Where fiction really exists:
The staging and experience of authenticity in the literary icon-city

Anne Klara Bom

Abstract

Denne artikel fokuserer på, hvordan autenticitet iscenesættes og opleves i litterære ikon-byer. En litterær ikon-by er en by, der har opnået en ikonisk status, fordi et litterært ikon enten har boet der, skrevet om byen eller begge dele. Den litterære ikon-by defineres som et "medieret center": et sted, der – i dets medierede form – rummer forskellige appeller til autenticitet og mulige svar på disse autenticitetsappeller. Når de besøgende oplever et "match" mellem deres egne forestillinger og den fysiske virkelighed, opstår en særlig form for deltagelse, hvor den litterære ikon-bys iscenesættelse af ikonet sætter rammerne for dynamiske forhandlinger om den litterære kultur-arvs betydning. For at kunne undersøge disse processer, præsenterer artiklen en firedelt typologi, der kan bruges i analyser af, hvad der er på spil, når mennesker inviteres til at engagere sig i den litterære ikon-by, og typologien forklares og testes med den svenske forfatter Astrid Lindgrens Vimmerby som eksempel. Typologien tager højde for, at ikon-byer kan rumme flere typer af appeller, og at det er muligt for den samme besøgende at opsøge for-skellige former for autenticitet i den litterære ikon-by.

The prime focus of this paper is how authenticity is staged an experienced in literary icon-cities. A literary icon-city is a city that has gained iconic status because a literary icon either lived there, wrote about the city or both. The literary icon-city is conceptualised as a "mediated centre": as a site that – in its mediated form – presents different kinds of authenticity and possible responses to these authenticity appeals. When visitors experience a "match" between their own conceptions and the physical reality, a special form of participation emerges where the staging of the icon in the literary icon-city frames the dynamic negotiations of the significance of literary heritage. In order to examine these dimensions further, the paper presents a four-part typology that can shed light on what is at stake when people are invited become involved in the literary icon-city, and the typology is explained and tested by use of the Swedish author Astrid Lindgren's Vimmerby as an example. The typology takes into account that icon-cities can contain several types of appeals and that it is possible for the same visitor to look for different types of authenticity in the literary icon-city.

Introduction

Some people leave so profound an imprint because of their life and work that their history of effect is reflected in generation after generation. As these people are repeatedly integrated in new cultural contexts, they transform into *more* than their biography and their work. The meaning and value added to them makes them specific signi-fiers of cultures, and when they are used as representatives of local, national or global narratives, they become

iconic (Bom 2015: 36). A literary icon-city is a city that has gained this status because a literary icon either lived there, wrote fiction about the city or both.

When tourists visit literary icon-cities, they are encouraged to involve themselves in both the factual (biographical) and fictional environments relating to the literary icons in question, as "imagined worlds vie with real-life experiences" in literary places (Herbert, 1995: 33). The "imagined worlds", however, have already been constructed in the minds of tourists prior to their actual visit to the literary icon-city, as they have "visited" the places via descriptions of them in books and other media (Jansson 2002). By use of media scholar Nick Couldry's concept, it can be argued that literary icon-cities present "mediated centres" (Couldry 2003: 45): places that have been mediated "and therefore have become 'special' in a way that they were not prior to mediation" (Peaslee 2011: 41). The central aim of this paper is to examine further this "special" character of literary icon-cities. It is suggested that icon-cities have the potential to generate authentic experiences because they give participants (here = tourists) "momentary proximity to the unobtainable" (ibid.), namely physical contact with the icon, be it the author figure and/or her fiction.

When the individual imagined worlds collide with the physical staging of the icon in the literary icon-city, a complex mix between the public and the private sphere emerges. Literary tourism scholar Shelagh Squire has described the complexity like this:

> "Once published, a novel becomes public property. But when people incorporate literary
> meanings into their own lives, the book again fulfills a private function. Similarly, when a
> literary setting is developed for tourism, the private becomes an object of public scrutiny.
> As visitors make sense of their encounters with literary places, private meanings are likely
> to interact with public forms and images." (Squire 1994: 107)

In icon-cities, the icon is reflected in many different forms of organisation, spanning from museums over theme parks to municipal city-branding. As the individual interaction with "public forms and images" can take place on many levels, tourism developers cannot control where, how and why the visitors "recognize the location and match it with their own preconceived mental cartographies in order to generate a sense of authenticity" (Peaslee 2011: 44). Thus, the individual demands for and experiences of authenticity become pivotal to examine if we want to understand the participatory practices that are reflected in the dynamic (re-)productions of the icon's significance as literary heritage that take place in the literary icon-city.

The Swedish author Astrid Lindgren is a literary icon. With her native town and source of inspiration Vimmerby as an example, the topic of interest in this paper is to test a four-part typology that will hopefully prove to be an analytical strategic tool in examinations of how authenticity is staged and experienced in literary icon-cities. Such a typology is important, firstly because many different elements in the urban space can appear "unobtainable" as "a single visitor may have multiple reasons for visiting the site" (Heidelberg 2015: 84) and secondly because multiple visitors can have even more different reasons for visiting the same site. Vimmerby is chosen as the case example because it presents several different forms of organisation in the staging of its icon. Despite its rather humble size, tourists can visit Lindgren's original childhood home, walk the streets of both Lindgren and her characters, visit film locations and enjoy themselves in the theme park Astrid Lindgren's World.

Just decades ago, literary tourists were "literary pilgrims" (Pocock 1992): a narrow audience of well-read and well-educated people who visited literary sites because of their indisputable link to authors and their works. Today, literary places appeal to a much broader target audience and as a consequence of this, "(l)iterary

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). Thus, it is complex to identify and examine the "special" character of literary icon-cities, as it is contingent and dependent on the individual experience of it: For one tourist, the geographical specificity of a literary work will create a sense of proximity and authenticity, and for another tourist it is the amusement park with its commercialisation of the literary work that acts as a catalyst for the authentic experience.

Whether it is fact or fiction, material objects or immaterial ideas that attract tourists to the literary icon-city, all tourists have the same goal with their visit: They want to cross a boundary and get as close to the icon as possible in order to activate affects and emotions. As communication scholar Robert Peaslee states: "Affect relies upon proximity. We want to see things 'up close'" (2011: 49). As a mediated centre, the literary icon-city contains this "up close" level for tourists to get involved in. Every literary icon-city has reached its status because an author once had a relation to it, and thus, it contains some kind of heritage that can be contemplated, staged and experienced as authentic. Thus, the city contains a possibility for participation in the processes where literary heritage is passed on to the next generation (Graham, Ashworth & Tunbridge 2000): a process that ensures that the significance of literary icons, works and places is sustained. Because of the mediation of the city, people "feel invited, committed and/or empowered" to participate in these processes and thus, cultural engagement with authentic elements in the literary icon-city can be perceived as a "prerequisite (…) for participation" (Dahlgren 2011: 8).

The staging and experience of authenticity

In the literary icon-city, both the iconic figure and the iconic fiction are potential objects for mediation in the urban space. The icon (in both manifestations) have historical, "authentic" relations to the cities, but the cities are also "augmented" (Sandvik & Waade 2008), as fictive layers are either physically or mentally added to the urban space. In this sense, a mix between the material and the immaterial, the tangible and the intangible, the authentic and the non-authentic, is presented.

Authenticity has been a dominant theme within cultural tourism research for the past decades. As more and more scholars have presented their proposals to how the concept can be defined and put to use, it has become increasingly evident that authenticity is not what it once was. Once, "authentic" was a word used in curatorial contexts, where it meant that an object did not contain any traces of social construction. The object was authentic if it was "what it appears to be or is claimed to be, and therefore (…) worth the admiration it is given" (Trilling 1972: 93, cited in Cohen 1988: 374). This object-oriented conceptualisation of authenticity, where the authentic is perceived as a question of either authentic or non-authentic – a "true" or "false" that can be measured – was imported to early perspectives on authenticity in tourism studies (Boorstin 1964; MacCannell 1973; 1976). As the humanistic approach moved further and further away from the idea of obtainable objectivity, the concept of authenticity has been defined as always negotiable; depending on the context in which it is presented and experienced (Cohen 1988; Fawcett and Cormack 2001; Jamal and Hill 2004; Reisinger and Steiner 2006). This social constructivist paradigm in cultural tourism studies of authenticity has also replaced the actual (in-)authentic *object* as the preferred object of analysis with the different *ways* in which people *experience* the specific object as authentic (Wang 1999). Within this paradigm, questions such as how authenticity is felt and how these feelings are expressed have been central. With the affective turn, the analytical gaze is now on how people feel, how they express and perform these feelings and how feelings relate to language and discourse (Ahmed 2004a; 2004b; Clough with Halley 2007; Massumi 2002; Wetherell 2012). This is also the case within the field of cultural tourism, where concepts linking affect with places, such as "spatial phantasmagoria" (Jansson 2002),

"emotional geographies" (Thrift 1999; 2004), "imaginative geographies" (Light 2009) and "performative authenticity" (Knudsen & Waade 2010), have been introduced recently. As cultural scholars Britta Timm Knudsen and Anne Marit Waade argue:

> "If authenticity is no longer to be seen as objective qualities in objects or places, but rather something experienced through the body, through performance, management and media, authenticity becomes a feeling you can achieve. In tourism, authenticity is a feeling you can experience in relation to place." (Knudsen & Waade 2010: 5)

It can seem reductive to define authenticity in the curatorial manner, with the tangible elements of the cities as the only objects of interest, but it can seem just as challenging to reduce research in authenticity of literary icon-cities to feelings achieved on a site, as this perspective puts the analytical weight on the individually embodied experience and disregards the materiality of the icon-city. In his widely cited paper "Rethinking authenticity in tourism experience" (1999), Wang presented the important argument that "the issue of authenticity in tourism can be differentiated into two separate issues: that of tourist *experiences* (or authentic *experiences*) and that of toured *objects*" (351).

In continuation of Wang's perspective, it can be argued that as the icon-city consists of both material and immaterial (affective) components, the authenticity of both the "objects" and "experiences" are at stake in such places: Authenticity is a tool that is put to use, both when it comes to the staging and the experience of the city. The tourism developers have the agenda of staging the particular city and thus different levels of participation are constructed and offered to the city's visitors. These levels consist of tangible elements, such as historical objects in museums and other strategic accentuations of iconic objects and environments, but the staging is always accompanied by intangible elements as well, as different staging actors supply the objects and environments with culturally specific narratives, convictions and affects. As Peaslee has put it: "We understand the appeal that is being made to us, and we respond to that call with our thoughts, words and actions (…) We simultaneously act and *en*act" (Peaslee 2011: 40). Thus, authenticity plays a vital role both on the different participatory levels that contain *appeals* for authenticity and in the different ways tourists become involved in these levels and *respond* to the appeals.

The icon-city as a mediated centre

This gap between the staging of and the involvement in authentic elements in literary icon-cities reveals a field of tension or a "site of struggle" (Hall 1981: 233) where different mediations of the icon, her works and her city either collide or interact, as tourism developers present discourses about the icon to potential visitors, and tourists represent themselves through the different discursive resources presented to them and thereby add new symbolic and discursive meaning to the urban space. What is at stake in these struggles over meaning is that tourists have already "met" the iconic places in mediated forms in literature. Imagined and pre-fabricated images of places are very powerful elements in both the framings and experiences of authenticity (Crang 1998; Herbert 1995; Sjöholm 2010; Squire 1994; Teo & Yeoh 1997; Wang 1999; Waade 2013) All kinds of media – brochures, commercials, the internet, literature, film, TV-shows – offer full images of actual places long before people actually arrive there, and thus, "mediated images are (…) becoming the 'originals' against which experiences of simulated landscapes and socioscapes are measured" (Jansson 2002: 439). In these processes, people need first to "recognize the location and match it with their own preconceived mental cartographies in order to generate a sense of authenticity" (Peaslee 2011: 44). When this match between imagination and actual experience of a physical space

occurs, the tourist will experience a sense of proximity to spatial elements that have been framed as special, both in literature and by tourism developers. In this way, the literary icon-city can be conceived as what Couldry has termed a "mediated centre" (2003: 45). With this concept, Couldry argues that the media have the power to communicate narratives about specific "centres" in the social world, and as these places are framed as more special than other places, "the myth of the mediated centre" is constructed. Couldry pays specific attention to places featured in TV-programmes or films, as these landscapes represent "'the myth of the mediated centre' mapped onto actual space" (2003: 75). According to Couldry, this materialisation of media power and authority trigger people to perform what he terms "media pilgrimages" that are "journeys to points with significance in media narratives" (ibid: 76):

> "Through media pilgrimages, not only is the abstract nature of the media production system 're-embedded' in an encounter, for example, with a site of filming or a celebrity, but the significance of places 'in' the media is more generally confirmed. The media pilgrimage is both a real journey across space, and an acting out *in space* of the constructed 'distance' between 'ordinary world' and 'media world'." (ibid: 76-77)

In the case of literary icon-cities, this means that when actual processes of proximity take place, tourists both confirm the existence of places first presented to them in the media and thereby participate in the processes where literary heritage is supplied with the significance and symbolic meaning that sustains its status as heritage. In this sense, the literary icon-city can be conceived as a mediated stage that accommodates the dynamic processes where authenticity is constantly articulated and negotiated. According to media scholar André Jansson, this activates another concept of authenticity: "The modern objectivist notion of authenticity (…) is confronted by a more relativistic, postmodern, sense of the word, implying 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" (ibid.). The literary icon-city contains many places in one urban space, and the cultural object(s) in literary icon-cities can take many forms, spanning from the indisputably authentic to the completely fake. The ways tourists and tourism developers engage spatially with the tangible and intangible iconic elements in the urban space can vary from city to city, from spectator to spectator in the same city, and from place to place for the same spectator. As a consequence of this, authenticity in the literary icon-city emerges in a contingent interplay between mediation, curated orchestration and the individual "sight of the site" (Peaslee 2011: 44). The four-part typology presented below takes into account that the conditions for and expressions of the enactments that occur when people become involved in authentic elements in the literary icon-city are contingent for at least two reasons: Firstly, because the appeals for authenticity and proximity are coterminous with the changeable hegemonic convictions in each city, and secondly, because different people have different perceptions of and expectations to the encounter with both the icon and the city.

The four-part typology

This four-part typology is conceived as a proposal that must be tested in future analyses of what is at stake in the tension field between the participatory claims of authenticity and responses to them that emerge when tourists engage with the literary icon-city. The typology consists of four place categories – spanning from authentic to inauthentic (in the curatorial sense of the word) – and with them four discursive invitations to cultural engagement. These four categories appeal to four different perceptions of authenticity, thereby staging four positions

from which the place authenticity can be approached, re-articulated and re-negotiated through cultural engagement. The place categories and possible responses are as follows:

Spatial appeals to authenticity	Available responses to the appeals
Historical places with factual relation to the icon	Objectively authentic experience within a factual frame of reference
Real places that have inspired the icon in his/her work	Objectively authentic experience within a fictive frame of reference
Fictional places presented in real fragments	Subjectively authentic experience within a factual frame of reference
"Genuine fakes" – invented fictive places	Subjectively authentic experience within a fictive frame of reference

With this typology it will be argued that even though the gaze at authenticity in tourism has changed from modern to postmodern over the last decades (Wang 1999), both object- and experience-oriented authenticity can constitute the literary icon-city as a mediated centre.

The literary icon-city Vimmerby is used to illustrate the typology. Vimmerby is the birthplace and source of inspiration of the Swedish author Astrid Lindgren. Astrid Lindgren was a famous author of books for children. She created characters and stories that are still significant parts of the literary heritage, especially in Scandinavia and the rest of Northern Europe. Lindgren was born in Vimmerby in Småland in 1907 and the town remained important to her all her life. She died in 2002 and is now buried on the graveyard in Vimmerby. The material included in the presentation of the typology consists of my own observations in Vimmerby, carried out in May and July 2014, and of material from different web-sites and blogs.

Historical places with factual relation to the icon

Places or sites that fall into this category are for example grave sites or buildings that have been inhabited by the icon. These kinds of places can be perceived as authentic in the curatorial sense of the concept, as there can be no discussion about whether or not they are historically related to the icon that signifies the city.

In Vimmerby, such places are Lindgren's grave site and her childhood home. Today, the latter is a part of the biographically oriented museum centre, Astrid Lindgren's Näs, where the guided tours are accompanied by Lindgren's own voice that tell the tourists about her childhood in the house. Lindgren lived in house till the age of 12. In her late fifties, she bought it back, and decorated it exactly as she remembered it from her childhood. Thus, the house contains several original objects that belonged to the Lindgren family. On the website of Astrid Lindgren's Näs, the spatial dimension of the indisputable authenticity of the house is accentuated:

> "It was here at Näs that she climbed into lemonade tree (which still remains in the garden) and played with her siblings in the woodshed. It was here she jumped in the hay and listened to tales in Kristin's kitchen. (…) Right here at Näs."[1]

The use of the spatial marker "it was here" creates an intense degree of proximity to the icon and thus, the presentation can be analysed as an invitation to a mediated centre. Mostly, this marker is attached to things people know Lindgren did at Näs as a child: She played with her siblings, jumped in the hay and listened to tales. What she did *not* do, however, was climb the lemonade tree, as the lemonade tree is a tree that grows lemonade

in the tales about Pippi Longstocking. The tree at Näs is of course not a lemonade tree but an old elm tree that inspired Lindgren to invent the fictional tree in Pippi. Thus, the staged authenticity of the childhood home contains a fictional element too. Nonetheless, the appeal to authenticity in the curatorial sense of the concept is the main content of the site description:

> "Her childhood home is still intact, as it was when Astrid was a little girl. It was Astrid
> herself who restored the first floor to its original condition. Most of the original furniture
> and belongings are still there, making it a great, absolutely unique and genuine experience
> to visit the childhood home."[2]

In this articulation, the site is connected with signifiers such as "intact", "original", "real" and "unique", and it is accentuated that the house is preserved "as it was" when Lindgren was a little girl. As objects with documented relation to Lindgren are highlighted; the authentic is presented as tangible and measurable. Thereby, it appeals to what can be termed *objectively authentic experiences within a factual frame of reference*: The visitors are encouraged to approach the authentic elements with a true/false approach where they respond to the facts presented to them, thus grading the level of authenticity in terms similar to the way they are presented to them. A reviewer on the travel website tripadvisor.com describes her experience in the childhood home like this:

> "The guided tours in the childhood home give you a special sensation. You see before
> your eyes what it looked like when Astrid and her siblings were little, how life worked out
> for the family and the people who worked on the farm"[3]

Despite the magnetic, tangible authenticity of this place, and despite the fact that all icon-cities contain elements that can be perceived as authentic in this curatorial sense of the concept, these sites are, however, not always presented as the mediated centre of the cities. There can be many reasons for this.[4] In the case of literary icon-cities, the reason is quite frequently the iconic fictional works created by the icon.

Real places that have inspired the icon in his/her work

This place category encompasses for example landscapes, buildings and geographical locations: Places that exist physically but have been presented in powerful fictional versions in such media as literature or film. In Vimmerby, the town worked as a source of inspiration to Lindgren, and it is presented in mediated forms in many of her most beloved tales. Thus, Lindgren's fiction reflects many actual places in the town.

One example of this is to be found in the graveyard. Not far away from Lindgren's final resting place, there is a grave with a cross and names of the two baby Phalén brothers. For a while, Lindgren had wanted to write a tale about a place in the afterworld. Recollecting her stop at this grave, Lindgren said: "I knew then that is was going to be a fairytale about death and about two brothers."[5] The result was the tale of The Brothers Lionheart. With this tangible source of Lindgren's fiction, visitors encounter the physical reminder that she was here in front of this actual grave, and that one of her famous tales originates from this exact spot. The full image – the tale about the brothers Jonatan and Rusky who live in Nangijala after their death, only exists in mediated forms and in the mind of the person standing in front of the grave, and thus, individual "mental cartographies" (Peaslee 2011: 44) are needed for an authentic experience.

The earlier mentioned "lemonade tree" at Näs is also a place that falls into this category. As mentioned earlier, the tree is presented to tourists as the "real" lemonade tree on the website of Astrid Lindgren's Näs. In a

description of the same tree on Astrid Lindgren's official website, however, it is clear that the authenticity of the tree is rooted in both fiction and fact: "The Lemonade Tree in the Villa Villekulla garden – the one with the hollow trunk where Pippi, Tommy and Annika found lemonade – was one of the ancient elm trees which are still there at Näs."[6] Thus, the elm tree exists – it is a tangible object in the garden at Näs, but the lemonade tree only exists in its mediated form in Lindgren's tales. On these locations in Vimmerby, the icon Lindgren is not the only one who is presented. Her tales are also situated in physical places and thus they present a more complex form of authenticity where fact and fiction intertwine. Thus, people are encouraged to engage simultaneously with both the factual location and the fictional place it has been transformed into in the tales.

According to media scholars Sandvik and Waade's concept of "augmentation", an extra layer of meaning is added to these places by means of *narrativization* "in which the place constitutes a scene for the performance of 'true' stories" (Sandvik & Waade 2008: 4). The scholars further argue that for this type of augmentation to work, a response from the people who experience the particular space is required: "Augmentation of place by means of narrativization thus implies and element of performativity: the place comes into being through our performance (actions, movement, navigation…)" (5). In the case of the real places in the literary icon-city that have inspired icons to their work, this means that people must accept and respond to the narratives that are staged as embedded in the urban space. While the authentic elements in these places are still indisputable – the tree and the cross are both real, tangible objects – the framing of the place authenticity contains a fictional layer. With these framings, the locations appeal to what can be termed *objectively authentic experiences within a fictional frame of reference*: The tangible and measurable aspects of authenticity are still central in the construction – but the fictional aspects of the places are highlighted and accepted as integral parts of them at the same time. Thus, visitors will relate to the fiction of the literary icons when the physical facts are presented to them. An example of this can be found in this journalist's description of her travels around Vimmerby in Astrid Lindgren's footsteps. When she describes the hotel in the city centre, she writes:"… the pink hotel is one of proud old buildings of the city. It is from 1868 and was, by the way, the place where Astrid Lindgren attended dances with Mardie, whose real name Anne-Marie Ingeström"[7]

Locations within this place category hold in common that the physical/real in the urban space prevails fiction in the way they are framed. People who perceive these locations as "special" will do so because they are looking for the authentic roots of both the icon and her imagination, simultaneously. This double aim is put like this by a blogger who visited Vimmerby: "It was so nice to be able to put the author of my beloved childhood books into context and walk the streets of her childhood."[8]

Fictional places presented in real fragments

The third category of locations that can be staged as elements in the mediated centre is fictional places presented through real fragments. This category still highlights the intertwining of fact and fiction. But this time, fiction presents the full image and facts are fragmentary.

A few kilometres outside Vimmerby, tourists can visit the area of Sevedstorp. The area consists of three small cottages – Lindgren's father grew up in the middle one. But the reason why these three cottages are tourist attractions is *not* the Lindgren family's historical relation to the area. It attracts tourists because Lindgren transformed the cottages into "Noisy Village" in her tales about The Children in Noisy Village. This place category is complex, as Sevedstorp exists, but Noisy Village only exists in fiction and in people's imagination. In the case of Sevedstorp, many visitors have "visited" the place as Noisy Village, both in the books and the later films,[9] before their actual visit. In line with Sandvik and Waade, the village is augmented by way of "fictionalization", "where the actual place functions as a setting for fictions" (Sandvik & Waade 2008: 5). As an example of fictionalisation,

Sandvik and Waade use another icon-city, namely the Swedish city Ystad, home of author Henning Mankell's famous detective Wallander, where "the *concept* and the imagination of Ystad as a city and physical, geographical location, can hardly be distinguished from the crime stories and the popularity of Wallander's Ystad" (8). This augmentation of the urban space of Ystad, Sandvik and Waade argue, has changed the identity of the town and now, "tourists visiting Ystad visit at the same time a real and a fictional town and telling the two apart is quite difficult" (5). In a similar way, the fictionalisation of Sevedstorp has equipped it with a new and inescapable identity as Noisy Village. The augmented character of Sevedstorp is acknowledged at the staging level, as the signs leading to the village present both the real and fictional signifier for the area. Visitors approach this area with individually constructed images of the place. They will talk about where Lisa lived, for example, and where little Kirsten walked around, even though they know this never happened. Thus, when people visit Sevedstorp, they actually visit the non-existing Noisy Village. This is reflected in a reviewer's presentation of the village on a website: "Did you know that you can go to the real Noisy Village? The three little cottages in a row are there, just as if they were cut and pasted from Astrid's books (…)".[10] In an articulation like this, people are not invited become involved in the real place but in fiction.

In his case study of The Hobbiton Tour Experience in New Zealand, Peaslee points out Bag End, home of protagonist Bilbo Baggins, as the tourist's mediated centre of Hobbiton. The attractiveness of this location can, Peaslee argues, be perceived as an interest in visiting "the fictional land, not a film set". Desires like this are impelled by "a playful attempt to touch something untouchable" as tourists are seeking "the emotional experience of tricking themselves into thinking they are standing inside Bag End" (Peaslee 2011: 42). Hence, in this case as in the case of Noisy Village, the mediated centre can just as well be a fictional marker as it can be a real place. The framing of these kinds of locations thus appeals to what can be termed *subjective experiences of authenticity within a factual frame of reference*. Mediated versions of the place have already supplied the visitor with an image of the place, and in reality, and this full image is only partly represented in reality. The visitors will relate and respond to the elements presented to them in reality, but their potential experience of authenticity at the site will depend on their own subjective interpretations and imaginary layers added to the actual place. A Polish blogger wrote this after his visit in Noisy Village: "After a bit of breakfast we visit Bullerbyn, the exact place that inspired Lindgren to write 'The Children in Noisy Village' in 1946. This place really exists!"[11] The blogger uses the fictional signifier for the place – Noisy Village – and accentuates that this place "really exists". Thus, if the visitor has an authentic experience of visiting the three cottages outside Vimmerby, it will be based on his/her own subjective and imaginative addition to the actual experience.

"Genuine fakes" – invented fictional places

Even though icon-cities are all in some way historic sites, many of them frame invented fictional places in the urban space. These places can be perceived as "genuine fakes". The concept was originally introduced to tourism studies by Brown (1996) and defined as objects or events that are non-original, artificial reproductions but still trigger genuine feelings in the tourist (33), or – as Timothy and Boyd put it: Genuine fakes are "fundamentally phoney but still able to stir up genuine feelings of nostalgia" (2003: 240). In this paper, genuine fakes are perceived as spatial: As completely fake places that still appeal to authentic experiences. Genuine fakes in icon-cities can be for example theme parks and other commercialised attractions, and these places are quite frequently framed as appeals for authentic experiences. In these places, fiction is used as the foundation for a further – commercially oriented – construction of fiction.

The most famous attraction in Vimmerby is Astrid Lindgren's World, a theme park with staged representations of Lindgren's famous tales. In the park, all the popular environments from Lindgren's tales are pre-

sented in miniature. Actors play a vital role, as the tales are revived in several daily performances, and between these events, the same actors walk around in the park, still true to their roles. On the park's official website, the visitor is greeted like this:

> "Meet Pippi Longstocking, That Emil and Karlsson on the Roof. Visit Matt's Fort, Cherry Tree Valley or Noisy Village. Here in Vimmerby, Småland you will encounter most of the characters and settings Astrid Lindgren wrote about in her books. Play and get up to mischief, experience familiar scenes from the books and become part of the popular stories. (…)Welcome to Astrid Lindgren's World, where fairytales come to life!"[12]

In this presentation, the fictional characters are referred to as real people you can meet, and the park as a place "where fairytales come to life". Via bodily engagement (play) the visitors are even explicitly invited to take part in the fictional reality that is staged in the park. The topography of the park is described like this:

> "Astrid Lindgren's World is actually many worlds, all in one place. Walking around the park you pass well-known settings such as Cherry Tree Valley and Wild Rose Valley. Not far away, but in a whole other world, you'll discover Matt's Fort. Walk on and wouldn't you know it, there's Villekulla Cottage. And on the way you'll have probably already stopped at Karlsson's Roof and Katthult."[13]

This genuine fake could in principle be located anywhere and everywhere, as its own internal geography is based on fiction and fictional places alone. But even though (or maybe because) the park is a fake place based on fiction with no factual references beyond the guidance given in the tales, it still appeals to and works as a setting for authentic experiences. In the early years of the authenticity debate in tourism studies, it was suggested that scholars should look further into the feelings and perceptions expressed by tourists in order to approach the question of what it takes for tourists to accept an object or event as authentic (Cohen 1988: 378). In the interface between fact and fiction and in the context of participatory claims and cultural engagement in icon-cities, this is particularly interesting. In the case of literary tourism, geographer Shelagh Squire has argued that the tourist's own memories of encounters with the author and his/her fiction is a pivotal element in their later experience of the authenticity of the literary places and attractions (Squire 1994; 1996). Thus, visiting a genuine fake "is an opportunity for visitors to make their own meanings based on what they bring with them to the place" (Light 2009: 247).

In Astrid Lindgren's World there are different opportunities for both children and adults to activate culturally specific values and personal memories. The children can watch and talk to Pippi Longstocking and Ronja the Robber's Daughter, and they can play in their houses. Their parents, many of whom also have Lindgren's tales as a part of their heritage, can use the place as a way to feel individual nostalgia and pass on the Lindgren-heritage to their children. As a reviewer writes on the travel website tripadvisor.com: "The fun thing about this park is that adults can relate to all the narratives too so we too appreciated this visit."[14] Another reviewer on the same site accentuates the sense of authenticity she experienced in the park: "The nostalgia and the authenticity blossom completely in this fantastic park, full of warm-heartedness and adventures. You can really feel the Swedish, and especially Astrid Lindgren's, spirit and charm."[15] As Astrid Lindgren's World is the most popular attraction in Vimmerby with approximately 430,000 visitors a year, it seems likely that many tourists perceive the park as an important element in the mediated centre that is the literary icon-city. The appeals to authentic

experiences in this genuine fake are also very explicit. In this case, *subjectively authentic experiences within a fictional frame of reference*: The tourists are of course aware of the fact that nothing in this place is genuine or real, but the park is still perceived as authentic, because personal relations to the stories are the tourist's point of departure.

Conclusion

Literary icon-cities are staged and experienced as "mediated centres": As spaces with several places that are conceived as "special" because of the media's framing of them. The central aim of this paper has been to shed light on what is at stake in the contingent and dynamic processes where authenticity is framed and negotiated in the mediated centre. To illustrate these processes, a four-part typology was developed. The typology illustrates how different locations in the mediated centre appeal to different experiences of authenticity, and how tourism developers and curators in this way outline different positions from which people can respond to the authenticity appeals. The gap between the staging and experience of authenticity in literary icon-cities is a field of tension, a "site of struggle", because the mediated images that accompany tourists to the city are significant triggers to where the tourists have authentic experiences.

In this paper it has been argued that in these cities, authenticity is the result of a successful interplay between curatorial orchestration, mediation and the visitor's experience of the city. As these interplays can occur at indisputably authentic locations as well as at genuine fakes, the mediated centre reveals itself as a complex and contingent object of analysis: Authenticity becomes a power tool that can be put to use by tourism developers and curators as they can stage authenticity in the icon-city by framing different place categories as "special" elements of the mediated centre. In Vimmerby, the framings of both the childhood home, the Phalén brothers' cross on the graveyard, The Noisy Village and Astrid Lindgren's World contain appeals to authentic experiences rooted in both the factual and fictional cartographies that accompany the tourist. Thus, Vimmerby is an example of a literary icon-city that because of its many organisational forms stage authenticity on many different levels simultaneously and thereby confirms a mediated centre with many "unobtainable" elements. Whether tourists actually occupy the positions outlined for them when they involve themselves in the literary icon-city is a topic for future in-depth analyses that are for example based on empirically based studies of the visitors to the literary icon-cities.

Another point of departure in further studies of icon-cities can be possible links between the contested democracy that is frequently present in participatory strategies elsewhere and the possible democratic elements in the processes where tourists participate in the dynamic (re-)productions of iconic significance in literary icon-cities.

Bionotes

Anne Klara Bom, PhD, is an assistant professor at the University of Southern Denmark, The Hans Christian Andersen Centre, Department for the Study of Culture. She has written articles, book chapters and her PhD thesis on icon-cities, heritage tourism, Hans Christian Andersen as a cultural phenomenon, and discourse analysis. She is also the author of the book Diskursanalytisk Metode *(2015).*

References

Ahmed, Sara. 2004a. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
Ahmed, Sara. 2004b. "Affective Economies." *Social Text* 79, 22:2: 117-139.

Bom, Anne Klara. 2015. "Affective practice in the icon-city. Ownership, authenticity and fictionalization of urban space." *Academic Quarter* 10: 35-52.

Boorstin, Daniel J. 1964. *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in American Society*. New York: Harper.

Brown, David. 1996. "Genuine fakes". In *The Tourist Image: Myths and Myth Making in Tourism*, edited by T. Selwyn, 33-47. Wiley: Chichester.

Clough, Patricia Ticineto, and Jean Halley, eds. 2007. *The Affective Turn*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Cohen, Erik. 1988. "Authenticity and commoditization in tourism." *Annals of Tourism Research* 15:3: 371-386.

Couldry, Nick. 2003. *Media Rituals. A critical approach*. London & New York: Routledge.

Crang, Mike. 1998. *Cultural Geography*. London: Routledge.

Dahlgren, Peter. 2011. "Parameters of online participation: conceptualising civic contingencies." *CM, Communication Management Quarterly* 21: 87-110.

Fawcett, Clare, and Patricia Cormack. 2001. "Guarding authenticity at literary tourism sites." *Annals of Tourism Research* 28: 686-704.

Fulbrook, Mary. 2009. "Historical Tourism. Reading Berlin's Doubly Dictatorial Past." In *Memory Culture and the contemporary city*, edited by U. Stalger, H. Steiner and A. Webber, 126-144. Palgrave MacMillan.

Graham, Brian, Gregory John Ashworth, and John E. Tunbridge. *A Geography of Heritage: Power, Culture and Economy*. London: Arnold, 2000.

Hall, Stuart. 1981. "Notes on Deconstructing the Popular." In *People's History and Socialist Theory*, edited by R. Samuel, 227-240.. London: Routledge.

Heidelberg, Beth A.Wielde. 2015. "Managing Ghosts: exploring local government involvement in dark tourism". *Journal of Heritage Tourism* 10:1, 74-90.

Herbert, David. 1995. "Heritage as literary place". *Heritage, Tourism and Society*, edited by D.T. Herbert, 32-48. London: Mansell.

Herbert, David. 2001. "Literary places, tourism and the heritage experience". *Annals of Tourism Research* 28:2: 312-333.

Jamal, Tazim, and Steve Hill. 2004. "Developing a framework for indicators of authenticity: the place and space of cultural and heritage tourism." *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research* 9:4: 353-372.

Jansson, André. 2002. "Spatial Phantasmagoria. The Mediatization of Tourism Experience." *European Journal of Communication* 17: 429–443.

Knudsen, Britta Timm, and Anne Marit Waade, eds. 2010. *Re-Investing Authenticity. Tourism, Place and Emotions*. Bristol, Buffalo, Toronto: Channel View Publications.

Light, Duncan. 2009. "Performing Transylvania: tourism, fantasy and play in a liminal place." *Tourist Studies* 9:3, 240-258.

MacCannell, D. 1973. "Staged Authenticity: Arrangements of Social Space in Tourist Settings." *American Journal of Sociology* 79:589–603.

MacCannell, Dean. 1976. *The Tourist*. New York: Schocken Books.

Massumi, Brian. 2002. *Parables for the Virtual: Movements, Affect, Sensation*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Peaslee, Robert. 2011. "One Ring, Many Circles: The Hobbiton Tour Experience and a Spatial Approach to Media Power." *Tourist Studies* 11:1, 37-53.

Pocock, Douglas. 1992. "Catherine Cookson country: tourist expectation and experience". *Geography* 77: 236-243.

Reisinger, Yvette, and Carol Steiner. 2006. "Reconceptualizing object authenticity." *Annals of Tourism Research* 33:1: 65-86.

Sandvik, Kjetil, and Anne Marit Waade. 2008. "Crime Scene as Augmented Reality. On Screen, Online and Offline." *Crime Fiction and Crime Journalism in Scandinavia Working paper no. 5*, 1-17.

Sjöholm, Carina. 2010. "Murder Walks in Ystad." In *Re-Investing Authenticity. Tourism, Place and Emotions*, edited by B.T. Knudsen and A.M. Waade, 154–168. Bristol, Buffalo, Toronto: Channel View Publications.

Squire, Shelagh. 1994. "The cultural values of literary tourism." *Annals of Tourism Research* 21: 103-120.

Squire, Shelagh. 1996. "Literary Tourism and Sustainable Tourism: Promoting 'Anne of Green Gables' in Prince Edward Island." *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 4:3: 119-134.

Teo, Peggy, and Brenda Yeoh. 1997. "Remaking Local Heritage for Tourism." *Annals of Tourism Research* 24:192–213.

Thrift, Nigel. 2004. "Intensities of Feeling: Towards a Spatial Politics of Affect". *Geografiska Annaler* 86 B, 1: 57-78.

Thrift, Nigel. 2008. *Non-Representational Theory: Space, Politics and Affect*. London: Routledge.

Timothy, Dallen, and Stephen Boyd. *Heritage Tourism*. London: Prentice Hall, 2003.

Trilling, Lionel. 1972. *Sincerity and Authenticity*. London: Oxford University Press.

Wang, Ning. 1999. "Rethinking authenticity in tourism experience". *Annals of Tourism Research* 26: 349–370.

Wetherell, Margaret. 2012. *Affect and Emotion. A New Social Science Understanding*. London: Sage.

Waade, Anne Marit. 2013. *Wallanderland. Medieturisme og skandinavisk tv-krimi*. Aalborg: Aalborg University Press.

---

[1] http://www.astridlindgrensnas.se/en/the-childhood-home-of-astrid-lindgren

[2] http://www.astridlindgrensnas.se/en/the-childhood-home-of-astrid-lindgren

[3] http://www.tripadvisor.dk/Attraction_Review-g1152668-d3584456-Reviews-Astrid_Lindgrens_Childhood_Home-Vimmerby_Kalmar_County_Smaland_Smaland_and_Bleki.html#mtreview_review_158868169

[4] In the case of Berlin, for example, the authentic site of the bunker where Hitler committed suicide is not as framed and findable as for example the constructed Holocaust Memorial (Fulbrook 2009, 128). If objectively authentic places are framed as the mediated centres of an icon-city, there has to be correspondence between the hegemonic narrative presented by the city and the objectively authentic site. Berlin is an obvious example of this.

[5] http://www.astridlindgren.se/en/characters/brothers-lionheart

[6] http://www.astridlindgren.se/en/characters/pippi-longstocking

[7] http://nordjyske.dk/nyheder/i-astrid-lindgrens-fodspor/c05d9402-eaea-4995-bc58-181b4561e2e9/112/1513

[8] http://blog.liu.se/marketadoubnerova/2014/10/

[9] The little village is also the location where the films were shot.

[10] http://www.barnsemester.se/?option=com_attraktioner&func=detail&id=1171&Itemid=44&jen=yes

[11] http://www.malypodroznik.pl/swiat/szwecja2011/szw_blog23.htm

[12] http://www.alv.se/en

[13] http://www.alv.se/en/park

[14] http://www.tripadvisor.dk/Attraction_Review-g1152668-d1237255-Reviews-Astrid_Lindgren_s_World-Vimmerby_Kalmar_County_Smaland_Smaland_and_Blekinge.html#REVIEWS

[15] http://www.tripadvisor.dk/Attraction_Review-g1152668-d1237255-Reviews-Astrid_Lindgren_s_World-Vimmerby_Kalmar_County_Smaland_Smaland_and_Blekinge.html#REVIEWS