

Convocation Day: Authentic Adventures or Tourist Traps?

April 16, 2015

By John Miller

On Convocation Day, archeologist, adjunct instructor and cultural guardian Lynda Carroll explained how outsourcing and pollution can damage tourist hotspots and their local economies.

The April 14 morning session consisted of an interactive PowerPoint followed by a discussion in Room 107 of the Natural Science Building. The PowerPoint mostly revolved around Mach Picchu in Peru and the Khan el-Khalili bazaar in Cairo, Egypt.

The PowerPoint claimed that people simply walking through the famous Machu Picchu caused deadly mud slides in 2010. However, further investigation revealed the culprit was a combination of record-breaking rains and deforestation rather than just footsteps. The village of Aguas Calientes, situated in the valley below Machu Picchu, has transformed from a farming village to the last stop for tourists on their journey to the Inca site. Forests surrounding the village have been cut down to make way for expensive hotels and fast food restaurants. Many experts, including Carroll, argue something needs to be done soon to save Machu Picchu for future visitors.

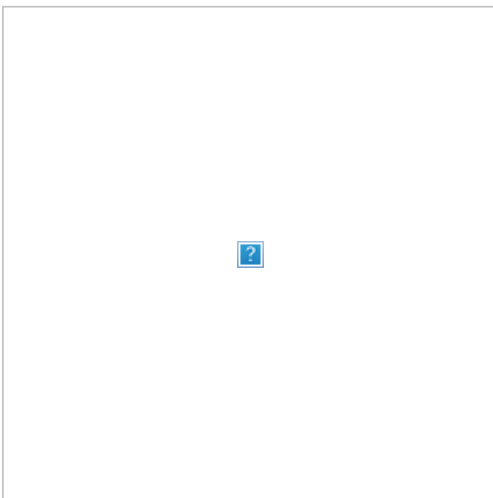
The Kahn el- Khalili bazaar is one of the largest tourist attractions in Cairo, Egypt. The most popular shops in the bazaar are the souvenir shops. There, tourists like to buy small figurines of ancient Egyptian deities and models of the Pyramids. According to the presentation, 80% of these souvenirs are made in China. This outsourcing hurts local craftsmen who used to mold them by hand and then sell them at a much higher price. These cheaper Chinese models hurt the vendors, many of whom rely on tourism as their main source of income. Carroll also said that since the 2011 revolution, revenue from tourism has fallen 54%.

Carroll concluded by saying, "If you're going to be a tourist then try to make the smallest impact possible, don't exploit the locals and don't litter."

Lynda Carroll's archeological research focuses mainly in Turkey and Jordan, but she has projects in Upstate New York.

And if you're going to be visiting Machu Picchu sometime soon— remember to tread lightly.

Writer John Miller is a SUNY Broome student.



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