

Media Tourism in Scandinavia: An Introduction

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The primary aim of this special issue of *Scandinavica* is to present some thoughts on and examples of Scandinavian media tourism. The links between media, heritage and tourism have a long history. When wealthy young men set out on their so-called Grand Tours from the seventeenth century onwards, they travelled to European places of cultural importance (Towner 1985; Towner 1996). Most destinations on the Grand Tour were considered significant because the travelers had become acquainted with them via their education in, for example, art and literature, and the most popular stops were sites biographically connected to the Roman poets (Schaff 2011). Thus, it can be argued that these young men were the first European media tourists.

The first type of media tourism was literary tourism, and the oldest destination in this category is Stratford-upon-Avon, the town where William Shakespeare was born and died. Stratford-upon-Avon has been a popular tourist attraction since the eighteenth century, when people started visiting the town because of their scholarly interest in Shakespeare (Hubbard and Lilley 2000: 223; Ousby 1990). Today, about five million people per year visit the small town to feel proximity to the iconic English playwright.

Over the last decades, visitor numbers have proliferated in Stratford-upon-Avon, as they have in innumerable other media tourist attractions, for at least two reasons. Firstly, as a probable counter-reaction to so-called disneyfication of culture, tourists now appear to desire experiences of nostalgia when they travel. One way to fulfil this desire is to visit natural and cultural settings that appeal to a sense of authenticity (Bom 2015b; O'Meara 2000; Timothy and Boyd 2003:

239). The authentic sensation for literary tourists feels within reach, for example, when they walk in the footsteps of famous authors. Secondly, media tourism attracts a huge and very diverse audience today. It is no longer a pursuit for 'literary pilgrims' (people with high educations and cultural capital) alone (Pocock 1992), both because the longing for authentic experiences is present in many individuals (not just the highly educated), and because the media tourism market has expanded to encompass different types of media, such as film and television series.

Furthermore, as media tourism was transformed from a pilgrim activity into mass tourism, tourists' access to the mediated sites was transformed as well. The rise of the internet led sociologist John Urry to argue that 'the end of tourism' was near, because people had always already 'visited' tourist attractions online beforehand and therefore had no apparent reason to travel (Urry 1995: 148). But the fact that the entire world is only a click away does not decrease tourism at all. On the contrary, heritage tourism is one of the most profitable forms of tourism these days (Waitt and McGuirk 1997). Media scholar André Jansson takes Urry's prediction as his point of departure and argues that the fact that potential tourists have already experienced mediated representations of sites and attractions before they actually visit them is an important part of modern tourism, and that 'the authenticity of a tourist destination may be defined in terms of how well it meets the customer's own ideas of what the particular destination is about' (Jansson 2002: 439). In the case of media tourism, this argument is particularly important, as media tourism exists only because potential tourists have already 'visited' the places when they read the book and watched the movie or series back home.

With regard to literary tourism, geographer David Herbert has argued that the attractions have changed concurrently with the target group: 'Literary places are no longer accidents of history, sites of a writer's birth or death; they are also social constructions, created, amplified, and promoted to attract visitors (tourists hereafter)' (Herbert 2001: 313). Herbert's point is of course also valid at sites connected to film and TV; categories that have created multiple tourist attractions over the last decades. One of the most popular attractions in Scandinavia in

this category is Ystad, the Swedish town where the TV series *Wallander* was shot (Sjöholm 2010; Waade 2013). Thus, media tourist attractions are no longer just sites historically connected to artists: many of these attractions today present 'factualisations of fiction' (Schaff 2011: 167) as well. In mediated sites in Scandinavia where tourism is induced¹ by literature, film and television, it is possible for tourists to walk in the footsteps of authors, film sets and fictional characters, and media tourism is thus a type of tourism that activates many 'modes of experience' simultaneously (ibid.). In Scandinavia, one of the most obvious examples of a multifaceted media tourist attraction is Vimmerby, the Swedish birth town of author Astrid Lindgren. Here, tourists can visit Lindgren's childhood home, walk in the footsteps of both Lindgren and her characters, visit film sets, and be entertained in the amusement park Astrid Lindgren's World (Bom 2015b; Strömberg 2009).

In other words, media tourist attractions are not just more or less original sources of authenticity. Today, they have symbolic value, encompassing narratives, experiences and entertainment, and one of their pivotal features is that cultural heritage is staged, communicated and experienced in these places. Human geographer Shelagh Squire has stated that literary tourism presents a unique opportunity to promote a writer, national cultural heritage and a specific location simultaneously, because 'a country's literary canon is integral to its cultural heritage and literary works are often geographically specific' (Squire 1996: 120). Even though (or because) media tourism has expanded and now contains sites induced by film and TV side by side with the literary sites, it is crucial to examine the connections between media, heritage and place.

The complexity and multimodal character of media tourism sites makes them interesting objects for cultural analysis. This is reflected in the vast amount of literature, journals and articles on the topic that have appeared in the last few decades. Recently, the most dominant themes in this field of study have been the staging and experiences of (in-)authenticity (Bom 2015b; Fawcett and Cormack 2001; O'Dell 2005; Peaslee 2011; Sandvik and Waade 2008; Wang 1999), the inherent field of tension between fact and fiction at the tourist sites (Bom 2015a;

Herbert 1995; Herbert 2001; Light 2009; Sjöholm 2010), the frequently contested relations between developers, citizens and tourists (Bom 2013; Hubbard and Lilley 2000; Waade 2013), media-induced tourist sites as cultural heritage (Squire 1994; Squire 1996), and the ways in which tourists engage affectively with the sites before and during their visit (Jansson 2002; Knudsen and Waade 2010; Månsson 2010).

All media tourism scholars are interested in various aspects of what is at stake when places are created by or in media. Scholars of media studies, cultural studies, literary studies and tourism studies have presented different locations as cases, and suggested different themes as focal points, but a geographically defined study of how media create heritage places and tourism in one specific part of the world is yet to be presented. Therefore, the main interest in this special issue of *Scandinavica* is to look further into how Scandinavian countries present and represent parts of their media heritage as tourist attractions. The issue contains three articles and four practice-oriented essays where Scandinavian media tourism is examined from different perspectives but with a common goal: to introduce Scandinavian media tourism as a joint field of study that can shed light on how Scandinavian values, ideas and affects are reflected in the mediated sites of this particular region.

In 'The Jutland Heath as a Literary Place of Inheritance', Johs. Nørregaard Frandsen examines how a link between media and heritage can create a possible space for tourism. Nørregaard Frandsen's case is the heath, a historical and symbolic area in Denmark, and he examines how this area was constructed as a literary place by Danish authors. With examples from the writings of St. St. Blicher, Hans Christian Andersen and Jeppe Aakjær, Nørregaard Frandsen illustrates how the heath was addressed as a significant element in Danish cultural heritage: an antipode to the industrialisation and urbanisation that gained more and more ground in the nineteenth century. With the famous authors' staging of the heath as a reflection of Denmark as it once was, Nørregaard Frandsen shows how literature has functioned as a promoter for cultural preservation of the area as national and natural heritage. As parts of the heath were indeed preserved, media tourists of today can visit an area that, Nørregaard Frandsen argues,

presents an interlacing of historical and fictionalised facts.

In Danish media scholar Anne Marit Waade's article 'Nordic Noir Tourism and Television Landscapes', another significant link is highlighted, namely the link between media and potential locations for tourist attractions. Waade asks the important question: if media landscapes create tourism, what is at stake when (possible) tourism creates media landscapes? With the two television series *Wallander* (Sweden) and *Bron/Broen* (Denmark and Sweden) as her cases, Waade argues that there is a close connection between market and media in today's media tourism, because 'not only are the landscapes, national colours and iconic places and buildings used as significant concepts and locations in the series, they are also used to frame and promote the series' (Waade, this issue). In cases like these, media tourism becomes an economic strategy in a new industry where possible place promotion is integrated as early as in the manuscript production. Thus, as a field of study, media tourism contains more than 'just' a connection between heritage and place: it is also a study in how aesthetic, symbolic and economic values and strategies interlace and/or collide in local communities.

Swedish tourism scholar Per Strömberg's article 'Developing Film-induced Tourism in Scandinavia' looks further into the possible consequences for locations where market meets media. With the Norwegian movie *Yohan Barnevandreren* as his primary case study – a fictional story based on historical events that took place in the late nineteenth century in Norway when children walked east to find work – Strömberg points out another important theme in media tourism studies, namely how the politics of representation interlace with the communication of historical events. Strömberg argues that film-induced tourism can contribute to a post-industrial sense of community, but he simultaneously asks whether local economic considerations have replaced the significance and potential of media as the all-important factor that decides if a place is to be transformed into a media tourist attraction.

The three scholarly articles are supplemented by four more reflective and impressionistic essays, by academics and practitioners, about a range of aspects of literary and media tourism. The essay

'The Hans Christian Andersen Trail' by Ane Grum-Schwensen and Johs. Nørregaard Frandsen, both affiliated with the Hans Christian Andersen Center at the University of Southern Denmark, describes a specific practice where history is communicated to a tourist audience. Nørregaard Frandsen and Grum-Schwensen have been responsible for the development of the app *The Hans Christian Andersen Trail* that presents a route around the island of Funen to eighteen mansions or castles visited by Hans Christian Andersen during his lifetime. In the essay, the authors explain that both ethics and target group represented important considerations and practical challenges when it was made possible for tourists to drive in Andersen's wheel tracks.

Catherine Lefebvre, curator of Danish author Karen Blixen's home at Rungstedlund, pays attention to another challenge in media tourism, namely the sustainability and life span of media. Lefebvre argues that in order to keep an author's birthplace alive as a tourist attraction, literature must be presented to people in unexpected places. In her essay 'Accidental Tourists' Lefebvre illustrates her point with an example of how the legacy of Blixen was moved from Rungstedlund during the environmental summit COP15 in Copenhagen. Rungstedlund wanted to draw attention to Blixen as a forerunner of globalisation. The museum distributed a speech by Blixen in the Copenhagen Metro, and thus transformed public transport into a literary space. Based on this example, Lefebvre suggests that by staging literature in alternative or 'disobedient' ways, it becomes possible to meet a potential audience in constant flow, and make them 'literary tourists by accident'.

In her essay 'Hans Christian Andersen Was (NOT) Here', Henriette Steiner takes quite the opposite point of departure, as she describes the scenario when she deliberately looked for an in-authentic staging of an apartment in Copenhagen where Hans Christian Andersen once resided. Steiner's essay makes another significant theme in media tourism studies topical; namely the individual bodily experience in mediated places. Steiner thus actualises the different modes of experience and senses of authenticity present at mediated sites, and she argues that these places present a 'rather uncanny dialectic between nearness and alienation' because they contain the 'spectres' of icons (Steiner, this issue).

The link between literature and heritage is also the centre of attention in curator Ejnar Stig Askgaard's essay 'Odense: The City of Literature', but Askgaard does not choose the obvious canonised example of how literature has affected the city: Hans Christian Andersen. Instead, Askgaard's examples of how Odense has been a place of literary heritage since it became a city (and thus long before Hans Christian Andersen's lifetime) are retrieved from the archives of literary history. With these examples of connections between significant writings and the urban space of Odense, Askgaard's essay directs our attention to another significant aspect of media tourism studies: that the staging of media is always a result of negotiation. In the case of Odense, the connection between the city and the world famous writer Hans Christian Andersen surpassed another possible urban narrative: Odense as the capital city of Danish literature in general. Askgaard argues that instead of leaving local literary history in the archive, Odense could become an even more powerful literary attraction if the narrative about Hans Christian Andersen was combined with the broader narrative about literary history in the staging of the city.

As this special issue is only a first attempt at Scandinavian media tourism as a joint field of study, the question remains open as to whether there are specific and shared regional traits in Scandinavian media tourism. Whether mediated places in Scandinavia hold in common some 'layers' of either fact, fiction or the field of tension between them, and whether the collisions between market and media have specific Scandinavian traits, are obvious themes for future studies. A place to look for possible common tendencies could – ironically – be in the darkness. Scandinavia is famous worldwide for its production of dark media. Both classical literature, represented by for example Henrik Ibsen, Hans Christian Andersen, Knut Hamsun and August Strindberg, directors such as Ingmar Bergman and Lars von Trier, and high-quality television drama series like *Broen*, *Riget*, *Forbrydelsen* and *Wallander* all revolve around the dark sides of both people and places. To stage these dark sites and people as appealing, 'authentic' tourist attractions is perhaps a common Scandinavian challenge in present and future media tourism.

Endnotes

¹ The term ‘induced’ is adopted by several contributors to this theme issue. The term was first used in connection with tourism by Sue Beeton in the book *Film-induced Tourism* (Channel View Publications, 2005).

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