

On the Leisure Healing Function of Museum

Meng Zhao

Shanghai University, Shanghai 200444 China

Abstract

At present, the world is facing unprecedented epidemic challenges. Facing the harm caused by the epidemic, what we need most is to remember the pain or heal ourselves? As a "cultural complex", the museum has rich cultural relics and art resources, knowledge and platform for creating art, and the strength of combining social groups, professional institutions and scholars. It can not only bring beautiful rivers and mountains, clear wind and bright moon, 5000 years of history and hundreds of millions of years of changes to the public, but also is destined to bear the responsibility of paying attention to the public's mental health and happiness. Today's museum is no longer a simple collection and exhibition space, but also consciously expanding its leisure function. This paper explores the healing function of the museum and puts forward the possibility of application, so as to make a beneficial exploration for the development of the emerging leisure healing function of the museum.

Keywords

Museum; Leisure Treatment.

1. Art and Healing

"What's the use of art?" The exhibition "art is healing" held by de Botton in Amsterdam National Museum illustrates this problem. The highlight of art is to let the audience feel the healing effect of art with their body and mind through their intuition at the first glance. That is, art contributes to treatment because of the healing inherent in its creative process[1]. Art works are the representational representation of human unique creativity. No matter whether the artist wants his works to be sanctified or not, they always carry symbols or symbolize some important things worthy of commemoration. They are the conscious and spontaneous products of personal intelligence, and their energy is so large that they can violently impact the mind. Art can relieve stress, improve health, benefit body and mind, and even prolong life. Art not only provides a way to communicate, solve problems and enhance imagination, but also a bridge between conscious and unconscious. Recently, Wu Hongliang, member of the National Committee of the Chinese people's Political Consultative Conference and President of Beijing Painting Academy, who participated in the two sessions in 2020, pointed out that psychological research has proved that art is an effective way to assist in the treatment of psychological trauma and a good means of emotional expression. In addition, in the long history of the Chinese nation, a large number of art works and experience with psychological healing value have been accumulated. These art forms precipitated in the national memory can bring people cultural belonging and comfort.

2. The Healing Function of the Museum

2.1. Evolution of Museum Functions

Museums are public service institutions that serve the society by meeting the needs of the public for cultural knowledge[2]. Its basic functions are education, collection and research. Among them, education is an external function, which is the goal of evaluating the social

effectiveness of museums, and with the expansion of the concept of museums, more functions may be derived, such as exhibition and so on; Collection and research are the internal functions of the museum, that is, the basis for all activities of the museum. Specifically, collection is to collect cultural relics, historical materials and works of art related to the theme and scope of the museum, keep them properly, and repair those damaged due to age; Research includes professional research and Museology research.

With the improvement of national living standards, people's spiritual and cultural needs are increasing day by day. The society requires museums not only to pay attention to cultural relics, but also to fully consider the needs of tourists and better serve the public. Therefore, the service purpose of the museum has changed from "material-oriented" to "people-oriented" and constantly innovated the mode of serving the society. The International Museum Association also began to seek to establish a balanced and harmonious relationship between museum culture, economic and social development and people's life on the premise of adhering to the core values of museums [3]. Its definition of Museum in 1989 first proposed the entertainment and sightseeing functions of the museum. The conference on "new goals of museums" held in Venezuela in 1992 called for changing ideas in order to seek the common development of museums and tourism, pointing out the direction for the development of museums. As an organism, the museum exists and evolves. Once a space is open to the elite of society, it will gradually accept more audiences and promote its development by shifting most of its focus to benefiting visitors, which makes today's museums clearly advocate people-oriented. Although it is still regarded as an institution for the collection, protection and accessibility of cultural relics and specimens, the way it communicates with the audience and attracts new audiences has changed. Nowadays, the museum has developed from the original classical asset as the center to the tourist as the center, and from its sightseeing function to the social function of meeting people's mental health.

Healing is seen as a positive way to find ways to improve and maintain health and happiness. Due to the unique communication environment of the museum, it has great development potential as an effective healing tool [4]. At present, the world is facing unprecedented epidemic challenges. Fortunately, both the violin sound on the balcony and the online exhibition of "culture never stops" are transmitting the power of art to comfort people. Healing the soul by being close to art is not an initiative in the "new crown" epidemic. As early as after the outbreak of Spanish influenza in 1918, people have realized the relationship between art and health. In memory of the relatives who died of Spanish flu, Duncan Philip founded the Philip Art Museum in Washington in 1921, which became the first modern art museum in the United States. The museum itself can be regarded as a model of art healing. In this non-medical environment, art can improve the health of participants. Dorothy Kosinsky, the current curator of the Philip Art Museum, once said, "the original intention of the art museum is to establish a profound relationship between art and health." In this fast-paced world, museums promote health by relieving physical tension and mental anxiety. Research shows that many people go to museums to seek relaxation and physical recovery [5]. In a special study conducted by the Art Museum of London City Hall, even if the staff participating in the study only took a short lunch time to visit the exhibition, the level of stress hormone cortisol also decreased "rapidly and significantly" [6] According to the attention recovery theory of psychologists Rachel and Kaplan, the museum can repair "attention fatigue", because the museum meets our "restorative environmental conditions": it is far away from people's habitual environment and daily affairs, and provides a place that can be explored and perceived for a long time.

2.2. The Theoretical Basis of Museum's Healing Function

2.2.1. Theoretical Basis of Physiology

Cohen's theory on the potential motivation and mechanism of cultural participation in promoting health revolves around the views of psychoneuroimmunology and neuroplasticity. Psychoneuroimmunology was born in the 1970s. It proves that the nervous system and the immune system are two-way connected. The psychological state can change the immune system, and the immune system itself can lead to the change of psychological state. According to the theory of psychoneuroimmunology, Cohen found that participating in art / music can improve the levels of T cells (lymphocytes against bacterial infection) and NK cells (natural killer cells against cancer cells in the blood), so as to improve the immune system.

Cohen's research on neural plasticity shows that the neural structure of the brain retains its ability to develop. In theory, "the brain, like muscles, benefits from constant challenges". By engaging in challenging activities and new experiences, such as the participation of art and museums, the human brain changes by forming new synapses (contact points between cells), so as to enhance its reserves of neurons, synapses and dendrites. Cohen's research results show that cultural experience through Museum activities can enhance the immune system, increase brain reserves and "brain cell connection efficiency", which is beneficial to health.

2.2.2. Theoretical Basis of Psychology

Martin Seligman, President of the American Psychological Association, introduced "positive psychology" in the late 1990s. Positive psychology describes the concept of happiness and prosperity through five elements: positive emotion, investment, relationship, meaning and achievement (perma). This shifts the focus of psychology from mental illness to the positive aspects of health and happiness, and shows that positive states can affect broader mental and physical health.

The scholar Barbara Fredrickson (2000) proposed the use of positive emotional interventions, such as cultural and Museum participation, to promote a positive state. On this basis, Fredrickson distinguishes the forms and functions of positive emotion and negative emotion, and puts forward specific mechanisms and intervention strategies for cultivating positive emotion. The author hypothesizes that positive emotion can "optimize health, subjective well-being and psychological elasticity", and negative emotion will lead to anxiety, depression and cardiovascular problems. In theory, positive emotions can not only establish physical and psychological resources, but also be regarded as an effective "antidote" against the long-term impact of negative emotions. This study shows that activities and leisure strategies, such as contact with museums, are characterized by creating positive meanings of happiness, interest and satisfaction and using positive emotions, so they can effectively offset the health problems caused by long-term or repeated negative emotions.

2.3. Art Healing Project Practice

More and more museums around the world try to explore the healing methods belonging to museums, and a series of museum projects have been born one after another. The success of more and more such projects proves the emerging healing function of museums.

According to the definition of the American Art Therapy Association, "art therapy provides nonverbal expression and communication opportunities", and its effect has been positively confirmed in many patients. Canadian doctors will prescribe a kind of special prescription drugs for patients with mental diseases - visiting museums for free, the daily mail of London reported. This activity is jointly launched by the French doctors association of Canada and the Art Museum of Montreal, Canada. It aims to help patients solve their mental health problems through culture and art. The museum pass issued can include up to two adults and two minors, which means that patients will have the opportunity to carry out cultural treatment

accompanied by family and friends. The vice president of the French doctors association of Canada said that more and more scientific research has proved that art therapy is of great benefit to health. When people visit museums, serotonin will rise, and the rise of serotonin can stimulate people's mood and pleasure. This has a very similar effect to exercise, which is very good news for people who are inconvenient to exercise.

In 2019, the British Medical Journal (BMJ) published the new results of researchers from University College London: watching plays or visiting theatres, museums or art galleries can prolong life, and the more you go, the better. Compared with those who do not often participate in art activities (including exhibitions, concerts and operas, but not movies), those who often participate in art activities (every few months or more) have a 31% lower risk of early death. Even going to a theater or Museum once or twice a year can reduce the risk of early death by 14%. Associate professor of behavioral science and health research at University College London, said: participating in art activities can relieve stress, cultivate creativity and enable people to adapt to the changing environment. It also helps people build social capital - access to emotional support and information to deal with aging more calmly. Now, Philip Art Museum has launched a new audio guide project "meditation in the art museum" online. Netizens can concentrate on watching paintings and listen to the soothing explanation of voice at the same time. The art museum hopes that participants will have a profound connection with themselves, communities and the world in this process.

The Harlem national Jazz Museum in the United States has combined its jazz with a Dynamic Yoga course. The 90 minute yoga class starts with mutual greetings, followed by an hour of yoga, all accompanied by live hip-hop music. Ryan Maloney, its director, said, "we provide people with a cultural experience of non-traditional space and a traditional jazz experience, which is what we are interested in. At the same time, people want to experience more than the gym can provide. " In order to hold Yoga activities, the Royal Museum of fine arts of Belgium specially invited artist Gao Xingjian to create six commemorative paintings to decorate the yoga room, where everyone over the age of 18 (beginner or advanced) can participate in professional and systematic yoga courses, including appropriate exercise, breathing and relaxation, as well as positive thinking and meditation. In addition, the Dragon Art Museum and the Himalayan Art Museum in Shanghai, China have also held public activities that combine the theme of the museum with yoga, intentionally or unintentionally improving people's physical and mental health.

3. Suggestions

Firstly, we should sort out, review and excavate the cultural relics and other resources of the museum, analyze and collect the psychological state, multiple needs and expectations of the audience in the community, so as to find the connection point between our own resources and the needs of the public, and actively respond to the changes and development required by museums and other cultural and art institutions after the epidemic. Attention should be paid to the mental health of community members in areas with serious epidemic situation, and health and hygiene education in areas with mild epidemic situation. Actively seek cooperation with external art, psychotherapy, medical and other social welfare organizations, universities and academic circles, strengthen the alliance, improve the joint anti risk ability and deal with the social negative impact of social public health emergencies, and hold professional theme studios to serve the public.

Secondly, museums and art galleries can also take this opportunity to give full play to the value of their indoor and outdoor architectural space and build a visual space with relaxation and healing functions for visitors. Many venues with natural environment can consider holding yoga, sports and other projects outdoors.

Finally, improve digitization, intelligence, online operation and multimedia technology, which is a suggestion for every link of museums and art galleries. During the epidemic, we formed the habit of watching exhibitions and appreciating works of art online. People still have the habit of online consumption and reading for a long time. This habit should not change in a short time, because the impact of the epidemic can not be underestimated. We must not wait for everyone to go out as usual and continue the previous operation mode. Therefore, it is worth thinking about how to make the audience more satisfied with the online exhibition and how to use the more attractive online exhibition to promote everyone to go out of the house and enter the museum after the end of the epidemic.

4. Conclusion

Many challenges arise when people face mental or physical illness, or when relatives are ill. In the field of social psychology, the influence of this experience may lead to role swallowing. In this case, the role of "patient" or "caregiver" may devour a person's life and cover up his previous social role. Role swallowing may have a negative impact on people's self-awareness, ability perception and social opportunities. The role of "patient" will increasingly limit people's self-identity and ability, and even opportunities for social participation. Therefore, for those who experience role swallowing, any opportunity to emphasize previous precious roles or provide new roles, even temporarily, may provide them with a therapeutic means that has an impact on their self-consciousness or relationship with others. The power of museums is to create new roles, create new dialogues and stimulate new hope. Nowadays, museums are gradually playing an increasingly diverse role, the most prominent of which is as an intermediary of health and happiness and an engine of social change. Museums need to recognize the meaning of their own existence, their unique ability to relate to something and help someone.

At the same time, "the diversity of museum collections can also reflect the value of personal unique expression to a certain extent." Therefore, in such a situation, the museum appreciates uniqueness and encourages us to maintain an understanding of differences when dealing with ourselves and others. At the same time, by creating a good atmosphere for expressing different ideas and ideas, the museum has become the best place to explore universality, which can be regarded as its healing function. This also reveals many common characteristics of human beings. In order to achieve their dreams or goals, the loneliness along the way inevitably resonates with the hearts of the audience. Moreover, through the museum, the audience can also understand the ability of human beings to surpass themselves, which also shows that hope is not nowhere, it is right in front of us. Indeed, in this era of trauma everywhere, the art and history in the museum have just become a key for us to explore the meaning of being human and a good medicine to heal the soul.

References

- [1] Ulman,E.2001.Art Therapy:Problems of Definition.American Journal of Art Therapy, Vol. 40, No.1, pp.16-26.
- [2] Shan Jixiang. On the social functions of museums [J]. Chinese cultural heritage, 2011 (1).
- [3] Qin Wenping. Pursuing happiness: the essence of museums serving society and its development [J]. China National Expo, 2015 (06): 117-118.
- [4] Silverman,L.Johnny showed us the butterflies. The museum as a family therapy tool[J]. Manage and Family Review.1989.13(3/4):131-150.
- [5] Soney, Haradat, Miyamotom,et al. The Effect of Group Reminiscence in Nostalgic Room for Mildly Demented Elderly: Evaluation with NIRS During Dementia Assessment Test[J], Journal of Physiological Anthropology,2007,26(6):613.

[6] Silverman: The social work of museums[M],London and New York.Routledge,2010.49.