Diaspora, Authenticity and the Imagined Past

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ABSTRACT

Ancestral tourism in Scotland, a sector of the heritage tourism market sensitive to consumer personalisation, has particular propensities towards process-driven co-created experiences. These experiences occur within existing categories of object-based and existential notions of authenticity alongside an emergent category of the 'authentically imagined past'. The latter of these modes reveals a complex interplay between professionally endorsed validation of the empirical veracity of objects, documents and places and the deeply held, authentically imagined, narratives of 'home'. These narratives, built up in the Diaspora over centuries, drive new processes towards authenticity in tourism. We conducted 31 re-enactment interviews across 27 sites throughout Scotland with curators, archivists, and volunteers to explore these notions of authenticity within the ancestral tourism context.

*Keywords***: Diaspora;** Heritage; Co-creation; Museums; Ancestry; Scotland

INTRODUCTION

Ancestral tourism has been identified as a key area of growth by Scotland's National Tourism Organisation, VisitScotland, with a market in the Scottish Diaspora estimated at 50 million people in countries such as Canada, the USA, Australia and New Zealand (VisitScotland, 2013). This paper reveals how ancestral tourists appear not to seek authentication of this form of heritage consumption in a conventional sense of indirect professional assurance, but seek confirmation of longstanding ancestral narratives (real and imagined), developed in the Diaspora itself. As a result, tourists seek to produce authentication through co-creation, with direct staff contact, participatory interpretation, and contribution of and to archival and object-based records.

This presents heritage practitioners with direct, focused, and potentially rich, mutually productive encounters with tourists, yet also presents ethical challenges when intervening to disprove or modify often deeply held, but empirically dubious, notions of personal 'imagined pasts'.

Conceptual debates on 'authenticity' in the tourism literature have been present since its introduction to the tourism lexicon in the early 1970s (see MacCannell, 1973). In particular, a body of work focusses on authenticity as a process, negotiated (or renegotiated) between a tourist site and its visitors (Bruner, 1994; Cohen & Cohen, 2012; Frisvoll, 2013; Daugstad & Kirchengast, 2013; Wall & Xie, 2005). This complex process often takes place around sites of staged authenticity (e.g. Daugstad & Kirchengast, 2013; Frisvoll, 2013) and is increasingly viewed as a participatory, or co-created process (see Cohen & Cohen, 2012).In particular, we focus here on the specificity of historical relationships between zones of supply and demand that *produce* tourists' notions of 'authenticity', sometimes in tension with those held by heritage practitioners in the destination itself. While notions linking religious pilgrimage and authenticity among tourists are related to our context (Andriotis, 2011; Belhassan, Caton & Stewart, 2008), these are largely determined by adherence to particular creeds and institutions. It is argued that experiences demanded by the

ancestral sector of the heritage market often require intimate, place bound, origin-based levels of personal interaction with practitioners. The result of an increased desire for particular forms of 'authentic' verification can either reinforce and reproduce the curator/archivist as guarantor of authentication or, in one important sense, disrupt it. As such, the research question underpinning this study is: does the intimate engagement between the diasporic market and the heritage sector at the ancestral destination produce existing and emergent forms of authentication?

The contested notion of 'authenticity' as desired, imagined, performed, experienced and consumed through cultural heritage tourism is well rehearsed in the literature (see Bryce, Curran, O'Gorman & Taheri, 2015; Cohen, 2004; Lugosi, 2016; MacCannell, 1999; Salazar, 2012; Shackley, 1994). Analysis has been brought to bear on heritage professionals as activists, re-framers and 're-authenticators' of history (see Barker, 1999; Bryce & Carnegie, 2013; Hein, 2000).

Discussion begins with an examination of changing professional discourse at heritage sites where much ancestral tourism is consumed. A review of the specific implications of tourism on professional heritage practice is undertaken, as well as of the notion of 'authenticity' as a function of market demand. The specific contextual background of ancestral tourism, nostalgia and the imagined-past is then offered alongside some necessary historical background on Scotland and the Scottish Diaspora's experience of emigration and return. Our data is drawn from a qualitative study of ancestral tourism delivery at 27 sites across Scotland, pre-identified as *loci* for the ancestral tourism market through prior correspondence with staff. Analysis is framed on two existing themes identified in the literature, object-based and existential authenticities, and a third emergent theme, the authentically imagined past, leading us to implications of our research for heritage tourism in general.

Changing Institutional Discourse, Heritage Tourism and the Desire for Authentication

Museums, archive centres and sites where heritage is consumed are traditionally framed, as communities of cultural practice (Wenger, 2000). Professional staff see their primary role as custodians and enablers of conservation (Delafons, 1997). They, and the particular representational and interpretive praxes they adopt, are historically mobile manifestations of societal change (Barker, 1999; Hein, 2000). Staff are under pressure to develop adaptive strategies to increasing demands for independent revenue generation. However, they are still embedded within national and local contexts which often underwrite their core appeal as repositories of favoured versions of past and current values (Barr, 2005; Hetherington, 2000; Radakrishnan, 1994). Collections, therefore, become visual signs 'colonized' by both tourist and curatorial gazes (Claessen & Howes, 2006: 200), modified around the professionally legitimated discourse of curators and archivists or 'triggering' less empirically informed ideas and images for tourists (Jordanova, 1989: 23).

Museums are considered "premier attractions", often forming a network or locus for how destinations are conceived, represented and consumed in heritage terms (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998: 132). Concerns exist that the meaning of texts and objects may be decontextualized due to the historical distance of tourists from particular events and the commodifying effects of tourism (Pollock & Sharp, 2007).

In tourism, authenticity often functions as a fixed concept (Hall, 2007) imposing "a one-dimensional interpretation, supported by assessment criteria" (King, 2007: 1143). If considering authenticity as enhancing measurements of 'tourist satisfaction' (Shackley, 1994: 397) to support 'benignly self-serving' tourist understandings of 'the authentic' (Horne, 1986: 223-224), then it is unlikely to yield much beyond managerial reductionism.

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Therefore, Bell (1996: 132-133) wonders whether one can "know if an [aesthetic] experience is 'authentic' – i.e., whether it is true and therefore valid for all men?" and traces a late-modern shift in the defining quality, from 'authority' vested in 'mastery of craft … and knowledge of form' to 'immediacy' of intent and reception. To Slater (1997: 94-95) the search for authenticity constitutes 'scrutinising' people, objects and aesthetic form for a 'consistency' which is often confused with 'sincerity'. This is near impossible in a fragmented social world of pluralistic representation and reception for and by multiple 'audiences' (*ibid*). This invites recognition of the many modes in which subjects are 'interpellated' in relation to objects in a plenitude of 'authenticities', manifested in dispersed consumer culture (Althusser, 2008; Collins, 1989).

In a commercial/cultural nexus like tourism the valorization of 'authenticity' as a socially formed object of desire, has crossed the 'threshold of formalization' (Foucault, 1989a) and become a discursive 'positivity' with material consequences (Shepherd, 2011). In the move from the experiential 'front' (false/recreated) to 'back' (true/authentic) (MacCannell, 1999), 'inauthentic' experiences 'staged' in whole or in part for tourist consumption may, through habituation become accepted as 'authentic' (Cohen, 2004; Ryan & Gu, 2010), acquiring patinas of 'timelessness' (Trevor-Roper, 1983).

Claims to authenticity can rarely be authenticated by tourists themselves, but are often offered through quality assurance of *versions* of original objects, experience and places (Asplett & Cooper, 2000; McIntosh, 2004; Swanson & Timothy, 2012). Importantly, in the sense that Foucault (1988) understood 'power' both as deployer and producer of approved forms of 'knowledge', all such second-order experiences must be 'authenticated' by a source perceived by the market to be legitimate, i.e. having a relation to the original referent (Henderson, 2000; Hsieh & Chang, 2006; Thomson & Tian, 2008).

Meanwhile, 'self-connection' with brands (Park, MacInnes, Priester, Eisingerrich & Iacobucci, 2010), can be projected onto entire destination cultures and experiences and be a determinant of tourist satisfaction (de Rojas & Camarero,

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2008), hinting that some tourists may have done much of the work of authentication in advance, merely requiring the destination to confirm it in a 'customized' sense (Wang, 2007). Several authors note that, while sites, experiences or objects may be reproduced or 'staged', rooted in 'provenance' but 'mobile' in their place of consumption or even produced 'creatively' by tourists themselves, they may yet evoke an 'authentic' second-order existential experience (Gonzalez, 2008; Guttentag, 2010; Richards & Wilson, 2006; Wight & Lennon, 2007).

The intimate relationships between ancestral tourists and the 'home' destination can muddy conventional distinctions between 'objective' and 'existential' modes of authentication. Wang, (1999: 351) conceives of existential authenticity in both 'personal and inter-subjective' terms in relation to a range of liminal experiences consumed through tourism. The 'inter-personal' dimension of the process of existential authentication that Wang (*ibid*: 364) proposes as emerging through shared touristic experiences, such as 'family ties' and 'communitas', are independent of the existence of the destination as such. We reconcile this with our own contextual understanding of how existential authenticity is produced and consumed by drawing on Steiner's and Reisinger's (2006: 309) proposition that, the historically informed world is comprised, in Heidiggerian terms, by a dyad of one's personal ('heritage') and collective ('destiny') histories. In the case of ancestral tourism, the objective existence of the destination as an empirically verifiable place of 'origins' acts as the catalyst bridging the gap between 'heritage/destiny' in which a sense of the 'true existential self' is rediscovered in collective terms.

This may find expression in the relationship between notions of 'object based' and 'existential' authenticities (Kolar & Zabkar, 2010), denoting in the former reliance on physical artifacts and association with the individual or collective essential sense in the latter. The physical mobility of cultural objects and their historico-cultural mutability of reception has led to pragmatic recognition of often blurred lines between these two categories, or at least their lack of mutual

exclusivity (Bryce et al., 2015; Lau, 2010; Reisinger & Steiner, 2006; Rickley-Boyd, 2012).

Ancestral tourism and the 'Imagined Past'

Cultural heritage in the broadest sense is an archive of selective stories that particular cultures, nationalities or religions, choose to tell about themselves to themselves and others or, as Lowenthal (2011) and Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) argue, an act of faith in how people in the present wish or imagine the past to be. The increasing self-conception of tourist-consumers as autonomous subjects, oscillating between individual and group identities in relation to particular sites is a function of late-capitalist consumer-culture (e.g. Baudrillard, 1998; Jameson, 1991) and heightened when an 'ancestral' stake is present or 'imagined' in relation to particular destinations and histories. Salazar (2012: 865-870) hints at this when he states, "an individual's propensity to produce imaginings is the primary fact [and that] tourists are invited to participate in a performance that will bring an imagined past back to life". Several authors have framed discussion of the tourism 'imaginary', myth-making and the construction of tourist-subjects with reference to the 'exotic' and the desire to consume 'difference' (e.g. Bryce, MacLaren & O'Gorman, 2013; Echtner & Prasad, 2003; Salazar, 2012). In the ancestral context, the context is not so much *difference* as a felt *tension* between subjective proximity and historico-spatial distance experienced by professional practitioners and, based on their accounts, by ancestral tourists themselves.

This tension is, of course, also related to the notion of nostalgia and emotion evoked by tourism suppliers and experienced by tourism consumers. It may be determined by producing a 'preordained' discourse of place that is 'familiar' only through textual reproduction. Frow (1991: 125) identified this reproduction as "a form of knowledge that can be recognized in and has a greater force than the appearances of the world" or indeed the physical reality of the destination itself.

Travel to reengage with individual or group ancestry is not limited to the Scottish context, with motivations to reengage with former 'homelands' existing

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in various global Diasporas (Bandyopadhyay, 2008; Jacobson, 2002; Kwek, Wang & Weaver, 2014). McCain and Ray (2003) note 'legacy' tourists as those with a direct cultural or ancestral connections with particular destinations. Their motivation to visit is likened in heroic or quasi-religious terms to a 'quest' or 'crusade' by Basu (2005) who favours the term 'roots tourism'.   Other authors identify the transition from desk-based ancestral research to related tourist consumption as 'genealogy tourism' (Santos & Yan, 2010; Savolainen, 1995; Yakel, 2004). In this paper, 'ancestral tourism' is adhered to as a superordinate term, conceived of as an embodied outcome of subjectively felt nostalgia and longing for a 'homeland' spatially and temporally at remove from Diaspora communities (reference withheld).

'Highlandisation'; invented tradition and the 'authentically' imagined past
Remembering one's cultural heritage or national roots is an often-febrile mixture of the search for historical verisimilitude and wishful thinking, and is a relatively recent historical phenomenon emerging from the European Enlightenment and 'Modernity' (Anderson, 2006; Mee, 2007; Rigney, 2001; Smith, 2008). Scotland is a small Northern European nation of c.5 million inhabitants and was one of Europe's oldest independent states prior to its union with England in 1707. Scotland maintains and projects powerful heritage signifiers, evoking images of a 'timeless' Celtic culture, rooted to the land (McCrone, Morris & Kiely, 1995).

The opportunities offered by Britain's expanding colonial empire and economic shifts in the Highlands[1] provided the necessary conditions for large-scale emigration from Scotland from the late 18th to mid-20th centuries. Around 60,000 Lowlanders between 1701 and 1780, and 10,000 Highlanders between 1768 and 1775, left Scotland largely for British North America (later Canada) and the nascent United States (Whatley, 2000). Whatley *(*2000: 254) argues, "as the peoples of the Highlands and Islands … suffered the deepest sense of loss of place, the cult of Highlandism and nostalgia for an older and noble way of Gaelic life were in the ascendant". This was followed by, largely from the industrial,

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[1] Broadly understood as the area above the geological 'highland fault line' which separates the more populous and industrial central belt and more remote northern parts of Scotland

urban Lowlands and principally to Canada, the USA, Australia and New Zealand, the emigration of 1.84 million economic migrants between 1825 and 1914 (Cameron, 2002; Morton, 2010).

Yet it is the Gaelic, Highland culture, long marginalized under successive Scottish and then British governments (Lynch, 1992) that has come to serve as a synecdoche for the whole of Scotland in the popular imagination (Duffield & Long, 1981; Inglis & Holmes, 2003; McCrone et al., 1995). This discourse of 'Scottishness' was produced by the convergence of several events in wider British cultural, political and economic life in the late 18th and early-mid 19th centuries. These include: repeals on laws suppressing Gaelic language and culture; the growing popularity of Scottish literature such as Sir Walter Scott's novels and poetry (which present a romanticised version of Scotland and which sold in their tens of thousands) and the Ossian text (a cycle of epic poems of contested Gaelic provenance, published by the poet James Macpherson) as well as George IV's progress through his northern kingdom in ersatz 'Highland' dress (Trevor-Roper, 1983). Therefore, a depopulated Scotland-as-Highland romantic 'wilderness' emerged as one of the industrialized world's first popular tourist destinations (Morgan, 2001). Subsequently, markers of identity in the form of St. Andrews Societies, Caledonian Clubs, and Sons and Daughters of Scotland, for example, were established by the Diaspora in North America and Australasia (Morton, 2010).

It is important to distinguish between Scots who stayed at home and those who Morton (2012: 248) calls "our extended selves: [people] born in Scotland, second or later generation Scots or affinity Scots". These 'other' Scots came to embrace multiple, overlapping identities in which a sense of 'Scottishness' by no means superseded their often primary identification as Canadian, American, Australian or New Zealander (Devine, 2011). It is perhaps more useful to look upon this as an entirely new culturally informed subjectivity that certainly refers to an idea called 'Scotland' as a signifier of 'roots', yet constructed in quite distinctive ways in diaspora communities because of temporal and spatial separation from Scotland itself. These 'other Scotlands' (one might transpose any ancestral

destination here) were produced over centuries of collective experience of separation and memory of 'home' by sustained cultural production in events like Highland Games, Clan society membership and the wearing of versions of 'Highland' dress.

These embodied (re)productions of 'Scotland' are influenced by the wider cultures (Canadian, Australian and so forth) in which they are embedded and may seem strange, naïve, or even faintly amusing to Scots-in-Scotland themselves. Such abstract, extra-territorial versions of Scottish culture may more correctly be described as the *authentic* cultural production of 'Scotland-as-Produced-in-Diaspora'. These, we will argue in the third section of the following analysis, are directly confronting and negotiating with *actual* Scotland through the ancestral tourism market. Such 'other' Scotlands, which may indeed be 'inauthentic' in the sense that their empirical relation to much Scots history and present day culture may be tenuous, are nonetheless the products of centuries of *authentic* lived diasporic cultural experience in which an *idea* of Scotland is a core signifier and stimulant of return.

METHODS

Given the interdisciplinary nature of a study like this, informed by Tourism Studies, Marketing, as well as History and Cultural Studies, we accept Darbellay and Stock's (2012: 453) contention that these areas are "seen as complementary [and require] organised coordination within a research process". Therefore, it is informed by an integration of methodological and contextually applied sources. Given our focus on the changing discourses underpinning curatorial roles, and the increased desire for authentication which might impact upon them, we chose to focus our study solely on providers of ancestral tourism. We undertook a sequence of 31 semi-structured interviews with heritage professionals and volunteers designed to elicit particularly vivid recollections of memories and experiences at 27 national, civic and local museums, heritage centres and archives across Scotland (see figure 1). Through prior contact it was determined

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these locations dealt with ancestral tourists directly or by enquiry on a regular basis. Practitioners were invited to reproduce encounters with tourists, where their own retelling formed the object of our data (Carlsson, Dahlberg, Lutzen & Lystrom, 2004; Varman & Belk, 2009). Although the experience of practitioners was our main focus, their telling allowed us to give some consideration to the experiences of visitors through the provider as surrogate. The 'serendipitous encounter' (Foster & Ford, 2003) with potentially fruitful data upon which theory might be built, thereafter formed the principle focus for this paper.

Insert Figure 1 here

To understand the construction of meaning we follow Weber's notion of *'verstehen',* conceiving of reality as a social construct made manifest by the particular meanings subjects attach to it (Tucker, 1965). That is, to trace and reconcile practitioner notions of their responsibility to empirically informed interpretation and their accounts of tourists' demand to co-authenticate their experience. We refine this approach by drawing on Geertz's (1973) notion of 'thick description', arguing that in order to build theory, one must not simply codify conceptual regularities, but also account for insights provided by the language, philosophy, and socio-cultural settings which construct and create meaning in particular temporal and spatial contexts. 'Thick description's' application depended upon accepting views articulated by research participants in order to understand broader cultural and professional situations 'as they are': moments of historical contingency (Reisinger & Steiner, 2005).

Analysis is based on illustrative quotes from our research sites and organised around two existing (object based and existential authentication) and one emergent (of the 'authentically' imagined past) themes. Foucauldian notions of discourse and subjectivity are used, not so much as a 'method', but as a particular set of *attitudes* towards the data. It is necessary to take a 'historicist' approach in the Foucauldian sense, which seeks to conceive of 'the now' as an artefact of a history about to be written. Foucault's (1989a: 182) archaeological

metaphor invites analysis based on lateral and oblique relations among discursive objects within which we venture to conceive of as layers of historical 'sediment' (Foucault, 1989a). Furthermore, as Rouse (1994: 93) explains, the emphasis of this Foucauldian approach is not intrinsically on the empirical veracity of particular statements and the bodies of knowledge to which they adhere, but the "epistemic context within which those bodies of knowledge became intelligible and authoritative".

This approach necessarily leads us to analyse our data as the articulation of both practitioners' and tourists' encounters with their own subject positions as events filtered through and made possible by the particular historical conditions necessitating emigration and contemporary cultural and economic circumstances enabling return. In other words, the notion of existentialism, insofar as it is understood to denote the quest for authenticity by the individual subject amidst the dislocation of modernity, are present in all three modes of authentication we discuss below. Yet, while acknowledging this desire, we return to the notion that none of its forms can be conceived of or articulated through, in this case ancestral tourism consumption, exclusively via one's autonomous engagement with one's historical position but rather the superordinate 'final vocabulary' which make such self-conception and the quest for ancestral discovery possible (Hacking, 2004: 282-283; Rorty, 1989: 73).

RESULTS: PRACTITIONER DISCOURSES AND ANCESTRAL TOURISTS

> *"Some folk come with the knowledge already … some have not got a clue why* [their ancestors] *had left … some … think it was worse here than what it really was … you are forced to explain the economic situation to them … the number of people in a family … they didn't all stay at home and even today that doesn't happen so why should it have happened before? A lot of people come with a romantic view of what life was like when* [their ancestors] *were living here and why they left"* (Meg, Dunbeath Heritage Centre).

This statement crystallizes the complex discursive field practitioners negotiate containing, as it does, the seeds of our subsequent tripartite categorization of statements. Meg first expresses tourists' *object* based need for authentication or 'to authenticate'; their *existential* sense of verifiable links between self and place and then their often authentically felt adherence to an *imagined past*.

'They are Very Scientific': objectively authenticated experience
It must be reemphasized that many ancestral tourists do not seek a *passive* experience, but rather a *participatory* one supporting their own object-based research. This leads to specific associations with locality and engagement, allowing tourists to contribute to the production of authentication. Thus, professional staff, often traditionally situated at some remove (Delafons, 1997), are placed in intimate proximity with tourists. For example, Martin at the Glasgow Museums Resource Centre, observed that:

> *"Some of it is very, very specific, I am looking for this particular object with this number, I know that you have it, can I see it, they have obviously done their research beforehand and know specifically what they are coming for".*

Reinforcing this notion of pre-authentication brought by tourists and the expectation of professional support, Michelle at Tarbat Discovery Centre stated that:

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> *"I find the people who do come in with a geographical knowledge of this area have traced and done a lot of work on their family tree and they will know that there a link to somebody here".*

These quotes indicate professional receptiveness to collaboration. Indeed, Michelle also acknowledged the serious intent underpinning tourists' pre-visit research:

> *"They are very scientific ... it is a very serious objective that many of them have ... people from abroad have done an awful lot of ground work before they come in ... probably more ground work than people here".*

This is enhanced by the fact that most of the sites necessary to deliver the spatially and genealogically specific nature of ancestral tourism draw upon local volunteers to supplement and enhance tourist experience. Gordon from Applecross Heritage Centre related:

> *"We are very lucky that we have a couple of volunteers and ... they are almost Shenachies* [traditional Gaelic oral historians] *in the old sense ... they are people who can link people very quickly and they are only a phone call away".*

This hints at Stylianou-Lambert's (2011) notion of active 'gazing from home', given considerable impetus by ancestral tourists' desire to unify this gaze with the reciprocal gaze of 'home'. This happens not in sequential terms, but in a kind of 'knitting together' of objects and documents previously separated temporally and spatially. The very personal and locally specific nature of this form of heritage encounter seems to demand involvement and co-creation of experience between tourist and professional (Cabiddu, Lui & Piccoli, 2013).

Other accounts indicated frustration with ancestral tourists, not because of a lack of willingness to deal directly with them, but because of unpreparedness to

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engage meaningfully in direct collaboration. For example, Juline at the Hawick Heritage Hub expressed frustration at lost opportunities for object-based authentication when tourists arrive with naïve understandings of the capacities available:

> *"When people have to leave for their flight and expect to do their entire family history in a short period of time ... it is often not possible even when they do come with some starter information".*

Other participants expressed active willingness to salvage this, offering some potentially useful advice; even if it may lack some of the objective assurance that might otherwise have been provided. Jacqui at Timespan in Helmsdale stated:

> *"If somebody comes and says, "I am just here for an hour, I am travelling up north, I don't have much information", the realistic answer is that I can't really help you ... but ... we try to find out what we can quickly and give a vague idea of what it* [family history] *might be and if* [I am] *90% sure their ancestors were involved in the Clearances, we can give the whole 'Clearances Experience'".*

What this indicates on the one hand is that the active participation of tourists in, as much as practicable, 'pre-authenticating' who their ancestors were, where they came from, when and why they left is expected and *required* by heritage practitioners in order to fully engage professionally. On the other hand, there is a sense that the drive to optimize tourists' experience *as consumers* may push practitioners to either offer them a version of what *might* be useful, or to rush through an exercise, which would, ideally, benefit from more time and focus. This led us to reflect on the significance of Baudrillard's (1998: 151-152) notion of 'free time'. In this conceptualisation, supposed 'free' time needs to be purchased in order to be consumed. These encounters suggest that it is not simply tourists as consumers who are subject to this tension, but heritage practitioners themselves, increasingly aware of and subject to often ethically disfiguring

pressures to modify established professional practise for commercial need (Pollock & Sharp, 2007).

'There isn't an Artefact for Every Family but Hopefully there is Something': existentially authenticated experience

Often less formal authentication, in the form of reproduced versions of place, of a wider and looser sense of connection with cultural heritage is sought (Bryce et al., 2015; Ryan & Gu, 2010). Yet it would be simplistic to claim an absolute boundary between these theorized forms in practitioners' experience of dealing with ancestral tourists. Instead, we noted a 'transition' between the two, typified, for example by Katey at the National Trust for Scotland (NTS) Culloden Battlefield Visitor Centre:

> *"You get the group who identify with the idea of Culloden and want to find out where their family would have stood at the battle based on their own name or perhaps even grandparents' name".*

Here we see the more abstract identification with ideas of places and events with which tourists may identify, such as sharing a surname with someone in the battle. Yet this experience is produced by professional reassurance at a reconstructed heritage site. Such a search for existential authentication may be weighted towards partial notions of ancestral connection; disregarding the complexity of the events the site might represent (Horne, 1986; Pollock & Sharp, 2007). This provokes challenges to curators charged with producing a full historical interpretation. These may likely be absorbed and diverted somewhat or in total by large national or civic organisations like NTS and National Museums of Scotland (NMS) with outward facing, public remits, where David (NMS) stated firmly:

> *"We make it clear … that we really can't answer genealogical enquiries and so* [ancestral tourists] *seem to know that. We can show them the broader narrative, the broader context for their ancestors, the way they lived, worked and died".*

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Here we see the traditional distance between curator and tourist maintained in national institutions. However, much of our research took us to smaller, community based museums and heritage sites where curatorial, guiding, managerial and even retailing responsibilities were conflated because of both scale and lack of funding. Again, this mandated a consumer-facing role in which previously hierarchical divisions may dissolve. Once again, the demand for 'authentication' as a process, in existential terms this time, presents both opportunities and challenges for staff (Chhabra, 2008). For example, one participant (name and institution withheld) related:

> " *… some* [tourists] *are not even sure they are connected to* [the area]*, but they have a family story that they are maybe from Scotland".*

While Rachel at the Highland Folk Museum related encounters where ancestral tourists asked:

> *"… "have you heard of this graveyard or name?" … because Gaelic names change so much so they might have a name and it just does not mean anything to them and they cannot find it on a modern map so they are wondering do we know where this was".*

Once again professional practice is adapted to respond to the particular needs of ancestral tourists to not simply 'gaze' at heritage but to seek active authentication of connection. This can be stimulated in part by opportunities presented by object-based evidence of one family to construct and authenticate wider 'existential' stories of belonging for tourists with perhaps less defined connections to place. As Gordon from Applecross Heritage Centre related:

> *"[They were] a very successful family in terms of academia and business here in Applecross with descendants all over the world. So you can allow people who maybe are not directly connected … to see the sort of importance that their ancestors may have placed upon education or*

business here and what sort of life people had here 100/120 years ago, so
there is not an artefact for every family but hopefully there is something
which indicates what their families lived like".

Similarly, Ewen at Clan Macpherson Museum, Newtonmore, saw the value in
'compensating' ancestral tourists for whom object-based authentication was not
possible with a sense of 'existential' connection, in this case, to clan identity:

"The Diapsora covers people, Macpherson people, who have gone overseas
… some have done pretty well and some of them are quite ordinary folk but
nevertheless, there is still a record here of where and how their ancestors
lived".

This would seem to reinforce Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's (1998) contention that
tourism's commercializing effect on museums and museums' status as primary
markers of destinations' heritage identity are mutually reinforcing elements,
through the possibilities of use and appropriation' of the same discursive
formation (Foucault, 1989a: 201).

'Our Role is to Break it Gently to Them': authenticating the 'imagined past'
The third theme was emergent and, potentially, the most challenging from the
professional perspective of our interviewees. It is the 'authentically imagined
pasts' brought by some ancestral tourists and projected upon the destination.
Implicit in the quote presented below, is the idea that migration creates a
'rupture', between emigrants and those who remained, in experience of what the
ancestral homeland was and is:

"A lot of people come with a romantic view of what life was like when [their
ancestors] *were living here and why they left"* (Meg, Dunbeath Heritage
Centre).

Coeval in this statement is the idea that the 'homeland' is produced, reproduced
and experienced historically as multiple versions of the same place. If, as

Jacobson (2002: 2) writes, "the weight of emigrant cultures perpetually enforced interpretations of the move – as departure and absence [with lost homelands occupying] a place in the imagination [in which] the *beleaguered* peoples left behind ... retained a central position in the migrants ideological geographies (emphasis added)", then we must accept that spatial and temporal distance from 'home' often leads to the reconstruction of versions of 'home' elsewhere. At the core of many such reproductions of, in this case, Scotland-in-the-Diaspora, are notions that ancestors must have left under tragic circumstances and a certain 'romance' is overlaid on tales of cleared crofters, exiled Jacobites, convicts transported to the colonies, or links with clan names or places of heroic repute. Maggie at Clan Donald Centre observed,

> *" ... there are quite a lot of people who come with quite a lot of romantic stories that you just feel are not right ... and MacDonald's didn't just come from Skye, so they have made the trip here and you are thinking well actually they came from somewhere else ... they have made this trip across the Atlantic and they have picked this tour that comes to Skye because that is where their ancestors come from, but they don't".*

This indicates a perceived need amongst professionals to act diplomatically in the face of dubious historical literacy with one eye on the importance of this market for the maintenance of Scotland's heritage. For example, Lynda at Dumfries Family History Centre related,

> *"Recently we had a tourist – I think from California - and he wanted to follow his Kirkpatrick ancestors. The Kirkpatricks were allies of* [King Robert] *Bruce (d. 1329) and one of them was involved here in Dumfries in an actual murder of a rival ... and so we arranged for all the books he wanted would be delivered to his hotel ... and we never saw him until he came in on his last day to return the books and enthuse about all the help he had been given".*

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Given that reliable Scottish Parish records often don't start much further back than the mid-18th century it is very doubtful that this tourist would have been able to establish a direct ancestral link to the 14th. In cases such as these, veracity becomes secondary to the desire of many ancestral tourists to inscribe their own imagination of the past, as well as their place in it, on to the destination as a kind of inert canvas. Similarly, Katey at Culloden Battlefield Visitor Centre stated:

> *"For some people, as I have said, it can be emotional, I mean we have had in the past people in tears and so it is a complex negotiation. We do an awful lot of myth-busting here … people are people and sometimes the decisions they make historically are not palatable to our sort of worries or ethics today and understanding that is okay".*

The imagined past is not solely concerned with connections to famous figures or battles from Scottish history but with a desire amongst some ancestral tourists to link themselves to tragedies visited on ordinary people. Meg at Dunbeath Heritage Centre, sensing a 'disappointment' amongst some tourists that their ancestors hadn't 'suffered enough' related:

> *"… folk tend to think the Clearances idea [was] that everybody was burned out of their houses. This definitely did occur but not everywhere … but folk will only read about the places where that occurred therefore they assume that it happened to their people as well".*

Here we have instances of tourists linking themselves directly to some of the great dramas of the Scottish past in empirically dubious terms. This certainly may be linked with the force of international popular culture and its ability to 'induce' tourism with films like *Braveheart, Rob Roy* and TV series like *Outlander* (e.g. Beeton, 2006; O'Connor, Flanagan & Gilbert, 2008). However, the way diasporic Scots have constructed and reproduced 'home' in ideological terms over centuries, as Knox (2006) points out, through 'Highlandised' notions of a romantic, martial past , means that such notions of 'Scottishness' should not be lightly dismissed. What we sensed from our interviewees was a pragmatic desire

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to help ancestral tourists seeking to authenticate an imagined past make the best of things. Additionally we sensed that curatorial staff were aware that ancestral tourists bring with them, not simply shallow simplifications and misrepresentations of the past but genuinely felt identification with stories of place. These stories have come to occupy a kind of ontological stability often resistant to empirical refutation. Clearly, many of our interviewees have adapted their professional stance in as pragmatic terms as ethics will permit. Gordon at Applecross Heritage Centre observed that,

> *"Some people are fine with it … some people are not happy and some people are very, very unhappy and some people gloss over what you are saying and just carry on believing and that keeps them happy and keeps us happy as well if they leave with their morale intact even although we have tried to gently give them the correct information".*

Here, we see not so much a desire amongst professionals to help ancestral tourists to consume or co-create connections to a lost homeland through object-based or existential authentication but, rather to negotiate the encounter of the 'authentically imagined' Scotland with the existing place and culture. Such projections onto the historical and contemporary actualities of 'place' recalls the post-facto reconstruction and modification of 'reality' (Foucault, 1989b) and the 'invention of tradition' (Trevor-Roper, 1983). It is the transformation of a destination into a land of origins and ancient provenance *by* and *for* this section of ancestral tourism demand. Such a conceptualisation depends on the existence of a market with historical lived experience of the *idea* of a specific ancestral destination.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This paper approached and contributed to the literature on 'authenticity', both from historicist and process-related perspectives. It accepted the value and validity of the already well-rehearsed notions of object-based and existential

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authenticity and of subsequent interventions which doubt the utility of attempts to arrive at absolute assurance of 'the authentic' in a largely commercial, socially subjective sphere such as Tourism (Reisinger & Steiner, 2006). However, it interrogated the very notion of 'authenticity' as an object of desire, or will-to-knowledge, as a historically contingent 'positivity' in discourse (Foucault, 1989b. If, as Foucault (1981) argued, discourse is productive of knowledge in a historically mobile sense and institutions and institutional practice respond and adapt accordingly, then we can conceive of 'authentication' as a 'process' as well as a 'value'.

Using extant literature and the data gathered, ancestral tourism shows particular characteristics that distinguish it from other varieties of heritage consumption. These lie in the personal or collective attachments and associations ancestral tourists have with the destination as a place of memory, return and even 'belonging'. These create often more intimate relationships with the destination than perhaps the more abstract notions of consuming place through the desire for 'difference' or 'exotic escape'. Moreover, the fact that versions of long-lost 'homelands' are maintained, reproduced and inevitably adapted, over centuries in the Scottish case, within diaspora communities means that the relationship between ancestral tourist and the place of return are inevitably more complex than in standard heritage tourism markets. The object of this research was to explore the particular consequences of this market's desire for authentication of their links with a 'homeland', real or imagined, alongside the ethics and practice of those professionals and volunteers charged with maintaining the integrity of national and regional cultural heritage. These accounts of practitioners at heritage sites across Scotland demonstrate that ancestral tourists pre-authenticate their claims to belonging within the place of return in three ways.

The first is through the object-based contribution to the process of authentication given the provision of family records or artefacts maintained in the diaspora or publically available online, thereby enabling collaborative co-creation of experience at heritage sites. Whilst research on the role tourists have in co-creating experiences is not new (see Mossberg, 2007), to date research has

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focussed mainly on the time and effort spent by tourists before, during and after vacations and how these resources contribute to perceptions of experience value (e.g. Prebensen & Foss, 2010; Prebensen, Vittersø, & Dahl, 2013). Our research reveals a highly personalised form of co-created experience, which is unique to each visitor. The second is the existential authentication produced by tourists and professionals where a sense of verifiable collective belonging is the evident outcome, but where potentially ethically problematic drives to 'compensate' tourists who have been disappointed by lack of more object-based associations was also apparent.

The third perhaps most closely reflects the discursive divergence between 'Scotland's' produced at 'home' and those in the diaspora. Here we see an empirical example of Cohen and Cohen's (2012) 'hot' authenticity, stoked in the invented traditions and origin myths of the diaspora (Bruner, 1994) clashing with the 'cool' authenticity of Scotland's heritage sector. We contribute to extant literature on processual authenticity in tourism by drawing attention to the pressure that can be experienced by those 'who authenticate' (Wall & Xie, 2005). In our study providers were not concerned with how to stage an experience to provide authentication of a place which meets the perceived needs of particular tourist segments (Daugstad & Kirchengast, 2013; Frisvoll, 2013). Authentication, in our research takes place at a granular level as each individual tourist's family history requires unpicking and reconstructed in such a fashion that provides some kind of satisfactory ancestral tourism experience.

In relation to this, we reveal the diverse range of responses that providers have to the authenticity negotiation process. Some providers attempt to compensate visitors who arrive with loose affiliations to Scotland by offering existential connections with a region. Other providers feel duty bound to engage in 'myth busting' with visitors whose knowledge of their ancestral heritage is generated through popular culture. We thus observe the profound sense of responsibility felt by some providers towards their visitors and who wish to avoid disappointing them, even if this meant turning a blind eye towards dubious genealogical research.

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This need not, however, be a zero sum game for practitioners when they attempt to take seriously imagined pasts as historical artefacts themselves or as versions of identity developed elsewhere, ostensibly sharing the e core referent of the 'home' destination. There is scope for practitioners to respond through the sensitive business of working with this section of the market to gently steer tourists towards that which is empirically verifiable whilst acknowledging the historical provenance of 'imagined' ancestral narratives. What is vital, however, is the recognition that all three of these *produced* authentications require the kind of intimate, empathetic collaboration of tourist and practitioner and the mutual identification with the *aspiration* to authentic experience (existential or otherwise) of 'the other' called for by Gnoth and Wang (2015) and developed by Tucker (2016).

Davies (2006: 11) argues that our world is 'already historicized' – that we understand and produce social reality in historical terms. The corollary to this is that we must understand the modes by which societies understand and construct 'history' and subsequently its symbolic and selective poor relation, 'heritage' as historically contingent artefacts themselves. We have reinforced the point that the symbolically and commercially vital notion of 'authenticity' in tourism and heritage and, by implication, related spheres of consumption, is a meaninglessly ahistorical term when not understood as the *product* of the historically mutable *process* of authentication.

We have noted a particularly heightened example of this heritage production in the co-created authentication, in both of the received academic concepts of object-based and existential terms, of ancestral tourism. This production of empirically sound links with the past, produced collaboratively by ancestral tourists and heritage practitioners, has particular implications for professional practice. Opportunities clearly exist for heritage sectors internationally to bridge the gap between subjective belonging and the temporal/spatial distance between diasporas and 'homelands'. Yet, there seems to be an ethical corollary to this in which the heritage sector of the destination may acknowledge and

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integate the versions of 'home' produced over time elsewhere. Here the social and managerial implications of our third 'emergent' theme, the 'authentically imagined past' present themselves most vividly: if the 'homeland' is imagined, produced and consumed in terms oblique to or radically different to how it is lived *at home*, yet retains the same core signifier, then what are the implications for professional heritage practice? Our data indicates that heritage professionals are living the negotiations necessary to accommodate these two versions of 'home' in their daily practice of producing 'authenticity' for ancestral tourists.

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