

In Defense of Heritage Tourism: Analyzing the Gaelic College in a Comparative Context

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Interviews:

Bald-Jones, Sandra, Highland dance instructor

Fynan, Nanette and Mike, American tourists

Harrington, Thomas, Nova Scotian high school student and bagpiper

MacLeod, Angus, Gaelic instructor

MacNeil, Hector, Gaelic Director and member of the Nova Scotia Office of Gaelic Affairs

Abstract

Heritage tourism is an important and expanding niche within the tourism industry. While there are many specific types of heritage tourism, including ecotourism, roots tourism, and diaspora tourism, one of the larger sects of heritage tourism focuses on the consumption of culture. Much of the literature about heritage tourism assumes that if a region capitalizes on its own culture to draw in tourists, this marketing will be detrimental to the “true” culture of the host society. The present study challenges this assumption, arguing instead that commodification and marketing of culture (in its tangible and intangible forms) to tourists can, if implemented in particular ways, be beneficial to the host society both economically *and* culturally. The study focuses on Gaelic College in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, founded in 1938 to preserve local Scottish culture. The College has also become a destination for international tourists. Comparing the successes and challenges Gaelic College has experienced over the years with heritage tourism in Greece and Ireland provides a comparative context in which to examine the “double-edged” sword that is heritage tourism.

Introduction

Today, the varying motivations of travelers and responses of host communities to these travelers are countless. It has been only in recent decades that various types of tourism have fallen under scrutiny by scholars seeking to analyze their economic, sociological, psychological and political effects. One of the most intriguing issues presented by global tourism is the effect it has on the cultures of host societies, specifically in the context of tourists coming to explore their “heritage” (a concept which, in itself, is a social construction and can therefore have different meanings). This study analyzes the effects and implications of cultural heritage tourism, arguing that the model exemplified by the Gaelic College in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia has the greatest potential to benefit the host community’s culture.

For this study, I spent a week at the Gaelic College as a student in their March Break program of 2010. While taking classes in fiddling and Scottish Gaelic, I had the opportunity to speak to College administration, instructors, and students (both from Nova Scotia and elsewhere) regarding their experiences at the college. It is these people who I cite in Section 3.3.

We begin by defining the term “cultural heritage” and tracing the development of this particular type of tourism, as well as the problems that it presents. Next, we examine the tourism industries in two other countries (Greece and Ireland) through this lens in order to get a sense of how successful (or not) cultural heritage tourism has been elsewhere. We will focus on four specific cultural heritage “markers”: UNESCO World Heritage Sites, music and dance, language, and crafts. The same four variables will then be analyzed in the context of tourism at the Gaelic College in order to determine how cultural heritage tourism can be implemented in order to benefit visitors and host communities both culturally and economically.

1. A Brief History of Tourism

1.1 Why People Travel

Humans have been traveling for centuries, from the Romans exploring and conquering Greece and Egypt (Richards 1996, p. 5), to people simply traveling to visit family or friends, to medieval pilgrimages to sites of religious importance, such as Santiago de Compostela in Spain.

According to Richards (1996), the origins of cultural tourism and indeed, the term “tourism” itself, stem from the Grand Tours of the seventeenth century (p. 5). While definitions and interpretations of the Grand Tour vary, there were both cultural and imperialistic aspects to the tours (Cohen 2001, p. 129). Aristocratic British men, generally graduates of Oxford or Cambridge, would travel for a period of about three years in order to explore the rest of Europe to refine themselves through education (Cohen 2001, p. 131). Italy and France, due to their art and “refined” languages, were two of the most popular destinations within Europe. On these Grand Tours, the young men would bring with them entire legions of servants, and transportation was expensive, so tourism for tourism’s sake (not simply for the purpose of visiting family or friends) was an activity primarily undertaken by the wealthy.

While exploring other cultures was certainly a component of these Grand Tours, there was also an imperialistic motive to the travel which, in a way, was a reflection of the desire of British travellers to explore their own heritage. Even though, according to Carr (1994, p.50), the Grand Tour itself ended with the Napoleonic Wars, travel left its legacy among the British aristocracy. As travellers began to explore farther from home, they started to view new places as extensions of (or at least influenced by) the British Empire (MacKenzie 2005, p.20). The same applied to other imperialist travelers in Europe, but the British in particular viewed their culture as superior to the rest of Europe (and presumably everywhere else). Part of this imperialistic

thinking was the belief that the British had the ability and means for a “complete taxonomising of the globe...[t]hrough empire, the world could be engrossed and enumerated, identified and indexed.” (MacKenzie 2005, p. 20).

The concept of the guidebook emerged from this shrinking of the globe. Guidebooks are important to mention because the information contained within them reflects the status and mentality of travelers at the time. Travelers’ handbooks as we know them were first published in the 1830s. Two of the most famous early publishers were the German printer Karl Baedeker and the British printer John Murray. Baedeker’s works, though originally published in German and French, were translated into English and published in both London and New York. According to MacCannell (1999), these guidebooks have a distinct “upper-crustiness,” as Baedeker guides contain no information on inexpensive options for lodging, food or transportation (p. 61). As an example of the imperialistic nature of the travel, John Murray’s guide books to India devoted large sections to the pre-Imperial rulers of the country, glorifying the state of the Indian nation—*after* it was occupied by the British. (MacKenzie 2005, p.24). Additionally, British Grand Tourists went to Italy for the art and the architecture, but also because they saw a connection between the very powerful Roman Empire and the ever-expanding British empire (Harlan 2009, p.430).

Looking at the effects of the Grand Tour from the heritage perspective, Carr (1994) argues that the Napoleonic Wars also caused educated British classes to learn about their own arts and antiquities, out of which the Romantic Movement was born. The idea of a “heritage,” Carr (1994) writes, has roots in the Romantic Movement (p.50). Nostalgia is an integral part of Romantic ideals, and nostalgia was an integral part of British tourists exploring the rich history of Rome and “finding themselves” in it. While the categorization of seventeenth and eighteenth

century British travel as “heritage tourism” might seem dubious, it is clear that, since the beginning of the Grand Tours, there has been some connection between travel and discovering the heritage and culture of one’s self and of others. Heritage tourism today, as we will discuss, can involve looking upon things as they once were, which is a very Romanticized notion.

1.2 Expansion of Travel to Other Classes/The Development of Mass Tourism

The era of the aristocratic traveler started to give way to the mobility of classes lower than the aristocracy, and from Britain emerged an age of mass tourism. In the mid-nineteenth century, the construction of railroads in Britain led to the development of seaside towns around the English coast. Urry (2005) refers to the expansion of travel to the lower classes as the democratisation of travel, in that, because of the advent of comparatively inexpensive train transportation, travel was no longer an activity restricted to elites (p. 16). Urry (2005) argues that, as an attempt to civilize the rougher working class, employers and reformers introduced increasing opportunities for organized recreation (p. 19). He writes that as part of this movement, workers still labored for over 50 hours a week (p. 19). He also argues that this was a strategy undertaken by the factories to increase overall productivity. Whether or not this was a widespread occurrence is unclear, but travel began to spread to the middle class (e.g. the successful shopkeepers and merchants) and, to a lesser extent, the lower classes.

Travel agents who had previously catered only to the wealthy classes saw an emerging market in the working classes and started to work for them. For example, famed British travel agent Thomas Cook began to specialize in packaging domestic (not international) trips for the lower classes. The first of these was offered in 1844, and, in the spirit of democratizing travel, Cook was also the first to offer packages for women to travel unchaperoned throughout Europe.

In addition, a concept that MacKenzie (2005) conceptualizes as “print capitalism” caused the aforementioned guidebooks to become available to everyone in the 19th and 20th centuries, and while early guidebooks were clearly meant for the aristocrat traveler, the new mass production of guidebooks contributed to the rise of middle and lower class travel (p. 22). In the period between World War I and World War II, transportation grew enormously with the expansion of car ownership, plane travel and coach transport (Urry 2005, p. 25). In the 1920s and 1930s, workers’ unions in the United States and Britain also pushed for (and eventually received) paid vacations.

Shortly after World War II ended, conditions of the tourism industry in Britain and then United States included (1) peace (and, in the United States, prosperity), (2) governmental promotion of tourism, (3) paid vacations and (4) regulation of air transport (Fayos-Solá 1996, p. 406). This combination, along with the paid vacations achieved before the war, led to the “massification” of tourism, which has been conceptualized by some scholars (Fayos-Solá 1996, Chin 2008) as Fordian or Fordist tourism, an analogy with Ford’s system of mass industrial production. This conceptualization of tourism describes tourism as a product (although one comprised of many different elements) to be consumed. In the postwar years of the 1940s and 1950s, middle and lower class travelers were looking to travel somewhere with sun, sand, sea (and recently, “sex” has been added), somewhere that had at least a mild sense of the exotic, and they wanted to be able to pay for it with their relatively modest salaries. Over the next few decades, globalization took hold of tourism and international mass tourism emerged. Today, cruise tourism (Chin 2008) is one of the best examples of the mass tourism that grew out of this era.

1.3 The (Re)Development of Niche Tourism

Partially because of its connection with the lower classes, mass tourism is often viewed with some degree of disdain. The stereotype of the mass tourist today are the flocks of flabby men and women (usually American) in sunglasses and tropical print shirts. These tourists tend to travel in clusters, do the same things, go to the same places, and take the same photos. This partially explains the shift in the last few decades away from mass tourism to a specialization of different types, or niches of tourism (Urry 2005, Chin 2008, Fayos-Solá 1996). According to Chin (2008), a mass tourist is “waiting-to-be-acted-upon,” where as the niche tourist is actively seeking meaning (p. 4). It is a vague definition, but that “meaning” refers to something beyond travel for the sake of travel—generally, niche tourism offers something specific *beyond* the realm of what most tourists seek, be it sites related to sports, food, conflict, or, as we will discuss, cultural heritage. One of the fastest growing examples of niche tourism is ecotourism, when tourists can stay in “sustainable” lodging, use “sustainable” forms of transportation, learn about nature and conservation, learn about nature and conservation, etc. Although the distinction is blurry, niche tourism is perceived by tourists as more “elite” than mass tourism—at least travelers like to think so.

Cultural heritage tourism is an example of niche tourism. Although it is a relatively recent field within tourism studies, from our previous discussion of the Grand Tour, it is clear that tourists have long sought out their own heritage in some way (whether imperialistically motivated or a religious pilgrimage). It could be argued, therefore, that the “nichification” of tourism, at least in terms of tourists seeking a particular kind of meaning from their travels, is not completely new.

It can be very difficult to discuss different types of niche tourism individually simply

because, like the distinction between niche and mass tourism, different distinctions between categories of tourism are unclear. For example, Bumrungrad hospital in Bangkok, Thailand caters to medical tourists (another form of niche tourism, encompassing primarily American tourists seeking lower prices for medical procedures in exotic locations), yet it also occasionally hosts culinary exhibitions for tourists interested in local cuisine. Or think of a Jewish tourist who visits a Nazi concentration camp. This could be classified as “dark” tourism, but for him, it is also part of his heritage, so he is also engaging in heritage tourism.¹ Urry (2005) classifies this blurring of different tourism sectors as “de-differentiation,” which is a fundamental aspect of postmodernism (p.75). Postmodernism, which is classified by its rejection of both classification and objectivity, is practically an ideal lens through which to think about tourism, as it explains the difficulty of categorizing different sectors within the field. However, this does not provide a particularly useful platform for analyzing one particular type of niche tourism. Taking into account the past work of tourism scholars, in Figure 1, I offer what I propose as working definitions of different types of tourism, and where cultural heritage tourism fits into this picture²:

¹ A dark tourist, by definition, seeks sites related to conflict. Like most terms in tourism, it is relatively broad and subjective. The “darkest” of these tourists seek conflict that is occurring in the present (such as tourists who visit the Gaza strip and watch bombing from a distance), and the “lightest” of these tourists seek sites of conflict that have been washed over by time, such as concentration camps or battlefields.

² I have included natural heritage tourism in this chart. While the focus on the past is important to both types of heritage tourism, the “natural” heritage tourist seeks sites formed by nature rather than people. It is, in a way, the very exemplar of Romanticism within tourism.

Figure 1: Different types of tourism

Mass Tourism	Generally for-profit tourism which aims to attract as many people as possible; consumers are passive and tend to travel in large groups. Mass production of tourism, for example, cruise tourism .
Niche Tourism	May be for-profit or non-profit; geared towards a particular sector of tourists who seek a specific meaning from their experiences. Also thought to be more elitist than mass tourism. Examples include heritage tourism, sports tourism, culinary tourism, and medical tourism .
Cultural Tourism	A type of niche tourism in which the tourist seeks to explore a culture different from his or her own. Aspects of culture can become commodified for consumption.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage Tourism (Cultural) 	A type of cultural tourism in which the culture being consumed is based in the past. The culture can be the tourist's own (which becomes roots tourism), part of another culture, or part of a "global" heritage. The idea of "heritage" suggests a stronger emotional and personal connection than "culture" in general. Also includes roots tourism, diaspora tourism .
Heritage Tourism (Natural)	Similar to cultural heritage tourism but based in non-man-made sites. Natural sites (e.g. jungles, beaches) become the sources of the heritage sought by tourists, and it is an exemplification of Romanticism. The focus is generally on sustaining and preserving the sites. Ecotourism can be considered a type of natural heritage tourism.

2. Cultural Heritage Tourism

2.1 What is cultural heritage tourism?

What is cultural heritage tourism? Even within this narrow sector, definitions are flexible.

One accepted definition of heritage tourism, though intentionally broad, is the "present day use

of the past” (Timothy and Boyd 2002, p.2). Heritage tourists visit places that represent the past, usually from the perspective of a particular culture. They consume tangible and intangible products of that place’s past culture(s), or of current culture(s) that have long-standing and historical traditions.

However, Timothy and Boyd’s broad definition does not quite capture what a heritage tourist is. As Figure 1 indicates, the idea of “heritage” suggests not only looking at cultures of the past, it also connotes a stronger personal connection than just “culture.” Recall Carr’s (1994) suggestion that heritage has direct connections to the Romantic idea of nostalgia, returning to a time before modernization and industrialization. Urry (2005) refers to nostalgia as “the seventeenth-century disease [which] seems to have become a contemporary epidemic,” suggesting that these Romantic ideals have found their way into the thoughts of modern travelers (p. 95).

The slight sarcasm embedded in this statement reflects the view of tourism scholars who view the “heritage industry” with at least a degree of scepticism. The very idea of commodifying history and past cultures for consumption by tourists presents a number of different issues. Ashworth (1994) suggests that the difference between “history” and “heritage” is commodification, that heritage itself is a product (p. 16). The idea of authenticity is one of the most important and most contested issues that this sector of tourism raises, and this will be discussed further in the next section.

One of the most useful ways to analyze cultural heritage tourism is to divide up the heritage tourist’s experience into different culture “markers”—objects of the heritage tourists’ gaze. Timothy and Boyd (2006) suggest that heritage tourism might be broken down into different objects sought by the tourist, including heritage “markers” (mostly crafts), heritage

trails, “ordinary” landscapes and people, and religious sites. While this list is not comprehensive, Timothy and Boyd make a distinction between “tangible” and “intangible” aspects of heritage tourism (p.2).

This distinction of tangible versus intangible was originally established by UNESCO, which once defined “heritage” as simply involving tangible sites. The organization’s initial focus was on the promotion and preservation of physical structures—architectural sites and monuments. In 1964, ICOMOS (the International Committee on Monuments and Sites) was created by UNESCO, and it still exists to support the designation and preservation of cultural World Heritage Sites (which will be further discussed in the next section). UNESCO’s definition of heritage expanded with the eventual inclusion of artifacts as “moveable,” but still tangible, pieces of culture, and monuments. Buildings and land were categorized as “immovable”.

This definition of heritage was again refined during UNESCO’s 1972 UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. The new categorization included three different aspects of culture and heritage: nature, tangible (artifacts and monuments were categorized together) and *intangible*, or living culture, which included aspects like language and music. An example of a tangible heritage marker would be a monument or folk art, whereas dance and music are categorized as intangible aspects. Ashworth (1994) points to museums as the most direct perpetuators of the cultures of dominant historical groups, whereas Urry (2005) suggests that there has been a shift to “living” museums, where the focus is on the “ordinary” (for example, seeing someone dressed in colonial garb and blowing glass) rather than the “aura” of rare historical objects behind glass (p. 118).

UNESCO is the international organization most closely linked with heritage tourism, as it promotes the idea of a “world heritage.” The origins of this idea can be traced back to after the

First World War, with the creation of the League of Nations (“About ICOMOS”). With increasing globalization, the idea that humans are all citizens of one world began to emerge (perhaps comparable to the sense of major empires who thought beyond the confines of the state), and with this, discussions ensued among scholars and statesmen about how to preserve a nation’s culture. It is quite possible that these two concepts grew alongside each other to prevent global homogenization of culture in the wake of economic and cultural globalization, linking the concepts of heritage and culture, as well as the preservation of both.

Since the 1972 convention, UNESCO has designated 890 World Heritage Sites all over the globe.³ The convention has thus far been signed by 170 different countries, all of whom have committed to “ensure the identification, protection, conservation and transmission to future generations of the cultural and natural heritage situated on its territory.” (Pedersen 2002, p.11) In order for a site to be designated as a World Heritage Site, it must be nominated by the individual state. Because of this, deeming sites as UNESCO World Heritage Sites affirms part of a country’s national identity.⁴ The site must ultimately meet at least one of ten criteria outlined by UNESCO, including having a “unique or at least exceptional testimony” to a past or present culture, or being an “outstanding example of human settlement...which is representative of a culture (or cultures)”.⁵ The UNESCO World Heritage Sites have a clear linkage with tourism, as the designation of sites, especially lesser-known sites, increases numbers of tourists (Bandarin, v). There are direct links to tripadvisor.com, a travel review website, on the UNESCO website, and most of the attractions listed are countries’ most popular tourist attractions.

³ UNESCO differentiates between natural and cultural world heritage sites. Natural heritage sites are based on jungles, beaches and general outdoor scenery. These are important to natural heritage tourism, which as outlined in Figure 1, is a slightly different sector of tourism that will not be discussed in this study.

⁴ This is often the source of contested heritage, as the assigning of these sites to individual states marks them with a definite national connection that others may not agree with.

⁵ The full list of criteria can be found at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/criteria/>.

I have narrowed the aspects of cultural heritage tourism to what I see as the most relevant to the study of cultural heritage tourism and how it affects the host community. The three case studies in the third section will focus on the following aspects of culture that are capitalized upon for the sake of cultural heritage tourism: UNESCO World Heritage sites, local folk music and dance, and language.

2.2 Authenticity Debates

There is much scepticism among tourism scholars about the commodification inherent in cultural heritage tourism. And rightfully so—the idea that people might be trying to market and sell their own history is distasteful to many. Some scholars have claimed that the heritage tourism industry knowingly “peddles” the inauthentic (Breathnach 2006, p. 102). Whether or not they state this view explicitly, pervading doubts regarding authenticity are evident in much of the literature, which argues that commodifying heritage and culture must necessarily lead to contrived, and therefore inauthentic, experiences.

The debates about authenticity address two perspectives: first, what the tourist is seeking and second, how the site caters to that tourist. Dean MacCannell (1999) was one of the first scholars to discuss authenticity in tourism, applying Erving Goffman’s social analysis of the dichotomy between front and back regions.⁶ MacCannell (1999) maintains that tourists are seeking real life as much as possible (the back stage), rather than the places that are constructed for them (the front stage), and that places which cater to tourists seek to set up a back stage to give them a sense of the authentic (p. 94). He establishes a continuum of six “stages,” which ranges from the “front” stages that tourists are seeking to avoid (think of tourist traps, like

⁶ Goffman’s original discussion contemplates the construction of the self between front and back regions. The back region has tools for “shaping the body,” determining what “props” are to be used in the front region, the appearance and outward presentation of the self. (Goffman 1959)

gravity hills, which are optical illusions along certain sections of the road that make a car appear to roll uphill) to “back” stages that the tourists cannot access at all, such as the importation of goods to sell as “local” crafts. The middle stages of the continuum are all, to some degree, constructed by those on the “inside,” for example, the people from the host culture who have made products (such as tours or folk crafts) to be consumed by the tourist. MacCannell also suggests that all tourist experiences are “cultural experiences,” which, by his definition, are “somewhat fictionalized, idealized or exaggerated models of social life that are in the public domain” (p. 23).

According to Urry (2005), the current age has generated what he terms the “post-tourist,” who travels to places and assumes “that the apparently authentic local entertainment is [socially contrived]” (p. 91). These tourists, therefore, accept the inauthenticity of their experiences. We can see how a focus on the tourist experience necessarily being inauthentic is inseparable from Urry’s argument.

Breathnach (2006) argues that while scholarly views that debunk the authenticity in heritage tourism, may be valuable they provide a one-sided perspective that fails to address the complex nuances of the field. Rather than focusing on whether tourist attractions are authentic or not, Breathnach writes that the focus of heritage tourism should be on the self-identity of the tourist himself. Modernity and increased globalization, she writes, have rendered the national identities of individuals less distinct, especially in diasporic cultures, such as Jewish-Americans or Irish-Americans. The construction of the nation that heritage tourism creates fills in the gaps. The authenticity in heritage tourism sites, therefore, is not in the place being toured but rather in the self. (p. 116) Whether tourists themselves realize this or not is unclear (the same could be said for Urry’s argument), but such is the risk of attaching scholarly analysis to personal

activities.

Pitchford (2008) also argues for heritage tourism's contribution to identity, but in her case, to the identity of the nation: "...tourism can serve as a medium for telling a nationalist story, thereby contributing to the construction of a sense of national identity, *but it is not a perfect tool and requires skillful handling* [emphasis added]" by the creators and operators of tourist sites within a nation (p. 174). Pitchford's approach to heritage tourism is partially consistent with arguments such as McCannell's and Urry's, which argue that heritage tourism is largely inauthentic. Pitchford acknowledges the fact that heritage tourism, when properly balanced, offers an opportunity for those within a nation to tell their national story to visitors.

The connecting thread between arguments about authenticity seems to be that heritage tourism, when implemented correctly, can help construct a sense of self for the individual, as well as a sense of the nation (or region). While there are certainly challenges in the implementation, successful cultural heritage tourism can benefit both the tourists and for the locals. The present study will explore the validity of that statement, arguing that heritage tourism *can* provide authentic, non-enhanced experiences for the tourist.

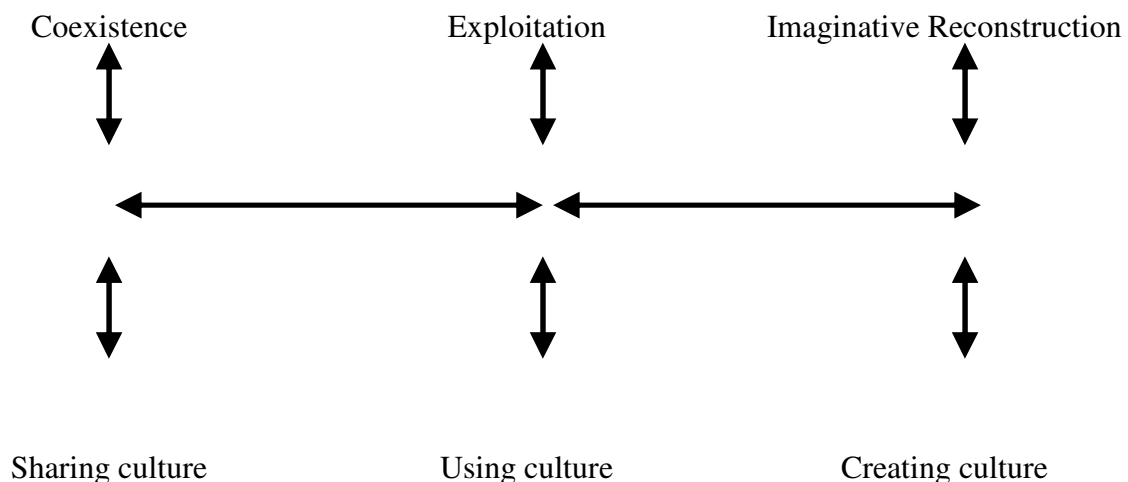
Because the debates about authenticity are so difficult to resolve, it is in one sense pointless to place too much emphasis on whether or not a heritage destination is "authentic" or not. While the issue of authenticity certainly merits discussion and provides insight into the field of cultural heritage tourism, too much emphasis on authenticity can ultimately be counterproductive. For example, if renovations need to be undertaken for a historical monument, and it is seen as "inauthentic" to perform modern upgrades, and maintenance is therefore not performed, the site will deteriorate with time. If tourists decide to not pay for a "cultural" dance that has been altered for their viewing pleasure because it is not "authentic," then that money is

lost. Tourism, ultimately, needs to draw in money to sustain itself, and sometimes (but not always) authenticity must be sacrificed in order to continue funding the industry.

2.3 Cultural Heritage Tourism Relationships as a Continuum

Like the different types of tourism, the various ways that cultural heritage tourism can affect a host region are difficult to categorize. Newby (1994) presents a useful model which suggests that the relationship between cultural heritage and tourism is a continuum (p. 208). He discusses whether or not tourism is a “threat” to the survival of local culture, and argues that culture can, on some level be *shared* rather than simply exploited by tourists. He suggests the following relationship, illustrated in Figure 2 based on the evolution of cultural heritage tourism’s significance to host regions. While the diagram is meant to show how the growth of tourism affects the creation of local culture, Newby acknowledges that there is “no inevitability” that the relationship will involve in such a distinctly linear way (p. 209):

Figure 2: “The evolution of a tourism-heritage relationship”*



*Source: Carr (1994, p. 208)

As we have already discussed, MacCannell (1999) thinks that the tourist cannot truly experience the authentic, and Urry (2005) argues that the post-tourist willingly and knowingly seeks the inauthentic. Newby's continuum offers a model for more nuanced views on heritage tourism, like those of Breatnach (2006) and Pitchford (2008). While Newby acknowledges that heritage is a construction based on commodification, his continuum includes the possibility that culture can be shared with the tourist. According to Newby, if host societies rely on tourism as a significant sector of their economy, culture tends to be more of an "imaginative reconstruction" than in regions that rely less on tourism. As will discuss in Section 3, this seems to be the case with the heritage tourism of Greece, which relies heavily on tourism, as compared with the heritage tourism of Ireland and Cape Breton.

The one problem with Newby's model is that it assumes that a "culture" is homogenous and that exploitation or imaginative reconstruction must occur across the board. As we have seen, heritage tourism can be divided into separate objects of the tourist gaze. In their discussion of different cultural aspects, Timothy and Boyd (2006) do not mention the intangible aspects of language, music or dance, although these can be very attractive to heritage tourists. Language, as we will also discuss, can also play a significant role. Each of the cultural "markers" from Section 2 (UNESCO World Heritage sites, language, music and dance, crafts) fits in a different place on the continuum, though the exact categorization varies based on the host community. Figure 3 categorizes where each of these heritage "markers" generally fit along Newby's continuum:

Figure 3: Aspects of Cultural Heritage Tourism

UNESCO World Heritage Sites	Exploitation
Language (when sought by tourists)	Shared culture
Music and Dance	It depends on the host culture, somewhere between sharing culture and exploitation
Crafts	Imaginative Reconstruction

In the following comparison of Greece, Ireland and Cape Breton, I will further discuss the application of Newby’s continuum to each of these cultural heritage “markers” chosen in the previous section. This discussion will provide an analysis of how and in what settings heritage tourism may or may not become a cultural “threat.”

In the cases of Greece and Ireland, while aspects of heritage in different regions certainly differ (between the Greek islands and the mainland, or between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland), I have chosen to focus on how the nation as a whole promotes heritage tourism. Additionally, the tourism boards, which have the most control over how tourism is promoted, are nationally run. Cape Breton, by comparison, focuses on a more regional identity, and it is most directly influenced by the decisions of the Nova Scotia Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage—not of the Canadian government as a whole.

3. Case Studies in Cultural Heritage Tourism

3.1 Greece

Overview of Greek Heritage Tourism

While there are records of Romans “visiting” Greece as conquerors, modern tourism in Greece traces back to well after the age of the Grand Tour. Most Grand Tourists travelling to the Mediterranean focused on Italy as a destination, and they experienced Greek culture only

through the Hellenistic influences on Roman ruins that they visited in Italy (Harlan 2009, p. 203). Greece itself, because it was a part of the Ottoman Empire until 1832, was seen as difficult to get to, and while exotic, somewhat dangerous. (Harlan 2009, p. 204). After Greece achieved independence in 1832, Western European tourists were disappointed with what they found in Greece, as they expected to see the neoclassical architecture and perhaps the philosophically driven society that they had always associated the country. According to Karpodini-Dimitriadi (1999), this trend continues today, as the modern tourists' views of Greece are influenced by "images which they [wish] to see in reality" (p. 17). The promotions of the Greek National Tourist Organization (GNTO) therefore rely on this image production.

Discussion among scholars (at least written in English) about heritage tourism in Greece is difficult to find. In some ways, nearly all tourism to the country could be considered cultural heritage tourism, as much of the industry is based on beautiful scenery and ancient Classical sites (the Acropolis being the most obvious example) and therefore relies heavily on the past. Wickens (1994) classifies "cultural heritage" tourists as just one type of tourist who visit, although he is discussing the island of Crete, where most tourists come to see sites of the Ancient Minoan culture (see Adriotis 2003. p.29). As we have just seen, tourists on the mainland seek a particular image of Classical Greece, and because the GNTO seeks to satisfy the desire to see these images in reality, much of this "heritage" tourism is based in imaginative reconstructions, particularly in the music, dance and crafts.

In general, tourism is extremely important to the Greek economy, having drawn in 17,518,000 visitors in 2007 (the latest figure available, an increase from 14,276,000 in 2005) or almost one-tenth of the total number of visitors to Southern and Mediterranean Europe (*Greece: Country/Economy Profiles*). In 2008, tourism made up 22% of the total exports from Greece

(WDI Online). It employs about 20 percent of the population, more than any other industry within the country (Itano, 2009).

With the global recession, however, the numbers show that the current state of Greek tourism is dimming. Figures from the Institute for Tourism Research and Forecasts (ITEP), operated by the Greek government, show that, from January to October of 2009, the number of visitors to Greek airports fell by a very significant 7.8 percent (Miller 2010). At the same time these statistics were released, there was expected to be a 1.6 percent drop in the contribution of tourism to the Greek economy. National deficit, meanwhile, reached the equivalent of 12.9% of the total GDP, and the per capita income is among the lowest in Europe (“Economy: Greece”). In other words, Greek’s largest industry is in severe decline along with the rest of the country’s economy.

In times of economic crisis, cultural heritage tourism is seen as a way of diversifying the tourism economy. Since the beginning of mass tourism in the Mediterranean around the 1950s (when it was made popular and accessible as a tourist destination), Greece has drawn in many European tourists because of its sun, sand and sea (Buhalis 1999, p. 1). The hedonistic motivations for certain European countries (particularly France) to travel to the Mediterranean have been likened to American visitors to the Caribbean. Tourism in Greece is not often addressed in terms of “niche” sectors because, as the country’s largest singular economic sector, it is focused on making as much money as possible, and niche markets by definition draw in smaller numbers of tourists (Karpodini-Dimitriadi 1999, p. 177). As Newby (1994) states, tourism and heritage can coexist when the economy does not rely on tourism. In the case of Greece, the corollary holds true: because tourism dominates the economy, aspects of Greek “cultural heritage tourism” tend towards the “Imaginative Reconstruction” side of Newby’s

continuum. One of the clearest tangible cultural examples of this are the UNESCO World Heritage Sites within Greece.

UNESCO World Heritage Sites

The first and most important aspect of cultural heritage tourism in Greece is the prominent number of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. While all of these sites are “authentic,” as we shall see, their promotion and preservation is vital to the existence of tourism in the country. Because of this, they are largely sites of exploited culture.

Greece currently has 17 cultural and “mixed” (both natural and cultural) World Heritage Sites, and eight more were added to the tentative list in 2003. Some of these are archaeological sites, such as Olympia and Rhodes. Also included on this list are the Acropolis in Athens and churches from the Byzantine empire. The UNESCO World Heritage website describes the sites in the Acropolis as “universal symbols of the classical spirit and civilization and form the greatest architectural and artistic complex bequeathed by Greek Antiquity to the world.” While they themselves have not been manufactured for the sake of tourism, their antiquity has been capitalized upon in the modern day. This image has been upheld by reconstructions, cleaning and repairs as well. Recent tourist advertisements for the country make it clear how this “world heritage” has been tied in with a mass tourist culture of sun, sand and sea.

In 2005, partially as a reaction to a 4% drop in visitation from the United Kingdom, the Greek National Tourism Organization launched an ad campaign in the United States and the United Kingdom, calling on visitors to “Live Your Myth in Greece.” The television ad featured wide open blue seas, attractive young people dancing around a fire, and a woman dressed in a flowing white dress standing next to and running her hand over ancient ruins. All of these are

fairly typical images that one would find in a brochure for any Mediterranean tourist destination, but the ruins are specifically recognizable as the Parthenon, possibly the most recognizable part of the Acropolis in Athens. The Parthenon is juxtaposed with a contemporary exoticism and an implied potential for adventure. It serves, in this case, merely as a backdrop for the construction of a national identity for tourists.

Another television ad from 2009 makes it clear how the “antiquity” presented by the UNESCO World Heritage Sites is something of a brand used by the GNTA along with its focus on the four “Ss” of mass tourism (sun, sand, sea and sex). This is not to say that sun, sand, sea and sex are the only reasons to visit Greece, and that the history is a mere backdrop, but the tourism industry has clearly found this to be the most lucrative approach. This particular television ad advertises Greece as being “5000 Years Old.” The images in this campaign are similar to the advertisement from 2005, with the only real emphasis on antiquity being another shot of the Parthenon. From these ad campaigns, it is clear how the “world heritage” of Greece has been blended with and is practically inseparable from mass tourism.

The contribution of the World Heritage sites to Greek tourism is not necessarily negative, however. Greece demonstrates how this idea of a “world heritage” can be promoted to expand the tourism sector. If a tourist can on some level believe that he or she is a descendant of (however indirect) or somehow related to this ancient civilization, the personal connection will therefore constitute a type of “heritage” tourism, since the definition is so fluid.

Language

As we will see in the case of Cape Breton, tourism can sometimes be tied to the revival of a dying language. In Greece, this is not the case, and language factors very little into the tourism

sector. Attic Greek, which was spoken in Athens and surrounding Attica, is the Greek we associate with the height of Classical Greek civilization, from the 6th century BCE to the 4th century BCE. By the 3rd century BCE, this dialect had evolved into Koine Greek. This version of Greek became widely spoken and understood in the Mediterranean around the time of Alexander the Great (whose reign lasted until shortly after 300 CE). Modern Greek, the language spoken today, is so far removed from Ancient Greek that a modern Greek speaker could not simply pick up and read a classical text.

The “5000 Years Old” advertisement has a particular shot of a sand-covered tablet written in Attic Greek. In many ways, it would be rather pointless to try and “revive” an ancient language that has since evolved into a different language altogether. So while local Greeks might consider Classical Greek part of their own heritage, it is not something that they have attempted to revive, especially not for tourists to partake in. While an ancient, once widely-spoken language is arguably the most genuine aspect of heritage tourism in smaller tourism sectors (like Ireland and Cape Breton), it does not factor into heritage tourism in Greece.

Music and dance

Unlike Ireland and Cape Breton, where music is an integral part of the heritage tourist experience, the GNTTO makes little mention of Greek music on its website. The focus, if there is one, seems to be on the instruments themselves, particularly stringed instruments (like the bouzouki) and wind instruments. The only readily accessible information that relates directly to both tourism and music is a mention on the GNTTO’s website of a museum of Greek folk music instruments in the Plaka in Athens. This collection of instruments is advertised by the website as “the most important in Europe” (“Museum of Greek Folk Musical Instruments”). In addition, the

Samothrace Dance Festival is advertised for tourists. This electronic music festival is held on one of the picturesque Greek Island of Samothrace, but the focus is not on Greek tradition so much as the fact that the festival is on a beach.

The television advertisements we have been discussing include what could be construed as “Greek” music, but it, like the ancient ruins of the Parthenon, serves as a backdrop to contribute to an image of “exoticness” in the ads. While there are several different folk musical traditions in Greece that are enjoyed and pursued by the locals, they are not widely shared with tourists.

Crafts

One of the easiest ways to generate money from tourism is to create crafts that are “reflective” of a culture. In Greece, the government under Prime Minister Metaxas (1936-1940) viewed tourism as part of a larger corporatist vision for the country. The government viewed tourism as a way to employ groups that did not hold political power, such as women, who, through a revival of traditional crafts, could bring tradition back to the Greek economy (Dritsas 2006, p. 3). Such crafts would include pottery, basket-weaving, wood sculpture and weaving. While this, theoretically, would be the ideal situation for crafts and tourism—a co-existence of tradition and culture—the situation in reality is not as cooperative.

Andriotis (2003), in his study of the tourist economy on the island of Crete, mentions that there are no means for mass production of crafts on the actual island, so crafts that are sold to tourists are actually manufactured on the Greek mainland.⁷ He describes these crafts as “attractive, but not ethnic” (p. 39). He also mentions the decline of traditional craft-making occupations as more workers turn over to occupations related to tourism—which is the opposite

⁷ Today, as one might find at other tourist attractions, many of these goods are made in China.

of what the Metaxas government hoped would happen. Somewhat paradoxically, however, Andriotis also mentions that, in Crete, the trade in traditional arts contributes to the preservation of local culture. Whether or not crafts are an exploitation of culture or not seems to be somewhat subjective. In an economy like Greece's, however, it seems that crafts in general tend to be commodified and imaginatively reconstructed for tourists, as they are some of the easiest and portable items to sell. Therefore, they fit between "exploitation" and "imaginative reconstruction" on Newby's continuum.

3.2 Ireland

Overview of Irish Heritage Tourism

When discussing heritage tourism, aspects of Ireland's tourism sector are easier to address in this niche context than in the case of Greece, as tourism receipts made up only 4% of exports from Ireland in 2008 (although, in current economic times, it is seeing a similar drop in tourists attracted to the country) (WDI Online). Not only is the market much smaller than in Greece, but because of Irish emigration across the Atlantic Ocean after the potato famine in the mid 1800s, many tourists (especially American tourists) are of Irish descent and travel to seek their own "heritage" in Ireland. In Ireland's case, it becomes clear that the intangible aspects of cultural heritage (specifically music and dance) are more important to heritage tourism, as opposed to Greece, where tangible sites are the crux of heritage tourism to the country.

Ireland's *Bord Failte*, or Welcoming Board, was founded in 1952, despite politicians' protests that tourism was an unwelcome annoyance in Irish society (Kaul 2009, p. 48). As tourism expanded throughout Europe, however, the Irish government poured more money into its tourism sector, and from the 1950s to the 1970s, the number of North American tourists to

Ireland tripled (Kaul 2009, p. 49). With this, both outsiders became increasingly interested in the folk culture of Ireland, and there was a revival of Irish music in North America.

Though tourism is important to Ireland, it does not play as large a role as it does in Greece. In 2008, 7.8 million overseas visitors came to the country (“Overseas visits”) One of the most prominent groups of tourists that travel to Ireland today are Americans. According to Amelia Siobhan Wright (2010), the connection between Americans and Ireland lies mostly in the Irish diaspora, and as of 2008, there were over 36 million Americans who claimed Irish heritage (U.S. Census Bureau). The Irish population, as of 2008, was just over 4 million (WDI Online). Of the over seven million tourists who visited Ireland in 2006, Americans contributed 22% of the revenue (Wright 2010, p. 22). Many of the tourists who visit Ireland are engaging in heritage tourism, believing “that ‘all will be revealed’, if they can just put their feet on Irish soil” or because they wish to “fulfil a lifelong destiny by travelling to the land of their forefathers and actualize the tales that nurtured their youth.” (Wright 2010, p. 25) It is unclear exactly what the respondents in Wright’s study meant by these statements, but the flowery language makes it plain that the connection between American and Irish tourists is a highly romanticized one—and one that is based in heritage. In fact, the official website for *Bord Failte* (discoverireland.ie) includes a section for “culture and heritage,” with activities and sites ranging from music to historical sites.

One of the reasons that heritage tourism to Ireland has been such a success is because the country has done a remarkable job of branding itself. When Americans are asked to think about Ireland, they tend to come up with images of leprechauns, castles, the Blarney Stone, and what can be categorized as commodified cultural icons. According to Ruth McManus (1997), *Bord Failte* as well as the Northern Ireland Tourist Board have recognized heritage as a cornerstone of

tourism and market this to audiences (p. 91). Even though Dublin is actually a modern, cosmopolitan city, much like other cities in Western Europe, the kind of marketing that has been done for tourism focuses on Ireland's distinctiveness. This sense of distinctiveness works on two levels. First, it creates a sense of history and a unique experience for visitors. Second, it creates a sense of national identity for the locals. Irish history is inseparable from the country's struggle to free itself from the British. To some extent, its cultural icons provide a sense of distinctiveness for both audiences. Although Ireland does experience some degree of commodification, the projected heritage is shared by locals and tourists.

UNESCO World Heritage Sites

Unlike Greece, the Republic of Ireland is home to only two cultural heritage sites—Skellig Michael, a seventh-century monastery just off the West coast of Ireland, and three combined major prehistoric archaeological sites on the Boyne River, fifty kilometers north of Dublin. There were seven other tentative candidates added to the list in 2010, though many were updated tentative candidates from 1992. Since the nominations for World Heritage Sites must come from the states themselves, it would appear that deeming sites as UNESCO-endorsed attractions has not taken top priority for the *Bord Failte*. While the sites are a part of the ancient history of Ireland, their image is not as constructed and used as heavily by the tourism sector as we have seen in Greece. The *Bord Failte* certainly seeks to promote Irish castles such as Kilkenny, one of the most popular tourist sites in Ireland, but it relies less on the designation of World Heritage sites than Greece does.

Language

One of the heritage aspects which makes Ireland so unique is the presence of the Irish Gaelic Language. In 1892, future first president of the Irish Republic Douglas Hyde delivered a lecture to the Irish National Literary Society in Dublin. In his speech, he called for “de-Anglicisation” of the Irish. Essentially, the speech was a call to return back to Irish Gaelic in order to separate themselves from the British (Dunleavy 1991, p. 184). The English culture, in Hyde’s and in future Irish nationalists’ opinion, had overtaken the Irish although the Irish people had continued to let their culture be overtaken. In the mid 1800s, the number of Irish speakers declined significantly. In the speech, Hyde claimed that throwing away the Gaelic language had sacrificed Irish nationalism to the British.

According to the Irish government’s Statement on the Irish Language, which was issued in 2006, about 3% of the Irish population speaks Irish Gaelic as a household language, and it is the official language of the Republic of Ireland, even though English is more widely spoken. According to Hindley (1990), the Irish language is accepted as a badge of nationalism and distinctiveness, although there is very little attempt to use it in everyday life (p. 3). He speculates that survival of the language is possible, with nationalism, patriotism and identity being its main promoters (p. 163). Today, Irish Gaelic is promoted in contemporary culture—for example, there are advertisements on “All Irish Radio” (which is broadcast world-wide on the Internet) to learn Irish Gaelic. It is clear, however, that there is little, if any, connection between heritage tourism and the Irish Gaelic language. .” The only real connection are the names of particular names of music festivals and other tourist attractions, which are written in Gaelic. While English-speaking tourists might encounter the language in this way, they will likely find it unpronounceable, although attaching Irish Gaelic to certain tourist attractions gives them a sense

of unique “Irishness.” It does not seem, however, that tourists specifically seek out the language. So while the revival of an ancient language *is* a factor in nationalist identity, tourism has not been used as a method of reviving the language.

Music and Dance

In her study of the American tourist connection with Ireland, Wright (2010) quotes one particular tourist who speaks about her motivations for traveling to Ireland: “As a little girl, I listened to Irish music, and I remember how the music of Ireland moved me and stayed with me forever...hearing all the recent revival of Irish music and all the beautiful songs awakened my love for Ireland” (p. 26). This sentiment represents the desire of many Americans, particularly those of Irish descent, to gaze on the past in Ireland—and music plays a very key role in the Irish promotion of heritage.

While there are varied types of Irish music, the first types that most people think of are Irish ballads and fiddle or pipe-driven jigs and reels with entrancing, persistent rhythms and lilting melodies. Irish folk music started to take hold in America in the 1960s with an increased interest of both Irish citizens and Americans in traditional music (Kaul 2009, 46). In this way, it was musical nostalgia. The Celtic revival took a major upswing in the 1990s as the Irish economy boomed. According to Kaul (2009), economic prosperity begets a desire to preserve one’s own culture, and it is clear that the Celtic music revival has done exactly this. Matheson (2010) discusses the rather powerful invocation of location when listeners who feel an attachment to Celtic places hear the region’s associated music. Therefore, it stands to reason that certain tourists associate a very specific sense of place with the music.

According to Matheson (2010), Celtic music is subject to an authenticity paradox similar

to that found within the larger case of heritage tourism. Because Celtic music is so steeped in folk tradition, some scholars and musicians argue that commodification and modernity endanger the authenticity of the music (Matheson 2010, p. 59). Reiss (2003, p.152) weighs in on this debate by saying that the argument is ultimately between the “influences of change,” which happen naturally with time, and the “voices of stability,” which argue that tradition is the most “genuine”. In order to allow heritage tourism via music and dance to flourish, a compromise needs to be made between the two—an acceptance and continuation of tradition with a combined ability to be open to outside influences on the traditions themselves. To say that outside influences render a particular brand of cultural heritage “inauthentic” is to deny the inevitability of change.

Bord Failte is aware of this tourist draw to Irish music, as it advertises for a number of “passion-fuelled music festivals” on its website. These festivals include the *Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann*, in which thousands of musicians from different Celtic disciplines meet and compete with each other. According to the website, it draws over 250,000 visitors to a different town in Ireland—the 2010 location will be Cavan—for a week in August. Interestingly, another festival, the “Kilkenny Rhythm and Roots Festival” in April hosts American styles of music—bluegrass included—which makes the heritage connection between the two countries even clearer. While some might argue that this goes against “authentic” Irish music, there are many musical commonalities between American bluegrass and Irish folk, especially in the use of the fiddle, and these styles have influenced each other.

What is so curious about the importance of Celtic folk music in Irish heritage tourism, and indeed Irish heritage in general, is the fact that most of the folk tunes date back only from the last couple of centuries—they are not “ancient” by any means. Irish folk music, as we have just

seen, did not take off in popularity until the middle of the last century, and most of the “traditional” folk songs are relatively new. This provides an interesting juxtaposition to the UNESCO World Heritage Sites and other Irish monuments and castles, all of which focus on an ancient “heritage.” The heritage advertised is for the same country, but it comes from two completely different eras. And yet, in a video advertising the “Culture and Heritage” of Ireland on discoverireland.ie, tempting images of ancient Irish castles are set to these “newer” Irish folk tunes. It therefore seems that Irish music, although it is a genuine part of the Irish culture, also provides a useful aspect of culture to exploit in order to attract tourists. So while the music is exploited in this sense, it is also a genuine bit of shared culture. The situation is similar to that of Greece, as folk music traditions of relatively recent heritage exist in both countries. However, Irish locals actively play this music for themselves, and a version of it is offered to tourists.

Crafts

The official tourism website of Ireland offers at least thirty different craft-based attractions around the country, both in Northern Ireland and in the Republic of Ireland. These attractions range from craft shops to craft “trails” to entire craft villages. Based on general figures from tourism revenues, it is difficult to determine just how much revenue is generated from the sale of crafts, but it is the seekers of a piece of “genuine” Irish heritage have no shortage of places to find them. Like Greece, the sale of crafts and the draw of local artisanship contributes a great deal economically to heritage tourism in Ireland. Unfortunately, there appears to be very little literature about whether or not these crafts are “genuinely” Irish or not.

3.3 Cape Breton, Nova Scotia

Overview of Heritage Tourism in Nova Scotia

The examples of Greece and Ireland have demonstrated that heritage tourism both relies on constructed images, but it can also contribute the construction of the nation and the people within it. In some cases however, particularly when the economy relies heavily on tourism, as we saw in Greece, priorities shift—selling culture comes first, and the preservation of authentic local culture is as good as forgotten. Heritage tourism, in this case, is used as a way to diversify the tourism sector and attract visitors beyond just peak season. It is clear that while the idea of “heritage” gives cohesion to the historical memory of groups of people, in order to be preserved, it must generate income. Opposite from Greece, in Ireland, there has been an attempt to revive an ancient language among locals, but the tourist sector has not been explored as a way to contribute to this revival.

Is it possible, therefore, to have a dually successful heritage tourism industry?—that is, one which generates enough revenue from outside visitors to benefit the preservation of the local cultures? The heritage tourism industry in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, provides an example which suggests that heritage tourism can, if implemented correctly, provide equal benefits to hosts and to visitors. Even Kennedy (2002), who is extremely critical of inauthentic “Gaelicness” in Nova Scotia as well as the tourism attractions based on it, admits that tourism institutions “have the potential to be a stabilizing force for the culture and the economy in Gaelic areas of the province” (p. 291). In order to explore the benefits of heritage tourism in Cape Breton, we will first examine the history of the area. We will then look at the history of the Scottish Gaelic language in the region, which has arguably been the one factor that makes heritage tourism to Cape Breton so unique.

A Brief History of Nova Scotia and Cape Breton (*Eilean Cheap Breatainn*)

Though the name “Nova Scotia” is Latin for “New Scotland,” this Canadian province has a history that is divided among the M’ikmaw tribe, English, French, and Scottish Gaelic settlers. Before European settlers ever arrived, the Mi’kmaw First Nations people inhabited the land for thousands of years, and they were there when the Europeans arrived.⁸ In the early 1600s, Cape Breton was established one of the first French settlements in the New World, and it was initially known as *Ile Royale* as part of the French *Acadie*.⁹ Although the area (comprised also of what today is New Brunswick) had a strong French and British presence, having changed hands between the two countries several times between 1604 and 1713, it received the name “Nova Scotia” in 1621 because it lay on the northern border of New England. This nomenclature was therefore meant to mirror the geographical situation overseas, not necessarily the nationality of the settlers to the region.

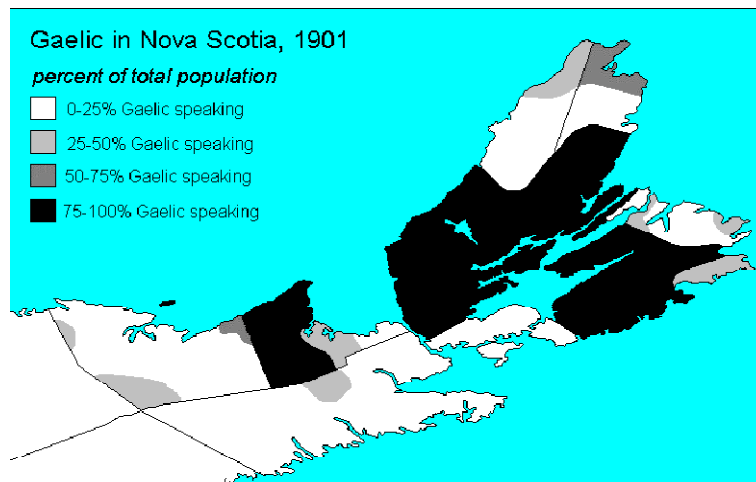
The Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 ceded the area officially to Britain, but it did not open for mass immigration until the Seven Years’ War ended in 1763 (Kennedy 2002, p. 17). Most of the Scottish settlers came to the area 1770 and 1840 (Kennedy 2002, p. 19). The event that sparked the most concentrated immigration of Scotsmen was the end of the second Jacobite Uprising, during which the Scottish Jacobite Army attempted to return the Stuart line to the throne, in 1745. Scotsmen who could afford it started to immigrate to the New World. While two of the most important settlements were in New York and North Carolina, the third most important was

⁸ Today, as an acknowledgment of their past and ongoing presence, the Nova Scotian Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage, officially promotes the Mi’kmaw tribe to tourists as one of three major cultures in Nova Scotia—the other two are Acadians and Scottish Gaels.

⁹ As an example of how “heritage” is largely a social construction, Kennedy (2002) claims that Gaelic explorers came to the region 1200 years ago along with more well-known Norse Vikings. He writes that that “[few scholars] are aware of the Gaelic connection” (p.16).

Nova Scotia. Many of the Scottish settlers were leaders, or tacksmen of their communities—they were educated middle class men who led whole communities of “generally...upbeat, highly motivated people”, rather than impoverished individuals, as was so often the case with Irish immigrants to the New World. They brought the Scottish Gaelic language with them, and by 1781, the number of Gaelic speakers in the province actually outnumbered the number of English speakers. It is estimated that, in total, over 50,000 Scottish Gaels ultimately immigrated to Nova Scotia, and this population survived throughout the next century (Kennedy 2002, 20). Figure 4 shows the distribution of native Gaelic speakers in Cape Breton from around 1901:

Figure 4: Gaelic in Nova Scotia, 1901*



*Source: Kennedy 2002, p. 71

Gaelic Language Decline and Revival

As we have seen, Cape Breton has a long history of Scottish settlers in the area. While there was a significant presence of the Scottish Gaelic language in the region from the late 1700s up through the 1930s, today, there are only roughly 500 Gaelic speakers remaining in the area. According to Angus MacLeod, a Gaelic instructor at the College who was raised with Gaelic-

speaking parents, Gaelic was considered an improper and unrefined language. Parents did not teach it to their children with any regularity because English was considered the superior language. The Nova Scotian government, since it was controlled by the British, funded French education systems in the province in the 1920s, but they did not do the same for Gaelic. The Scottish Gaelic language, therefore, experienced a continuous decline in the number of speakers.

According to Hector MacNeil, the Gaelic director at the Gaelic College, over the last several decades, there have been periodic “sound[ing] of alarms that Gaelic was in trouble” (MacNeil, personal communication). One of the most significant of these came in the 1930s, when Prime Minister Angus MacDonald wanted to “Scottify” the region. The Nova Scotia Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage simultaneously decided to promote the image of the “rustic Highlander” as the image of Nova Scotia. The 1930s therefore marked the beginnings of significant amounts of tourists visiting Nova Scotia—the Cabot Trail, as an example, was established during this decade. In the last century, therefore, there has been a direct linkage with the revival of Gaelic and the growth of tourism.

The most recent attempt at reviving Gaelic has come over the last decade. In 2002, there was a movement to understand the history of Gaelic in the region. Michael Kennedy (2002) was hired by the government to write a nearly 300-page document tracing the history of the language and determining the problems and successes with the revival. In 2004, the position of Gaelic Cultural Officer was established and headquartered in Cape Breton, and in 2006, an entire Office of Gaelic Affairs has been established to provide funding for the Gaelic language. The most recent wave seems to have left the most permanent influence on the culture of Cape Breton, as the Office of Gaelic Affairs has been established within the Nova Scotia government within the last decade—it only chose an official symbol, a salmon shaped like a “G,” in 2009. Another

source of funding for the revival, as we will see, has been the Gaelic College and the Gaelic-based tourist institutions around Cape Breton. Overall, it is estimated by Hector MacNeil, who is also involved with the Office of Gaelic Affairs, that Gaelic and related institutions bring \$23.5 million into Nova Scotia each year. This means that attempts to revive Gaelic have contributed a great deal to the province itself, and it is economically and culturally beneficial to local communities.

What is the Gaelic College?

The Gaelic College is an educational institution in St. Ann's, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. The College is located on the Cabot Trail, a scenic 300-kilometer loop around Cape Breton and one of the top three tourist attractions in the area (Kennedy 2002, 276). The Cabot Trail, established in the 1930s, runs around most the Cape Breton Highlands, and it showcases the most scenic parts of the island—and landscapes provide a backdrop for heritage tourism. For example, Brian McConnell, a 65-year-old from Chicago who emigrated from the Scottish Highlands at the age of nine, came to Cape Breton in 2010 as part of his “bucket list” before he died. He said that the sea air, trees and sky of the Island reminded him of home. When asked if he considered himself a tourist, he said that no, he was on a pilgrimage. But “tourist” or not, it is clear that people come to seek a heritage in Cape Breton.

The Cabot Trail also connects a number of tourist attractions. These include the “Artisan's Loop,” where local artists can set up stands to sell their goods. The trail also connects a number of fishing villages that reflect the maritime location and heritage of the province. Therefore, the Trail is an example of what Moulin and Boniface (2001) characterize as a “heritage route”—it provides a network and itinerary of heritage attractions for tourists to visit.

Additionally, simply naming the trail after the famous explorer John Cabot (even though his “discovery” of Nova Scotia is dubious, his name is well-known) establishes a “heritage” and history for the region that tourists can discover for themselves. In Figure 5, the Gaelic College is situated at point A, and the loop around the Cape Breton Highlands National Park is the Cabot Trail:

Figure 5: Map of Nova Scotia with Cape Breton*



Source: Google maps

The Gaelic College, though the name would suggest otherwise, is not a degree-granting institution. It is a school that was established in 1939 under the auspices of Angus MacDonald (notably, alongside the rise of the tourist trade) for the sake of teaching Scottish Gaelic and Gaelic arts. The official mission statement of the College today, according to the website, is “to promote, preserve and perpetuate, through studies in all related areas, the culture, music, language, arts, crafts, customs and traditions of immigrants from the Highlands of Scotland” (gaeliccollege.edu). To this effect, the College holds a number of programs and Gaelic festivals

throughout the year.

In 2009, the Celtic Heart of North America was launched during the Celtic Colours International Festival, part of which is held at the College. This new initiative is comprised of a number of institutions on Cape Breton which provide a chance for visitors to have, as the Celtic Heart's website states, a "Celtic Experience" (celticheart.ca)¹⁰ Another institution within this group is the Highland Village in Iona, where visitors can come see an "authentic" Scottish village.¹¹

Based on the fact that the website offers packages and itinerary suggestions, the Gaelic Heart of North America has clearly been formed with an eye on heritage tourism. The Gaelic College, however, is not *primarily* a tourist institution. While yes, the summer season greets a number of tourists, students and staff at the Gaelic College, as we will argue, are genuinely devoted to the preservation of their heritage.

Programs at the college are geared toward all age groups, and they last anywhere from a few days to a few months. The peak season is primarily in the summertime, as this is when tourists tend to travel the most. According to the College's organizational profile, 1/3 of its visitors are from Nova Scotia, 1/3 are from the rest of Canada, and 1/3 are international. It would seem that most of the "international" component, however, are students from the United States. The figures differ depending on the program and season. The College hosts many more Nova Scotia student during the March break session, and they attract more tourists in the summer.

¹⁰ It should be noted that "Celtic" is a wider term than "Gaelic." All Gaels are Celts, but not all Celts are Gaels. Additionally, while Irish Gaelic culture has had some influence on the music of Cape Breton, and it is *similar* to Scottish Gaelic, the two are not the same. The Gaelic influence in Cape Breton is a Scottish one.

¹¹ So as not to overlook the French aspect of Nova Scotia's heritage, there is also an Acadian village nearby. In addition, the Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage seeks to draw tourists to Gaelic, Acadian and Mi'kmaq cultures. The Gaelic narrative, therefore, while present in the region, is not the dominant one—all three of these cultures have actually been largely overshadowed by the English presence in the province.

While statistics about exact numbers of tourists were not available from the Gaelic College, Nova Scotia's department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage, like other tourism bureaus, publishes its statistics online. These statistics are useful for looking at tourism in the province as a whole, though further analysis with figures from the College would be helpful. In 2009, Nova Scotia as a whole brought in 2,092,500 visitors, only 68,900 of whom were from overseas. Visitors from the United States made up double that amount (184,700), and the remaining 1,839,000 came from the rest of Canada, most of whom were from Atlantic Canada ("Visitation Statistics")

The first obvious difference, therefore, between Nova Scotia and Greece or Ireland, is that the market is much smaller. Nova Scotia is the second smallest province in Canada with a population of just under 1,000,000 people, and Cape Breton's population is less than 20,000. Greece (with a population of over 11 million), as stated, drew in over 17,000,000 visitors in 2007, and Ireland (with a population of over 4 million) had 7,839,000 visitors in 2009. The small size of the market, as we will discuss, is important.

The heritage tourist, as we will see, travels to Cape Breton and the Gaelic College for a number of different aspects of heritage, most of which are intangible—the music and dance, and language are arguably the most important attractions.

UNESCO World Heritage Sites

In contrast to Greece and Ireland, Cape Breton is not home to any World Heritage Sites, although the province of Nova Scotia is home to two. The focus in Cape Breton is on a much more regional heritage, which is reflected through the intangible elements of heritage—the

music, dance, and language.

Music and dance

These intangible aspects of heritage, provide one of the most important draws for visitors to Cape Breton. As we have seen in Greece, the sort of cultural music and dance sold to tourists is largely reconstructed. The music aspect of heritage tourism in Cape Breton is much more comparable to Ireland, where it is part of the landscape and the culture. The age of the folk music in Cape Breton is about the same as Ireland, though the traditions of both continue to change even today. Like the music-loving tourist from Wright's study (2010), tourists to Cape Breton, both of Scottish descent and not, are drawn to the music. Fiddler Nanette Fynan and her husband, contra-dancer Mike Fynan, two Americans from Northern California, wanted to visit Cape Breton because they saw it as a "music mecca." Mike compared the Celtic music they had heard in California to "Xeroxed" copies, and they both expressed a desire to come to the Gaelic College to hear the pure form of Celtic music.¹²

However, traditional music that is based in the "voices of stability" can still be lucrative for a culture. Especially in the case of Cape Breton, this commodification and increasing popularity of the music is in no way negative or seen as "selling out". Fiddlers Ashley MacIsaac and Natalie MacMaster, for example, are both musicians from Cape Breton who have gained worldwide fame as part of the larger Celtic revival. A punk tartan-clad MacIsaac performed at the 2010 Opening Ceremonies as a representative of the East Coast Music Scene. The Rankin Family, one of the first groups to emerge from the Cape Breton music scene in the 1990s, have also gained fame, at least across Canada. Hearing Nova Scotian students (particularly those from

¹² Interestingly, many outsiders use "Celtic" and "Gaelic" interchangeably. This is technically incorrect, as all Gaels are Celts, but not all Celts are Gaels, and there are different varieties of each.

Cape Breton) at the Gaelic College talk about “Ashley” or “Natalie” or any of the Rankin Family by their first names, however, it is clear that these internationally renowned artists are part of and loyal to the much smaller music scene on Cape Breton.

The Gaelic College is unique because it provides visitors the opportunity to *learn* these arts, rather than just listening to them—although these programs did not start up until around the 1960s. In McKay’s book (1994), he argues that the Scottish heritage found in Cape Breton has been purely constructed. His argument, however, focuses almost solely on the crafts and folklore of Nova Scotia. He does not address mention the music, which is indeed “authentic,” especially on Cape Breton Island. In addition, Kennedy’s (2002) perception of the Highlander stereotype promoted by the College also makes little mention of the music. While Cape Breton fiddle tunes, pipe tunes, Highland dance and step dancing have certainly been influenced by Scottish (from Scotland) traditions, they are not the same as Scotland, and in many ways reflect the unique musical tradition of the Island. For example, according to Thomas Harrington, an 18-year-old bagpiper from Truro, there is no spirit of competition in Cape Breton fiddling. According to him, it’s always been “just for fun.”¹³ In other places of strong musical tradition, such as Ireland, Scotland, and even within American bluegrass, fiddling competitions are fairly common. The Cape Breton Fiddler’s Association does not host them. The College also currently offers classes in piano accompaniment to fiddle and pipe tunes, which is largely a Cape Breton tradition. In addition, most of the instructors at the College, especially the fiddling instructors, are from Cape Breton.

On the other side, in the tradition of attempting to “Scottify” Cape Breton, back in the 1930s, Angus MacDonald placed a heavy influence on mass piping and competition piping,

¹³ In addition to being an award-winning piper, Thomas was also in charge of writing a proposal in order to start a Gaelic program at his high school in Truro. His proposal was successful, and the Nova Scotia government granted them \$9,000 CAD for the year.

which, according to Hector MacNeil, were the focus of the Gaelic College from the 1940s through the 1960s. It was after this that classes in other Cape Breton musical traditions (fiddling, Highland dancing, step dancing, Celtic harp, piano accompaniment) were offered, primarily for locals, but, especially in the summertime, for tourists.

In some ways, however, the musical tradition of Cape Breton is seen as “purer” than that of Scotland. According to Sandra Bald-Jones, a Scottish-born Highland dance instructor at the College who resides full-time in Ontario, she has had students from both New Zealand and Japan who come back to the College every summer to take dance classes. They specifically chose to come to Cape Breton rather than Scotland. The music and dance, therefore, is a prime example of cultural heritage shared between tourists and locals.

Language

The aspect that most defines tourism to Cape Breton, and the Gaelic College in particular, is the presence of the Scottish Gaelic language. The presence of the language, as well as the way tourists experience it, can be seen as a shared culture—although the most recent revival of the language is mostly for the community. As we have seen, there is a rich history of Scottish Gaelic in this particular area of Nova Scotia, but today, there are less than 500 speakers left of the language, and most of them are in Cape Breton (MacNeil, personal communication). Over the last couple of centuries, there has been periodic alarm about the disappearance of Gaelic and several attempts to revive it (MacNeil, personal communication).

The Gaelic College, although it is a partially tourism-driven institution, has close ties to the Nova Scotian government and the support of Gaelic. The College receives \$220,000 CAD a year from the Nova Scotia Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage, and it generates about

\$1 million CAD per year (most of this revenue comes from building rentals and sales from the crafts shop). Within the last five years, the Nova Scotian Government, specifically the Office of Gaelic Affairs, has started to provide funding to Gaelic education programs around the province. As Hector MacNeil said with a smile, “Every once in awhile, you hear someone grumbling about Gaelic getting so much money. That’s kind of a good thing.”

One of the main focuses of the Gaelic College, since its foundation, was the teaching of the Scottish Gaelic language—the music lessons came along naturally, as the two are closely linked. For example, the sounds of the fiddle in are meant to imitate the way Gaelic is spoken. According to Angus MacLeod, a Gaelic instructor at the College, the hallmark of a good Gaelic speaker is if one can hear the fiddle in his or her voice (MacLeod, personal communication). There is, in fact, a style of singing in both Scotland and Cape Breton called *Puirt a Beul*, which translates to “music of the mouth,” and is meant to mimic the sounds of fiddles and bagpipes. Like the music, Scottish Gaelic in Cape Breton has taken on its own traditions. According to both Hector MacNeil and Angus MacLeod, the language is much more conservative than Scottish Gaelic in Scotland (MacLeod, personal communication; MacNeil, personal communication).¹⁴

Today, at the Gaelic College tourists can opt to take Gaelic classes, and the money provided by them goes back into community language programs both at the College and within the region. High schools around Cape Breton (and even as far away in Nova Scotia as Truro and Halifax) have Gaelic programs that are funded by the Office of Gaelic Affairs. While MacNeil says that it is too soon to determine what effect tourism has had on this most recent Gaelic revival, he speculates that the effect is significant. One example of this effect are the new street signs seen on Cape Breton Island. They have been erected only within the last five years, and

¹⁴ While the evidence supporting this is only anecdotal, the isolated geography of Cape Breton makes this a logical conclusion, especially since this has been the case with other languages in isolated areas.

they include Gaelic translations of place names. While Thomas Harrington claimed that these signs are for tourists, since the language is only read by 500 people in the province. MacNeil, however, claimed that while these provide a sense of the exotic for visitors, they were not erected for that reason. Clearly, Scottish Gaelic is shared by both the local culture and by tourists, with almost no traces of commodification.

Crafts

As we have seen, scholars of tourism in Greece and Ireland acknowledge, at least to some degree, that the sale of crafts to tourists can provide an outlet to preserve cultural tradition. There seems to be an acknowledgement in Cape Breton that the sale of crafts is, by and large, for the tourists. From the 1950s, home craft production for tourists in Nova Scotia has been meant to contribute to a sense of antimodernism, giving tourists the ability to consume something that was created in a home, or a home-like setting (McKay 1994, p.183). McKay (1994) argues that “folk art” has been largely a construction in Nova Scotia and that the expanding of tourism in the 1920s led to the “official production of images” (33). These images of an anti-modern “innocent” Nova Scotia, he writes, were produced by painters, poets, novelists and photographers so that tourists could return home with a handicrafts or having had an “authentic folk experience” (34). In a review of McKay’s book, Hollinshead claims that “the tourism industry of Nova Scotia (and, indeed, the tourism industry of other places? [*sic*]) occupies its time *projecting a folk (people) who never existed in places that were never ever quite that way.*” (532). This argument seems to overstating the inauthenticity of the region because, as we mentioned in Section 2.2, the “influences of change” that lead to the evolution of cultures does not necessarily translate to inauthenticity.

However, McKay's research into the crafts sector of Nova Scotia tourism points out that much of the idea of "Scottishness" has been exported to outside communities in an attempt to create authenticity for the sake of the tourist. For example, tourists around the 1940s and 50s, specifically Americans, began to ask for something with a Nova Scotian feeling to take back with them. Hooked rugs were sold to them, but the creations by actual Nova Scotians were garish and rather ugly, as the rug-makers lacked European training. "Craft revivalist" Mary Black then brought in European training to province to help with sales. The Nova Scotia tartan was also designed by an Englishwoman in 1953 when, previously, the Scotsmen who had immigrated to Nova Scotia had not had a tartan to distinguish themselves.

Today, the craft shop at the Gaelic College (along with facility rentals) generates nearly one million dollars every year. Generation of revenue was, indeed, why the craft shop was originally opened (MacNeil interview). The College's organizational profile acknowledges the fact that tourism is a part of their economic operations and is very open about the double-edged sword that is heritage tourism. As a marker of this, the craft shop was closed for renovation over March Break in 2010, when the College hosts mostly school-age children from around Nova Scotia, who were unlikely to purchase anything from such a craft shop. The crafts are clearly commodified and fall into the "imaginative reconstruction" side of Newby's continuum, but they help keep the College in business.

4. Conclusions

"Heritage" tourism can have different meanings for different people, depending on the tourist and depending on the host society. While many scholarly viewpoints suggest that heritage tourism is largely for the self-identification of the individual tourist, this focus on

personal gains from tourism does not provide a particularly stable basis for analysis. Other tourist scholars argue that the commodification of “heritage” is necessarily negative, and it must detract from the local culture. In this study, we have seen three different examples of how heritage tourism is carried out in three different places in order to examine its effects on the local economies and the local cultures.

Greece, in general, tends to engage in imaginative reconstruction tactics for heritage tourism, particularly in constructing the images of its World Heritage Sites. European tourists going to Greece have historically sought sun, sand, sea, and because the economy relies so heavily on tourism, those who market the country (the GNTTO, for example) do not tend to focus on niche trends within the country.

Ireland tends to have more of a double-edged shared cultural heritage between the tourists and the host community. In general, based on the prevalence of tangible and intangible aspects of culture, heritage tourists seek to partake in the “living” heritage—particularly in music and dance—in Ireland.

In both Greece and Ireland, as with any tourist destination which promotes some version of its past, the tangible aspect of handicrafts contributes a great deal of revenue to the tourism sector. While it may not be possible to find exact amounts of crafts sold per year to tourists, it seems that crafts, in general, fall towards the “imaginative reconstruction” side of Newby’s continuum—they are meant to be sold. In Greece, however, certain scholars have speculated that promoting local crafts can also promote and preserve local heritage via craft jobs (as argued in Andriotis’ article about crafts on the Island of Crete).

While both Greece and Ireland have aspects of the “double-edged sword” of heritage tourism, as we see when examining the four different cultural heritage aspects (Ireland more so),

the Gaelic College in Nova Scotia provides the closest example of how heritage tourism can benefit the culture of the host society, rather than simply causing it to “sell out” to visitors. The unique aspects of heritage tourism at the Gaelic College are: (1) the small size of the market; (2) the involvement of the government in the preservation of a local language; (3) the uniqueness of the music and dance scene and its connection to Scottish heritage; (4) offering tourists the ability to engage in and learn the local culture rather than just observing it through a nostalgic, Romantic gaze; and (5) admitting that there is a divide between what is marketed for tourists and what is meant to benefit locals. The heritage is a very localized one, unlike Greece, which seeks to promote a “world heritage” to drive its economy and diversify its tourism market.

Is the Gaelic College model applicable to any region that wishes to implement a lucrative and beneficial heritage tourism program? Perhaps—with a great deal of patience and acceptance that no heritage tourism program can be perfect. Paradoxically, it seems that “successful” heritage sites are based in smaller tourism markets. Because Ireland and Cape Breton have smaller markets than Greece, perhaps they feel that commodification and the “selling out” of culture is not as necessary for keeping their tourism industries large. While the Gaelic College is a model of dual-sided success, it seems possible that too much growth beyond its current state might result in “massification” of the industry. The current state of the College and the current heritage it seeks to promote developed organically, from one of the minority cultures of the region. It has gone through several difficult phases since its opening, one of which involved the Nova Scotia government considering its development as a theme park. With the support of the government in the Gaelic revival, which in turn supports the intangible cultural elements of music and language, the Gaelic College continues its existence as a small but lucrative institution.

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