
THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE, AND LEISURE

The Case of the Ecomuseum

To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And Heaven in a Wild Flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour.

William Blake, *Auguries of Innocence*

The past is now and we confront a paradox. We strive to prevent decay and to replace and preserve the symbols of our cultural heritage. In doing so we become part of the *Cult of Preservation*, the *Cult of Illusion*. The illusion occurs because that which we seek to preserve continually alters, changes, and “weathers.” It frequently is real only in that it is differentiated from the modern and the present — the clipper ship berthed beside modern warships, the clapboard Methodist church hunched beside the hanging walls of the office tower.¹ We search for our heritage, yearn for our roots, and, with passion, defend an imaginary past through conservation and restoration. Such strivings also qualify us for membership in the rapidly growing *Cult of Nostalgia*, the *Cult of Selective Memory*. As members we are active participants in the living history games of open-air museums and are window shoppers on 1890 Street, the spurious expressions of our memories.²

by R. Peter Heron

It is in the contrast between an imagined and illusory "nostalgic" past and the changing and ever-present reminders of a "real" past that the paradox resides. Its resolution lies in the recognition that

... a fixed past is not what we really need, or at any rate not all we need. We require a heritage with which we continually interact, one which fuses past with present. This heritage is not only necessary but inescapable; we cannot now avoid feeling that the past is to some extent our own creation.³

THE FOLLOWING DISCUSSION SUGGESTS that this paradox is rooted in a culture's leisure and is deliberately perpetuated by both public and private institutions for their own survival through a hegemonic control of indigenous and local cultures. Such attempts can well be termed "institutional revisionism." However, the paradox begins to be addressed, if not resolved, through the increasing influence on heritage planning and development of the concept of *écomusée* and its realization in an ecomuseum, or le musée éclaté (the museum without walls, the "fragmented" museum) — a place of permanent buildings and permanent residents, a place for and about people at home, and an expression of community and individual leisure.

The discourse will begin by presenting, in an abbreviated form, the extended influence of the *écomusée* concept, its origins and meanings, and several modes of preserving and presenting the built environment which have, to some extent, contributed to the current ecomuseum expression. It will continue by suggesting that considerations of culture and leisure are fundamental to a beginning understanding of the paradox, and that such considerations are the concerns of institutions involved with influencing the presentation of the past. Finally, it will examine this influence as an expression of organizational hegemony through contrasting "institutional" and "folk" ecomuseums.

Over the last forty years, an articulated approach to integrated local and regional development (an ecomuseum) seems to be emerging. On the one hand it has been stimulated by an increase in environmental sensitivity manifested through preserving, conserving, restoring, and displaying both built and non-built environments and associated artifacts and significant features (Sigtuna, Sweden; Orvelte, Holland; Ebey's Landing, Whidbey Island, United States; Cowichan-Chemainus Valleys, Canada). On the other it has been encouraged by a rise in cultural awareness and sensitivity expressed idealistically through symbolic displays of national, regional, and local pride (La Haute-Beauce, Canada; Sigtuna, Sweden; and Dorfien, near Munich, West Germany), and expressed pragmatically through cultural tourism (Crownsnest Pass, Canada; Cowichan-Chemainus Valleys, Canada). This approach has also been a planning and development response to war ravages (Zaanse Schans, Holland), to natural disasters such as earthquakes (Popaya, Columbia), to co-operative socio-economic activity in depressed rural areas (Le Creusot, Montceau-les-Mines and Ile d'Ouessant, France) and urban areas (Maison du Fier-Monde, Montreal, Canada; Sã Cristóvão, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil), and to the preservation of areas of ethnographical (Marquèze, Sabre, France) and archaeological (Alcochete, Portugal) significance. Most recently it has been one of the models (others are community museums and school museums) adopted by the "new museology" movement to exemplify how museums can be used as community vehicles for addressing significant cultural, social, and political issues.⁴

Only some of the examples given call themselves "ecomuseums." Some are termed "historic" cities, villages or regions. Others are "living heritage parks" or "folk villages." Still others are "social/ecological communities" or "museums without walls." However, each exhibits, to a greater or lesser extent, the eight characteristics to be described and each exhibits and cares for its buildings *in situ*. Despite its ambiguity, lack of English equivalent, and its particularly French connotations, we will consider "ecomuseum" to be an inclusive term.

THE CONCEPT AND EXPRESSION

Écomusée is a perspective developed by George Henri Rivière to describe

... both a concept and an approach to cultural-historical preservation. [The] *écomusée* assumes the functions of research, conservation, exhibition and involves a coherent grouping of natural and cultural elements which are representative of the lifestyle of work and existence of the people within it.⁵

First, it is useful to consider the *idea* of *écomusée* as a way of thinking, a holistic open-systems view of the world, as the previous quotation demonstrates. Second, it is a planning approach having two components: the environmental setting in which individuals carry out their regular daily and seasonal routines; and the activities through which individuals address issues related to the "quality of life" of their community and themselves.⁶

In contrast, it is useful to view an *ecomuseum* as an entity, a tangible *expression* of the concept. It is in this sense that Hugues de Varine appears to have coined the term *ecomuseum* to describe a "... didactic instrument, designed to build heritage awareness, not for a public but for and by a community."⁷ Rivière elaborated by suggesting that, though the concept and thus the term is in a continuous process of evolution, there are nonetheless some basic features common to any *ecomuseum*:⁸

First, "... it is an instrument conceived, fashioned, and operated jointly by a public authority and a local population."

Second, "It is a mirror in which the local population views itself to discover its own image, ... and holds up to its visitors so that it may be better understood and so that its industry, customs and identity may command respect."

Third, it is an expression of mankind situated in a natural environment.

Fourth, it is an expression of time which begins prior to mankind, extends through prehistoric and historic periods, arrives at the present and extends towards future hopes and aspirations.

Fifth, it is a presentation and interpretation of both closed and open spaces for expressions of culture and leisure.

Sixth, it is a research centre for studies in such areas as archaeology, history, ecology, anthropology, ethnology.

Seventh, it is a conservation centre for the preservation and development of the natural and cultural heritage of the population.

Eighth, it is an educational centre for inhabitants and visitors, and a school, in the more formal sense, for young people.



The Folk in Marken, Holland.

HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The origins of the concept are extremely difficult to trace, if they are indeed traceable at all. This is because it has been expressed in a variety of forms in different locations, for different reasons, and within different cultures. There are, for example, *ecomuseum* developments in the Slavic countries, in West and North Africa, and in South America.⁹ But despite the location, the concept of *écomusée* and its expression as an *ecomuseum* seem to have emerged as a response to at least three evolving needs: for preservation, for community survival, and for demonstrating national and local pride.

Concerning the first, many villages, towns, and city districts have developed and evolved with a strong sense of preserving traditions, customs, and structures, particularly the vernacular architecture. They appear to have cultivated all the characteristics of an *ecomuseum* without realizing it. Sigtuna, near Stockholm, Sweden, is an example. In 1187 it was ravaged by fires; in 1350 the population was virtually decimated by the plague; during the 1500s it was destroyed by the Reformation wars; in 1600 and 1744 it was again nearly wiped out by fire; in the 1800s it suffered severe economic recessions; and in the early 1900s fires and economic recessions again threatened its survival. Today it is prospering as an *ecomuseum* by functioning as a service centre for the surrounding rural area; a cultural centre of museums, local arts and crafts, and fine and performing arts; and, to a limited (and unsolicited) extent, a destination for tourists.

Concerning the second and third needs, regions such as the Crownsnest Pass, Alberta, have sought to survive as economically viable communities in the face of economic depressions and population declines. In towns where the plight has been particularly serious, collective community action in the form of social cooperatives, as at Le Creusot and Montceau-les-Mines, France, has been the route taken.¹⁰ Still other areas which have felt their culture seriously threatened have not only made a special effort to preserve it, but also to proclaim it proudly. Thus, it is not surprising that the growing number of *ecomuseums* in the province of Quebec, such as La Haute-Beauce region, coincides with the growth of concern for the preservation of Quebec culture.

In considering the development of *ecomuseums* in North America our concentration must be essentially on Europe, since it is from there that most of our cultural charac-

teristics have been derived. The historical development there seems to have arisen from, or at least been influenced by, the traditional museum functions of collecting and acquiring, restoring, conserving, preserving, displaying, explaining, and studying. In addition, from an ecomuseum perspective, museums are also seen to have social, political, and economic responsibilities. The development has been well described by Uldall,¹¹ who observed that one type of influence stems from preserving buildings on site, particularly as these were representative of the "folk," or from collecting and relocating such buildings in one area to form what has been termed an open-air, public park museum. This type of museum was first established in Skansen, Sweden, in 1891 and was followed in 1897 by the Friland Museet of Sorgenfri, Denmark. It is now found world-wide in both developed and developing countries. Originally, open-air museums selected buildings based upon their representation of specific cultural areas of a country or region, the aesthetic qualities of overall designs and motives, and the documentation of solutions to space and construction problems. Functional reasons for selecting the buildings eventually became important, so they came to house and display artifacts (some static and some in motion) and become "occupied" by costumed guides and actors.

A second type of influence comes from the preservation of a whole village or part of a town as an historic area, whether or not it is staffed. The emphasis is still largely on the preservation and restoration buildings, with all or the majority being *in situ* and their treatment and presentation based on principles of museology models employed in open-air museums. In Canada, Dawson City, during its initial stages of restoration, is a representative type. However, unlike most open-air museums, historic villages also pay much attention to the authenticity and ambience of streetscapes, parks, and playgrounds and to the preservation of natural areas such as woodlots, creeks, and ponds. Sooner or later, such villages become "animated" open-air museums (Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, and Barkerville, British Columbia) with the inhabitants being the staff who "perform" according to daily and seasonal opening and closing times.

In addition to these influences, an ecomuseum development occurs when a historic area of significance is considered to be the explicit cultural expression of a continuing socio/cultural system. Thus, to the dimensions of the historic village are introduced permanent residents forming a community which "displays" itself to itself and to outsiders. It becomes a place in which the past becomes a part of the present — fresh and frozen garden vegetables are sold together, a horse-drawn buggy is parked beside a modern car, home-baked bread is part of an instant TV dinner.

ISSUES

Culture

The fundamental difference between ecomuseums and preserved historic villages/districts is that an ecomuseum preserves both the static and living expressions of a culture. Buildings, material culture artifacts, and streetscapes become cherished not as *ends* exclusively to themselves, but as *means* to symbolically express the cultural values of the residents and transmit these values to future generations.

Edward T. Hall¹² has suggested convincingly that there are three essential levels at which a culture is expressed. These are the conscious, *technical* level in which words and obvious actions play a prominent role; the screened-off, *private* level which is revealed to only a select few and denied to outsiders; and the underlying, out-of-awareness, *implicit* level of primary culture. Each has its special meanings and thus its own symbols.

The first level is the most apparent to the casual viewer and outsider. It is the music, the festivals, the arts and crafts, the language, and the special attractions of, for example, a maritime museum or a working mine. But it is also the buildings, streetscapes, parks, and playgrounds, the preserved natural regions with their native flora and fauna, and the unique, indigenous or seemingly natural "Capability Brown" landscapes. Such obvious visual features also have functions which Alderson and Low have described¹³ as primarily aesthetic, documentary (having research and study significance) or representative (being prototypical in an exemplary state of preservation or restoration). It is these "first level" types of symbolic expressions which are the most amenable to technical-legal-rational manipulation, and to perpetuating the *Cults of Nostalgia* and *Preservation*. They are the expressions to which the residents of the ecomuseum become accommodated in their daily life, unless attention is specifically and continually drawn to them (as specific tourist attractions, for example). Such technical expressions, be they of the intellectual acts of preservation or of the emotional base of such acts, form the very stage, the background against which the other cultural levels become expressed in the "presentation of self."¹⁴

The second, the personal level, is probably more regular, more secure, and more binding for a society than is the first. For the residents of an ecomuseum, as for any other culture or subculture, it is where exclusivity and uniqueness are cherished and protected. It is symbolized by the screened-off areas of space (the lovers' trysting place, the family breakfast-nook) and of time (the Saturday night community dance, the Thanksgiving Day dinner) from which outsiders are excluded. It is the "hidden dimension" of both space and time which Hall¹⁵ has described well in architectural terms. But it is the very level which outside institutions attempt to identify and open (through the development, for instance, of tourist Bed-and-Breakfasts). As Hall observes, "Most social science and political science is directed at strategies for penetrating the screen separating the manifest culture from the secondary level culture."¹⁶

The third, the primary, implicit level, is that which is out-of-awareness. It is the source of traditions — rules, beliefs, and customs which are taken for granted, known to all, obeyed by all, and seldom if ever stated. Within it are sown and nurtured the seeds of spiritual and cultural identity, and from it are provided the meanings attached to the symbols expressive of the events of the first and second levels. In essence, it is the "ground of cultural being" which is protected and transmitted from generation to generation.¹⁷ It is this cultural level which is approached with diffidence and caution by outside social forces.

Leisure and Culture

It is a basic assumption of this discussion that leisure, as distinct from labour but not necessarily work,¹⁸ is basic to, arises from, and is an expression of all three levels of a culture. As Joseph Pieper observes,

Culture depends for its very existence on leisure, and leisure, in its turn, is not possible unless it has a durable and consequently living link with the cultus, with divine worship.... Culture, in the sense in which it is used above, is the quintessence of all the natural goods of the world and of those gifts and qualities which, while belonging to man, lie beyond the immediate sphere of his needs and wants.¹⁹

This perspective has been also developed by Huizinga, the anthropologist/historian, in *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture* and by von Bertalanffy, the theoretical biologist/philosopher, in *Robots, Men and Minds*. When associated with individual and social creativity, John Kelly, in *Freedom To Be: A New Sociology of Leisure*,²⁰ sees leisure as a humanistic description of culture which encompasses and provides for seven other views: immediate experience, existential freedom, personal growth and development, individual identity, social interaction, institutional influence, and political action. In essence, leisure can be considered as any creative, individual or social expression which is culturally-defined and which may or may not be perverse.

If leisure is viewed in this way then the various views of leisure can be expected to be associated with each of the three cultural levels. When leisure is seen as a means of political and economic control (for example, the establishment of a park prior to an election, or the state control of youth organizations, or even the use of period architectural styles in mainstreet programs to enhance economic cultural tourism) or as an expression of an institution's purpose (civic leisure centres or civic heritage days), it becomes a fundamental component of the *technical* or explicit cultural level. When it is seen as the means of establishing social bonding (for example, collective games and community enterprises) or of defining an individual's identity (through personal education and community service), it becomes the fundamental component of the *private* level. And finally, when we view leisure as a fundamental, intense individual experience, as the personal freedom to decide, as personal creative development and productivity, and as the attachment to and use of things for their symbolic meanings, then it becomes the basis of the *primary* culture. From such a perspective on leisure, architecturally significant structures — in this case forming an ecomuseum *per se* — can be seen as the explicit symbolic expressions of political influence (a church) and institutional control (a standard visitor centre), as the private symbolic expressions of individual and community identity (custom-designed homes and community centres), and as the implicit symbolic expressions of intense cultural feelings (cemeteries).

In these ways, leisure, as a cultural expression, is essential for the definition of each level. And at each level it becomes the mechanism for confronting the paradox of preserving and respecting the waning past while experiencing the present and planning for an uncertain future. In other words, the problems of leisure become the problems of culture, and vice versa. Do we preserve a culture in order to exploit it? Does leisure become extolled in order for it to become commodified?

Institutions

Communities and various levels of government have both attempted to address these questions of culture and thus leisure by using the institutional expertise of professions, government agencies, large corporations, and consulting firms. The mechanisms used have ranged from demographic and site surveys, through cost/benefit analyses, to marketing and promotional strategies. Each is symbolic of a set of institutional dimensions and beliefs which Scott,²¹ in a major review of organizational cultures, has summarized as “technical-legal-rational conformities.” These include the belief in and the value of:

- 1. clear-cut distinctions between, for example, production and distribution staff and professional and administrative staff (Categorical Conformity);
- 2. a hierarchy of control through a structural hierarchy of positions (Structural Conformity);
- 3. rules, regulations, procedures, and standards (Procedural Conformity);
- 4. specialized, trained, and educated staff (Personnel Conformity).

To these can be added an agency’s beliefs and values associated with:

- 5. the stated goals and purposes (Mission Conformity),²²
- 6. its rituals, myths, and symbols (Ritual Conformity).²³

Thus, when any organization external to the local community is called upon to address questions of blending the past and the present, for whatever reasons, these sets of beliefs become the bases upon which planning, development, and construction occur. Even though they may conflict with the inherent values of the indigenous culture, and may even be antithetical to them, they are frequently perceived, at least initially, to be the *correct*, the *best* values. This perception is in the interests of an organization, since its primary reason for existing is to survive. Trivializing culture and commodifying leisure are two powerful survival strategies. One of the current playing fields upon which such strategies for cultural control are occurring is cultural tourism. And external institutions seem to be “winning”!

IMPLICATIONS

Hegemony

This struggle over which culture — the community’s or the external agency’s — shall prevail has been termed “cultural interpenetration.”²⁴ It is a contest between cultural expressiveness and cultural rationality in which communal, kinship-based, traditional forms of community association become displaced by technical-legal-rational practices.²⁵

This phenomenon of institutional interpenetration can also be termed “cultural hegemony.” In this regard Clarke and Critcher have commented appropriately that

Hegemony has become a significant concept for cultural studies because it condenses, or crystallises a number of major themes about the processes of cultural domination and conflict. First, it emphasises the field of culture — a national culture — as being made up of different cultures and sub-cultures, embodying divergent social perspective. Secondly, hegemony stresses work — the cultural struggle — that is needed to unite aspects of these divergent cultures under the ‘leadership’ of a dominant culture. Thirdly, hegemony identifies cultural conflict as a process which does not just happen at the level of political ideologies, but also involves the patterns of everyday thinking and habits of mind — precisely those aspects of social ideologies which we take for granted because they are so ‘obvious’. Finally, hegemony contains the idea that cultural domination — the creation of hegemony itself — is always in a state of tension. Hegemony involves the effort to dominate a society in which the divergent interests and perspectives always threaten to outrun the ability of the dominant culture to contain and incorporate them.²⁶

Clarke and Critcher conclude that “The very idea of leisure is itself central to the struggle for hegemony.” In other words, if expressions of leisure (such as arts, crafts, and other creative cultural works and patterns of leisure activities) can be controlled, then so too can be the indigenous (native) culture.

Ecomuseums and Hegemony

Fundamental to the idea of *écomusée* is the question “Whose idea?” And fundamental to the instrumental nature of the ecomuseum are the questions “Whose instrument?” and “For what purposes?” These questions are concerned with how the paradox is to be addressed in the context of the ecomuseum, and thus are about control and domination. These questions

will be examined from an institutional perspective, from a “folk” perspective, and from a combination of the two. Such an examination implies that each ecomuseum exists on a continuum ranging from those heavily influenced by external agencies to those which are primarily self-governed. These two extremes, which can be considered “ideal types,” will be exemplified later in the discussion. Few ecomuseums conform exclusively to one or the other. Each presents a different pattern based on Rivière’s eight basic features previously listed, though, overall, one

can say that a particular ecomuseum is more or less institutionalized or more or less community-oriented. There is also a tendency for community/folk ecomuseums themselves to become institutionalized.

In contrasting the institutional ecomuseum with the community or “folk” ecomuseum, Hubert²⁷ addresses the problem inherent in Rivière’s first criteria of an ecomuseum as “an instrument conceived, fashioned and operated jointly by a public authority and a local population.” As we have seen, this is essentially a question of cultural hegemony — a question of which value/belief system and its symbolic expression, that of the public authority (e.g., government agency) or of the community, shall dominate. Thus, the main concern is whether an ecomuseum will be a tool used by external institutions for their own



Upper Town main street, Chemainus, British Columbia.

economic, political, and social purposes, or a tool used by the residents to preserve and reveal their cultural heritage and give meaning to their present and future activities.

Institutional Ecomuseums — In western North America the first approach to ecomuseum development is exemplified by the Cowichan & Chemainus Valleys Ecomuseum in British Columbia and by the Crowsnest Historic and Coal Mining Corridor (Crowsnest Pass Ecomuseum Trust) in Alberta. The former is an economic development project funded primarily by and accountable to Heritage Canada and the B.C. Heritage Trust, even though it is a cooperative effort by various interest groups managed by a volunteer society. Its objectives state that:

Arts, culture and heritage are no longer seen as “costs” to society and its governments but are increasingly viewed as investments which provide many social, cultural and economic benefits.

The Valley’s heritage experience thus must be packaged and marketed for long term payback and community economic development. All levels of government, public, and private not-for-profit and entrepreneurial groups in the community must be involved.²⁸

It is characterized by static, stylized, “frozen in time” heritage presentations such as Edwardian streetscapes, residents in late-Victorian costume, and an open-air forestry museum of early artifacts, each appealing to the nostalgia of the tourist. It is concerned with exhibiting (as opposed to using) its well-maintained built and natural environments as these have been institutionally defined. Thus, it self-consciously displays only that which it considers to be of quality, and is a representation of the *Cult of Preservation*. Its focus is on the visitor. The social structure of such an ecomuseum is composed of four groups (listed in decreasing order of social influence): expert advisers who frequently represent institutional sources of development funding, paid administrators or managers, tourist agencies, and permanent inhabitants. Typically, the sponsoring agency(ies) hires staff and develops and manages the ecomuseum.

The Crowsnest Pass development shows many of the same characteristics, though at a much earlier stage of development. It is similarly dependent upon external funding from government and quasi-governmental agencies.

“Folk” Ecomuseums — In contrast, a community/folk ecomuseum conveys a vibrant mosaic of natural and unstaged sounds, sights, and smells. It emphasizes those social, cultural, and political issues of relevance to the quality of life of the residents, albeit within a preserved and conserved setting. In almost direct contrast to the institutional type, the components of the social structure (again listed in decreasing order of influence) are permanent inhabitants and their governing council, ad-



Plank cutting, Ste. Marie Among the Hurons, Ontario.

ministrators (managers) who are paid employees of or volunteers from the community or both, expert advisers, and visitors (tourists). Such ecomuseums are self-managing and self-directed.

In western North America they are exemplified by Ebey's Landing National Historic Reserve on Whidbey Island, Washington, U.S.A. It was established in 1978 as an affiliated historical reserve under the National Parks Service with the intention of being transferred later to a local authority for its planning, development, management, and operation. That transfer occurred and the authority is a Trust Board, in effect a fourth level of government, to which the National Parks Service and other agencies are advisory. Its purpose is as follows:

The reserve was established to preserve and protect a rural community which provides an unbroken historical record.

Preserving the past often means setting something aside and protecting it from change. The reserve is different. It is a community of people that continually reshape their surroundings. They live and work in a place that has been minimally impacted by urban growth pressures and still continues to evolve as a vital living system.²⁹

Here, old and new buildings, tools, and ways of living function in combination with and adjacent to each other, exhibition is a normal part of daily life, and fields, parks, and other open spaces function as "lungs" for community living.

In summary, the first approach emphasizes a cultural tourism which utilizes the area's current and historical natural and cultural characteristics as the basis for economic development. As such, it is an expression of Butler's³⁰ institutionalized tourism, which becomes increasingly controlled by "absentee stakeholders," and of Hall's institutionalized *technical* level of a culture, symbolized by an ersatz streetscape.

The second approach emphasizes the quality of life of the residents, the changing dynamic nature of their culture, and their contribution to the national character. In contrast to other areas of Whidbey Island, tourism is not encouraged, since it is viewed as intrusive, but neither is it discouraged. In addition, the residents show a concern for all three levels of culture, the *technical* through preservation and daily living instrumentalities, the *private* through the emphasis on cooperative activities of the inhabitants, and the *primary* through the recognition of the symbolic meanings of both the built and non-built environments. It should be noted that, although it does not call itself an ecomuseum, Whidbey Island does conform to the Rivière ecomuseum model, a response to the paradox which is "conceived and fashioned by the local population."



A main street in the Crowsnest Pass, Alberta.



Museum/Community Centre, Orvelte, Holland.

Institutionalized/"Folk" Ecomuseums — Most ecomuseums conform to neither of the "pure" types described, but contain elements of each. Within this mixed form two types of competition for cultural domination seem to occur: one between the desires and wishes of the local community expressed collectively and those of an external sponsoring organization(s); and one between the culture of an ecomuseum itself as an institution and the culture of any other institution or agency. In the first type the tensions occur between expressive and technical/rational value systems. In the second type tensions occur between two different expressions of technical/rational value systems. Both hegemonic discords (disputes

over cultural domination) arise from the normal and inevitable desire of a social collectivity to protect its culture — its system of values and beliefs and their symbolic expression — albeit expressed in different ways.

In the first type of hegemony, expression for the community will be through its indigenous buildings and streetscapes, its festivals and fairs, its parks and open spaces, its surrounding conserved (managed) and preserved natural environment, its trades and crafts, its museums and interpreted sites, and its customs and language. The results of the discord appear in the compromises made to the demands of external forces — Are the festivals sanitized

and quaint? Are the parks and playgrounds manicured? Does the interpretive centre in a two-hundred-year-old village have a false front and contain post-modern office furniture?

The second type of hegemony is again over the survival of a particular culture, but this time it is the culture of an organization, either the ecomuseum itself or an external agency. In essence, we see a typical case of inter-organizational conflict with the usual strategies of merging, co-opting, and coalescing being attempted. This becomes exemplified by a govern-

ment tourist bureau encouraging international tourism while the ecomuseum is encouraging the more reliable regional tourism. The ecomuseum, however, is faced with the additional problems of having to prevent both the abandonment of its own original goals and functions (as outlined previously by Rivière) and the denial of its very culture. It has to prevent the replacement of these with an antithetical technical-legal-rational culture which it is gradually adopting in the name of efficiency and effectiveness. Thus it is still confronted by struggles with both outside forces and with itself.

The effects of these struggles become apparent upon an examination of the growth and decline of tourist areas which rely for their appeal upon the blend of heritage and natural resource amenities. Fre-

quently, a once culturally-vibrant and attractive locality is destined to become a tourist slum unless rejuvenation occurs. If it does, the evolutionary cycle of exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation, and decline repeats itself. In such a cycle the reaction of the local population progresses from euphoria through apathy and irritation to antagonism (Doxey, 1975).³¹ Such a condition, Butler suggests, is directly attributable to the success of marketing, advertising, franchising, and packaging the tourist and host experience, to the institutionalized organizing of the tourist-host relationship by either a dominating "absentee landlord" or to the community itself in its search for short-term economic gains. He concludes that

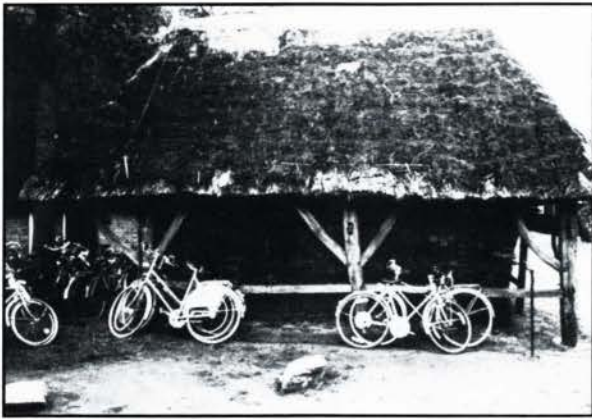
Unless more knowledge is gained and a greater awareness developed of the processes which shape tourist areas ... many of the most attractive and interesting areas in the world are doomed to become tourist relics.³²

The attractiveness to which he refers includes not only the natural and built features of the area but also the traditions and customs of the residents of that area. Through the imposition of rational, linear time-frames by planners and operators, traditional cultural time perspectives become displaced. When these conditions are realized, the area, as a relic, becomes a "ghost town" and its buildings "mausoleums."

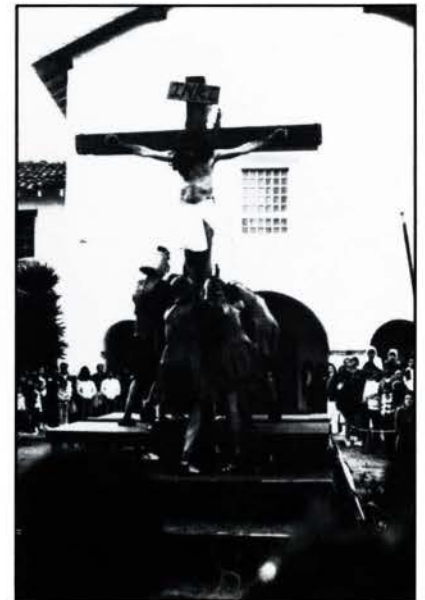
CONCLUSION

The main argument of this discussion has been that the concept of écomusée and its realization through an ecomuseum is a significant and increasingly apparent expression of local, indigenous cultures. The basis of such cultures is to be found in the leisure of the people and the symbolic meaning, particularly in the case of ecomuseums, given by the primary importance of its buildings. This argument arises from a consideration of how the *Cults of Nostalgia* and *Preservation* have failed to address the problem, the paradox, of interacting with a heritage which "fuses the past with the present," and how this paradox has been attempted to be addressed by ecomuseums. This consideration has been highlighted by contrasting institutionalized and non-institutionalized ecomuseums. From the examination of both organizational cultures and indigenous, non-institutionalized cultures the inevitable struggle over control and domination was raised. Implicit, though not discussed, in these observations, was the potential for conflict over differing views of leisure, since these were shown to be fundamental to an understanding of culture.

Within this general context, ecomuseums were examined in more detail through a presentation of several expressions of the concept and as arising from various approaches towards preserving and giving meaning to buildings. Two specific current examples of more-or-less institutionalized and non-institutionalized ecomuseums were described and contrasted.



Modern bikes and ancient peat, Orvelte, Holland.



The Passion Play, San Juan Bautista, California.

In conclusion, ecomuseums, these museums without walls, seem to have become the tangible expressions of the “new museology” and of urgings for “traditional” museums to become more sensitive to social and political issues of the communities and regions in which they are located. They challenge architects and other creative artists to be aware of their art as a reflection of the cultural traditions from which it arises and as an expression of that culture’s evolution. In essence, the challenge means that the authenticity of architectural creative expression is most significant and persuasive if it arises primarily from the indigenous, “folk” culture. This culture can authentically be symbolized by an architecture ranging from the simplest rustic home to the grandest palace, or from a simple roadside shrine to an ethereal cathedral. It cannot be represented and preserved by the mixture of 18th century French Chateau, “Canadian” log cabin, and Bavarian/Austrian alpine pastiche styles prevalent at Lake Louise, Alberta. Nor can it be represented by the cultural symbols of a multinational homogeneous corporation or a faceless bureaucracy.

Endnotes

- 1 D. MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Schocken Books, 1976), 13-14.
- 2 *Ibid.*, 151-55.
- 3 David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 410.
- 4 Pierre Mayrand, “The New Museology Proclaimed,” *Museum* 148 (1985): 200-201.
- 5 G. Rivière, *Les Parcs Naturels Régionaux et le Patrimoine Ethnologique* (Paris: Fédération des Parcs Naturels de France, 1978), 3.
- 6 R. Peter Heron, “Heritage Presentation for Community Development: A Planning Perspective,” *European Leisure and Recreation Association Workshop Meeting* (Växjö, Sweden: European Leisure and Recreation Association, 1983), 283-309.
- 7 UNESCO, “Images of the Ecomuseum,” *Museum* 37 (4/1985): 3.
- 8 Rivière, *Les Parcs Naturels Régionaux*, 183-84.
- 9 UNESCO, “Ecomuseum,” 3.
- 10 Kenneth Hudson, *Museums of Influence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 163-66.
- 11 Kai Uldall, “Open Air Museums,” *Museum* 10 (1/1957): 68-96.
- 12 Edward T. Hall, *The Dance of Life: The Other Dimension of Time* (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1984), 7, 230.
- 13 W.T. Alderson, and S.P. Low, *Interpretation of Historic Sites* (Nashville, Tenn.: American Association for State and Local History, 1976).
- 14 Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Doubleday and Co., Anchor Books, 1957).
- 15 Edward T. Hall, *The Hidden Dimension* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1969).
- 16 Hall, *The Dance of Life*, 231.
- 17 Using Richard Dawkin’s term, we can suggest that buildings are “memes,” the units by which cultural information is transmitted. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, “Memes vs. Genes: Notes from the Culture Wars,” *Reality Club Review* 1 (1988): 109-127.
- 18 The distinction being made is that leisure, like work and labour, is not effortless and free from tension (Stanley Parker, *Leisure and Work* [London: George Allen & Unwin, 1983], 108-19). Rather, in leisure as in work (but unlike labour), when there is a freedom to create there is also a continual balance between the challenges presented by a task and the skills of the individual addressing it. For the individual, job satisfaction and leisure satisfaction are virtually the same (Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience* [New York: Harper and Row, 1990]). For a community, the same lack of distinction has also been observed (Antonella Delle Fave and Fausto Massimini, “Modernization and the Changing Contexts of Flow in Work and Leisure,” in M. Csikszentmihalyi and I.S. Csikszentmihalyi, eds., *Optimal Experience: Psychological States of Flow in Consciousness* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988], 193-213).
- 19 Josef Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, 2nd ed. (New York: New American Library, 1963), 17.
- 20 John R. Kelly, *Freedom To Be: A New Sociology of Leisure* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1987).
- 21 W. Richard Scott, *Organizations: Rational, Natural and Open Systems*, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1987), 194-8.
- 22 R. Peter Heron, “The Institutionalization of Leisure: Cultural Conflict and Hegemony,” *Leisure and Society* (in press, 1991).
- 23 John W. Meyer and Brian Rowan, “Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony,” *American Journal of Sociology* 83 (2/1977): 340-63.
- 24 R.L. Jepperson and John W. Meyer, “The Public Order and the Construction of Formal Organizations,” in *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*, ed. W.W. Powell and P.J. DiMaggio (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 2ff.
- 25 Lynne G. Zucker, “Organizations as Institutions,” in *Research in the Sociology of Organizations*, ed. S.B. Bacharach (Greenwich, Conn.: JAI Press, 1983), 1-74.
- 26 J. Clarke and Chas. Critcher, *The Devil Makes Work: Leisure in Capitalist Britain* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1985), 228.
- 27 François Hubert, “Ecomuseums in France: Contradictions and Distortions,” *Museum* 148 (1985): 186-90.
- 28 Cowichan-Chemainus Valleys Ecomuseum Society, *Work Strategy for the Cowichan and Chemainus Valleys’ Ecomuseum* (Duncan, B.C.: Cowichan-Chemainus Valleys Ecomuseum Society, 1988).
- 29 Ebey’s Landing National Historic Reserve, *The Land, The People, The Place: An Introduction to the Inventory* (Seattle, Wash.: National Park Service, 1984), 1.
- 30 R.W. Butler, “The Concept of a Tourist Area Cycle of Evolution: Implications for Management of Resources,” *Canadian Geographer* 24 (1/1980): 5-12.
- 31 *Ibid.*, 10.
- 32 *Ibid.*, 12.