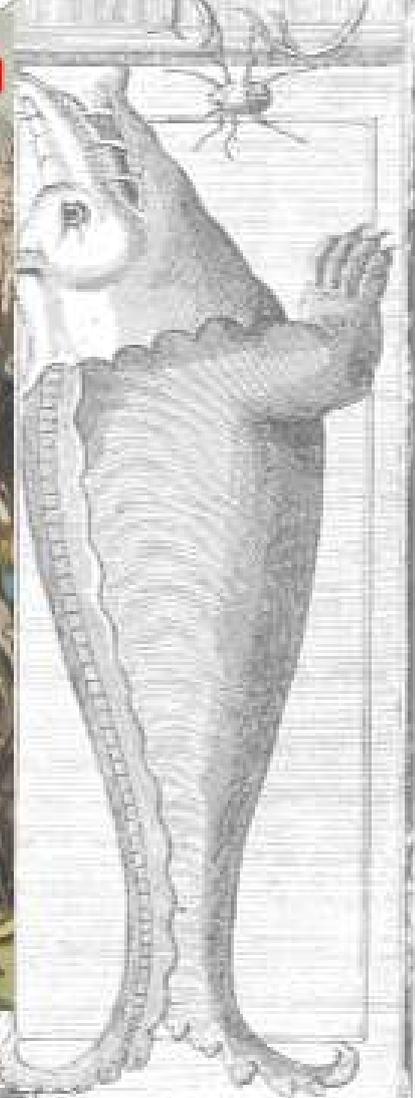
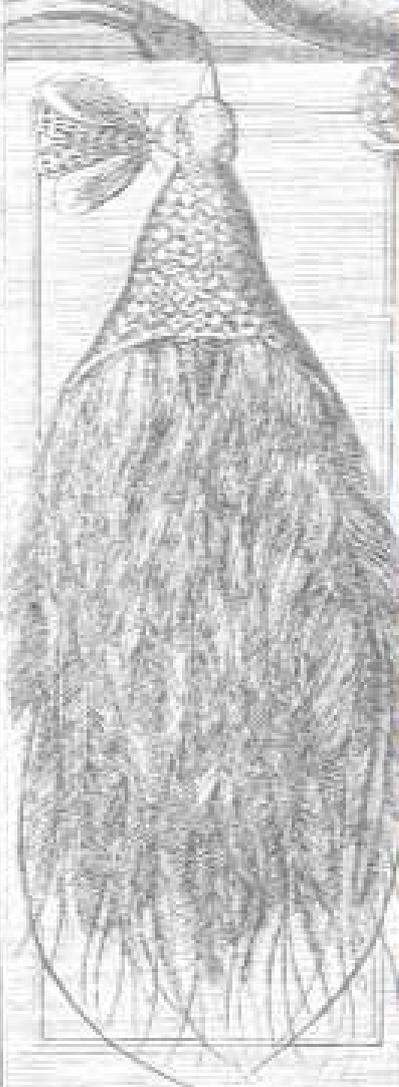




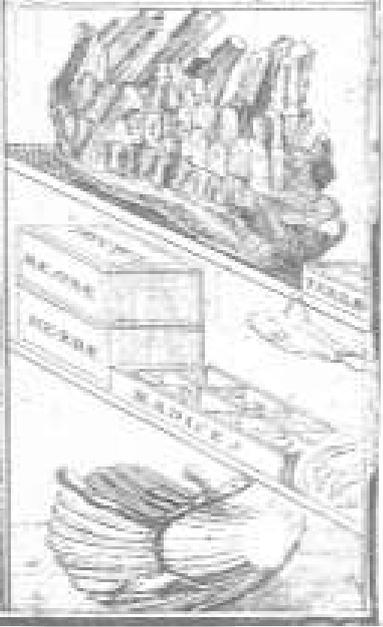
THE PREDATORY MUSEUM



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The Predatory Museum

Bruno Brulon Soares and Lynn Maranda

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Paradigm or Predator? Eco- and Community Museums in Scotland and Costa Rica

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As long ago as 1995, UNESCO declared: “each society needs to assess the nature and precariousness of its heritage resources in its own terms and determine contemporary uses it wishes to make of them, not in a spirit of nostalgia but in the spirit of development” (1995, p. 176). Since then, scholarship and policy have developed to consider museums and their cultural landscapes in a holistic way, making such research an urgent field of enquiry. Sustainability is, of course, a word often cited and seldom defined. For the purposes of this paper in museology it will refer to an “anti-predatory” approach to sustainable tourism in the context of small to medium-sized rural or island museums and their communities. In the spirit of the 1995 UNESCO Declaration, best practice will be seen to lie in community empowerment and ownership, not only over community heritage, but also in processes of decision making and governance. At best, negotiating tourism in locations such as the Isle of Skye in Scotland and the Boruca territory in south-eastern Costa Rica can result in a vernacular kind of globalisation. At worst, predatory tourism “continues an ontological and essentialist vision of exotic cultures, conceived as static entities with clearly defined characteristics” (Salazar, 2010, p. xviii). Analysing the touristic gaze on Costa Rica’s community museums in particular carries on the discourse of the politics of encounters between western and non-western gazes in the field of heritage and museum studies (Said, 1978; Clifford, 1997; Mitchell, 1998). Notably, mythologised (colonial) visions of Otherness are created and re-created through a kind of travel which is nostalgic for a static / less developed / idealised imaginary, harking back to early travel narratives. As Noel B. Salazar remarks, “in tourism studies, paradoxically, the tendency has been to see places in developing countries (and, by consequence, their inhabitants) defined by immobility, and international travel as something that happens in a sort of nonplace between home and destination” (2010, p. xvii).

In what follows, I shall take on board such observations on the predatory nature of tourism and measure them against examples in Scotland and Costa Rica. With no literature existing specifically on the museums I focus on, my research relies heavily on primary evidence – fieldwork and interviews with museum directors, policy makers, community leaders and the public – analysed through the lens of what we might usefully refer to as cultural heritage tourism studies relating to eco- and community museums and their communities. Taking heed of the Siena Charter and UNESCO Recommendations, I seek to answer the following questions: In what ways has the eco- and community museum movement been defined in each region? How does each museum consider *community* and *cultural landscapes*? What has been the dialogue between policy makers and local communities in relation to museum policy and governance? What strategies are deployed in each context to enhance sustainability of the cultural landscapes? Can eco- and community museums foster human well-being and national identity through nature and culture?

But first, a brief background to the history and definitions of eco- and community museums and related literature will highlight similarities and differences in the cultural contexts of Scotland and Costa Rica.

Background

In 1972, a Round Table on the role of museums in relation to social and economic needs of modern-day Latin America was held in Santiago de Chile. The resulting Declaration, published by UNESCO in 1973, brought about a paradigm shift from a museum focused on traditional values of custodianship, preservation, and interpretation, to one where the needs of the community are located at its core. Following the 1973 Declaration, Hugues de Varine and Henri Rivière led the ecomuseum movement in France, and today eco- and community museums exist predominantly in Europe and in Latin America in which, spurred on by a literature published mostly in Spanish, Portuguese and French, the concept has followed a specifically socio-museological agenda (Chagas, Santos, & Glas, 2012). As the Declaration of Intent in Trento explains, “[a]n ecomuseum is a dynamic way in which communities preserve, interpret, and manage their heritage for sustainable development. An ecomuseum is based on a community agreement” (2004). The central precepts of these museums – wherein the *collection écomuséale* is a collection made of all the monuments, sites, landscapes, artefacts, and documents that are recognised by the community as being part of its common heritage and cultural environment – could not be more urgent at this point in time in relation to Sustainable Development Goals and multiculturalism.

And yet to date, no substantial bi-regional study has appeared comparing and contrasting the concepts and experiences of social sustainability in the two regions of Europe and Latin America since the radical ideas of the 1970s. Moreover, only a handful of prominent scholars have written on the topic in English: in particular, Peter Davis (2011), Gerard Corsane (2009), and the late Kenneth Hudson, who was both fascinated by ecomuseums and critical of their utopian side and wrote several articles on the subject. At the same time, the growth of scholarship on cultural heritage, sustainability, and community is evident in both academia and policy. For example, Routledge’s Key Issues in Cultural Heritage series is pursuing major topics of discussion, including Harvey and Perry’s *Future of Heritage and Climate Change* (2015) and Labadi and Long’s *Heritage and Globalization* (2010). Informative volumes on museums and community by Watson (2007), Crooke (2007), and Golding (2013) have also appeared. Similarly, the networks of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) and the Inclusive Museum have prioritised the topics through events such as the launch of 2015 International Museum Day on “Museums and Sustainability”, and the ICOM triennial conference on “Cultural Landscapes” (Milan, 2016). The question of defining “eco-” and “community” museums is also currently under discussion, especially in Italy, with a debate having taken place in Milan in 2016, and efforts for future network strengthening ongoing (ecomusei.eu).

The reason for locating my research in these two countries is that Costa Rica (51,100 sq. km; 4.8 million people) is close in size and population to Scotland (78,387 sq. km; ca. 5.3 million people); the countries also share farming, fishing, and mining heritage, and both are advocating sustainable tourism. Costa Rica has 41 museums, almost half of which are small, regional museums that call

themselves, or can be identified as, *museo comunitario* or *ecomuseo*. Scotland has over 265 museums, including regional museums identified as community or ecomuseums. However, while the remote museums may be common in type, they function very differently in each context. This is because since the 1980s, Latin America has arguably led the way in promoting community cohesion through museums. Socio-politically, their best museums aim to preserve local distinctiveness, create sustainable relations between the state and local communities, empower the rural poor through a sense of cultural identity, and resist homogenising forces of globalisation – many of these features will be seen in evidence in south-eastern Costa Rica. Scotland has much to learn from such initiatives while sharing concepts and experiences here, including social inclusion policies and successful ecomuseum practice. In Scotland, it is also exigent to understand our cultural distinctiveness in today's political climate, situated in a broader state framework through political devolution and the 2014 Scottish independence referendum, and following the 2016 UK Brexit referendum.

So let us begin by focusing on Skye Ecomuseum, before turning to the *museos comunitarios* of the Boruca people, both of which demonstrate commonalities and departures from traditional ecomuseums. Each museum is open air and encourages visitors to explore the natural landscapes and traditional structures by maintaining a focus on the cultural landscape of their territories. Both are essentially processes at various stages of progress.

Skye Ecomuseum, Scotland

In the far western region of Scotland lies the Isle of Skye. Herein lies the rural community of Staffin, an area defined by a traditional crofting community which was established there before the clearances of the late nineteenth century. Staffin also boasts Scotland's only ecomuseum, called *Ceumannan*, opened in 2008 and managed by Staffin Cultural Trust. Enticing us to visit, the museum website hosts visually arresting images of dinosaur prints in Jurassic landscapes either preserved in the Eilishadder Museum or fossilised on Staffin beach for archaeologists and families alike to explore at low tide in the right season. Inevitably, this predatory heritage, together with the stunning surrounding landscape, has attracted a great deal of tourism to Staffin, and the ecomuseum concept has been used in this context as a dynamic force, capable of uniting surrounding tangible and intangible features as a unique cultural site, landscape, and community. It has also been used in a strategic effort to attract funding and deliver real benefits to the local community of Staffin. All the key elements of the ecomuseum identified by René Rivard are present (Ecomuseum = territory + heritage + memory + population) (Corsane, 2005, p. 371), especially because Gallic culture features strongly here, with 50% of the population fluent in Scots Gaelic language, and traditional folklore and myth resonating with the local community. For example, there is a sacred lough called Loch Shianta, and traditional heritages, such as peat cutting and medicinal uses of seaweeds, are also kept alive; one of the Trust Board Members runs a "Gaelic in the Environment" course first created by Roddy Maclean at which students learn to recognise plants and animals by their Gaelic names in their natural habitats, as well as hearing about ecology, folklore, and fossils, and their application to education and tourism. With all of this mysticism and stunning natural beauty, tourism at large generates millions of pounds for the local economy, and since the ecomuseum was

established Staffin has seen an international footfall increase by 15,000, to 90,000 visitors per annum. A number of high-profile films have also been made on site, including *The Land that Time Forgot*, *Breaking the Waves*, and *The Wicker Man*. Such interest and acclaim also boosts the local economy in terms of grocery and gift shopping and B&B reservations. However, it also brings inherent problems to a designated area of scientific interest, and it could be argued that a musealisation of landscape turned commodity is taking place (Salazar, 2010). The question poses itself: is tourism sustainable in this context? Is it a “paradigm or predator?”

In the context of ecomuseology as it relates to predatory tourism, we also need to ask about the place of the local people – the “landscape communities” as the Siena Charter calls them – in this context. Has the Staffin ecomuseum landscape become emblematic at the expense of its people? In the words of Bruno Brulon Soares, “What is the place of the people in the musealised landscape?” (Milan, 2016). In contrast to the Brazilian context where Soares asks whether the people themselves may be considered commodities in the commodified landscape, in Skye the research question is whether “the people” actually engage in the ecomuseum project at all. On the outside, the ecomuseum seems exemplar. Signage at the thirteen sites is verbally and visually attractive for a range of ages, interpreting the landscape in both English and Gaelic through the lenses of history, ecology, and local mythology. In terms of governance, the Trust consists of a variety of members of the community: businessmen, farmers, retirees with a range of valuable business and decision-making skills (Staffin Trust website). Such a demographic reinforces the point made in the 2016 “strategic document” relating to “new residents” bringing “sustainable lifestyles, innovative skills and keen sensitivity to cultural expressions of local tradition”. The business practice of the Trust is also seemingly transparent, with minutes of meetings available for public access through their web site. In many ways the model is paradigmatic in practice and democratic in its decision-making processes. In the spirit of the Common Ground Paris Maps project, the local people are apparently determining what features lend the place its “local distinctiveness” (Corsane, Davis & Murtas, [eds.], 2009). Recognising what local communities value about their landscapes, both cultural and natural, sets a place apart from its neighbours. The health and well-being agenda promoted by the Scottish government also plays a part in Staffin’s current development agenda, which is in tune with the European Landscape Convention (2000), “believing that the landscape is a key element of individual and social well-being and that its protection, management and planning entail rights and responsibilities for everyone”.

But what about the majority of the people in the territory, the ones who are not involved in the Trust that has agency over creating value in their cultural landscape? Do they in fact engage with the ecomuseum, and do they even know it exists? Do they recognise their cultural landscape in line with ecomuseum principles, and in what ways do they actually use it? An audience survey and development plan commissioned by Skye Ecomuseum itself in 2016 highlighted some pitfalls. The main visitor demographic is from the UK and Europe: casual walkers and families with children aged three to twelve (Audience Profiles, 2016, p. 5). Serious walkers and archaeologists are similarly in search of “memorable experiences, authenticity, and romanticism” along the mysterious, soaring cliffs, narrow pillars called The Needle, and vistas to the crofts below

(Audience Profiles, 2016, p. 12). However, when thinking around whether ecomuseums can be “paradigms or predators”, as I have written elsewhere, in contrast to this enchantment, the same visitor analysis showed that many local people are less engaged with the *Ceumannan* sites than one might like or expect. For many of them, the hills have always been for rearing livestock and crops in crofts rather than for recreation, and while the locals and bus drivers interviewed knew the sites, the majority were only vaguely aware of the ecomuseum concept. Moreover, when the focus groups were probed further, they did not know what an ecomuseum was (Audience Development Plan Part 2, Appendix 3, 2016). It is because of these and other misunderstandings that the Staffin Cultural Trust submitted their *Ceumannan* Phase II Heritage Lottery funding application (now successful), in which the interpretation plan is to provide “a clear and coherent ecomuseum both on the ground and offsite that delivers a clear visitor journey and promotes the Ceumannan *brand* [emphasis mine]” (Audience Profiles, 2016, p. 21). Such “branding” should cater well to the tourist imagination, which expects an easily consumable attraction and an historically fixed version of local heritage and culture (Salazar, 2010, p. 47). A problem could nevertheless emerge when distinctiveness itself becomes commoditised, as Staffin attempts to compete with nearby Portree and other crofting territories, even a mile away, for tourism footfall. In the context of evaluating “paradigm or predator?”, while we may wish for more visitors to experience the less visited and more special sites such as Loch Shianta in order to appreciate our ancient heritage, at the same time we need to think of the impact of hordes of people driving to it, parking, and walking around it.

In summary, by investing in identifying the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities of their ecomuseum, Staffin exemplifies many elements of the ecomuseum process at its best as it “musealises” its sites, economises on a strong sense of community identity, and becomes an economic and social resource for the community’s needs and problems. It could, therefore, be said to approach the 2016 “Strategic document” of ecomuseums in presenting a “virtuous” model of sustainable local development, which has been successful in raising money to make itself sustainable.

However, local development is only as participative as the Trust can make it under the shadow of the predator of mass touristic footprints when it comes to environmental sustainability and the local people’s willingness to engage. The idea of the Siena Charter’s “museums and cultural landscapes”, therefore, holds an increased importance in current times. Moving beyond a romanticisation of landscape (Appleton, 1975), eco- and community museums have the potential to take on added force in contemporary times, helping local communities to define their identities as we question the very idea of the nation and ask, “Who Owns Scotland?” (Wightman, 2016). In the framework of tourism studies, this question could never be more prescient. According to the United Nation World Tourism Organisation, by the year 2020 international tourism arrivals will have reached 1.6 billion (of which 1.2 billion will be intra-regional and 378 million long-haul travellers), resulting in earnings of US\$1,550 billion (World Tourism Organisation). And it should be noted that within this quota, *cultural* tourism is significantly on the rise, increasing a country’s duty to promote ecologically efficient development to keep up with tourist numbers (Girard & Nijkamp, 2010, p. 1). In many ways, such worldwide circulation of people, ideas, and fantasies, as well as capital, can only be predatory in nature, and so it is the task

of the people managing museums and cultural heritage at large to find ways to negotiate the impact of visitors on their community in their own terms. In the words of Girard and Nijkamp:

Cultural heritage – a broad container concept – has a hate-love relationship with modern tourism. It acts as an attraction force for people from different places of origin, while it stimulates local socio-economic development and reinforces a sense of local identity and pride. On the other hand, vast volumes of tourist flows may be at odds with the ecologically benign development of localities and may negatively affect social cohesion at a local level. Consequently, the issue of local sustainable development is at stake here (2010, p. 2).

Boruca and Rey Curré *museos comunitarios*, Costa Rica

Moving across continents now to consider Costa Rica, this question of defining one's identity through museum cultural landscapes is equally prescient, and especially in the context of indigenous or semi-indigenous communities such as the Boruca community museums in the south-eastern region. As Salazar has pointed out, "tourism sells meaning and experience by creating essentialized representations of peoples and places in an exoticizing and static frame – the liminal space of the 'exotic elsewhere'" (Salazar, 2010, p. 15), and such issues are augmented when an indigenous community puts their heritage, and even, as some postulate, their people, on display. As a number of studies have shown, the rationale for indigenous tourism is fraught with pros and cons for the local people (Butler & Hunch, 2007, pp. 3–4).

(Interviewer): "What is your opinion on the relationship between culture and tourism?"

(Participant): "That relationship is very ... it's necessary for both fields. Let's say, they're closely related, because nowadays in this globalized world, in these globalized times, we'll always need resources to highlight a culture. To be precise, we aren't selling – and I would like to clarify that right now – we're not selling culture, we're not selling our culture. Rather, we're promoting ourselves so we don't lose our culture. So people won't say that 'they don't exist, they don't; look, so far I haven't seen anything [about the Boruca people]'" (Interview Location: Rey Curré, Costa Rica).

In Costa Rica there exists a range of museum types, including two main ecomuseums and several community museums, or *museos comunitarios*, a term that has special meaning in a Latin American context owing to its ethos and practices of governance – grass roots, community-centred at its core, and usually supported by the network of *museos comunitarios* of the Americas based in Oaxaca, Mexico (Museos Comunitarios website). Of course, the *museos comunitarios* were in many ways born of ICOM-related initiatives, including the "Declaration of Quebec" (1984) and the promotion of the so-called "new museology" through networks including ICOFOM in the 1970s and ICOM MINOM. The initiatives can also be paralleled with recent thinking in development studies wherein there is a move to place local people and their culture at the centre of development work, and where participatory, transparent, integral business models are seen as best practice. It goes without saying that community development

and social progress have been the overarching objectives of the museum movement of past decades, related to a larger challenge to define museums and their theory and practice. Perhaps most significantly, though, *museos comunitarios* offer a distinctive counterfoil to the traditional anthropology or ethnographic museums that have been so criticised in recent decades by both the academic community and the peoples whom they purport to represent, especially the indigenous communities (Kreps, 2003, p. 2). Native peoples are questioning the way cultures displayed in museums are fixed in time and space and focus on the past, and they ask: “who has the right to speak for and represent whom?” Similarly, until recently, museology as a discourse has relied on western knowledge systems transmitted largely through universities and government agencies, in turn affecting curatorial practices that transform cultural materials. These systems and centres of power have been critiqued by critics, including Robert Chambers (1993), as a “top down” approach. By contrast, a local or indigenous knowledge system has the capacity to offer distinctive ways of ordering and communicating about the peoples’ world (Kreps, 2003, p. 8). As Kreps has argued, such knowledge can be lost through academic training and curation, where, in fact, indigenous curatorial knowledge and practices can contribute to cross-cultural knowledge of museology.

The indigenous communities I will focus on from Costa Rica are located in the Boruca area, covering approximately 12,470 hectares and comprising the central community of Boruca village (which holds the oldest community museum), and then about 17 or 18 more communities, including Rey Curré in the Río Térraba river valley. Inside the territory are over 1,900 indigenous people and over 1,200 non-indigenous people whom they call *mestizos*. The community receives a good deal of support from an Asociación de Desarrollo (the development association of the community), as well as the National Museum of Costa Rica through its Network of Community Museums of Costa Rica (Martinez, 2016). While the National Museum actively supports community strengthening and empowerment, the association’s funding priority is water and obtaining a proper pipeline, rather than sustainable heritage, and so the people have been working in conjunction with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture on some projects. It could be said that the strengthening of local identity in the Costa Rican museums in question challenges threats of globalisation, of the type identified by Appadurai relating to resistance, selectivity, and agency (Appadurai, 1996, p. 7). Indeed, the example of Costa Rica *museos comunitarios* shows an initiative attempting to integrate indigenous knowledge systems in a local cultural context to better serve the community and its needs. Initiatives include safeguarding the collective memory of the community where it lies in oral traditions and personal stories, as well as in objects such as their stone spheres, said to be pre-Columbian. Considered together, these objects and settings offer the tourist imagination a distinctive alternative to the type of culture presented in a major national museum in Costa Rica or elsewhere, where objects such as these (pre-Columbian) spheres become de-contextualised and take on an alternative aura to their original context.

However, as the interview above highlights, there are some tensions surrounding the commodification of culture, especially in an indigenous context, which not being highlighted in discussions about the development of the museums. When questioned on the relationship between tourism and culture, a community elder in Rey

Curré, quoted above, emphasised that they were not “selling” their culture, but rather that they were making themselves known outside their territory. The interview also points to the reciprocal and contested relationship between tourism and culture where the local people are selling indigenous crafts and performing displays of their intangible heritage for a tourist market in order to make a living. The three main areas in which this dynamic is currently manifest is in their efforts to protect their pre-Columbian heritage (including stone spheres), in the production of hand-carved masks and the handing down of indigenous techniques through generations, and in the performance of their native dance called the Festival of the Little Devils, traditionally performed around New Year’s Eve but in recent years given more visibility by being performed in the capital city, San José.

In 2011, after several years of negotiations with the National Museum of Costa Rica in San José, the Boruca community had three stone spheres transferred back to its community to be under its own custodianship; the largest sphere is located at the entrance to their museum. These stone spheres range from only a few centimetres to several metres in diameter and are said to have been symbols of rank, power, and ethnic identity. The original locations of the larger spheres appear to have marked special places, perhaps relating to celestial movements, and they may have been used to indicate special events in the community’s calendar. Whether situated in the National Museum or in the entrance foyer to Quai Branly in Paris, these spheres are transported into an alien environment across terrain, even continents, in order to satisfy the touristic gaze, which has perhaps neither the time, resources, or even the interest to see the object in its original context. By contrast, the stone sphere on the El Silencia site in Boruca territory can only be seen in the rainforest with a guide. It is the largest so far registered, measuring 2.54 m in diameter and weighing 24 tons, and questions of location are currently under consideration by the National Museum of Costa Rica (NMCR) and UNESCO. Stone spheres hold a lot of meaning for the south-eastern region of Costa Rica, where they were for many years covered and protected by sediment from the Río Térraba river, the main means of transportation before the Inter-American Highway was constructed. In 2014, the pre-Columbian chiefdom settlements of the Diquis where the stone spheres are located, were mapped and inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List (Museum Finca 6). When these stones are hosted in a community museum setting near the delta and rainforest where they have been found, or in the grounds of the school and museum of Rey Curré, the community museum is turned to for support and education about them, which in turn gives that community national and international significance (Interview Rey Curré, 2016). The local school then feels duty-bound to pass on knowledge about these objects, as well as the stones they call *galletas* (biscuits) that were placed by ancestors next to bodies to preserve their sacred burial sites, together with other indigenous traditions, including the building of *ranchos* and the making of baskets, trays, and traditional masks.

However, when a tourist ventures to Costa Rica with the desire to experience and appreciate cultural heritage in its original setting, one of the key differences is that the local people will also be present, both to be viewed and to mediate the interpretation of the objects on a number of different levels. On visiting the sites, the imagination of the tourist is therefore in full force; in the words of Salazar, “The imaginary can thus be conceived as a mental, individual, and social

process that produces the reality that simultaneously produces it” (Salazar, 2010, p. 6). For the *museos comunitarios* of Costa Rica, as for Skye Ecomuseum, we might therefore ask: whose memories are being negotiated by such a museum and for whom? Whose voices are being heard, and whose silenced?

To get to the bottom of these potential issues, a number of interviews conducted in the *museos comunitarios* of Rey Curré and Boruca proved illuminating. Firstly, Rey Curré is a new museum established only one year ago, located close to the river, and built on the grounds of a school for local, aboriginal Boruca people. The impetus for the museum came from the community’s desire to conserve the local culture of their senior citizens, grandparents, and ancestors, as well as to value what they have, including an ancient burial site and local arts and crafts traditions, not least the production of masks, *jícaras* (small cups), and weavings. Therefore, their motives are strongly linked to aspirations for indigenous education as they strive to pass on knowledge about traditional crafts and customs to their young people while functioning within the curricular norms of the Ministry of Education. As previously mentioned, however, the initiative is also directly linked to the local people’s desire to promote indigenous crafts, to augment production for the tourist market, encouraging visitors not only to appreciate their little museum, but also to enter the shop and purchase brightly painted masks, woven bags, and purses, among other items. While these goods are also for sale in San José, by enticing the visitor to visit their village and have an “authentic” experience, the goods purchased are not subject to a commission and so the profits go to the community.

On 13 August 1979, the Asociación de Desarrollo Indígena (Association for the Development of Indigenous People) was created. One hundred people were in favour, yet many others were against it, and it seems clear that there is still a long road to travel in efforts to stake a claim for their culture, especially in language rights. To take one example, the school wishes to teach its young people to carve and weave, but the use of tools is prohibited by the Ministry in case the young people hurt themselves. In 2013, a new school venue was inaugurated in Rey Curré, and in 2014, the Consejo Local de Educación Indígena (Local Council for Indigenous People’s Education) was founded, with the purpose of improving the quality of education in the territory.

In Rey Curré the remit of preservation extends beyond the little museum’s *rancho* walls to the local cultural landscape, in particular to a pre-Columbian cemetery that they are protecting from housing development and destruction. Such sites are under the threat of *huacas* or *huaqueros* (tomb robbers), who dig up vases or stones looking for gold and precious goods. The local community will now report them to the police, or at least try to stop it from happening. Instead, the site is being promoted as a place of interest for both the public and tourists, and its tourist offerings are publicised online through national organisations and fora.

This preservation of local carvings is also a strong feature at the original Boruca community museum located only 10 kilometres away, higher up in the valley. Here, the local people are lobbying for the artisans and the local crafts they make to obtain a Protected Designation of Origin through an *asociación* and the Ministry of Culture (Interview Boruca, 2016). In Boruca village, the local people are also resisting the purchase of land by non-indigenous people

who historically enter the community and chop down trees in the savanna, where all the raw materials, such as pine trees, grow. They are canvassing, for example, to gain their traditional access to sea snails, which live in a restricted natural reserve and from which they obtain their traditional, purple-coloured dye for use in weaving. Another initiative is obtaining vacant lots of land for the whole community so they can plant *balso* wood used for making their traditional masks which they then sell to the tourist market. The initiative prevents people from buying the wood at an inflated price elsewhere, and is linked to a longer history of unrest around ownership in the indigenous territories (Martinez, 2016, p. 226).

It was the gift of a vacant lot in the savanna to a group of four local women, including *dōna* Margarita and *dōna* Feliciana, in the 1970s that the rescue of Boruca heritage began through their museum, and this at a time when women suffered through lack of opportunities and sexism in their culture. When interviewed, the local women recalled how only one local man knew how to build the roof of the *rancho*. He charged them fifty thousand dollars, which they didn't have, and so they came up with the idea of throwing a dance party which lasted until the crack of dawn. When the roof collapsed, he charged them a million Costa Rica colones, but by then they had the support of the National Museum and were able to pay it. Today, many more women and four men have joined the initiative, and now 95% of the community live off crafts, especially weaving, in an effort to prevent the young people moving away to seek work in San José (Interview Boruca, 2016). The community is firmly supported by the National Museum through the Costa Rica network, and also through the *Museos Comunitarios* Spanish American network, both of which the community recognises and values as supporting and strengthening them. Therefore, the dream of women like *dōna* Margarita and *dōna* Feliciana has come true, and other fresh initiatives are starting, such as a new community café to provide visitors with traditional food, assisted by the Flor Association. The community's long-term ambition is for a new and bigger museum.

However, when indigenous people are empowered to strengthen their own culture at the same time as promote tourism, certain issues can arise, and we need to ask in what ways the local people can maintain ownership and agency over how they are being viewed and interpreted. In the context of Boruca, teachers, students, and other entities are involved in the Consejo Local de Educación Indígena on a voluntary basis, through which they grow stronger in their collective work and have a voice in national government in San José. The Municipal Council then provides the museum with online exposure and invites the community to perform *Danza de los Diablitos* (Dance of the Little Devils) in San José at cultural events. The indigenous *punto* (folk dance) is one of the main traditions being kept alive by the Boruca community, along with *cambús* (local Boruca songs), which are accompanied by accordions, pipes, and percussions made in the local region. The festival traditionally takes place from 30th December to 2nd January each year, during which time they have a lot of *chicha*, *tamales*, and pork. The dance is performed only by men and represents the conquest of the Spanish (represented by the bull) and the indigenous people (*los diablitos*) who take the forms of birds, snails, hammocks, whistles, or machetes through carved masks. These masks were originally unpainted and made of *bolso* wood, but today they are brightly painted for the tourist market, especially for visitors from the United States. The village's *diablo* elder ("Major Devil") keeps important artefacts from the dance, including a whistle

and the bull's head, and the museum hopes to have them on display when he passes away. Meanwhile, they want to make a film of him to show in the museum. The community is also currently working to have the dance recognised as a national intangible cultural heritage event supported by the Ministry of Culture. These and many other initiatives, therefore, clearly depend on a tourist market in a binary relationship in which the local community are effectively "branding" themselves, in a similar way to the Skye Ecomuseum, in order to increase their own environmental and economic sustainability. When asked specifically about the relationship between culture and tourism, the local headmaster replied:

Es una relación muy ... que hace falta en los dos campos. Digamos, tienen su relación cercana, porque ahora el mundo globalizado, en tiempos globalizados, siempre se van a necesitar recursos como para resaltar una cultura. Precisamente no vendemos, y de una vez aclaro, no vendemos cultura, no vendemos la cultura. Sino más bien, nos damos a conocer para no perder la cultura. Para no decir: "no existen, no existen; mira, hasta ahora no veo". Nos damos a conocer para bombardear lo poco que tenemos al mundo, de que todavía existimos. Entonces el turismo, las personas turistas deben entender de que eso es una característica del pueblo, de la comunidad, del originario costarricense y cultural boruca, en este caso nuestro grupo. Y lógicamente sí ocupamos recursos. ¿Recursos para qué? Para darle vuelta a la situación. ¿Cómo se le da la vuelta? En que los turistas se lleven su trabajo, su artesanía, adornos, como que, mira, más bien nos enriquece no tanto el valor de una pintura, de una máscara, de un jícaro, sino que: "Mira, ahí hay algo, una artesanía boruca, ahí hay un detalle boruca". Y lógicamente hablamos de que los artistas ganan muy poco. Al artista nomás se le aplaude y eso no es alimento. Entonces siempre va a haber una interacción ahí de que hace falta las dos cosas.⁴

Conclusion

It is clear that *community* and *cultural landscapes* have similarities and differences in Scotland and Costa Rica. Both locations have witnessed clear, strong dialogue between policy makers and local communities in relation to museum policy and governance, but the conditions in which they function are quite different, and the indigenous agenda of Boruca will have ongoing struggles in a cultural context. To enhance sustainability of the cultural landscapes, the strategy in Staffin has been to undergo a proper audience analysis in

⁴ [Translation]: That relationship is very ... it's necessary for both fields. Let's say they're closely related, because nowadays in this globalised world, in these globalised times, we'll always need resources to highlight a culture. To be precise, we aren't selling – and I would like to clarify that right now – we're not selling culture, we're not selling our culture. Rather, we're promoting ourselves so we don't lose our culture. So people won't say "they don't exist, they don't; look, so far I haven't seen anything [about the Boruca people]." We're promoting ourselves to show what little we have to the world, [to show] that we still exist. Therefore, tourism and tourists should understand that's one characteristic of the people, of the community, of the Costa Rican origins and the Boruca culture, which in this case is our group. And logically we do make use of resources. Resources for what? For turning around our situation. And how do we turn it around? By getting the tourists to take with them their piece of work, their craft, their decorations, that – look, it enriches us, but not so much for the value of a painting, of a mask, of a jícaro, but because [people get to realise] 'look, there's something, there's a Boruca craft, there's a Boruca detail!' And, of course, we're also saying that the artisans earn very little. Artisans only get a round of applause for their efforts, and that's no sustenance. So there will always be an interaction. There's always the need for both things.

response to a recent funding bid, and to make recommendations based upon it. In Costa Rica the strategies are in many ways more complex, as multiple ministries, support organisations, and agencies have their own agendas, in addition to those of the local community. By asserting in Costa Rica that the local people are “not selling culture [...] Rather, we’re promoting ourselves so we don’t lose our culture”, the community is resisting the predation of tourism. By strengthening its museum community and collective vision through local and regional networks, the community is also gaining agency over decision making and gathering political force.

In the end, it has been seen in both contexts that eco- and community museums can indeed foster human well-being and national identity through nature and culture, taking account of local distinctiveness and while being wary of predatory tourism on their own terms. If tourism is the predator, then the museums under investigation become paradigmatic as well as pragmatic, developing agency over local and national decision-making processes.

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Abstract

Recent decades have seen a rise in scholarship on the tourist imagination relating to the western gaze towards other cultures. In this essay, my theoretical standpoint is located in a nexus between museum studies, tourism studies, and anthropology, wherein the dynamic between the visitor and the heritage encountered can no longer be accepted as an innocent one. The contemporary examples I draw on from Scotland and Costa Rica – Skye Ecomuseum, and the Boruca and Rey Curré *museos comunitarios* – attract diverse international visitors, and tourism to both destinations is showcasing a life lived at a remove from the western world of capitalism and modernity, one experienced within, and at one with, stunning natural surroundings. However, as I will elucidate, both communities are concurrently experiencing the homogenising influences of globalisation while striving to maintain and strengthen their distinctive local identities in the response to predatory tourism.

Resumen

En décadas recientes, se ha visto un aumento en los estudios sobre el imaginario de los turistas y la mirada occidental hacia otras culturas. En este ensayo, mi punto de vista teórico se localiza en el vínculo entre la museología, los estudios turísticos y la antropología, donde la dinámica del

encuentro entre el visitante y el patrimonio ya no puede ser aceptado como inocente. Los ejemplos contemporáneos seleccionados de Escocia y Costa Rica (el Ecomuseo de Skye y los Museos Comunitarios de Boruca y Rey Curré) atraen diversos visitantes internacionales, y el turismo en ambos destinos exhibe un estilo de vida retirado del mundo occidental del capitalismo y la modernidad; una experiencia interior y en unidad con los increíbles paisajes naturales que los rodean. Sin embargo, como expondré, ambas comunidades están sufriendo las influencias homogeneizantes de la globalización, mientras que luchan por mantener y fortalecer sus distintivas identidades locales en respuesta al turismo depredador.

Keywords: cultural heritage management; ecomuseology; community museology; predatory tourism