations, and personality; and the social factors which are the consumers' age, marital status and others. The stimulus factors are being represented by the information sources, the consumers' previous experience and the distribution channels. When these two different factors are applied to the destination image, it creates different evaluations of the image. The perceptual/cognitive evaluation is based on the beliefs or knowledge about the destination, while the affective evaluation refers to the consumers' emotions towards a destination image. Further, the perceptual /cognitive evaluation and the affective evaluation create an overall global image of the destination.

While Baloglu and McCleary's (1999a) framework seems very general, it does offer researchers the opportunity to explore the relationship between two image destination forces: stimulus factors and personal factors. When assessing the global image of any destination, it is important to trace back the steps involved in creating the image. Having access to information regarding the consumers' social and psychological attributes, and the agents involved in the destination promotion, can allow marketers of destinations to influence these personal and stimulus factors in such a way to change the perceptual/cognitive and affective assessments of a destination, and thus, create a more representative image of the destination.



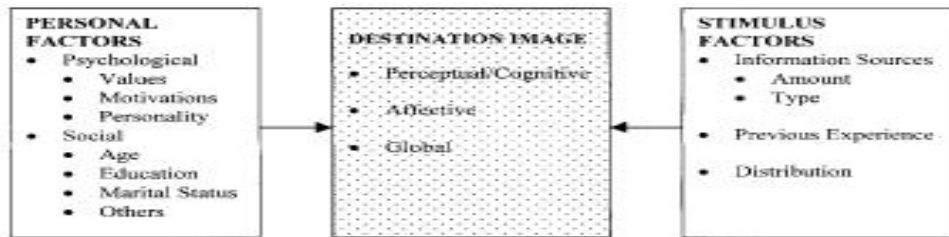


Figure 2 - A General Framework of Destination Image Formation

(Baloglu and McCleary, 1999)

In hopes to offer a better understanding of the complexity of destination image, Echtner and Ritchie (1993) gave four suggestions for better conceptualizing and measuring destination image: 1) destination image has to be viewed as having attribute-based and holistic components, 2) these components have functional (tangible) and psychological (abstract) characteristics, 3) images range from common and functional to unique, and 4) a combination of structured and unstructured methodologies should be used in order to identify the destination image. These suggestions were based on a previous framework for destination image which Echtner and Ritchie (1991) constructed. The framework consists of three different sets of components required in the destination image formation process (Figure 4):

1. attribute-holistic set – comprised of those perceptions of individual attributes and the more holistic impressions of place
2. functional-psychological set – comprised of elements that are observable and measurable and those that are less tangible

3. common-unique set – comprised of the destination images ranging from common to unique

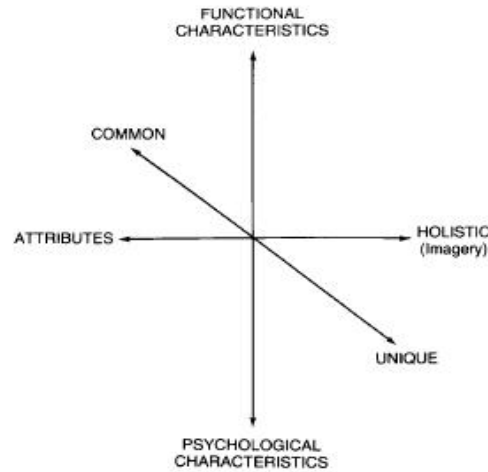


Figure 3 - The Components of Destination Image

Echtner and Ritchie (1991, p.6)

Echtner and Ritchie (1991) note that, although the graphic design of their model appears to divide the concept of image into different three different and independent components, there is overlap among the three. For example, “holistic impressions are based on combinations and interactions of attributes and, in turn, perceptions of individual attributes may be influenced by overall impressions and feelings” (p. 5).

Echtner and Ritchie’s (1991) framework allows researchers to better measure destination images, measurements that are useful for positioning and promoting destinations. As mentioned in their fourth suggestion, this can be achieved by following a combination of structured and unstructured methodologies such as open-ended questionnaires and scale items that can capture all the destination image sets presented in their framework. This suggestion was put into practice in 1993, when Etchner and

Ritchie used their model to assess the overall image of four different countries: Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, and Switzerland. A total of 600 questionnaires were given to students from four different educational institutions. The researchers' goal was to use both open-ended questions and scale items to capture the complex nature of the destination image.

Some of the open-ended questions used by Echtner and Ritchie (1993) are:

1. What images or characteristics come to mind when you think of XXX as a vacation destination?
2. How would you describe the atmosphere or mood that you would expect to experience while visiting XXX?
3. Please list any distinctive or unique tourist attractions that you can think of in XXX. (p. 5).

The researchers produced 70 scale items that were incorporated into a six-point Likert scale. When assessing the image of Jamaica, some of the scale items included:

1. Interest/Adventure:
  - a. A holiday in Jamaica is a real adventure
  - b. Everything is different and fascinating
  - c. Many places of interest to visit
2. Tourist facilitation
  - a. Many packaged vacations available
  - b. Good tourist information is readily available
3. Natural state
  - a. Restful and relaxing place to visit
  - b. Offers a lot in terms of natural scenic beauty

4. Cultural distance
  - a. Lifestyles and customs are similar to ours
  - b. Food is similar to ours
  - c. Local architectural styles are similar to ours
5. Inexpensiveness
  - a. Prices are low
  - b. Goods and services are expensive
6. Lack of language barrier
  - a. Few people understand English
  - b. Many people speak English (p. 9)

Echtner and Ritchie (1993) noted that “the scale items, usually based on a set of standardized attributes, are used to rate and compare a series of destinations. While such structured methodologies can be quite affective for measuring the common and attribute-based components of image, they are not useful for capturing the unique and holistic components (p. 5). These last components can be captured through the use of open ended questions. By using methods such as content analysis, factor analysis and reliability analysis, Echtner and Ritchie (1993) were able to extrapolate the holistic and unique images of the destination image, and its attribute-based components.

Although Echtner and Ritchie (1993) recognized that “the placement of the image data for any country into the various ‘boxes’ “is a somewhat artificial exercise” (p. 11), the exercise provides a useful assessment of the overall image of a destination. The image should not be assessed by each of the figures, but it “should be envisaged as the combination and interaction of all the components – attributes, holistic, common, unique,

functional and psychological” (p.11). Nevertheless, their study has shown that in order to capture the complex nature of a destination image, there is a need to use both structured and unstructured methods of gathering and analyzing the data.

### ***2.1.3 Image Formation Agents***

Gunn (1988) noted that a consumer’s destination image depends largely on external stimuli, which are also called image formation agents by Gartner (1993). As seen above, the creation of destination images are based on different personal and stimulus factors (Bologlu and McClearly, 1999); but also on perceptual and more abstract factors such as consumers’ attributes and impressions of place. These factors allow images to become either organic or induced. Gunn (1988) introduced the notion of organic and induced images in tourism. Organic images are those come from unbiased sources, while induced images are based on marketing and promotional material. He created a model to show how different agents can contribute to the destination image formation. His model contains seven phases of the travel experience within which the image is constantly changing:

1. Accumulation of mental images about vacation experiences
2. Modification of those images by further information
3. Decision to take a vacation trip
4. Travel to the destination
5. Participation at the destination
6. Return home
7. Modification of images based on the vacation experience

The main stages of destination image formation are happening in state one, two, and seven where destination images are first absorbed, then changed based on additional information and later modified again based on the overall experience. In phases one and two, the destination images are created based on secondary information, while in phase seven they are modified based on first hand experience. Thus, the images developed in phases one and two are induced images since they are coming from outside sources, while those created in stage seven are most likely organic images based on personal experience. Gartner (1993) suggested that the difference between induced and organic images is the amount of control destinations have over what is being presented.

In order for destinations to better understand from where these images originate, and to help destinations gain a greater control over the images being marketed, Gartner (1993) compiled a list of eight different image formation agents:

1. Overt induced I – traditional forms of advertising which promote a certain destination image to attract visitors; this can include television, brochures, radio, and other advertising outlets
2. Overt induced II – information received from tourism agencies which are not directly associated with a destination. The images portrayed by these agents might not be realistic since they are based purely on profits.
3. Covert induced I – the use of a recognizable spokesperson in order to overcome credibility issues, or any endorsement from satisfied consumers
4. Covert induced II – any published material where the consumer is not aware of the involvement of the destination promoters. This can include materials written by reporters who were invited to a destination by the local DMO

5. Autonomous agents – news and reports which are independently produced
6. Unsolicited organic – information not requested and provided by tourists who have been to a destination and believe have knowledge of it. This agent is most influential on people who do not have any or little images of a destination.
7. Solicited organic – information gathered from family or friends regarding a destination. This type of agent can be very influential due to the perceived credibility and trustworthiness between those offering the information and the future consumer.
8. Organic – information gathered by the tourist during a trip which holds the highest rank of credibility since it is based on personal experiences.

The first four agents are involved in inducing images to consumers because they are all largely based on marketing the destination upfront or behind a cover. While the fifth agent is more neutral, the last three agents are becoming more organic in nature because they tend to be largely based on consumer's experiences. The identification of these image agents allows marketing organizations to better manage these agents in order to project a better image and therefore a better brand. Destinations can choose which agents to use in order to build a more believable and realistic image. Their selection could be based on the agents' credibility, cost or involvement in the tourism industry (Gartner, 1993).

However, due to the complexity of the destination image formation process and the number of agents involved in the creation and promotion of images, it has often been difficult to control the images portrayed. Kotler and Gertner (2004) note that “most

country images are stereotypes, extreme simplifications of the reality that are not necessarily accurate. They might be dated, based on exceptions rather than patterns, on impressions rather than facts, but nonetheless, pervasive” (p. 43). Due to the emergence of the Internet as one of the most used methods of communication, destinations have been faced with a new agent involved in the creation and promotion of destination images – the blog.

#### ***2.1.4 Blogging as an Image Formation Agent***

For centuries, people have expressed their thoughts, impressions and emotions through the means of arts, or by paper and ink. Today, technology has been evolving in ways that it allows people to communicate their thoughts to others by posting them on the Internet through the use of a blog. Young (2002) defines a blog as an “online diary or journal...a place for you to put your experiences out for the world to see, a place for feedback from others, or even a place to vent” (p. 27). Keren (2002) also refers to blogs, or “weblogs”, as online diaries with links to other Internet sites of interest, while Pan, McLaurin and Crofts (2007) characterize blogs as a new important form of digitized world-of-mouth communication.

Due to the emergence of a modern mass media world, individuals have lost many means to participate in the public communication. As a result, Keren (2002) believes blogging has allowed the public sphere to be reborn because it gives people the opportunity to express themselves:

The search for subjective expression by those formerly marginalized in the public sphere is facilitated by software allowing hundreds of thousands of individual, however “colorful”, to publish their life stories...blogging provides individuals with



a way to overcome exclusion and to express their “true” selves” (p. 8)

Pan, *et al.* (2007) talk about the main motivations for blogging which include: entertainment, information, social interaction, self-expression, passing time and professional advancement; while Schmallegger and Carson (2007) note that the barriers to effective use of the Internet include computer competence, differences in technology adoption between different agents, and resistance to innovation. Moreover, Young (2002) provides a list of pros and cons regarding blogging. The pros are: blogs are essentially free to create or read, easy to use, a good networking tool, fun, can promote collaboration, and hosted on a remote server which allows the blogger to access the page at any time from anywhere; while the cons are: children are not afraid to post anything, negative comments and spam, can be time-consuming, may not be updated, and potentially biased. While consumers choose to share their experiences and beliefs online due to the above positive factors, those in search of information should realize that blogs might vary depending on each persons’ experiences and perceptions, factors that are highly subjective and do not apply from one person to another. The profile of a blog can also depend on the characteristics of the blogger. Mack *et al* (2007) note that the profile of a typical blogger is mostly male (57 %), young (48 % under 30), broadband users, internet veterans, with higher income and education level. Thus, the blog’s accuracy and attractiveness is dependent on the blogger’s capability to make the blog attractive and his/her knowledge of what is being presented.

Pan, *et al.* (2007) believe that “interpersonal influence arising from opinion exchange between consumers is an important factor influencing consumers’ purchase decisions” (p. 35). Schmallegger and Carson (2007) mention that the exchange of

information between consumers is perceived as higher compared to traditional tourist information sources which might lack the direct experience with the tourism product. Since, travel blogs offer tourists the opportunity to express their experiences with a destination and are assumed to be independent; it is inevitable that this digital word-of-mouth communication will become the preferred source of information for travelers (Pan, *et al.*, 2007).

Choi, *et al.* (2006) note that although image formation has been examined extensively in the literature, research on the Internet as an image formation agent is still in its early stages. Because the Internet has transformed the way information is passed and the distribution and marketing of tourism products, the addition of online information sources to the image formation agents is essential. Schmallegger and Carson (2007) suggest that because blogging is often used as a promotion tool, they help define the image of a destination. Travel blogs were one of the online information sources used in their study of Macau's destination image. Their data revealed that information was not consistent across different online sources, thus, the researchers suggested that destination marketers should adjust their marketing strategies based on these images.

A similar study done by Lin and Huang (2006) revealed that only one blog – “I left my heart in the Aegean Sea” - posted by a Taiwanese who traveled to the Aegean Sea in Greece, attracted about two million visitors in the first six months. People praised his photography, left messages expressing their thanks, desires and even plans to visit Greece. His blog was so successful that a company offered to publish a book, a calendar and jigsaw of his photographs. Through their study, Lin and Huang (2006) were able to reveal the impact blogs can have on travelers and on the marketing of destinations.

The visual and mental images posted on the Internet regarding worldwide destinations are ultimately based on each person's experience and understanding of a destination. While this form of Web marketing might increase the tourism flow to an area, it might also predispose tourists to have certain expectations. In tourism, the concept of authenticity has influenced many destination marketers to rethink the way they market their attractions.

## **2.2 Destination Image Authenticity**

The concept of authenticity has been of interest to many researchers (Pearce and Moscardo, 1986; Cohen, 1988, Taylor, 2001, Reisinger and Steiner, 2006, McCannell, 1973, 1976) mainly because, as Pine and Gilmore (2008) mention, "people increasingly see the world in terms of real of face, and they want to buy the real from the genuine – not the fake from some phony" (p. 19). While authenticity is becoming a sensitive concept for tourists, researchers still have a hard time defining the concept. Reisinger and Steiner (2006) note that in most studies "the intent is to find a way to stabilize how authenticity is defined and applied in tourism and to lay the groundwork for negotiations within the field on its meaning and significance" (p. 66).

In tourism, authenticity can be defined as "a desired experience or benefit associated with visits to certain types of tourism destinations. It is presumed to be the result of an encounter with true, uncommercialized, everyday life in a culture different than that of the visitor" (Smith, 1990, p. 31). Taylor (2001) mentioned that:

authenticity in the present must pay homage to a conception of origins. In this way, tourism sites, objects, images and even people are not simply viewed as contemporaneous productions, or as context depended and

complex things in the present. Instead, they are positioned as signifiers of past events, epochs, or ways of life. In this way authenticity is equated with the “traditional” (p. 9).

Authenticity then is a concept that deals with whichever is perceived as being “traditional” and untouched by modern society. However, as Taylor (2001) mentioned, in the present many of these attractions might be produced by the present society. Hence, the breadth of authenticity is depended “on the depth of the touristic experience to which each individual tourists (*sic*) aspire” (Cohen, 1998, p. 383). Authenticity is a concept which can be either subjectively or objectively viewed. This allows researchers to be more flexible when assessing the authenticity of a destination or attractions; however, it also raises concerns of consistency and validity in research.

### ***2.2.1 Objectivist View***

Firstly, “the term itself derives from the Greek *authentikos*, containing *authos* – the same – and thus denoting a relation of identity with itself...[today] authenticity is taken to mean a condition of an object which can be revealed in so far as it exists but which cannot be created willfully” (Holtorf and Schadla-Hall, 1999, p. 231). This approach to the concept of authenticity defines it as a characteristic of a tourism attraction that cannot be made on purpose. Taylor (2001) notes that today, authenticity is a concept that pays “homage to a conception of the original” (p.9). This original, in relation to ancient art, monuments and objects, has usually been understood as the material integrity of the object itself which cannot be debatable (Holtorf and Schadla-Hall, 1999, Reisinger and Steinger, 2006).

The authenticity and integrity of these objects can be determined by testing or assessing it according to different standards (MacCannell, 1973, Cohen 1988), which is judged only by experts and not as perceived by the tourists (Reisinger and Steigner, 2006). The authenticity of a place, object, or tradition is viewed by objectivists as being genuine, actual, accurate, original and true. Any element, in the objectivist view, “has the flavor of realism, which is based on the ideas that there is an objectively real world to which one can refer as a standard or for confirmation when making judgments about what is true, genuine, accurate or authentic” (Reisinger and Steiner, 2006. p. 69).

Cohen (1988) notes that “authenticity, for curators and ethnographers, is principally a quality of pre-modern life, and of cultural products produced prior to the penetration of modern Western influences” (p. 375). Cohen (1988) and MacCannell (1973) explain that the concept of authenticity is closely related to the rise of modern societies, and that people’s alienation from these societies have driven them to search for the past or for sites that have not been touched by modernity.

### ***2.2.2 Subjectivist View – Tourists’ Perception of Authenticity***

Pearce and Moscardo (1986) argue that “authenticity can be achieved either through environmental experiences, people-based experiences, or a joint interaction of these elements” (p. 125). They exemplify this belief by offering nine different classifications of tourist authenticity based on the interaction of tourists with backstage and frontstage people and regions. The front stage region is a concept which has been initiated by MacCannell (1976) who believes that in modern settings “society is established through cultural representations of reality” (p. 91), while the backstage represents the natural

environment of a destination or people. When referring to the front stage, MacCannell (1979) notes that “to the degree that this packaging alters the nature of the product, the authenticity sought by visitors becomes staged authenticity provided by the touree” (p. 596). The touree can represent tour guides, who, Reisinger and Steiner (2006) believe that they play an important role in the perceived authenticity of place since they:

influence how their tourists think and feel with respect to places, making their experiences convincing through the use of interpretive signs, models, demonstrations and shows, videos, audio commentary, computers and books, and all sorts of interpretive materials (p.72)

Further, Britton (1991) identifies different elements which can contribute to the perceived authenticity:

- a) those economic activities gathered to produce and sell travel and tour products
- b) those social groups, cultural features, and physical elements which are incorporated into travel and tourism products as attractions
- c) agencies for regulating the commercial behavior of social externalities associated with such production

Besides these agents that affect the way tourists perceive authenticity, Endensor (2001) notes that the authenticity of a destination is also created by the tourists themselves since they perform “diverse meanings about the symbolic places, dramatizing their allegiance to places and kinds of actions” (p. 71). According to Moscardo and Pearce (1999), authenticity as perceived by tourists “is not a real property or tangible asset, but instead is a judgment or value placed on it by the observer” (as cited in Reisinger and Steiner, 2006, p. 70). Further, Reisinger and Steiner (2006) mention, “authenticity is a projection of

tourists' own beliefs, expectations, preferences, stereotyped images, and consciousness onto toured objects" (p. 70).

The authenticity of a destination can be affected by the tourists' impressions and images of the destination. Further, in today's society, destination image can be greatly influenced by other consumers through the use of the Internet. Although it seems that so far Internet sites have not been yet included as agents in the formation of images, it is essential to pay attention to how they influence the marketing of a destination.

Ultimately, the branding process of a destination is greatly built on internet images. All these factors, when applied to a case study such as Dracula's Transylvania, can offer great insights into the different perceptions of place.

### ***2.2.3 Determinants of Authenticity***

Because the concept of authenticity is ultimately subjective (despite objectivist definitions), researchers have taken different approaches when determining what makes a destination or attraction authentic. Pine and Gilmore (2008) believe that in order for any attraction to be deemed authentic it needs to flow from two standards: (1) to be true to itself; and (2) to be what it says it is. The first principle follows the idea that for anything to be considered authentic it has to be earnest and consistent about its own image, while the second principle involves being trustworthy and honest towards those coming to visit. The second principle is the one that should lie at the core of any destination marketing organization efforts of promoting an attraction. Instead of presenting an idealized version of an image, promoters should stay true to their offerings in order to avoid any misrepresentation. This can be achieved by providing "a place for customers to

understand, use, play with, and fundamentally experience...offerings in a place and time that you are what you say you are” (Pine and Gilmore, 2008, p. 23). Images play an important role in the projection of what a destination is and how it chooses to present itself. Therefore, images are definitely an important agent when authenticating destinations.

Medina (2003), in a study conducted on Mayan tourism attractions, determined that there were three dimensions for establishing the authenticity of the Mayan attractions and souvenirs: (1) ancestry, (2) language, and (3) ritual. Medina (2003) notes that the vision of what the Mayan culture represents is “continually produced and consumed through the actions of archaeologists, tourism promoters, tourists, tour guides, artisans, and vendors of artisanal productions” (p. 357). The production of Mayan images is then based on the vision and interpretation of different tourism stakeholders. To maintain an authentic image of the Mayan culture, it is imperative for all these stakeholders to project the same images. While the categorization of Medina’s determinants of authenticity fall under the objectivist view of authenticity, the process thorough which these determinants were established is subjective because it is based on how archaeologists view, interpret and put forward their discoveries of the Mayan culture.

Although authenticity of destination images is not yet a popular concept, White (2007) discusses the involvement of imagery in the promotion of an authentic Fiji to western tourists looking for a paradise destination colored by native inhabitants, rural villages and groups of missionaries and colonizers looking to modernize the islanders. She mentions that “Western fantasies of otherness are fulfilled by differentiated images of peoples and places around the globe” (p. 26); however, that “otherness” is also united



with the concept of authenticity “in a desire to ensure that culture and ethnicity are preserved and aestheticized. It is the promotion of primitiveness within which authenticity becomes the principal commodity” (Mowforth and Munt, 2003, p. 74 as cited in White, 2003, p. 26). Hence, when analyzing a destination image, its simplicity and its disassociation from the current modern society become a determinant in how authentic it is. This view of the authenticity of the image is strongly related to the objectivist view which takes into consideration the historical nature of an attraction.

For example, in Canadian tourism, the attractions related to Anne of Green Gables have been altered to reflect the Canadian literary culture and to respond to the demands of tourists. The modifications made to the Anne of Green Gables attractions, as will be seen in the next chapter, also raise questions of authenticity since they alter the primitive image of the attractions but also strive to preserve the literary culture.

### **2.3 Imagery and Authenticity**

The following section provides two examples of tourism destinations where the local governments chose to promote the area by building on literary works and lost worlds. As with Dracula tourism, the authenticity and image of the destinations are constructed not only on fictional images and historical elements, but also on tourists’ demands and interpretations of places. The following examples provide researchers with the opportunity to explore the agents involved in destination image formation, agents ranging from historical to fictional, from tourists to local governments.

### 2.3.1 *The Case of Montgomery's Anne of Green Gables*

Lucy Maud Montgomery was born in New London, Prince Edward Island in 1874. She spend most of her childhood in Cavendish located on the north shore of the island. She published *Anne of Green Gables* in 1908. Initially, the book was written as an adult novel, however, more recently it has become a children's book that "remains integral to both provincial and national identity" (Squire 1996, p. 121). The book describes the life of an orphan named Anne Shirley who lived in Avonlea – Prince Edward Island. Anne's red hair and freckles won over her adoptive family who was expecting an orphan boy to help on their farm.

In attempts to maintain the natural site of the novel, the PEI provincial government is continuously maintaining the old furnished houses that represent Anne's period, attractions which motivate tourists to come year after year to walk the paths, tour the houses mentioned in the novel, and attend the *Anne of Green Gables* musical in Charlottetown (PEI Visitors Guide *Anne of Green Gables* 2007). The *Anne of Green Gables* attractions incorporate the real surroundings of the PEI and Montgomery's fictional story to create a literary site well preserved and presented by the PEI provincial government.

The main location where tourists can experience Montgomery's world is in Cavendish in north-central Queens County, along the north shore of Prince Edward Island. The town is situated about 39 kilometers north of Charlottetown, and has a population of 267 (PEI Place Finder 2007). In 2004, PEI experienced an influx of approximately 95, 377 visitors to the Cavendish area, of which 41% of these tourists came to the area to visit the *Anne of Green Gables* attractions (PEI Economic Impact

Tourism 2004). The tourists visiting these places, are attracted not only to the place where Montgomery wrote her novel, they are also looking to connect with Anne by leaving “the quotidian world behind and enter the realm of Montgomery and Anne” (Fawcett & Cormack 2001: 690).

While writing her novel, Montgomery “transferred aspects of her own life into her work” (Squire 1996, p. 121). The village where the story is set is a representation of Cavendish: “the long hill in the center of the village, the sand shore, the site of the old school and the local graveyard from part of the present community much as they did when Montgomery incorporated them into her writings” (Squire 1996, p.121). Further, tourists can get a real image of how Montgomery lived, and the landscape that inspired her, simply by walking around Cavendish and gazing at the surrounding scenery.

Looking south they see fields stretching to hills  
on the horizon. To the east is a colorful flower and vegetable  
garden backed by a lawn and hedge that hide the parking lot.  
Although the book store is visible in the distance, its unpainted  
shingle siding blends into the tones of the landscape.  
Developing the homestead site...they carved out a glade  
of birch, maple, evergreen, and apple trees—the heart of the  
homestead site—tidy, but relatively undisturbed, so that tourists sitting  
on a rough bench under the apple tree Montgomery described in her  
journal, could imagine themselves in Montgomery’s world  
(Fawcett & Cormack 2001, p.691).

Because Montgomery used real places to depict the surroundings in *Anne of Green Gables*, “for many fans, the lives of Montgomery and Anne have parallels just as the imaginary village of Avonlea seems to resemble Cavendish” (Fawcett & Cormack 2001, p. 690).

The parallel worlds of Avonlea and Cavendish and their fast growing popularity was “largely responsible for the National Park site selected by the Canadian government”

that incorporated the *Anne of Green Gables* sites into the Prince Edward Island National Park (Squire 1996:123). This agency was heavily involved in the production and presentation of the *Anne of Green Gables* attractions. A planning document noted that: “the surrounding landscape will be created, where possible, according to the interpretation of features described in...the...literary works of Lucy Maud Montgomery. Twentieth- century interferences...will be removed from the site” (Parks Canada 1981, p. 27 as quoted in Squire 1996, p.124). This shows that the role of the agency was to make a realistic presentation of the images in Montgomery’s novel. For example, the gables of the house that inspired the stories have resembles the birch and apple trees farm house with green gables portrayed in the novel, has been painted green since in the early 1940s (they were white at the time of Montgomery’s writing) in order to offer tourists the real experience of *Anne of Green Gables* (Fawcett & Cormack 2001, p. 695). When visiting this house, tourists can bring Anne’s fictional story to reality by admiring “furniture, ornaments, and utensils typical of a late 19<sup>th</sup>-century/early 20<sup>th</sup>-centry Prince Edward Island farmhouse [and] items of period clothing... laid on bed to indicate the fictional location of Anne, Matthew and Marilla’s rooms” (Fawcett & Comack 2001, p.695). Being able to see with their own eyes those objects that were used by fictional characters, tourists allow their imagination to bring characters to life just as the objects used by them are materialized.

The *Anne of Green Gables Museum* is also a site where real and fictional elements are merged. In the novel, Anne mentions: “When I lived with Mrs. Thompson she had a bookcase in her sitting room with glass doors....She kissed me goodbye through the book-case door” (Montgomery as cited in Fawcett & Comack 2001, p.699). Fiction

becomes reality when, in the orientation talk, the animator points out that while walking through the museum tourists will see ‘the enchanted bookcase in the corner that she talks about in Anne of Green Gables’” (Fawcett & Comack 2001, p.699). At this site, “tourists are invited to make sense of the site by playing with artifacts and fragments of uncontextualized fictional and nonfictional quotes” (Fawcett & Comack 2001, p.699). Thus, tourists are not influenced that much by production efforts, but more by their own imagination and expectation of what they will find and experience in this location. These attractions, through their materialized presentation of *Anne of Green*, “have shaped visitors’ impressions of place” (Squire 1996, p.126), serving as the bridge between fiction and reality.

Squire (1996) discusses the fame Anne of Green Gables achieved in Japan. Female Japanese women in particular are the main target of marketing promotions in Japan. To address this demand, “local tour operators have for some time had Japanese speaking people on staff, and provided Japanese signs and specialized tours” (p. 126). Further, Squire (1996) notes that Anne of Green Gables is so famous in Japan, that there are exhibitions and televisions documentaries about Montgomery and PEI in order to increase awareness and interest in visiting Anne of Green Gables attractions. The importance of the Japanese group is also highlighted by the fact that “PEI visitation statistics profile Japanese visitors separately, the only national group so differentiate” (p. 126). Finally, to emphasize the importance of the Japanese tourists, Squire notes that “between 15 May and 31 October 1995...approximately 8600 Japanese travelers visited PEI...[and] contributed 2.4 million dollars to the provincial tourist economy” (p.126).

Parallel to the case to be examined in this thesis, the Anne of Green Gables attractions present similar authenticity issues as Dracula attractions. Both places, while constructed on novels, are preserved by local governments in hopes to attract tourists familiar with these characters. While preserving these sites, alterations have been done to the attractions in order to better represent the novels. These alterations raise questions of authenticity. Fawcett and Cormack (2001) note that “those who manage these popular sites...hold different versions of the authentic” (p.687). They argue that there is an interpretive form of authenticity characterized by the touristic interpretation, while the rationalist form is that which excludes the interpretations permitted by the bureaucratic offices that have an invested economic profit in the attractions. Therefore, Fawcett and Cormack (2001) note that “what is authentic is formed partly by the personal commitments, bureaucratic mandates, and entrepreneurial interests/economic necessities that site guardians face” (p.687).

### ***2.3.2 The Case of Mackinac Island***

Mackinac Island is an island located in Michigan, USA, in the waters of Lake Huron. The island covers approximately 3.8 square miles and has about 500 year-round residents, although it receives up to 900,000 visitors during the summer tourism season (National Historic Landmark Nomination, 2000). Being officially recognized as an US National Historic Landmark District due to its historical significance, Mackinac Island offers visitors an array of events and Victorian architecture, but most interesting, its ban on automobiles.

The official site of Mackinac Island presents a chronological list of the historical events which led to its fame. A sacred place for Native Americans, the island's natural riches attracted French fur traders looking to trade with the natives, but also the British military which used the island to construct Fort Mackinac in 1780. After the Civil War, the island became a tourism destination due to its beautiful scenery and historical past. Also, businesses started investing in the island by building beautiful Victorian houses and hotels. The increase in tourism resulted in hiring local carriage drivers to take visitors on excursions, a fact which later led to the ban of automobiles because they 'startled the horses' (<http://www.mackinacisland.org>). The National Historic Landmark Nomination submission provides more detail about the 1898 automobile ban, stating that although regular automobiles were banned, "emergency vehicles, park maintenance equipment, residents' snowmobiles, and golf carts are granted temporary permits to operate for certain purposes" (p. 4).

Urry (2000) notes that tourists seek environments and experiences that contrast the every day life:

places are chosen to be gazed upon because there is an anticipation, especially through daydreaming and fantasy, or intense pleasure, either on a different scale or involving a different sense from those customarily encountered (p.3)

Mackinac Island offers tourists a wide variety of attractions from natural sites to Victorian structures, military museums and Fort Mackinac. Through restoration efforts and attempts to keep life simple as it once was during the Victorian era, Mackinac Island is attracting tourists looking to 'gaze' upon something different, something from the past. Romanticizing the simple life where automobiles were nowhere in sight may be the perfect vacation for many tourists. However, it is evident that while this ban is meant to

sustain the island's infrastructure, it is also a tourism marketing tool since back in the 1800s there were no golf carts or snowmobiles.

Although Mackinac Island has not been a topic of interest for destination image and authenticity researchers, just like Anne of Green Gables and Dracula tourism, the destination has used history as a tool to attract tourists looking to escape the every day life and submerge themselves into the romanticized past.

#### **2.4 Summary of Literature Review**

The main concepts presented in the above literature review included destination image, destination image authenticity and the interaction between fact and fiction in creating a tourism destination based on literature. While more countries are looking to attract tourists to their destinations, creating a destination image has been widely adopted by promoters in order to make the destination stand out from its competitors. However, the image is ultimately affected by the impressions and perceptions tourists have of a destination. These images are sometimes based on reality, however, they are often created on myths and stereotypes. Anne of Green Gables and Dracula tourism are examples of tourism created on images based on novels, myths and stereotypes. These images have been created by literary and film agents, however, they are more currently created by the tourists themselves through the use of blogs. By examining the phenomenon of blogging, the images held by Westerners' regarding Dracula can be extracted. Further, these images both reflect and affect the authenticity of a destination. Although history and myth are mixed in the case of Dracula tourism, tourists can either objectively or subjectively view the destination as authentic. Thus, it is important to



examine whether Dracula's western image has influenced the way the locals view Dracula, and how the Bran Castle tour guides respond to the tourists' demands.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODS**

#### **3.1 Strategy of Inquiry**

Qualitative research involves “the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials -... personal experience, introspective, life history, interview, observational, interactional, and visual texts – that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals’ life” (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, p. 2).

The study of Dracula as a tourism destination allowed the researcher to focus on a particular tourism destination. Creswell (2003) notes that a research is qualitative in nature if it is done in a natural setting, where the researcher can gain a level of detail about the place and the participants, and also become involved in the participants’ experiences. Qualitative approach is further appropriate due to the researcher’s ties to the research area. Her experiences with the area, her biases and values shaped the results of the research. Creswell (2003) notes that reflexivity “typifies qualitative research today” (p. 182), giving the researcher the ability to acknowledge and understand how biases, values and interests shape the way the data is being collected and analyzed.

Moreover, when involved in a qualitative research, the researcher has the opportunity to use different methods of data collection. Qualitative research allows the researcher to “rely on text and image data, have unique steps in data analysis, and draw on diverse strategies of inquiry” (Creswell, 2003, p. 179). The main questions used in this study included “what” or “how” questions which are more exploratory in nature. These questions were meant to find out “what” the different images associated with Dracula are,

and “how” the tour guides and the locals respond to these images. The types of qualitative data that was gathered to answer the research questions included interviews with local inhabitants and tour guides, and audiovisual materials posted by Western bloggers who have traveled to Bran Castle. The following sections will highlight the qualitative procedures used to gather and analyze the data.

### **3.2 Research Site**

The main research site was the city of Brasov located in the region of Transylvania, Romania. Brasov City Hall ([www.brasovcity.ro](http://www.brasovcity.ro)) identifies Brasov as the capital of the Brasov County, and the seventh largest city in Romania with a population of about 280,000 people. Located in the central part of Romania, Brasov is surrounded by the Carpathian Mountains making it the largest city in a Romanian mountain resort area. Within Brasov County, Bran Castle (Dracula’s Castle) was a particular target because the tour guides working there come in direct contact with Dracula enthusiasts, and also because the castle is the main destination for those searching for Dracula. Bran Castle is located about 27 kilometers south-west of Brasov. The following maps illustrate the locations of Brasov and Bran Castle within Transylvania and Romania.



[http://www.draculas.info/\\_img/gallery/romania\\_map\\_Transylv.jpg](http://www.draculas.info/_img/gallery/romania_map_Transylv.jpg)  
[bucarest\\_brasov\\_bran\\_castle\\_51.jpg](http://www.draculas.info/_img/gallery/romania_map_Transylv.jpg#bucarest_brasov_bran_castle_51.jpg)



<http://www.omniplan.hu/2002-Transylvania/Map->

Because the Internet offers a vast pool of information that can be accessed through different servers, only Google and Yahoo were used as search engines. These two information generators have been chosen due to their popularity based on the amount of information they store, which give better search results.

### 3.3 Data Sample and Collection Procedure

The two study populations in this research were inhabitants of Brasov, and tour guides working at Bran Castle. The size of the sample used was 27 local people, and three key informants represented by tour guides. The number of participants was determined by the available time of the research assistant (RA), located in Romania, and the number of tour guides at Bran Castle (there were 5 tour guides employed at Bran Castle museum at the time of the research).

The locals are defined as people who reside in Brasov and are over the age of 18. Residency in Brasov has been chosen as a parameter so that the sample can better represent the Transylvanian people, while the age has been chosen based on the legal age in Romania. In order for a responded to qualify as a local, he/she would have resided

there for at least 10 years. This ensured that the respondent is familiar with the local culture and therefore able to relate to the research and questions being asked.

The RA was chosen due to her relationship to the researcher, who has known the RA for more than 10 years. To assure that the data will be kept confidential, the RA was asked to sign the Confidentiality Agreement (Appendix F). Part of the data was collected by the RA during Spring 2009. The RA used convenience sampling technique to identify local people able to participate in the research. Therefore, the participants were chosen arbitrarily and in an unstructured manner. This was done by asking the RA's co-workers and the general public gathered in the city's downtown square for their willingness to participate. The RA was given a recruitment script which made it easier for her to approach and ask people for their willingness to participate in the study (Appendix E). If the potential participants agreed to participate, they were given an introductory letter asking for their consent (Appendix B), followed by the structured interview guide (Appendix G). Participants had the option to answer the questions on the spot, or they were informed of the e-mail address in the information letter, where they could send their responses at a later time. All the information was presented in Romanian.

The RA was also responsible for identifying tours guides willing to participate in the research. Again, a convenience sampling technique was employed. After presenting them with the information letter (Appendix A), they were given the interview questions (Appendix H) and asked to respond to them at their own convenience. The tour guides were given the option to complete the interview either via e-mail or by phone. The answers were later received via e-mail, at which time the researcher contacted them via telephone to gather more details. After agreeing to participate and answering the

questions, both the residents and the tour guides were either handed in or e-mailed the feedback letter, giving them the opportunity to contact the researcher with any additions or questions (Appendices C and D).

The following tables attempt to humanize the sample by providing fictional names and gender. The names of the local participants were not asked, however, since many responses were received via e-mail, their name and gender was identified which allowed the researcher to assign random Romanian names. Although the tour guides offered personal information such as name, occupation and contact information; pseudonyms are also assigned in order keep their identity confidential.

<b>LOCAL RESIDENTS</b>		
<b>#</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Gender</b>
1	Ioan	Male
2	Daniela	Female
3	Ana	Female
4	Anemona	Female
5	Cornel	Male
6	Irina	Female
7	Mihaela	Female
8	Bianca	Female
9	Roxana	Female
10	Ramona	Female
11	Sorin	Male
12	Alina	Female
13	Izabela	Female
14	Oana	Female
15	Florina	Female
16	Cosmin	Male
17	Ioana	Female
18	Marius	Male
19	Lucian	Male
20	Nicoleta	Female
21	Mihai	Male
22	Anca	Female
23	Vlad	Male
24	Alina	Female
25	Mircea	Male
26	Paula	Female
27	Maria	Female

Table 1- Local Residents

<b>Tour Guides</b>			
<b>#</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Occupation</b>
1	Adriana	Female	Bran Castle Museum Guide
2	Nadia	Female	Bran Castle Museum Guide
3	Diana	Female	Bran Castle Museum Guide

Table 2 - Tour Guides

A secondary data source represented blogs written by British, American, and Canadian bloggers who have posted personal web pages related to Dracula tourism and their travels to Transylvania. The sample size was 20 web logs. British blogs have been chosen because of the country's relationship to the creation of the mythical Dracula, while the American and Canadian bloggers have been chosen due to their familiarity with vampires and the language used.

The blogs were identified through search engines such as Google and Yahoo, using the following search terms: "Dracula", "Bran Castle", and "Transylvania". The web pages generated by these search engines were ranked differently depending on the search engine's technique. The random generation of blogs ensured that all blogs posted had a chance of being included in the sample. The blogs were initially screened to identify if the blogger was a Western tourist. If the blogger did not mention his/her nationality, the blog was excluded from the sample.

A total of 20 blogs were selected to be analyzed; 14 blogs were text and picture blogs, while six were video blogs. Half of the text and picture blogs were found on Blogger – a renowned blogging site – while the other half were posted on personal websites. The video blogs were generally found on YouTube – a video sharing site – but also on a similar website called Metacafe. The blogs were chronologically ordered, starting with the most recent. They range from January 2007 to March 2009. 15 blogs were published by Americans and five blogs by English bloggers. Although Canadian bloggers were intended to be included, no Dracula-related blogs written by Canadians were found. Ten blogs were posted by males, four by females, and six by group bloggers such as families, friends or couples. Although males seem to dominate the blogging



sphere, group bloggers also seem to be well represented, maybe as a result of traveling in groups on packaged vacations. The following table illustrates the sampled bloggers. Each participant is identified by a number that was chronologically assigned.

<b>Dracula Bloggers – Western Tourists</b>				
<b>#</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Type of Blog</b>
1	Jerry	Male	USA	Text
2	Maryann	Female	USA	Pictures/Text
3	Andy	Male	USA	Pictures/Text
4	The Greys	Male + Female	USA	Pictures/Text
5	Anthony	Male	USA	Pictures/Text
6	Tyler	Male	USA	Pictures/Text
7	James	Male	USA	Pictures/Text
8	Ethan and Emma	Male +Female	USA	Pictures/Text
9	Lauren	Female	USA	Pictures/Text
10	Ashley	Female	USA	Pictures/Text
11	Daniel and Grace	Male + Female	UK	Pictures/Text
12	Akshay	Male	UK	Pictures
13	Matthew	Male	UK	Pictures/Text
14	Team Blog	Males+Females	UK	Pictures/Text
15	Sarah	Female	USA	Video
16	Joseph	Male	UK	Video
17	Logan	Male	USA	Video
18	Ben	Male	USA	Video
19	Thomas	Male	USA	Video
20	Seth and Richard	Male +Male	USA	Video

Table 3 - Dracula Bloggers

### **3.4 Data Collection Instrument**

A structured, open-ended interview guide (Appendix G) was used to gather data from the locals, while the tour guides were interviewed through the use of an in-depth semi-structured interview (Appendix H).

Patton (2002) notes that, when doing qualitative research, it is important to use open-ended questions because they are “longer, more detailed, and variable in content” (p.20), but more importantly, they allow the researcher and the readers to see the world through their eyes of the respondents. The standardized open-ended interview approach allows the researcher to fully word the question before the interview in order to ensure that each respondent will be asked the same question, “in the same way and the same order, including standard probes” (Patton, 2002, p. 344). This approach helped the researcher ensure there were no variations in the data gathered by the RA. Hence, Patton (2002) notes that the four main reasons why a standardized open-ended interview should be used in this research are:

1. To ensure that the same exact instrument will be used by the RA
2. To minimize variations among responses
3. To use time efficiently
4. To find and compare answers easier

The structured interview guide was comprised of questions pertaining to the locals’ knowledge of the historical and mythical Dracula, their knowledge of the Dracula attractions in Transylvania, their views of the Western images of Dracula, and finally about their thoughts of how the region is portraying Dracula. These questions were open-

ended in order to allow participants the opportunity for free expression and to yield as much detail as possible. The questions asked were:

1. Who was Dracula in the Romanian history?
2. How is Dracula portrayed in the Romanian culture?
3. What comes to your mind when you hear the name of 'Dracula'?
4. What does Bran Castle represent to you?
5. How is Dracula portrayed at Bran Castle?
6. What is the Western tourists' image of Dracula?
7. How do you feel about this image?
8. What images of Dracula are being sold in your city by merchants, promoters?
9. Does authenticity play a role in the creation of these images and how?
10. What would you like to see changed in the way Dracula is being promoted by your province?

When doing an in-depth qualitative interview, Patton (2002) mentions that when interviewing experts, the researcher can gather valuable data from people knowledgeable in the topic studied. However, when conducting in-depth interviews, "great demands are placed on the ability of the interviewer, who must establish competence by displaying a thorough knowledge of the topic, or...by projecting an accurate conceptualization of the problem through shrewd questioning" (Rossmann and Rallis, 1998, p. 134 as cited in Patton, 2002). Also, Patton (2002) notes that when conducting an in-depth interview, a major challenge is that of knowing how to manage and control the amount of data being offered. This issue is being addressed by having a standardized interview that will help the researcher keep the respondents on track.

The in-depth interview with the tour guides was focused more on facts related to Dracula tourism, such as experiences and practices related to how Dracula was being promoted at Bran Castle and how tourists react to the destination. This interview followed a semi-structured format in order to allow the researcher to probe for further detail. The in-depth interview included the following questions:

1. How popular is Dracula tourism in Brasov County today?
2. Where is the demand for Dracula tourism coming from?
3. How did you respond to this demand?
4. What is the Western tourists' view of Dracula tourism?
5. What are the Westerners' demands and expectations regarding Dracula attractions?
6. How do you respond to these demands?
7. What promotional material is used to attract tourists to Bran Castle?
8. How do you incorporate the historical reality when planning for Dracula tourism?
9. What are the concerns of local people in regards to Dracula attractions and how do you respond to them?
10. What are the latest tourism plans for Dracula attractions?

The general order of questions for both sets of interviews was based on Patton's (2002) recommendations. Patton (2002) notes that when doing a standardized open-ended interview, the questions must follow a fixed sequence in order to fit the structured format. Initially, the interview should have non-controversial questions which are easy to answer and require minimal interpretation. Further, Patton (2002) believes that the researcher can

solicit opinions and beliefs and probe for details. Knowledge and skill questions should not be asked too early in the interview, while demographic questions should be kept minimal because they tend to bore the respondent. Finally, the interviewer should strive to ask questions about the present rather than the future which can result in answers based on speculation. However, if future-oriented questions are needed for the research, Patton (2002) believes these should be left at the end of the interview.

### **3.5 Qualitative Content Analysis**

The structured interview guide, the semi-structured in-depth interviews, and the weblogs were analyzed through content analysis. This analysis method allowed the researcher to make replicable and valid inferences from the interview data and blog content (Krippendorff, 2004). Creswell (2002) points out that the advantage of using content analysis is that the researcher can gain in-depth understanding of the language and words of the documents under investigation. Krippendorff (2004) notes that, in qualitative research, content analysis involves the close reading of relatively small amounts of data; the interpretation of verbal, pictorial, symbolic, and communication data; and the involvement of the researcher with the study of data interpretation.

In order to extrapolate both latent and manifest meanings in the data, a method similar to that of grounded theory, but that does not result in the creation of theory, was used. Charmaz (2006) notes that qualitative research “focuses on creating conceptual frameworks...through building inductive analysis from the data” (p. 187). Daly (2007) notes that “the key process...is to construct categories that reflect the main thematic

patterns in the data...Categories are named and refined and become the basis for the emerging theory” (p. 103).

While meanings are more easily inferred from textual data, the personal web pages and blogs also included images or pictures taken by tourists who visited Dracula related attractions. These images were examined and meanings of what they represent were inferred in order to be able to apply them to the research. Overall, both the textual and visual data were used to explore similarities and differences between the Western view of Dracula and those of the locals. This was accomplished through a process of coding, building relationships between codes, and finally, generating themes that answered the main research questions and addressed the research goal.

Data coding followed a process of careful examination of the interviews and personal blogs in order for the researcher to initially understand the big picture, and later to be able to find the hidden meanings. This step was completed through line-by-line coding, which Daly (2007) notes that although it is called line-by-line coding, does not necessarily mean to code every line of text, but only the data that can offer codes relevant to the research objectives. Next, the codes were categorized into themes by finding the connecting relationships and overarching conditions between them. This process is called theoretical coding and was first introduced by Glaser (1978) in order to help the researcher explain how the main codes relate to each other in such a way that if a relationship is non-existent, the theory would not be plausible. The following sections explain the analysis process for each set of data.

### ***3.5.1 Analysis of Blogs***

Although data were constructed in different formats such as video, text or photographs, the latent meanings were extrapolated based on the subjective interpretation of the researcher and the guidance of the research questions. While some data were more straight-forward, such as written text, the pictures and videos analyzed required more in-depth interpretation. Each blog type – text, picture or video – was first coded in different Word documents. The information included name of the blogger, nationality, title of the blog, website, and date accessed. For the text and picture blogs, the actual website was saved as a Word document; however, for the video blogs the web address was recorded. This involved the risk of losing the data because the blogger could at any time withdraw the video blog from the web sphere. To ensure that not all data were lost, the first step in the analysis of blogs was to transcribe the video blogs.

Fields (1988) notes that the process of qualitative content analysis of videos follows an eight step process:

1. Unitizing content
2. Transcription
3. Developing and using categories
4. Verbal analysis
5. Vocal and expressive analysis
6. Scene composition analysis
7. Describing interplay of components
8. Explanation

This method does not follow a linear process because the researcher must view the video repeatedly to gain insights. A total of six video blogs were used for the analysis. The number was chosen based on the videos' relevance to the study. If there was any doubt that the video did not depict images taken by the tourists on location, or if the nationality of the blogger was unidentifiable, then the video blog was excluded.

Because entire video blogs were used and not only parts of them, the first step of Fields' (1988) method did not apply to the research. Transcribing the voice-over in the videos was one of the most important steps in analyzing their content because audio data can be fast and easily misunderstood. Therefore, the immediate step was to analyze the verbal data which followed the same procedure as the analysis of the textual blogs.

Vocal and expressive meaning units were extrapolated by paying attention to the pitch of voice, tempo, and stress, and the facial expressions of the person appearing in each video scene. Included in the vocal analysis was any musical background. This also provided clues to meaning units that give insight into what was being communicated.

The scene composition of the blogs involved not only moving videos but also still pictures in a slideshow format. As a result, some images in the video blogs yielded meaning units similar to the ones in the picture blogs. The final step of the video analysis involved the amalgamation of all audio, vocal, expressive and visual meaning units into more focused codes in order to show the interrelations between the themes. A similar process was followed in the analysis of textual blogs.

After a careful examination, each text blog was decomposed into "meaning units". A meaning unit is considered as "words, sentences or paragraphs containing aspects related to each other through their content and context" (Graneheim and



Lundman, 2004, p. 106). Out of the 13 text blogs analyzed, 95 meaning units were extrapolated. The following step involved the condensation of the meaning units into more focused codes. These codes were generated subjectively, based on the research questions and the researcher's interpretation of the text.

Photo blogs, or pictures included in text blogs, involved a slightly different process due to their visual representation. The first step in analyzing the pictures was to record the title of the picture included with textual data, or that of the albums uploaded. The photographs were then analyzed as a "visual diary". Hessen-Biber and Leavy (2006) note that when photographs are taken by tourists as a means to remember their experiences, the researchers has to interpret what the tourist found interesting, what story he/she wants to tell. To better organize the visual data, a bipolar scale was used to categorize the codes. Canton and Santos (2008) used bipolar scales to classify photographs taken by students on an international study tour. The depiction scales should be able to capture the themes of the research while categorizing and organizing the codes. After reviewing all the photographs posted, two bipolar scales were developed:

1. Historical/fictional depiction
2. Tourist/local consumption of the myth

The first scale represented pictures of the historical castle versus pictures of the fictional Dracula from movies. The second scale depicted pictures of the tourists' consumption of the myth through their attempt to imitate Dracula or searching for anything scary, versus the locals' consumption of the myth represented by the their eagerness to sell everything Dracula. Although the scales are not represented equally with some spectrum having minimal representation, it was important not to exclude any images displayed by the

tourists. The exclusion of any illustration could result in the omission of important agents that affect the global image of the destination. Charmaz (2006) explains that the appearance of negative cases in theoretical sampling is part of the variation in a category and analytic density. Further, Charmaz argues that “qualitative researchers often use negative cases to find new variables or to provide alternative explanations” (p. 101). Patton (1990) agrees that the researcher’s understanding of “patterns and trends is increased by considering the instances and cases that do not fit within the pattern” (p. 463).

Patton (1990) notes that when classifying content analysis data, the process of convergence follows when the researcher has to figure out how things fit together. This is done by going back and forth between the data and the classification system to verify the meaningfulness and accuracy of the categories and the placement of data under related themes. To test for completeness, the categorizing system was checked for any exclusive codes that did not fit into any theme, and that the codes belonging to one theme were consistent.

### ***3.5.2 Analysis of Locals’ Interviews***

The inhabitants of Brasov province completed the open-ended structured interview guide at their own discretion without the help of the RA. The Bran Castle tour guides also completed the interviews at their own convenience, however, after the initial answers were received, the researcher contacted them for additional details.

After translating each interview from Romanian to English, open-coding was used in order to explore the data and help me remain open to what the data was presenting in

terms of my overall research goal. The technique of line-by-line coding was used because it allowed the researcher to get as much meaning from the data as possible. Although the questions were open-ended, many locals chose to answer using only one word, somewhat inhibiting the researchers' opportunity to interpret the results. Therefore, many of the codes represent the actual answer to a question.

After reading all interviews, each interview was coded by highlighting the relevant word or phrase, and sometimes additional comments in the form of codes were added to the side of the document. After finishing coding all interviews, over 350 codes were extrapolated. These codes were then organized in a table reflecting the origin of the interview – that is, each participant was identified by the codes from his/her interview. This final step of open coding was done as a result of using the constant comparative method which ensured the data would be relevant to the research questions.

Charmaz (2006) notes that the second major step in analyzing the data is “focused coding”. These codes are more selective and general because they reflect larger segments of the data. This process was accomplished through three steps. First, all the codes were reviewed and redundancies eliminated. This was followed by the categorization of similar codes into categories. The third and final step in the focused coding was to generate the main themes. This was done by reassembling the data fractured during open coding to give coherence to the emerging analysis, a step that Charmaz (2006) calls axial coding. The name of each theme encompasses the overall message of its respective codes.

### ***3.5.3 Credibility, Reliability and Validity***

Patton (1990) notes that, in qualitative research, the credibility issue depends on three different elements:

1. methodical techniques for gathering data that is carefully analyzed
2. the credibility of the researcher which depends on training and experience
3. belief in naturalistic examination and thus qualitative methods

Patton adds that “the credibility of qualitative inquiry is especially dependent on the credibility of the researcher because the researcher is the instrument of data collection and the center of analytic process” (p. 461). Although the researcher does not have a lengthy experience with naturalistic inquiry, a few academic encounters allowed her to develop a view of the world based on the belief that the reality is constructed by an individual’s experiences and encounters with others; a theory in accordance with Charmaz’s (2006) notion of social-constructionism. Academic experiences allowed the researcher to let the data speak their own reality as reflected by the participants’ experiences.

Although the researcher might have gained some credibility due to past experiences, reliability and validity still needed to be established. Kirk and Miller (1986) note that “reliability is the degree to which the finding is independent of accidental circumstances of the research, and validity is the degree to which the findings are interpreted in a correct way” (p. 20). To enhance the reliability and validity of data, the researcher took the following steps:

1. The same content was coded more than once to ensure the reproduction of same codes as suggested by Shields (2001).
2. The analysis process and conclusions were explored with colleagues and with the researcher's supervisor who, Holloway and Wheeler (1996) believe that has a "key role with research students to ensure rigor in their studies" (as cited in Long and Johnson, 2000, pg. 34).
3. The researcher's understanding and sensitivity for the community under research was already enhanced due to her involvement with the area. Long and Johnson (2000) believe that when the researcher spends a significant length of time in contact with the topic, it "allows time for emerging concepts to develop and for potential implications to be recognized" (p. 34).

Further, the researcher depended on intra-coder reliability when analyzing the data. To make consistent judgments about the codes generated from the data, the researcher followed the method Smith (2009) describes, which involves the coding of the data only when the mind is rested and free of bothersome thoughts, and the recording of notes about how and why meaning units were assigned certain codes. Charmaz (2006) notes that memo writing is "the pivotal intermediate step between data collection and writing drafts of paper" because "it prompts you to analyze your data and codes early in the research process" (p. 72). By writing down notes, the researcher increased the likelihood of codes being reproducible since they were based on the same thoughts.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE BLOGS

#### 4.1 Introduction

The following section presents the themes found in the analysis of textual, picture and video blogs. Even though each blog type was analyzed separately, the resulting themes incorporate the codes found in all blogs, allowing the overall image of the destination to surface. Each theme presented below is first defined in order to understand its meaning within the context, and quotes from participants are used to bring the data to life and allow them to describe each theme.

#### 4.2 Themes

##### *Reality*

*Reality* was a dominant theme in the blogs. *Reality*, in this context, refers to any representation of historical or geographical data expressed by the bloggers through their words or pictures posted on their blogs. The *Reality* theme had three sub-themes: Vlad Tepes, Romanian Ruler; Bran Castle Historical Museum; and Natural Beauty of Transylvania. All blogs had this theme present in their postings, either through pictures of the castle, talking about the history of the castle or referring to the real Vlad Tepes.

##### a. Vlad Tepes, Romanian Ruler

One of the first reality checks that many bloggers felt compelled to explain was that Dracula was an actual person named Vlad Tepes: “a medieval prince named Vlad who impaled thousands of his enemies” (3), “Vlad Tepes is actually a hero to

Romanians...known as Dracula as it means son of Dracul” (11) , “he was a very holy man defending his empire and the church against enemies” (13) , “he was called Vlad Dracul”, “Vlad the Impaler – the real Dracula” (14), “Vlad Tepes really was though a real person – a hero to Romania” (17). All these quotations occur in text and video blogs illustrated the real image of Dracula. Moreover, some of the video blogs have also included historical pictures of Vlad Tepes.

#### b. Bran Castle Historical Museum

The *Reality* theme is further represented by bloggers’ coverage of the Castle Bran museum. Their journey into *Reality* typically begins with facts about the historical castle: “Bran Castle was built in 1382 by Saxons” (4), “Bran Castle was originally a stronghold built by the Knights of the Teutonic Order” (5) , “Vlad Tepes is unlikely to have ever visited Bran Castle and certainly didn’t live there” (11) , “in fact he never even so much as slept here” (17) , “it is not Dracula’s castle, though he may have visited there” (6). Once they have established the reality that Bran Castle did not belong to Vlad Tepes, the bloggers explain who really inhabited the castle: “Bran Castle...became home of Queen Marie” (14), “This is really the castle of Mary, Queen of Romania, who lived in the 20<sup>th</sup> century” (17), “people of Brasov gave castle to Queen Maria of Romania who modernized it” (18).

Some bloggers go into even more detail illustrating the interior of the castle, which is now a museum: “The museum inside the castle does not even mention Dracula and instead highlights the possessions of Queen Maria” (1), “there was nothing about Vlad the Impaler in the castle” (10), “with artifact displays, photographs” (6), “displaying

art and furniture” (13). The fact that there is no Dracula exhibition inside the museum gives the tourists the historical view of Bran Castle. Surprisingly to some bloggers, the historical reality does not involve anything vampiristic. This is reflected by blogger 1 who notes that “the castle is a very large fort-house at the top of a hill, but it’s not the least bit spooky and only tangentially related to Vlad “Dracula” Tepes”.

### c. Natural Beauty of Transylvania

When one blogger was asked by one of his readers whether Transylvania was spooky, his answer was: “Far from it. My primary memory of the train ride is of the gentle, undulating hills as we approach the Carpathians” (1). Other bloggers talk about the “scenery and the mountain views were like none I’ve ever seen” (5), “the view was breathtaking” (2). Hence, the bloggers’ notes on their image of Transylvania reflect the natural reality of the place, a reality that does not include dark and spooky places often associated with vampires.

The photograph and video images support the historical reality by showing images of the exterior castle walls, the interior rooms decorated with medieval furniture and other artifacts. These pictures all fall toward the “historic” end of the historical/fictional spectrum. It seems that *Reality* is an image not easily missed by the Western bloggers visiting Bran Castle.



### *I Know Who Dracula Is!!*

The *I Know Who Dracula Is!* theme represents those images created by the Western movies and novels about vampires, media that have influenced Western tourists' beliefs and impressions about Dracula. This theme has three sub-themes: Dracula Movies and Novels, Beliefs and Feelings about Dracula, and Imitating Dracula.

#### a. Dracula Movies and Novels

As noted previously, the fictional representation of Dracula as a vampire was the creation of Bram Stoker in his novel "Dracula". Many bloggers referred to Stoker's novel to clarify that the real Vlad Tepes was at the heart of his inspiration: "the real Dracula – the one who inspired Bram Stoker to write his book" (3), "Vlad Tepes – Bram Stoker's inspiration for Count Dracula" (8), "Bram Stoker wrote the fictional account of Dracula but used the historic figure of Vlad Tepes" (11), "the fifteen century prince of Wallachia, Vlad Tepes, the real inspiration behind Irish novelist Bram Stoker's iconic vampire count" (13). Indeed, Bram Stoker's novel became an icon and created the Draculian culture. His novel became the inspiration of many vampire movies that not only nurtured a vampire culture, but also made the careers of Hollywood actors such as Bela Lugosi and Gary Oldman.

Lugosi's 1931 portrayal of Count Dracula imbedded itself in the minds of Western people. One blogger admits that as a child, he was "marveling at the old black and white stills of Bela Lugosi" (13). A male blogger (16), while on his visit to Bran Castle, made sure to interpret everything based on recent Dracula movies. He envisioned Van Helsing putting a cross at the entrance of the castle, Jonathan Parker played by

Keanu Reeves walking the steps to the castle entrance to meet Dracula who was played by Gary Oldman, and even Keanu Reeves sleeping in the medieval bed displayed in the museum. It is then without doubt that the Western tourists who blog their travels come to visit Bran Castle with a cultural baggage. As one blogger affirms: “We all know about the 20<sup>th</sup> century vampire” (19), an assertion supported by a picture of Bela Lugosi wearing a black cape in his role as Count Dracula. But it is not only the Dracula actors that became part of the Western culture, but also the soundtracks of their movies. Voices and music from Dracula movies were used in 2 blogs as the background for Bran Castle video and pictures.

#### b. Beliefs and Feelings about Dracula

Western tourists who have blogged about their experiences at Bran Castle seem to know exactly what Dracula represents, how he acts and sounds like. Their depiction of Dracula is represented by feelings of fear: “the name strikes fear into the hearts of millions” (3), “as we hiked the small road up to the castle and entered it, my fears were realized” (3), “you might see some torched wedding villages” (16), “a secret passage...it’s dark and scary!” (16), “the countryside in Transylvania was spooky” (1), “creaky floors, secret stairways, dark and short passages – creepy enough” (4). These feelings of fear were well expressed by one tourist looking to connect with Dracula and his land: “the butterflies in my stomach did extra somersaults as I peered longingly up into the darkness of the imposing mountains” (13). It is obvious that the Dracula novels and movies have shaped the Western culture, making people actually feel scared of places associated with Dracula.

Fictional representations of Dracula have also fostered confused images of what Dracula is. Some bloggers refer to Dracula as a magician of some sorts: “the Dracula guy just did like this [hand gesture] and made it [the castle] go up by magic!” (15). Other view him not just as a vampire but as a cannibal, a man eater: “Here is a room where Dracula ...[inaudible] his guests before eating them alive” (16). Others view Dracula as a shape-changer, especially in the iconic representation of a bat: “It is actually called a bat window because this is where Dracula would take a ...[inaudible]...he would jump out the window and turn into a bat!” (16). The data suggest that Western tourists have definite if confused ideas of what Dracula symbolizes. In their minds, Dracula is the pure image of evil, a vampire that drinks human blood, and a magical being who brings fear into the hearts of people.

### c. Imitating Dracula

However scary he might seem, the attraction to Dracula is uncontested. Tourists’ encounter with Dracula’s fictional residence allows them to express their fascination with the character by imitating him. The bloggers’ reproduction of Dracula is present either by them posing with fangs, black capes, or by making scary faces and sounds. The video blogs reveal Western tourists speaking with an accent: “Whohoho!! I can smell his blood!” (16), “Whohohhowho! What are you doing in my mansion, you infidels?” (15), “You see, they’re thinking I am filming the castle, but no! I am filming them instead [camera focusing on women]. Yes, yes!! You will all be my victims tonight!!” (15). One blogger chose to wear a cape: “I decided to wear my Dracula cape. I am going to sneak up on them and scare them!!” (15), while three other enthusiasts pose with Dracula teeth,

one by posting a picture of himself holding his fingers as fangs, and two other tourists using plastic fangs: “Jessica and Daniella bought some AWESOME Dracula teeth and had fun posing around the castle” (10). In their search for the sensational, bloggers choose to imitate Dracula by posing or speaking like him. Of course, these images are representations of what they learned from Dracula novels and movies, making them believe they know exactly who Dracula is. However, when they travel to Bran in search for him, some tourists remain profoundly disappointed with what they find.

### *All I Could Find Was Draculaville...*

The *All I Could Find Was Draculaville* theme encompasses those images of Western bloggers disappointed in not finding Dracula in Bran but a world of Dracula souvenirs and merchandise instead. The theme has two sub-themes: Tourists’ Disappointment, and Local Promotion of Dracula.

#### a. Tourists’ Disappointment

Traveling to Transylvania in search of Dracula carrying the Draculian culture in their backpacks, some Western bloggers find themselves disappointed with what they find, or more precisely, with what they don’t find. Many bloggers expressed their dissatisfaction with Bran Castle: “Took a bus out to Bran Castle, aka Dracula’s Castle, and were thoroughly underwhelmed... The museum inside does not even mention Dracula” (1), “Incredible that this small, scrawny wimp of a castle could be the home of the only person who gave me nightmares as a kid...we made our way through the rest of the rather dry and boring castle” (3), “But the payoff if it [the castle] being about Dracula didn’t

meet the expectations” (5), “Unfortunately... Dracula never lived in Dracula’s Castle. It was very disappointing”(10). Tourists do not only expect the castle to embody Dracula, but also the people working in Bran: “we were rather disappointed to discover the staff didn’t have long black cloaks, dodgy greased black hair and long pointy teeth!” (14). Whether they expected to find Dracula alive at Bran Castle, or tour guides working the part, some Western bloggers seemed to have missed the historical beauty of the castle while focusing so much on finding Dracula. By the end of their trip, they realized that the only Dracula they would find was the one painted on souvenirs.

#### b. Local Promotion of Dracula

The image of Bran as Dracula-central is well portrayed by one blogger in particular:

When we got to the town of Bran, we found Tourist Central. Cars, people, and souvenir vendors, chaos, a real madhouse... About 14 million other people were on the same path and things were not looking very good for a pleasant visit... When we got to the top we found a long line for tickets...we came back down, saw the line was only worse...

The town of Bran , aka Draculaville. Crazy! There was a vampire-themed tourist kitsch for sale everywhere and people were buying it! Vampire t-shirts, Vampire wine, Dracula vodka, mugs, plaques, you name it (9)

Tourists express their disbelief of how the locals responded to tourist demands for Dracula: “You can buy all sorts of fangs, bloody and batty paraphernalia at most of the several dozen kitscheries just below the castle, or you can stay at Vampire Camping”(1), “we walked through the sea of Dracula merchants” (3), “the various hawkers were selling mugs and tee-shirts and masks all with the hyperbolic visage of Vlad Tepes, the original Count Dracula” (7). Bloggers posted video and pictures of Dracula mugs and t-shirts,

scary masks, Dracula vodka and wine, and other merchandise. It is without question that this image of Bran is a result of the sea of tourists searching for Dracula.

While not being able to find Dracula inside Bran Castle, some tourists opted for purchasing or consuming any Dracula goods: “it was very disappointing...but we did get some cool t-shirts” (10), “we sat in a small restaurant for a chat over a bottle of ‘Vampyre’” (13), “we were supposed to stay at Count Dracula hotel”(19), “Arriving at Vampire Camping in Bran”(14). If Western tourists cannot find Dracula alive and well in his castle, they look for him in other places...

### 4.3 Quantitative Analysis

#### a. Text Blogs

The tabulation of data from the text blogs did not involve simply noting how many times a certain word appeared; instead, meaning units representative of the research questions were selected to be further focused into codes, which were then tabulated. The following table includes the counting of codes related to each theme. There were 13 blogs that were analyzed, out of which 80 codes were extrapolated. The table shows the number of codes per theme, and representation percentages for each theme.

<b>Textual Blogs – Theme Frequency</b>			
	<b>THEMES</b>		
	<i>Reality</i>	<i>I Know Dracula</i>	<i>All I Could Find Was Draculaville...</i>
<b>Count</b>	23	22	35
<b>%</b>	28.8%	27.5%	43.8%

Table 4 - Textual Blogs Theme Frequency

It is evident that the *All I Could Find Was Draculaville...* theme is the most populated theme with more than 30 codes out of 80. This result reflects the bloggers' main topic of discussion – their disappointment with what they found, and their amazement of the locals' response to Dracula demands. The other two themes were almost equally represented, which shows that bloggers choose to talk about the fictional Dracula just as much as talking about the historical reality.

#### b. Photographs

With the use of two scales developed to categorize the pictures found in blogs, it was found that five bloggers presented only historical depictions of Bran Castle represented by views of the castle walls, outside courtyard, and interior museum. Three bloggers had representations of both tourist consumption and historical reality, represented by images of them posing with fangs and historical illustrations of the castle. Five bloggers offered a combination of local consumption and historical pictures, presenting images of the castle but also of merchants, souvenirs, and any other Dracula-related merchandise. Only one blogger provided images that clearly belonged to the historical/fictional scale, presenting images from both ends of the spectrum such as illustrations of Vlad Tepes but also of the mythical vampire.

There were a total of 66 pictures in 13 blogs. Although the pictures were categorized in two bipolar scales, their illustrations have later become part of the main themes. The Historical representations group fit into the *Reality* theme, the Fictional representation into the *I Know Dracula!* theme, while the Local and Tourist Consumption

pictures belong to the *All I Could Find was Draculaville...* theme. The table below illustrates the rate at which each theme was being represented in the bloggers' pictures.

<b>Pictures – Bipolar Scales Frequency</b>				
	<b>Historical/Fictional Representation</b>		<b>Local/Tourist Consumption</b>	
	<i>Historical</i>	<i>Fictional</i>	<i>Local</i>	<i>Tourist</i>
<b>Count</b>	50	1	10	5
<b>%</b>	75.8%	1.5%	15.2%	7.6%

Table 5 - Pictures Bipolar Scales Frequency

What tourists find at Bran is an historic castle, thus their pictures show castle views, castle walls, the interior courtyard, and the interior museum. All these representations belong to the historic end of the historic/fictional spectrum. Because the castle does not provide any fictional representation of Dracula, it is reasonable that the blogs will have minimal representations of the fictional Dracula. The one blogger who posted a fictional picture, was portraying Bela Lugosi in his acting role as Count Dracula. Although not popular, the fictional representation scale is important because it offers the other view of Dracula which might be the destination image pre-visit.

The Local Consumption scale represents pictures taken by tourists showing souvenirs or other merchandise promoting Dracula. The number of pictures of Dracula-related souvenirs was the second highest after Historical Representation pictures. This is a reflection of what Bran has to offer to those visiting. If Bran Castle is the main attraction, the local merchants definitely do not go by unnoticed.

The Tourist Consumption scale includes pictures of bloggers imitating Dracula by posing with fangs or making scary faces. The low number of Tourist Consumption



pictures goes hand in hand with the low number of Fictional Representation pictures.

Because Bran does not promote the fictional Dracula, tourists visiting the castle are not prone to live the myth, but are presumably interested in the historical and local reality.

### c. Video Blogs

Video blogs were assessed using basic quantitative tools. The verbal data represents what was said and how, as well as any words shown in the video; while visual data includes the images showed and the facial expressions of the blogger.

<b>Video Blogs – Theme Frequency</b>						
	<b>THEMES</b>					
	<i>Reality</i>		<i>I Know Dracula!</i>		<i>All I Could Find Was Draculaville...</i>	
	Audio/Text	Video/Pictures	Audio/Text	Video/Pictures	Audio/Text	Video/Pictures
<b>Count</b>	31	23	39	16	4	7
<b>%</b>	25.8 %	19.2%	32.5%	13.3%	3.3%	5.8%

Table 6 - Video Blogs Theme Frequency

It should be noted the number of codes representing each theme can be skewed due to the nature of analyzing a video. While some video shots are short and present fast-paced sequence of different images, other video blogs can focus on the same image for almost the whole duration of the video. Therefore, a long shot of the same image will count as one code, while a shorter video showing many other things can result in more codes. Nevertheless, most video bloggers seem to concentrate on expressing both the fictional and real spectrum of Dracula.

There is not much difference between the audio and video components of the *Reality* theme, which shows that tourists are know the historical reality (or they learned it) but they also encounter historical images which they record. However, the percentages between the audio and video components of the *I know Dracula!* theme varies substantially. This might be due to the fact that while Dracula enthusiasts are able to verbalize their beliefs and impressions of Dracula, when traveling to Bran Castle, they are not able to find any fictional images of Dracula.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### LOCAL RESIDENTS' OPINIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

Interviews were conducted with inhabitants of Brasov province over the age of 18 during Spring 2009. The questions related to participants' knowledge and opinions regarding Dracula and Dracula tourism. A total of 27 interviews were gathered. All questions were in Romanian, received via e-mail, and later translated by the researcher into English.

#### 5.2 Themes

While having the three research questions as guidance, three themes were generated from the structured interview guides: *Dracula: A Foreign Fantasy*; *Dracula: A Page in History*; and *Dracula: A Commercial Good*. The following themes, although independent from each other, draw a parallel between the Dracula images portrayed on blogs by Western tourists and the locals' image of Dracula.

##### *Dracula: A Foreign Fantasy*

The *Dracula: A Foreign Fantasy* theme is defined as Dracula's image as created by the foreign imagination. The answers to the structured interview questions revealed that the locals believe in multiple Dracula personalities. One of them is that of an imaginary vampire created by Bram Stoker, a character belonging to the world of fantasy that has embedded itself into peoples' minds through images of blood, fangs, black cloaks and

other dark and evil representations. Categories such as “myth”, “vampire”, and “movies” illustrate the fantasy facade of Dracula.

#### a. Myth

The duality of Dracula’s name is a result of Bram Stoker’s novel with the same name. For many participants, when asked what comes to their mind when they hear the name Dracula, the only answer was “a myth character” (1), “a fictional character written by Bram Stoker and read by foreigner adolescents” (4). In the mind of the locals, the name Dracula is “a myth and only a myth” (13), “a legend that as each day passes it becomes more known in the world” (3). Dracula is a myth created by foreigners for foreigners, a myth that many locals do not consider to belong to the Romanian culture: “The myth ‘Dracula’ does not exist in the real Romanian culture” (18). Moreover, the locals’ agree that Dracula is “pure fantasy” (11) and that such myths “belong to fantasy” (20).

#### b. Vampire

These images of fantasy are often the first ones to come to the participants’ mind when they hear the name Dracula. Dracula as a vampire is the most popular image, a “dark, cruel and bloody” (1) character, “with outside fangs” (7), “a scary character who was transforming from bat to vampire” (21). The consecrated vampire image is not the only one coming to the locals’ mind, other dark feelings shadow Dracula’s name: “devil, ugly, scary” (23), and images of “fear, terror” (25).

The vampire representation is further reinforced by the Western bloggers’ image of Dracula. The locals have noticed that the Western travelers think of Dracula as “a character like Superman” (4) presented as a “vampire, monster” (23), “feeding of human

blood” (2). While the locals gazed at “how strongly they [Western tourists] believe in the Dracula myth” (26), the vampire images have clearly pierced their minds also since these are coming to their mind when they hear the name Dracula.

### c. Movie character

To the locals, Dracula also represents “the character from the movie ‘Dracula’” (21), “a movie character presented as a vampire” (8). Dracula brings memories of “movies with vampires” (18), motion pictures “created by the foreign cinematography” (6). Participants expressed their belief that “the Dracula myth is a fantasy belonging to the American cinematography” (1). Their image of Dracula is that presented in “many Hollywood movies that have in the middle the character from Transylvania” (4), images spread by “a vampire’s cinematography” (5).

### *Dracula: A Page in History*

Although Dracula is sometimes interpreted as the vampire made famous by Hollywood movies, the locals of Brasov province have not replaced the historical truth with the myth. *Dracula: A Page in History* theme is characterized by the historical nature of the participants’ answers in regards to what Dracula means to them. Dracula was identified as a ruler of Romanian territory, a respected but harsh punisher; while the castle associated with his name, a historical monument. The following categories represent this theme.

#### a. Vlad Tepes

Over nine out of ten (93.0%) of the participants answered “Vlad Tepes” when they were asked who Dracula was in Romanian history. Dracula’s identity to Romanians is uncontested as a historical figure even though his nickname became one of the most recognizable myths around the world. The inhabitants of Brasov province have no doubt that Dracula was “a great Romanian ruler” (1) who was “very respected and loved” (3) by his people. However, his actions towards his enemies won him the reputation of Vlad the Impaler.

While recognizing him as a respected ruler, the locals also think of Dracula as “a Romanian prince from the Middle Ages who was very cruel with his enemies” (7). He was “a very cruel ruler who impaled... traitors” (16), or used other “bloody punishments” (2). His cruelty towards his infidels resulted in “a reign sustained by terror” (4), however, due to his punishment methods “he succeeded in stopping the Turkish invasion” (4).

#### b. Historical monument

Dracula’s castle, known as Bran Castle to the locals, is recognized by most participants as a historical monument, a “beautiful medieval castle” (8), an “architectural beauty” (5) and a “cultural source” (13). Bran Castle has been identified as a “touristic attraction” (22) presenting the “Romanian history” (5) and not making any connection to Dracula inside the museum: “At Bran Castle, Dracula is not presented” (18), “the interior museum reflects the historical reality of its time” (6), “the castle is associated with Queen Maria” (17).

Over one-third (38%) of the respondents believe that changes are necessary in the way Dracula is being promoted in the Brasov province. Locals want the promotion plan to include images based on the historical reality, “erasing the wrong ones created along the way” (14). This is articulated by their desire for promotional material that “express the region’s historical reality” (5). Participant 17 believes that “what should make tourists come to Transylvania, respectively at Bran, should be the real story of Bran Castle and the castle itself”.

#### *Dracula: A Commercial Good*

Whether asked about how Dracula is being presented in the Romanian culture, what images are being promoted by the local merchants, or what Bran Castle represents to them, the participants’ opinion of what Dracula represents is nothing more than a commodity meant to attract as many foreign tourists as possible. Therefore, *Dracula: A Commercial Good* theme is defined as those images of Dracula meant to attract tourists and be consumed by tourists. The following categories illustrate the participants’ opinion of what Dracula represents.

##### a. Touristic attraction

Participant 5, when asked about what he/she thinks about the images promoted at Bran, answered: “I think they represent a touristic and commercial attraction”. Similarly, participant 6 said that when he/she thinks of Dracula, what comes to mind are “the areas and touristic attractions connected to this name”. The participants referred to Bran as a

“touristic attraction” (25), a commercial area for “tourists looking for the myth” (11), a “region...known on an international level” (16).

#### b. Souvenirs and Festivals

It is not surprising that local vendors use the Dracula myth to make money from foreign visitors. For them, Dracula equals income. The desire to sell the myth has also passed to the inhabitants of Brasov province who seem to think of Dracula as something that can be bought and sold. The participants are aware that the local vendors and merchants sell those images demanded by tourists: “the image of a vampire” (5), “long and bloody fangs and a black cloak” (18) but also images of Vlad Tepes and Bran Castle. These images are portrayed on “mugs, plates” (1), “clothing and medieval weapons” (5), “decoration objects, accessories, jewelry” (27).

One of the ways to sell the historical and mythical Dracula and to attract more tourists is through festivals. Participants noted that “there are celebrations organized where his [Dracula’s] image is utilized” (8). It seems that the “festivals in Transylvanian towns” (6) are “annual celebrations...specific to this myth” (1) organized to help the local merchants sell their Dracula souvenirs and to further market the myth with hopes to attract more tourists every year.

#### c. Public places

Because foreign tourists travel to Brasov province in search of Dracula, the local community has made itself available to them by offering hospitality services. For example, “in Poiana, Brasov, exists a restaurant called ‘At Dracula’s home’” (26).



Dracula is used in many “hotels and restaurant names” (6), but also in “pensions, housing” (27). The local community realized that Dracula is a good which can increase the local economy while offering tourists a place to rest and eat.

Another point that illustrates how participants view Dracula is a commodity is that 93% of the respondents think that although Dracula’s image is unauthentic, it is used to attract as many tourists as possible. This observation is reinforced by the nearly two-thirds (63%) of the participants who feel there is no need to change the way Dracula is promoted; further some feel the myth should be promoted further through the addition of parks and shows to increase the number of tourists to the area.

### 5.3 Quantitative Analysis

To better understand the relation between the above themes, each theme is represented by the rate at which its codes appeared in the participants’ answers. The following table summarizes the tabulations.

Public Interview Guide – Theme Frequency								
Theme	<i>Dracula: A Fictional Fantasy</i>			<i>Dracula: A Page in History</i>		<i>Dracula: A Commercial Good</i>		
Code	Myth	Vampire	Movie	Vlad Tepes	Historical Monument	Touristic Attraction	Merchandise /Festivals	Public Places
Count	21	47	13	65	23	34	14	3
%	9.5%	21.4%	5.9%	29.5%	10.5%	15.5%	6.4%	1.4%

Table 7 – Public Interview Theme Frequencies

It is apparent from the above tabulations that Dracula is viewed by the inhabitants of Brasov primarily as Vlad Tepes, the historical ruler of Romanian territory (65 of 220 codes). However, the dichotomy of Dracula’s reputation is reflected in the fact that the

“Vampire” was mentioned by a relatively high with 47 out of 220 codes. The image of a vampire has penetrated the minds of the locals maybe because of Dracula’s power as a touristic attraction, a category, which is the next most-frequent association by the respondents (34 codes). The duality of Dracula is further illustrated by the relatively identical frequencies of the contrasting categories, “Myth” and “Historical monument”, 21 and 23 codes respectively. It is normal for the participants to think of Dracula and Bran Castle as both a myth and a historical representation because they associate his name with both a vampire and a Romanian monarch.

It should be noted that the occurrence of each code is based on a relatively small sample (27 participants), and while the resulting themes may be replicable for a larger sample, the percentages at which these themes appear in the participants’ opinions might not be representative of the entire Brasov Province population.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **PERCEPTIONS OF TOUR GUIDES**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

The findings presented in this chapter are the result of three interviews with Bran Castle tour guides in April 2009. The interviews were completed by the tour guides through e-mail in April, 2009. Due to the fact that the answers were somewhat succinct, additional details were asked and recorded via telephone. The subjects were three women who have been working as tour guides at Bran Castle for almost ten years, time in which they have acquired the experience and credibility needed to participate in this study. Due to anonymity agreement, the participants will be referred to as Guide 1, Guide 2, and Guide 3. Each number was assigned in the order in which the interviews were received.

#### **6.2 Themes**

The analysis process, similar to grounded theory, resulted in five themes relevant to all three research questions. In this section, each theme will be introduced, defined, and explained through the use of quotes from the interviews. This method gives voice to the participants, allowing their own experiences and belief to shape the interpretation of their interviews.

##### *World-Renowned Attraction*

Characterized by notions of fame, the theme *World-Renowned Attraction* includes images of tourists groups coming from all over the world to see Bran Castle. The tour guides consider Bran Castle the most important attraction in Romania, the main reason why

tourists come to visit Bran, an attraction made famous by the myth of Dracula. Guide 1 believes Bran Castle to be “the most important historical structure in our country but also over the borders”, while Guide 2 reinforces this idea by stating that “the main attraction for tourists coming to Romania represents Bran Castle”.

The fame of Bran Castle is exemplified by the numbers of tourists visiting each year: “On the footsteps of Count Dracula are tens, hundreds of thousands of tourists” (Guide 2), “during the summer, 3000 tourists every day” (Guide 3). Tourists come to Bran Castle in “organized groups” (Guide 1) brought by tourism agencies who have contracts with Bran Castle: “So, we work primarily with tourism agencies” (Guide 3), agencies that “have contracts with the ones in foreign countries, and in their tours they include Bran Castle also” (Guide 1). The number of tourists visiting the castle each year is not the only proof of its fame, but the fact that these tourists come from all over the world also shows how well known Dracula is. Guide 1 described the tourists visiting Bran Castle in these words:

Their curiosity and wish to see the Castle associated with the famous and feared Count Dracula comes from all cultures in the world: Europe, United States, from the far Asia, the Islamic states, etc...there is no specific nation. They even come from the furthest corners of the world and in different seasons. In August the Italians, June-July the Americans, in September the Hungarians are coming, and in the fall months there are many people from Israel.

Although the Dracula myth is the creation of a Western writer, the myth has reached all nations, attracting people “from all over the world” (Guide 2). Dracula’s fame has become so imprinted into peoples’ culture that it is now considered a brand. Bran Castle was once a simple medieval castle; however, it is now “a touristic attraction becoming a

brand” (Guide 1). Guide 2 believes Dracula is a brand “because in every corner of the world, if you say ...Dracula they know Romania”. The name of Dracula identifies the destination, attracting tourists from all over the world, while bringing benefits to the locals who “are dependent on this brand” (Guide 2). Visitors “come back year after year” (Guide 3), their “frequent return” (Guide 3) being a result of a continuous interest in this world renowned brand.

### *Who is the Tourist?*

The duality of Dracula resulted in two groups of visitors: those interested in the history of the castle and Vlad Tepes, and those in search for Dracula, the vampire. The *Who is the Tourist?* theme reflects these two different types of tourists.

The Dracula enthusiasts’ expectations and demands are explained by the Bran Castle tour guides. Guide 3 notes the reason why this group exists: “Because of the talented Irish writer, Bram Stoker, the author of the novel Dracula, millions of people created in their mind a unique phenomenon, a phenomenon which they would wish to live in the places related to Dracula.” These tourists “come to Transylvania in search for the character” (Guide 2), bringing with them a baggage full of expectations based on their image of what Dracula represents: “they believe there are torture rooms, coffins” (Guide 1); “they expect blood on the walls, vampire clothing, and all kind of surprises on the tour” (Guide 2).

When asked specifically about Western tourists, Guide 1 explains their expectations

The Western tourists do not expect to find the pure Romanian medieval history, but a castle full of stories and legends about the count, they expect to find the count's house with all its grim and scary surprises such as: the coffin where the count was resting his hundreds of years old bones, the rooms of the girls who kept him company during the full moon nights when transforming in bats were flying to find the next victims, how the legend says.

If Dracula-seekers expect to see a vampire's home, while demanding to find scary images, they are also afraid of what they might encounter. Dracula as a source of fear penetrated the minds of people from many cultures: "I had a group of Italians, and strong lightning came, they got scared because the electricity went off, and they ran from the room. I tried to tell them it's ok, but they ran and we were only on the first floor of the tour" (Guide 2). This quote demonstrates how strongly this group of tourists believes in the Dracula myth.

Guide 2 mentions that these kind of expectations and images in the tourists' mind belong to a world of fantasy: "They have a behavior like they live in a fantasy world...they are sometimes disappointed by the historical barriers that limit their demand of sensational, of cruelty that most of them wish for". Because of the lack of scary things and Dracula-related images, "there are many who live disappointed" (Guide 1).

However, there are also tourists who visit Bran Castle solely for its historical significance: "there are many who ask me not to tell them anything on the subject because they are not a child, they know how to separate the character" (Guide 2). Guide 1 notes that when giving a tour to these tourists, she feels completely comfortable about presenting the historical facts: "even if I tell them the truth, they don't care about

Dracula” The history seekers appreciate Bran Castle for its historical value and are interested in the Romanian history. Guide 3 explains her experience with this type of tourists:

we showed them our history and they left profoundly impressed that they found out about Queen Maria, Princess Ileana, and they saw the castle in its true value, and as a geographical location, and then, automatically, if they did not see Dracula they really liked it and that is why they come back.

Although some visitors are attracted to the historical reality and the beauty of the region, “to compare...there are a lot less than those who want the myth” (Guide 2).

Each group has its own characteristics, each one looking for different things. Their experiences are shaped by the tour guides, leaving them with different impressions. “Those who believe in the myth leave with a sour taste, but those who know history and want to see a historical edifice...live with a good impression” (Guide 1).

### *Balancing History with Myth*

The *Balancing History with Myth* theme is characterized by the tour guides’ attempts to answer to tourists’ demands. To cater to tourists’ needs and to present the castle in its true light, the guides feel that the best way to inform is by combining historical facts with myth. Guide 1 feels personally responsible for how Romanian history is recounted: “as local guides, we are morally obligated (because nobody ever verifies us) to refer more to history and we don’t change it, we tell the truth”. However, because “there are curious people who ask what the connection is” (Guide 1), Guide 3 notes that:

even if we do not have specific Dracula-related exhibits at Castle Bran, we tried to combine history with business, the historical truth and legend and we answered well to this demand... The truth does

not have to be hidden, and the thirst for the sensational should not be rejected.

The connection between history and myth is done is made by presenting historical facts and at the end of the tour explaining how Dracula and Bran Castle are associated with the fictional vampire. Guide 1 explains how she deals with the tourists' demand:

I tell them that the fame of the castle is due to the writer [Bram Stoker]; and it seems that this writer found out from the Germans' writings from the medieval period who wrongly wrote about Vlad Tepes naming him a vampire, tyrant, and he [Bram Stoker]] wrote and heard of this castle where he found out that he [Vlad Tepes] stayed... So he made this connection...

Guide 3 follows a similar path to explain the connection between history and myth:

After we present a succinct history, in order to connect to Dracula...we make the connection with Bram Stoker and we tell them that none of the books make a specific connection to Bran but because Bran Castle looks a lot like the one in books and because it is from that specific time period, then the association is perfect...

The connection between the historical facts and the myth is made by explaining how the myth was created and how it became associated with Bran Castle. To answer the tourists' thirst for sensational stories, the tour guides focus on historical legends rather than on vampire myths:

For other groups that want jokes and legends, we tell them legends. We have in the area the street called The Row of Thieves, and we tell them that Vlad impaled thieves in a row and now it's named like that. We also tell them the legend about the money bag that was left in the middle of the road but because everyone was afraid of Tepes nobody picked it up. In no way we tell them vampire legends. (Guide 1)

The absence of Dracula-related exhibits inside the museum reinforces the distinction between history and myth: "The Castle does not have arrangements to deal with this theme...Bran Castle Museum does not promote this subject" (Guide 2). Not



only there are no Dracula or Vlad Tepes rooms, the museum also does not promote the idea that the castle is Dracula's home. If tourists expected to find a multitude of Dracula promotional material, the castle has "only some postcards with different images of the castle, only one book that tries to explain the historical truth" (Guide 1). This one book, published by the museum and called "Dracula-myth and historical reality", was created "to make clear the confusion between myth and reality about over 600 years of history, to stabilize their [tourists] limits and tolerance" (Guide 2).

To the guides, telling the historical truth is essential, but so is the need to keep tourists coming back year after year:

With perseverance and imagination, with history and legend, we try to answer to this demand...If we were trying to change the history, this is not good for us as a society... that is why we tried to go along with history without changing it (Guide 3)

### *Agro-tourism*

Even if the guides do not promote Dracula's myth, local people found a way of taking advantage of the vast number of people going to Bran to find Dracula. The *Agro-tourism* theme is defined as the locals' endeavors in the business world, endeavors supported by their knowledge of the land and animals, but also by the influx of tourists.

Based on the numbers of tourists visiting Bran yearly, one would think that the locals would be irritated by the lack of privacy, by the changes in their peaceful lifestyle. However, when asked about this issue, all three guides agreed that, on the contrary, the locals have no dissatisfactions: "there are no dissatisfactions from the locals related to his touristic attractions, on the contrary, they are very content" (Guide 1), "I don't believe there are any dissatisfactions from locals regarding Dracula tourism" (Guide 3), "I don't

think we can talk about locals dissatisfactions who, being people with a native sense of business are dependant on this brand” (Guide 2).

The locals’ lack of dissatisfaction with Dracula tourism is primarily due to the fact that the incoming tourists helped towards the development of agro-tourism. Guide 2 explains how the locals depend on agro-tourism: “the majority has animals and dairy products and they sell them to tourists”; while Guide 3 notes the locals’ ability to profit from the incoming tourists:

People exploited this region always, and now they are picking the benefits of their hard work. The locals who had animals counted on the local cuisine, and the tourists really liked it and so they made reservations and came back every season. They take advantage of raising animals - through the food they provide- but also of the hostels that were built

Because of the money tourists spend while staying in Bran, Guide 1 is certain that the locals are happy with the current situation: “people are satisfied not to have privacy in exchange for financial stability. They are satisfied because they have enough to sustain they families, a decent life”. Therefore, even if Dracula’s myth were not promoted at Bran Castle, “this myth helped develop the agro-tourism in the Bran region” (Guide 3), “agro-tourism also being an important source of capital for most of the locals” (Guide 2).

### *Dracula’s Future*

*Dracula’s Future* represents the uncertain future of Bran Castle as a private attraction, a future that could be shaped by Dracula enthusiasts. When asked about what the future holds for Dracula tourism, the guides all sounded hopeful, expressing their thoughts that “the future sounds promising” (Guide 2). This hope is due to the new changes in

ownership, the castle being restituted to Archduke Dominic von Habsburg of Austria, the son of Princess Ileana of Romania. Guide 1 explains the new changes:

The castle was restituted and is now owned by the lawful owner, a member of the Romanian Regal family. The furniture pieces that belonged to the Romanian state were collected. Next the owner has to refurnish, to redecorate the castle rooms

While the redecoration plans are not known yet, the tour guides believe that the new owner will include “something connected to Vlad Tepes, Queen Maria, and Middle Ages. Possibly something Dracula too but I cannot say for sure. Probably there will be a room that will answer the tourists’ questions to remind about Vlad Tepes – as historical character for sure, but as myth I cannot tell you” (Guide 3). The uncertainty of the future plans were made known after May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2009: “these plans will be created after May 18, 2009” (Guide 1), “starting from May 18, 2009, a new chapter in Bran’s history will start” (Guide 2).

No matter what the new plans will entail, the tour guides believe they will be for the best: “The transition from the national to private domain makes tourism agencies very hopeful, who expect a better promotion and therefore a larger number of tourists” (Guide 2). The optimism showed by the tour guides is due to their understanding of how the private and state sectors work. Guide 2 explains how she thinks the private owner will take charge of the castle:

Their interest is to invest more than the state, they will exploit it differently. There will be all kind of beautiful theatre programs every Saturday, birthday parties inside. I think there will be something about the myth too. The interest is to make money, but the owner is an archduke who is part of the history, but the tourists have demands too...things will be better

Once again, Dracula tourism is facing the conflict between history and myth. While the Archduke Dominic of Habsburg represents the historical past of Bran Castle, Guide 2 believes that his future plans will probably have to take into consideration the demands of Dracula enthusiasts if he wants to keep the tourists coming.

### 6.3 Quantitative analysis

The in-depth interviews included questions related to Bran Castle and the tourists visiting it, but also about the locals’ reaction to the tourists’ demands. Because all questions were open-ended, the tour guides offered their explanation and experiences related to the subject in matter. The below table illustrates the themes and the relative frequency of their occurrences in the interviewees comments.

<b>In-depth Interviews – Theme Frequencies</b>					
	<b>THEMES</b>				
	<i>World Renowned Attraction</i>	<i>Who is the Tourist?</i>	<i>Balancing History with Myth</i>	<i>Agro- tourism</i>	<i>Dracula’s Future</i>
<b>Count</b>	18	60	42	22	16
<b>%</b>	11.4%	38%	26.6%	14%	10.1%

Table 8 – In-depth Interviews Theme Frequencies

The tour guides’ experiences revolve around their customers and their job. As a result, the all three participants talked primarily about who their customers are and what their demands and expectations are. This subject seems to be the most important one (60 out of 158 codes), probably because without a guide knowing her customer well, visitors might leave dissatisfied and never return or recommend Bran Castle as a touristic attraction. However, the tour guides also discuss the importance of how they do their job.

The *Balancing History with Myth* theme comes in second, which shows that the guides' belief lies in the importance of knowing how to answer tourists' demands (42 out of 158 codes). If they understand how to satisfy tourists' demands, the tour guides along with the locals can use these demands to their benefit. This next step is illustrated by the theme coming in 3<sup>rd</sup> place – *Agro-tourism* (22 codes), represented by the locals' exploitation of the myth through their souvenirs and hostels.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

The main goal of this research was to examine the Western tourists' and the locals' image of Dracula, and to see how both the locals and the Bran Castle tour guides respond to the Western demands.

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What is the Western image of Dracula?
2. What does Dracula signify for the locals?
3. What Dracula images are being promoted at Bran Castle?

Based on the findings described in the previous chapters, this section will summarize the answers to these three questions as well as discuss the relevance of Dracula as a destination image to the concepts presented in the literature review chapter. More specifically, the findings of the study will be discussed in relation to the destination image frameworks explained in Chapter 2 and the concept of authenticity.

#### **7.2 Research Question 1 - What is the Western image of Dracula?**

The Western image of Dracula has been identified through the analysis of blogs posted by Western tourists who visited Bran Castle, and as reported by the inhabitants of Brasov province and the tour guides at Bran Castle who interact with Western visitors. The Western image of Dracula is composed of historical facts and myth elements.

Kotler and Gertner (2004) noted that the image of a destination is produced by the totality of beliefs and impressions people have about the destination, the overall image representing the associations and information about the place. The Western image of Dracula and Bran Castle as Brasov's main destination is formed by cultural agents that imposed certain beliefs and impressions on tourists minds, influencing them to associate Transylvania and Bran Castle with Dracula the vampire. Throughout the data, the Western tourists' image of Dracula has been revealed in the themes *I Know Dracula!*, *A Foreign Fantasy*, and *Who is the Tourist?*

The vampire associations to Bran Castle are primarily the result of the Western fictional narratives and cinematography, agents discussed in the *I know Dracula!* and *A Foreign Fantasy* themes. These two stimulus factors are in concordance with Baloglu and McCleary's (1999a) Framework of Destination Image Formation. The bloggers and the participants in this study talk about the vast amount of movies and novels written about vampires, information sources described in the framework as forces influencing the overall image of a destination.

Unlike Baloglu and McCleary's (1999a) framework in which the stimulus and personal factors act as independent forces upon the overall destination image, the findings of this study show that the stimulus factors also affect the personal factors, which then shapes the overall image. Western bloggers, when visiting Bran Castle, bring with them their beliefs and feelings about Dracula, imposing them on the destination by imitating of the fictional character or by acting on their feelings of fear of Dracula. These components, as discussed in the *I Know Dracula!* and *Who is the Tourist?* themes are concurrent with Baloglu and McCleary's (1999a) psychological factors. Therefore, the

information sources and distribution channels have manipulated the Western tourists' psychological features, elements which were applied to the destination.

When looking at Bran Castle's image as the main attraction for Dracula enthusiasts, the perceptual evaluation is composed of psychological factors influenced by stimulus factors. That is, Western tourists who travel to Bran Castle have created an image of torture rooms, coffins, and blood on the wall, but also of a vampire that speaks with an accent and scares everyone around him. The overall destination image also is composed of the affective elements embodied by the tourists' emotions towards the destination. As represented by the themes *I Know Dracula* and *Who is the Tourist?*, many Western tourists come to Bran Castle with feelings of fear. Tourists run out of the room when the light shuts off, some feel frightened by the interior castle, while others are afraid of what they might encounter even before they step foot inside the castle. Hence, Dracula and Bran Castle's Western image as applied to Baloglu and McCleary's (1999a) framework, is that of a scary and bloody castle, the home of a vampire.

It is important, however, to not generalize that the universal visitors' images of Bran Castle is based on the mythical character. The blogs and interview findings reveal that there is another group of tourists that holds a completely different image of Dracula and Bran Castle, a group interested only in the historical past. Echtner and Ritchie (1993) note that although the image contains individual attributes, less tangible elements, and common elements, the image formation process also involves the more holistic impressions of place, the observable elements and the unique ones. These elements are represented by the *Reality* and *Who is the Tourist?* themes.



Some bloggers express their fascination with Bran Castle as an historical edifice, and of Transylvania as a beautiful region surrounded by thick forests and undulating hills. Even more, the tour guides at Bran Castle described tourists who do not even want to hear anything vampire-related, who are there solely for the historical reality. The observable elements of the destination image are exemplified by photographs depicting the historical castle, the interior museum and the artifacts displayed. As Echtner and Ritchie (1991) noted, these elements are always interacting and influencing with the other attributes. Hence, although there was a distinct group of tourists with a historical image of the destination, the overall Western image of Dracula and Bran Castle is an amalgamation of the more common images related to vampirism, and that of a historical destination supported by images of reality.

However, reality can have different meanings to different tourists. The application of the authenticity concept to destination image raises the idea that Western bloggers can create their own images of the destination, leaving some researchers in a dilemma as to which destination image is the authentic one. Smith (1990) noted that in tourism, the concept of authenticity is based on the experiences desired by the tourists and the benefits they associate with the destination. The themes *I Know Dracula* and *Who is the Tourist?* represent Western bloggers' expectations of scary experiences when visiting Bran Castle. The benefits associated with their visit to Bran Castle are those described in the sub-themes "Beliefs and Feelings" and "Imitating Dracula". The destination allows Dracula enthusiasts to express their reality of what Dracula represents to them.

Endensor (2001) believes that the authenticity of an image or destination is created by the tourists who apply different meanings to the destination, "dramatizing their

allegiance to places” (p. 71). The Draculian enthusiasts, while visiting Bran Castle, apply their interpretation of what Dracula represents by performing different acts that allows them to fulfill their expectations. As noted by Reisigner and Steiner (2006), the Western bloggers’ authenticity about Dracula and Bran Castle is a result of their own beliefs, expectations, stereotype images and consciousness.

There is, however, a group of Western bloggers whose concept of authenticity is based on historical facts. The objectivist view of authenticity is a concept that pays “homage to the conception of the original” (Taylor, 2001, p. 9). The theme *Who is the Tourist?* represents a different type of tourist who sees Bran Castle and Dracula in relation to their historical significance. Just as Reisigner and Steiner (2006) believe that any element, or destination in this case, is based on an objectivist reality to which one can refer when looking for genuine and accurate information; the historical seekers’ authenticity in regards to Bran Castle and Dracula is based on their knowledge of historical facts. This historical authenticity is also present in the case of Mackinac Island, where the local government pays homage to the original society. While attracting thousands of tourists every year, the island’s main attractions are the historical edifices and the ban on automobiles. Even though the island attempts to preserve its history, the reality is that the society as a whole has undergone many transformations, changes which bring up the idea of staged destinations. Nevertheless, even if the attractions are staged or not, it is ultimately the destination that influences the perceived authenticity.

In the case of Dracula tourism, while some Western bloggers travel to Transylvania in search for the mythical vampire, their impressions of what is authentic are changed by what is being presented at Bran Castle. Britton (1991) while identifying

the elements that contribute to the perceived authenticity, makes reference to the agencies involved in regulating the commercial behavior of the destination, and the physical elements incorporated in the destination to attract tourists. Hence, although Western tourists arrive at Bran Castle in search for Dracula, their perception of what is authentic is influenced by the historical characteristics of the castle and its museum, and by the tour guides promoting the historical reality. This changed perception of what is authentic is illustrated by the Western bloggers through their expression of what is factual, real. The theme *Reality* discusses the Western bloggers perception of the destination, images which portray the historical reality of Bran Castle and Dracula.

The changes in the perceived authenticity are parallel to Gunn's (1988) phases of the travel experience. The modification of the destination image takes place after the visit at Bran Castle. The blogs written by Western tourists have all been posted after their experiences with the destination. Although their original images might have been based on Dracula's myth as portrayed in the Western culture, many bloggers chose to write about the historical reality of the destination. This is illustrated by the observation that three-quarters of the pictures posted on the blogs are representations of the historical castle and the interior museum.

Unlike Choi, Lehto, and Morrison's (2007) study of Macau's destination image where different online sources of information were examined to extrapolate the overall image of the destination, this study focused only the Western tourists' blogs. However, the results seem to be similar in that both studies revealed that the online sources do not portray a consistent image of the destination. This is illustrated by the counting results, showing both the *Reality* and *I Know Dracula* themes coming at similar rates. The text

blogs results are 45% representation for the *Reality* theme, and 45.8% for the *I Know Dracula* theme; while the video blogs results are 28.8% and 27.5% respectively.

To conclude, it is without doubt that the Western bloggers' image of Dracula is a combination of their beliefs about the myth and their impressions of the destination. While there are some tourists whose image of Dracula and Bran Castle is solely based on historical facts, the majority of Western tourists who blog about their Bran Castle experience see the destination as a blend of fiction and reality.

### **7.3 Research Question 2 – What does Dracula signify for the locals?**

The context of this study revolves around a historical ruler, Vlad Tepes. As presented in the beginning of this thesis, the character at the roots of Dracula tourism was a Romanian ruler who lived in the 1400s. However, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Irish writer Bram Stoker would forever change the way this honest but cruel leader would be viewed by millions of people. The Romanian people were not aware of the new fame Vlad Tepes has acquired. Only in the 1960s, after Universal made several vampire movies, Dracula enthusiasts started traveling to Transylvania demanding and expecting to find Dracula. The locals' historical knowledge along with the new myth elements have somewhat altered the way in which the Brasov inhabitants think about Dracula.

When thinking about the locals' image of Dracula in the context of Baloglu and McCleary's (1999a) framework, the personal factors are characterized by the locals' values towards their historical background. The theme, *A Page in History*, describes the locals' knowledge of who Dracula was in the Romanian history and what Bran Castle represents to the Romanian culture. They value Vlad Tepes as an honest ruler who used

harsh tactics to protect the Romanian territory against traitors and the Ottoman Empire. They view Bran Castle as a cultural source, a historic monument presenting the past of the Romanian royal family. Although fully aware of their historical reality, the inhabitants of Brasov province have created another image of Dracula.

Baloglu and McClearly's (1999a) framework discusses the influence of stimulus factors upon the overall image of a destination. In the case of this study, it is obvious that the stimulus factors affecting the destination also affect the locals' image of Dracula. The findings described in the theme *Dracula: A Foreign Fantasy* demonstrate that the locals' first thoughts about Dracula are also related to Western cinematography and the vampire novels written. This is illustrated by the rate at which the code "vampire" has been used by the participants in the structured interview, 21.4%, a rate coming closely to the historical code "Vlad Tepes" at 29.5%.

The influx of tourists to Romania in search for Dracula has had an affect upon the psychological and social factors involved in the formation of Dracula's image. The locals' motivations to use the myth to their advantage is the result of Western demands, demands the locals took advantage of in order to improve their families' economic well-being. As described by the themes *All I Could Find Was Draculaville...*, *Dracula: A Commercial Good*, and *Agro-tourism*, the inhabitants exploit Dracula's image through the creation of souvenirs and merchandise portraying the name or image of Dracula, or by opening hostels. In response to their financial need, the inhabitants of Brasov province have taken advantage of stimulus factors such as the incoming Draculian enthusiasts. However, the demands of the Western tourists have further manipulated the way in which the locals view and think about Dracula.

As a result, when interpreted through Baloglu and McCleary's (1999a) framework, the locals' image of Dracula is formed by their perceptual evaluation based on their knowledge of historical data and incoming tourists, combined with the affective evaluation, which represents the emotions created by Western influences. Nevertheless, as a whole, the inhabitants of Brasov province seem to be able to put their emotions and profit-driven thinking aside, still holding the historical image of Vlad Tepes and Bran Castle. They still recognize historical facts that have nothing to do with the vampire myth.

Interpreted through Echtner and Ritchie's (1991) framework, the locals' image of Dracula encompasses all the three different sets required in the formation of a destination image. The attribute-holistic set is represented by the locals' understanding of the individual attributes of the image such as the historical characteristics and the tourists' demands, but they also understand the Western holistic image of Bran Castle as a castle belonging to the mythical Count Dracula. The functional-psychological set is comprised of those images of profit, images that can be observed and measured due to the improvement in lifestyle based on agro-tourism; but also by the less tangible elements such as their motivations and values, and the demands and expectations of Western tourists. The locals' image of Dracula ranges from common to unique, from historical ruler to blood-sucking vampire.

All these elements overlap, creating a holistic image of Dracula in the mind of the locals - that of an historical ruler becoming a profitable commodity due to a Western myth. This is demonstrated by the common characteristics in the themes *All I Could Find was Draculaville...*, *Dracula: A Foreign Fantasy*, *Dracula: A Page in History*, *Dracula:*

*A Commercial Good* and *Agro-tourism*; themes which discuss the locals' mixture of historical and myth elements to alleviate their financial condition.

To the inhabitants of Brasov Province, the authenticity of Dracula and Bran Castle is based on the historical reality. The objectivist view of authenticity considers a destination to be authentic only when its material integrity cannot be debatable (Holtorf and Schadla-Hall, 1999, Reisinger and Steinger, 2006). When asked about who Dracula is in the Romanian culture, the locals answers raise no question about their objectivist view, identifying Dracula as a medieval ruler who was made known by his favorite punishment – impaling. Reisinger and Steiner (2006) note that in the objectivist view of authenticity, the element in discussion has to be based on an objectively real world to which anyone can refer to when making judgments. To the inhabitants of Brasov Province, Dracula's authenticity and that of Bran Castle is reflected in their historical past.

However, the fact that the locals also think of Dracula as the vampire count cannot be overlooked. This image in their minds is nothing more than the reaction to the Western demands. The locals' response, as presented by the themes, *All I Could Find was Draculaville...* and *Dracula: A Commercial Good*, is embodied in their attempts to sell anything that can be associated with Dracula. Jordanova (2007) mentions that “one knows that the real thing and the imaginary have little in common, nevertheless a mercantile interest thrives, building on the fascination with the imaginary” (p. 58). This is exactly what is being reflected in the findings of this study. Although the locals make a clear distinction between the two Dracula images, they realized that by taking advantage

of the Dracula enthusiasts and their expectations and demands, they will be able to increase their capital.

Similar to Medina's (2003) study of the authenticity of Mayan souvenirs, this study also reveals that the culture or image of a destination is produced and consumed by many stakeholders such as tourists, locals, vendors of artisanal production and tour guides. Each stakeholder has his/her own goals in mind and reacts differently to perceived images, demands and expectations of the destination; however, tour guides have additional power to respond to demands and influence the image of a destination.

#### **7.4 Research Question 3 – What Dracula images are being promoted at Bran Castle?**

Reisinger and Steiner (2006) note that the tour guides play an important role in the creation of the image and conveying a sense of authenticity of a destination because they can influence the way people experience and think about the destination. Tour guides represent the organic agents based on Gunn's (1993) classification of image formation agents, being the most credible source of information for the tourists visiting Bran Castle. They are, therefore, involved in the manipulation of Dracula's image in the tourists' mind. From the perspective of Britton's (1991) categorization of elements influencing the authenticity of a destination, the Bran Castle tour guides represent the agency responsible for regulating the commercial behavior of social externalities associated with Dracula.

The guides are the stimulus factors responsible for controlling the amount and type of information given about the destination. Balogly and McCleary (1999) note that the image of a destination is shaped not only by such information but also by the way it is



distributed. As shown in the Chapter Six, more specifically in the theme *Balancing History with Myth*, the tour guides provide only historical information on their tours, trying to satisfy the tourists' curiosity and demands for vampiristic myths by explaining the connection between fiction and reality. Nevertheless, their presentation of myth does not involve any vampire stories, but historical legends. Their objectivist perspective on the authenticity and image of Dracula affects the tourists' personal factors, such as their values, which can further influence the perceptual and cognitive image of the destination in the minds of tourists. Based on the tour guides' effect on the tourists' view of the destination, those visiting can either leave disappointed or impressed with what they found out, impressions illustrated in the themes *All I Could Find Was Draculaville...*, and *Who is the Tourist?*

The guides' moral obligation to present the historical truth is supported by museum exhibitions, all which reflect the historical past of the castle, and exclude any representations of Dracula or Vlad Tepes because they are not historically connected to the castle. The way Bran Castle is presented influences the attribute-holistic set of the destination image (Etchner and Ritchie, 1991), manipulating the tourists' perception and impression of the destination. Due to the functional elements of the destination, such as the observable historical exhibitions, tourists take in the historical reality of Dracula. This finding is reflected by the *Reality* theme where Western bloggers describe their impressions of Bran Castle either through text or pictures. The dominance of historical pictures (76%) compared to fictional representations (1.5%) illustrates that the destination portrayal of Dracula is assimilated by the tourists.

White (2007) believes that a destination is authentic when it is simple and disassociated from the current modern society and its demands. The historical nature of Bran Castle and the information provided by the tour guides do not respond to the tourists' demands of what White calls the "otherness". Rather, the destination ensures that its culture and history are preserved, trying to eliminate the wrong vampire images associated with the destination. This is contrary to what the PEI provincial government has done with the Anne of Green Gables attractions.

Although the Dracula enthusiasts visit Bran Castle in hopes to find Dracula alive, they are met by pure history. This is unlike the attractions at Cavendish, where the local tourism promoters have created a fantasy world where tourists can find Anne of Green Gables. While there is no Dracula exhibition at Bran Castle and the tour guides do not even mention Count Dracula, at Cavendish, the gables of the house have been painted green to resemble the ones in the stories. Squire (1996) notes that Cavendish shapes the visitors' impressions of place by bridging fiction and reality; a process that the Bran Castle tour guides try to apply by explaining the connection between the real Vlad Tepes and Bran Castle with the fictional vampire without distorting the historical truth.

In regards to the perceived authenticity of the place, Fawcett and Cormack (2001) believe that those who guard the destination might have different views of authenticity based on their goals. If the Romanian government did not want to distort the historical truth to gain profit, the theme *Dracula's Future* gives insight into another interpretation of authenticity. The three Bran Castle tour guides agree that the new private owner of the castle, Archduke Dominic of Habsburg, has not only a historical connection to the place, but also an invested economic profit in this world renowned attraction. His personal

commitment and entrepreneurial interests will probably change the way Dracula is being promoted at Bran Castle, influencing its global image and the image of the destination.

## **7.5 Conclusion**

The main goal of this study was to examine the different Dracula images held by Western tourists who document their experiences on their Internet blogs and by the inhabitants of Brasov, and to see how the Bran Castle tour guides and the locals respond to the Western demands. The findings show that while the majority of Western tourists visit Bran in search for Count Dracula most of them leave disappointed. The Bran Castle tour guides focus on presenting the historical truth; and the locals, although seeing Dracula as a national hero, many adopt the mythical image in hopes of increasing their capital.

Dracula's destination image is affected by three main stakeholders, creating an image built on historical and mythical elements. The diagram below illustrates how these different stakeholders come together into creating the destination image.

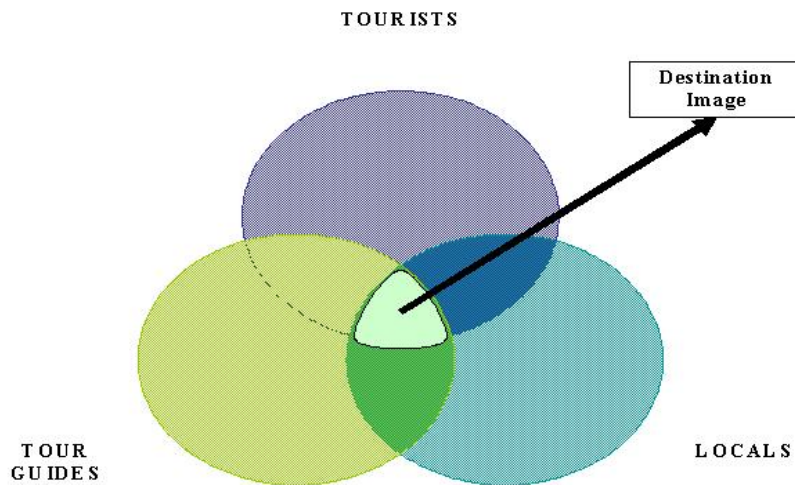


Figure 4 - Destination Image Creation by Stakeholders

Each stakeholder is represented by different agents that manipulate their view of the destination. The tourists' image of Dracula and Bran Castle is influenced by personal factors such as motivation and values, but also by their culture. Cultural influences can include media, movies, novels, childhood experiences, and so forth. The tour guides image of Dracula is also based on their culture, what they learned from their peers, but also on stimulus factors such as the government. Finally, the locals' image of Dracula is based on their knowledge of the historical character but also on the demands of tourists.

These stakeholders do not influence the destination image independently for each other - they influence one another. If the tourists' image of Dracula is manipulated by the tour guides and the information provided by them, the tour guides are also influenced by the local people who, understanding the huge demand for vampire-related merchandise,

manipulate the way Dracula is viewed locally. Hence, Dracula's global image is a mixture of Western perceptions, historical data and entrepreneurial endeavors. To summarize it, Dracula's destination image is:

*Historical in nature,*

*Disenchanted in the minds of seekers;*

*But always valuable in the eyes of the locals.*

The study has also presented destination image in connection with the concept of authenticity. In terms of the authenticity of the destination, when the destination is built on historical facts and fiction, the notion can be applied to both the historical and the literary constructs. By taking a look at historical characters such as Vlad Tepes, it is clear that his authenticity is undoubtedly truthful due to historical texts that portray his life. The tourism sites associated with these historical characters, in this case Bran Castle, is also authentic since it represents a historical fortress built well before the appearance of the modern Western demands.

Furthermore, the mythical character of Dracula that has been built on an historical character, is also authentic to those people who have read the vampire novels and have build a certain image of what they expect when traveling to Bran Castle. The castle, although not the original place of birth and residence of Vlad Tepes; becomes authentic in the eyes of travelers due to tourism productions, which allow tourists to perform their meanings and interpretation of place (Edensor, 2001).

Hence, mythical tourism sites cannot be characterized solely by the historical and objectivist theory of authenticity, but also by the tourists' perception of authenticity. The combination of historical facts and tourist experiences allows the concept of authenticity to become a mixed notion, which in turn gives researchers the chance to be more flexible when analyzing tourism sites. By being open to different interpretations, in this case a modern view of authenticity, researchers and tourists can have a more comprehensive understanding of how the concept of authenticity can be applied to a tourism site. This is reflected in the Bran Castle tour guides' explanation of how they bridge history with myth in order to satisfy both ends of the authenticity spectrum.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **8.1 Limitations to Research**

There were a few limitations affecting the manner in which this research was conducted that could have affected the results.

1. The researcher's inability to travel to Romania due to personal and family reasons.
2. Using a research assistant (RA) – the success of using an RA is based on the researchers' training abilities and communication skills, but also the RA's willingness to follow the instructions given.

The RA was selected based on the researcher's relationship with her. Because the RA is a trusted friend, the researcher was confident that she would fulfill the required steps to gather the data. The RA was born and raised in Brasov city, which diminishes any research misunderstandings because she is familiar with the subject and local culture.

3. The inability to gather data from other groups involved in Dracula tourism, such as Brasov and Bran City Hall tourism employees, and tour guides working for private tourism companies who provide tours to Bran Castle.

Although the above mentioned groups have been contacted numerous times via e-mail, no response was received indicating their availability and willingness to participate in this study. Moreover, before any data was collected, it was revealed by a Brasov city hall employee that the Tourism Department has been dissolved due to budget issues.

4. Language differences – the research was conducted in Romanian; however, the researcher was the only person involved in translating the data, which increased the chance of information being lost in translation

Dimache (1994) notes that the main problem in doing cross-cultural research is to make sure that when translating any data, it will mean the same in the original language. One translation method is to pre-test the procedure. Therefore, before starting the research, the interview was translated in Romanian and pre-tested to ensure that participants had a clear understanding of what is being asked. Each answer was then translated back into English to make certain that it was relevant to the study. Although the back-translation was not done by an independent translator, the researcher consulted with Romanian speaking peers to reassure herself no mistakes were made. Dimanche (1994) notes that in order to ensure that the translation is correct; the researcher should take into consideration a few types of equivalence:

- a. Experiential equivalence – ensures that terms translated refer to real things or experiences that are familiar in both cultures
- b. Conceptual equivalence – ensures that two concepts are used equivalently in the two cultures
- c. Measurement equivalence – ensures that the instrument and scale used to gather data have the same meaning in both cultures

Hence, based on the above recommendations, the interview questions were formulated keeping common language in mind, so that when translated to Romanian the questions had the same meaning as in English. While most words have the same connotation in both languages, some words that do not have translation in Romanian (such as “leisure”)



were excluded, and attention was paid to correctly translating every question because the structure of sentences is not the same in Romanian. Further, to address Dimanche's (1994) last point, the use of interviews as a mean to gather data was not problematic because it is a well-known method in the Romanian culture.

## **8.2 Recommendations for Future Research**

One of the main focuses of this study is on Western tourists' images of Dracula as expressed on their Internet blogs. However, the tour guides at Bran Castle noted that enthusiasts come from all over the world in search of Count Dracula. In order to better understand the global image of a destination, future research should include groups from more cultures, maybe taking the top three groups into consideration. Because a destination's global image is based on the amalgamation of tourists' perceptions and impressions who visit from all over the world, researching other cultural groups could yield additional images. This could be done by analyzing blogs written by tourists from Asia, Europe or South America. Another alternative is to conduct a research on-site and interview all foreign tourists visiting the castle regardless of their nationality. The data gathered would be based on the perceptions and impressions of tourists from all over the world, therefore allowing the researcher to describe the global image of the destination more accurately.

Although the Bran Castle tour guides provided valuable information regarding the way they respond to the tourists' demands, talking to more experts would give more insight about what goes into planning for Dracula tourism and how decisions are made. This group could include city hall employees, private tour guides and even hostel and

shop owners who base their businesses on Dracula tourism. The local tourism board could provide insight into how they respond to foreign tourists' demands when developing new plans. The souvenir vendors could offer valuable information about their interaction with Dracula enthusiasts, and therefore help in providing a more detailed image of the tourists' expectations and demands, but also about how they use the myth to their advantage.

In terms of the tourists' image of a destination, the findings of this study are based on post-visit experiences. The Western blogs were analyzed to find out the tourists' image of Dracula and Bran Castle, images that were recorded after their visit to Transylvania. Gunn's (1988) model suggests the image of a destination may change throughout different phases of the experience. Future research done on the tourists' pre-visit image of Dracula could reveal if their experiences at Bran Castle has an impact of their perception of Dracula and if it changes the overall destination image. The pre-visit image could be examined by contacting the tourism agencies that have contracts with Bran Castle and asking for their permission to interview their clients before visiting Bran Castle; or tourists can be interviewed on location before they enter the castle. Moreover, the tourists' image of Dracula as a touristic destination could be examined from a temporal perspective. This would include the analysis of their impressions and perceptions before and after the visit, but also how the tourists' image of Dracula changes along the experience. By finding out at what point during the Castle tour tourists change their perceptions of the destination, can help destination marketers and planners understand which images provoke tourists to react and change their impressions.

Another recommendation is to perform a quantitative follow-up study in which a larger, more random systematic sample would be used to provide more accurate proportions representative of the Brasov Province population. This can be accomplished by using a sampling frame that would allow each member of the population to have the chance of being chosen for the study. The research instrument could involve closed-ended questions which would expose all participants to the same response choices. This method would allow the researcher to use standardized quantitative methods when analyzing the data.

Lastly, due to the future changes taking place at Bran Castle, Dracula's image and that of the castle as its touristic destination could face many modifications. Because the data used in this study were gathered in Spring 2009, the information offered by the Bran Castle tour guides is based on the governments' plans and promotion of Dracula tourism. As the guides noted, the new private owner has different business plans which could ensure the sustainability of the castle as a main attraction in Europe. Future studies are necessary in order to examine how the new plans respond to the tourists' demands and expectations, and if and how it affects the global image of Dracula.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

#### INFORMATION LETTER FOR TOUR GUIDES

Dear Madam or Sir,

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in a study I am conducting as part of my Master's degree in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo, Canada, under the supervision of Professor Stephen Smith.

Destination image is a valuable tool to local tourism due to its power to attract more tourists and therefore increase the local economy. However, the destination images held by consumers can also have a negative impact on a country's culture. This study aims to describe the issues between the supply and demand side of destination image as applied to the case of Dracula tourism. The purposes of this study, therefore, are:

1. To describe the different images related to Dracula Tourism held by Western tourists
2. To compare these images to local and historical images of Vlad the Impaler

Due to your position, I believe that your insights and experiences will provide me with valuable information needed to complete my study.

In order to complete this study, I solicited the help of a research assistant. The RA will be involved in the recruitment process by making the initial contact and informing possible participants of this study; however, all interviews will be conducted by me personally by telephone or e-mail.

Participation is voluntary. It will involve an interview of approximately 45 minutes in length to take place at a mutually agreed upon time. You may decline to answer any of the questions if you so wish. All information you provide is considered completely confidential.

Your name will not appear in any report, however, with your permission, information you provided may be identified by your position title. Shortly after the interview, I will send you a written summary of my interview notes to give you the opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any points that you wish.

The data collected will be retained in my home in Canada, and will be available only to myself and my supervisor. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study.

The proposed study has been approved by the Office of Research Ethics at University of Waterloo. If you have any questions please contact Dr. Susan Sykes at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 36005 [ssykes@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:ssykes@uwaterloo.ca) , or my supervisor Stephen Smith at [ssmith@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:ssmith@uwaterloo.ca).

If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact me at [mbanyai@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:mbanyai@uwaterloo.ca). I very much look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project.

Yours Sincerely,

Maria Banyai

## APPENDIX B

### INFORMATION LETTER FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS

Dear Madam or Sir,

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in a study I am conducting as part of my Master's degree in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo, Canada, under the supervision of Professor Stephen Smith.

Destination image is a valuable tool to local tourism due to its power to attract more tourists and therefore increase the local economy. However, the destination images held by consumers can also have a negative impact on a country's culture. This study aims to describe the issues between the supply and demand side of destination image as applied to the case of Dracula tourism. The purposes of this study, therefore, are:

1. To describe the different images related to Dracula Tourism held by Western tourists
2. To compare these images to local and historical images of Vlad the Impaler

In order to complete this study, I solicited the help of a research assistant. The RA will be involved in the recruitment process. She will inform potential participants of this study, administer the structured interviews to those willing to participate, and collect the answers for the researcher to start the analysis process.

Participation is voluntary. It will involve an interview of at most 45 minutes in length to take place in a mutually agreed upon location. You may decline to answer any of the questions if you so wish. All information you provide is considered completely confidential. No personal information will be asked.

The data collected will be retained in my home in Canada, and will be available only to myself and my supervisor. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study.

The proposed study has been approved by the Office of Research Ethics at University of Waterloo. If you have any questions please contact Dr. Susan Sykes at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 36005 [ssykes@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:ssykes@uwaterloo.ca), my supervisor Stephen Smith at [sjsmith@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:sjsmith@uwaterloo.ca), or myself at [mbanyai@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:mbanyai@uwaterloo.ca).

Thank you in advance for your assistance in this project.

Yours Sincerely,

Maria Banyai

## APPENDIX C

### TOUR GUIDES FEEDBACK LETTER

Dear Participant,

I would like to thank you for your participation in this study. As a reminder, the purpose of this study is to describe the different images related to Dracula tourism and to compare them to the local and historical images of Vlad the Impaler.

The data collected during our interview will contribute to a better understanding of the demand and supply issues related to the image of Dracula as a tourism destination.

Please remember that any data pertaining to yourself as an individual participant will be kept confidential. Once all the data are collected and analyzed for this project, I plan on sharing this information with my colleagues through presentations and journal articles. If you are interested in receiving information regarding my results of this study, please contact me at [mbanyai@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:mbanyai@uwaterloo.ca). The study is expected to be completed by August 31, 2009.

As with all University of Waterloo projects, this project was reviewed and approved by the Office of Research Ethics. Should you have any comments or concerns resulting from your participation in this study, please contact Dr. Susan Sykes in the Office of Research Ethics at 1-519-888-4567, Ext. 36005, [ssykes@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:ssykes@uwaterloo.ca).

Thank you again,

Maria Banyai

## APPENDIX D

### LOCAL RESIDENTS FEEDBACK LETTER

Dear Participant,

I would like to thank you for your participation in this study. As a reminder, the purpose of this study is to describe the different images related to Dracula tourism and to compare them to the local and historical images of Vlad the Impaler.

The data collected in the structured interview will contribute to a better understanding of the demand and supply issues related to the image of Dracula as a tourism destination.

If you would like to add anything more to your answers, or if you have any questions about the study, please contact me at [mbanyai@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:mbanyai@uwaterloo.ca). The study is expected to be completed by August 31, 2009.

As with all University of Waterloo projects, this project was reviewed and approved by the Office of Research Ethics. Should you have any comments or concerns resulting from your participation in this study, please contact Dr. Susan Sykes in the Office of Research Ethics at 1-519-888-4567, Ext. 36005, [ssykes@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:ssykes@uwaterloo.ca).

Thank you again,

Maria Banyai

## **APPENDIX E**

### **RA RECRUITMENT SCRIPT**

Hello, my name is (RA's name) and I am currently assisting Maria Banyai in gathering data for her Master's thesis at University of Waterloo, Canada. I am recruiting participants for a structured interview involving Dracula tourism in Brasov province.

If you volunteer to participate, you will be asked 10 questions regarding your opinions and knowledge of Dracula and Dracula related attractions. The interview will take approximately 45 minutes.

I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Office of Research Ethics at University of Waterloo, Canada. If you are interested in participating, please review the information letter and complete the following interview.

Thank you.

## **APPENDIX F**

### **CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT**

I understand that as a research assistant for a study being conducted by Maria Banyai in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies, University of Waterloo, Canada under the supervision of Professor Stephen Smith, I am privy to confidential information. I agree to keep all data collected during this study confidential and will not reveal it to anyone outside the research team.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Witness Signature:

## APPENDIX G

### LOCAL RESIDENTS INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. When you hear the name of Dracula, what comes to your mind?
2. Who was Dracula in Romanian history?
3. How is Dracula presented in the Romanian culture?
4. What images of Dracula are promoted in Brasov province by merchants and promoters?
5. What do you think about these images?
6. What does Castle Bran mean to you?
7. What do you think about the way Dracula is presented at Castle Bran?
8. How do you think Western tourists (Canada, US and England) view Dracula?
9. In your mind, are these images realistic/authentic? Why or why not?
10. Is there something you would like to see changed in the way Dracula is being promoted in Brasov province? What?

#### ROMANIAN VERSION:

1. Cand auziti numele 'Dracula', ce va vine in minte?
2. Cine a fost personajul asociat cu numele Dracula in istoria Romaniei?
3. Cum e prezentat mitul "Dracula" in cultura Romaneasca?
4. Ce imagini ale lui Dracula sunt promovate in Brasov de vanzatori si promotori ?
5. Ce credeti de aceste imagini ?
6. Ce inseamna castelul Bran ptr dumneavoastra?
7. Ce credeti de felul in care Dracula e prezentat la Castelul Bran ?
8. Care sunt imaginile turistilor din West (Canada, US si Anglia) asupra lui Dracula ?
9. In mintea dvs., aceste imagini sunt realiste/autentice? De ce da/nu?
10. Este ceva ce ati vrea sa fie schimbat in felul in care Dracula este promovat in provincia Brasov ? Ce anume?



## APPENDIX H

### TOUR GUIDES INTERVIEW

1. How important is Dracula as an attraction in Brasov province?
2. From where in the world is the demand for Dracula images and attractions coming from?
3. How did you respond or how do you respond to this demand?
4. What is the impression of Western tourists regarding Dracula tourism?
5. What do they expect and what demands do Western tourists have from the Dracula attractions?
6. How do you answer to these demands?
7. What promotional materials are you familiar with that are used to attract tourists to Castle Bran?
8. How do you incorporate the historical reality when you plan for Dracula tourism?
9. What are the dissatisfactions of local people regarding Dracula attractions and how do you respond to these dissatisfactions?
10. What are the latest plans for Dracula tourism in Brasov Province or Bran Castle?

#### ROMANIAN VERSION:

1. Cat de important e Dracula ca o atractie in provincia Brasov?
2. De unde din lume vine cererea imaginilor si atractiilor Dracula ?
3. Cum ati raspuns sau raspundeti acestei cereri ?
4. Care este impresia turistilor din vest asupra turismului Dracula ?
5. La ce se asteapta si ce cereri au turistii din Vest de la atractiile Dracula ?
6. Cum raspundeti la aceste cereri ?
7. Ce material promotional este folosit pentru a atrage turistii la Castelul Bran ?
8. Cum incorporati realitatea istorica cand planificati pentru turismul Dracula ?
9. Care sunt nemultumirile localnicilor in legatura cu atractiile Dracula si cum raspundeti la aceste nemultumiri?
10. Care sunt ultimele planuri pentru turismul Dracula in judetul Brasov sau la Castelul Bran?