

Tourism and Cultural Change



Re-Investing Authenticity

Tourism, Place
and Emotions



Edited by
Britta Timm Knudsen
and Anne Marit Waade

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

A catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.
Tourism, Place and Emotions/Edited by Britta Timm Knudsen and Anne Marit Waade.
Tourism and Cultural Change.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
1. Tourism—Psychological aspects. 2. Geographical perception. 3. Authenticity (Philosophy) I. Timm Knudsen, Britta. II. Waade, Anne Marit. III. Title. IV. Series.
G155.A1T592432 2010
338.4'791-dc22 2009033599

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue entry for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN-13: 978-1-84541-128-2 (hbk)

ISBN-13: 978-1-84541-127-5 (pbk)

Channel View Publications

UK: St Nicholas House, 31–34 High Street, Bristol BS1 2AW, UK.

USA: UTP, 2250 Military Road, Tonawanda, NY 14150, USA.

Canada: UTP, 5201 Dufferin Street, North York, Ontario M3H 5T8, Canada.

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Typeset by The Charlesworth Group

Printed and bound in Great Britain by Short Run Press Ltd.

Acknowledgements

This book is the result of a comprehensive and collaborative process of researchers gathering in different contexts and dealing with meaning and production of places. The book is also part of an ongoing interdisciplinary and international research work and network process. Many researchers, guest speakers and colleagues have been involved, and many people as well as institutions appropriate to thank.

The Scandinavian Research Network on Emotional Geography includes institutions and enthusiastic people playing an important role in relation to this book. Different guest lectures, seminars and research workshops have been arranged, and we would like to thank John Urry, David Crouch and Nigel Thrift for inspiring and valuable meetings. We also wish to thank colleagues at the University of Lund: Thomas O'Dell, Erika Andersson Cederholm, Richard Ek, Johan Hultman, Jan-Henrik Nilsson and Orvar Löfgren, as well as Troels Degn Johansson in Copenhagen and colleagues at Roskilde University: Ole Jørgen Bærenholdt, Kirsten Simonsen, Jonas Larsen and Michael Haldrup for their engagement. We thank Anne Marie Pahuus, Anke Tonnaer and Mads Daubjerg from Aarhus University for their input to our seminars, too; and we are indebted towards colleagues from Aarhus University for taking part in organising seminars, networks and discussions: Louise Fabian, Nina Schriver, Sine Agergaard, Jonas Fritsch and Bodil Marie Thomsen.

We would equally like to thank colleagues and research fellows at our places of work, respectively Scandinavian Studies and Media Studies at Aarhus University, especially Kirsten Frandsen, leader of the National Research Project on Television Entertainment, as well as Gunhild Agger, leader of the National Research Project on Crime Fiction and Crime Journalism in Scandinavia. We would not be able to do this work without their input and acceptance. The conference on Emotional Geography at Queens University, Kingston, Ontario in Canada 2006 has also been of importance to this book, and we would like to thank the organisers as well as the inspiring people we met there, especially Kay Milton and Claire Daméry. We are additionally grateful to organisers and members of the Research Priority Area Globalisation at Aarhus University for both financial support and opportunities to meet, exchange and

present ongoing research work. A special thank you goes to members of the Interdisciplinary Network on Travelogues as Global Stories and the cooperation with the Scandinavian Conference on Travelogues in Relation to Old and New Media.

The Aarhus University Research Foundation has offered financial support to the project of publishing *Re-investing Authenticity*.

Last but not least we would like to say thank you to Mike Robinson and Alison Phipps for their exceptionally valuable, kind and professional cooperation to get where we are now with the publication. A special and warm thank you, too, goes to the unknown referees who have done a great job and without whom we would not be able to present the book as it appears today.

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Aarhus/Loughborough
May 2009

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Preface

In the early 1970s Dean MacCannell for the first time introduced the concept of staged authenticity in tourism. In 2007 Pine and Gilmore published the book *Authenticity: What Consumers Really Want*. Pine and Gilmore are not only thinking of tourism, but of consumer culture in general. In this period of nearly 40 years, the discussion of what authenticity really means has been going on in many different academic fields, from questions about realism, representation and reality in aesthetics and media studies, to 'authenticity as idea' related to national identity and cultural heritage, as well as 'authenticity as strategy' in marketing and place branding. Our ambition has been to view the question of authenticity as a cultural concept in tourism and consumer culture from different analytical views, and relate the discussions of authenticity in tourism studies to other theoretical and academic fields.

Researching authenticity regarding spatial experience, emotional and embodied geography has regained new interest. Many recent phenomena within the cultural economy (Ray & Sayer, 1999; Gay & Pryke, 2002) such as tourism, leisure time experiences, individual and collective identity- and history management, branding and marketing utilise authenticity strategies as important components in their design in order to appeal to certain emotional modes amongst the receivers/users. Emotional geography is a growing field of interdisciplinary research in which the second stage of globalisation and its localisation strategies is reflected, together with the effect of the experience economical paradigmatic shift (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Gilles Lipovetsky, 2006), the increasing 'culturalisation' of the market as well as the 'marketisation' of culture (Ray & Sayer, 1999; Gay & Pryke, 2002) and the new economy in the cultural field (Löfgren & Willem, 2005).

The 21 contributors to this volume have been part of the Scandinavian Network on Globalisation and Emotional Geography, and the researchers represent a considerable range of disciplines such as literary studies; media and communication studies; cultural studies; geography of media; studies of religion; ethnography; sports science; service management; creative industries research; history and area studies; and business administration. Since 2005 the network has organised several conferences, for example

Places of Memory (Aarhus, Denmark 2005); *Fantastic Places: Staging and Experiencing Provinces in Scandinavian Tourism* (Aarhus, Denmark 2006); *the Tourist Gaze, and the Question of Authenticity* (Aarhus, Denmark 2007); and *Emotional Geography, Emotions, Materiality and Mythologies* (Helsingborg, Sweden 2008). The people and authors behind this book are taking part in an ongoing international interdisciplinary engagement with fruitful exchange and development, and we are happy to present the ideas and work that the authors have been dealing with to a broad and international audience.

The book includes empirical as well as theoretical reflections upon the several levels and expressions of authenticity and presents a range of suggestive studies of cases and places both inside and outside the Scandinavian context. The book is meant for students, teachers and researchers in the fields of cultural studies, Scandinavian studies, geography, media, experience economy, arts management and tourism, as well as place branding and city planning.

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Chapter 1

Performative Authenticity in Tourism and Spatial Experience: Rethinking the Relations Between Travel, Place and Emotion

BRITTA TIMM KNUDSEN AND ANNE MARIT WAADE

Introduction

As the concept of authenticity continues to haunt consumers and cultures, Pine and Gilmore (2007: xii) argue: 'Now more than ever, the authentic is what consumers really want.' For Pine and Gilmore the craving for authenticity is a reaction to a strong technologically mediated, commercialised and socially constructed reality. One could think of this 'craving' as a 'longing' for the immediate, non-commercialised, brute natural world, characterised by the *real* authentic.

In this chapter we suggest that the reaction to, or the longing for, something other than a mediated, commercialised and socially constructed reality is neither a 'thing' you can possess nor a 'state of mind', but something which people can *do* and a feeling which is *experienced*. In this sense, authenticity is performed, and through the term performative authenticity we aim at bridging the two positions that have emerged in tourism studies with respect to the concept of authenticity, namely: object-related (authenticity synonymous to original and trace) and subject-related modes of authenticity (existential authenticity covering bodily feelings, emotional ties, identity construction and narration related to place). Through the notion of performative authenticity we wish to point to the transitional and transformative processes inherent in the action of authentication in addition to the contradictory position existing between phenomenological and social constructivist perspectives in which meanings and feelings of self and place are both constructed and lived through the sensuous body.

Authentication is taking place in between two entities and expresses the interrelatedness of different entities. Whether one is a performing body or a city/region/country, it is possible to 'authenticate' sites, sights, places and to enhance the tourist's/traveller's understanding and their sense of intimacy, self-reflection and feelings toward their surroundings. The media play an important role in the concept of performative authenticity on several levels. Novels, film, television series and documentaries provide representations of place which can stimulate a 'desire' to visit a destination. Various other forms of *in-situ* media such as DVD narrations and audio guides, along with personal guides, act to document and enhance experience on site. The media in various forms also play a significant role in the communicative afterlife of a site visit. Performative authenticity is related to a striving towards indexical authenticity – a view of the place as the real thing – and it is the relation between these two actions/strivings that we develop further throughout this chapter.

In rethinking the relationships between travel, place and emotion we want to bring tourist-specific discussions into broader interdisciplinary and theoretical perspectives, in which representation, spatial practice and emotions are reflected. This book includes empirical as well as theoretical reflections regarding several levels and expressions of authenticity and presents a range of suggestive studies of cases and places both inside and outside the Scandinavian context.

Several topics are raised by the authors in their chapters, regarding authenticity and place. There are five main perspectives represented:

- (1) developing new theoretical concepts;
- (2) mediated places;
- (3) place performances and rituals;
- (4) emotionalised places; and
- (5) branded places.

Some of the authors, such as Gran and Jansson, suggest new elements of theory on issues concerning investing in places economically, corporeally, emotionally and symbolically. Regarding the mediation of places and how media influence emotions and spatial experience, case studies cover writing about pervasive gaming in Stockholm (Sandvik); travelogues from the Far East (Ringgaard); personal photo narratives from Greenland (Sandbye); and online travelling and Google Earth communities (Linaa Jensen). Even though all of the chapters include, in one way or another, place performances, some of the authors deal with the concept in specific

ways, such as Månsson's work on literary tourism to Scotland; Gyimóthy's work on sport tourism in Western Norway; Sjöholm's work on 'murder walks' in the Swedish of Ystad; and Kayser Nielsen's work on the small village Keuruu in Finland. Contributors emphasising the emotionalising of places through myths and sacredness include Selberg, who looks at sacred geography in Norway; Klitgaard Povlsen, who examines the myths surrounding the place of Kullaberg in Sweden; and Refslund Christensen and Østergaard, who look at pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. Perspectives on place branding are represented in this volume through analyses of: urban design in Copenhagen (Buhl Hornskov); the branding of major cities such as Berlin and Singapore (Ooi and Stöber); the hybridity of Scandinavian place Solvang in California (Pico Larsen); and the project of Global City in Aarhus Denmark (Aagaard). In total the volume represents a comprehensive interdisciplinary approach to the study of authenticity and place experience as cultural production from both inside and outside of the Scandinavian context.

In this introductory chapter we examine the claim for 're-investing' authenticity in the light of the broader cultural frameworks of the new economy and discuss the various conceptualisations of authenticity under the following headings before introducing our own term of performative authenticity:

- *From sign to intensity* – whereby we consider the shift from a sign economy to an affective and intensive economy;
- *Emotional geography* – where we discuss this term as it is used to characterise experiences of places within the context of globalisation;
- *Hunger for reality and the indexical authenticity* – where we establish an understanding of the re-investing authenticity claim through a striving for the real;
- *Augmented feeling of authenticity* – where we position the concept in a more philosophical context.
- *Authenticity as a key issue in tourism studies* – which presents important conceptualisations of authenticity in tourism studies. We suggest two aspects of performative authenticity, either relating empathetically to the other or connecting affectively to the world.

We believe the re-investment of authenticity expresses a general discursive frame that includes different agents at different levels. Both individuals, institutions and organizations, e.g. cities, travel agencies, local authorities, agents in cultural and artistic industries, event-managers are taking part in this process.