

Fusing fact and fiction: Placemaking through film tours in Edinburgh

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Abstract

The current article focuses on the cultural practice of four film tours in Edinburgh, Scotland, analysing how film tours like these contribute to more general placemaking processes. Prior research has shown how film tours have become a staple of the tourist consumption of many contemporary cities. Building on these studies, the current article focuses explicitly on one of the defining features of these tours, namely the fictional character of their central topic. More particularly, this study examines how film tours are built up around a presumed conflation of imagined and material space. It argues that film tours are forms of cultural ‘work’ in which fictional plotlines from cinema are integrated into and used to revitalize notions of place. Through these practices, cinematic fiction eventually becomes part of what is experienced as the ‘true core’ of Edinburgh.

Keywords

Fiction, film tourism, imaginative geographies, placemaking, popular culture, Scotland

Introduction

Arthur’s Seat is the highest hill in Holyrood, a royal park in Edinburgh, Scotland, which overlooks the city centre and beyond. It is both the location where characters Emma and Dexter make a friendship pact in Scherfig’s romantic comedy *One Day* (2012) and the place where *Trainspotting*’s (1996) Renton and Spud reflect on their former lives of criminality and drug addiction in Boyle’s T2 *Trainspotting* (2017). Providing picturesque sights of the city, the hill is frequented by runners, hikers and city dwellers.

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Moreover, it is a popular destination for location shoots and often used by Scottish (film) tourism industries to draw tourists.

Film tourism, a phenomenon in which media products instigate people to travel and re-imagine fictional stories on site (Beeton, 2016), forms an increasingly expanding sector within Scottish tourism industries. As the research report 'How others see us on film' (on how Scottish identity is portrayed on film) by Education Scotland¹ shows, the so-called '*Braveheart* effect' indicates the boost films like *Braveheart* (1995) have given to tourism (Martin-Jones, 2014). This has continued with films and series like *The Da Vinci Code* (2006) and *Outlander* (2014-). Of the £21 billion spent on tourism by overseas visitors to the UK in 2013, an estimated £840 million can be attributed to film-induced tourism.² Moreover, surveys and consumer research show that around a fifth of all visitors to Scotland are influenced to visit after seeing the country in a film or on television.³

These numbers quantify the impact popular media have on the contemporary Scottish tourism landscape, which seemingly understands the magnetizing power of film and TV. Organizations like VisitScotland and Historic Environment Scotland entice tourists to visit the country by offering visitors film 'trails'.^{4,5} Moreover, tourism companies such as TripAdvisor endorse destinations through a wide offer of culturally themed tours centred around popular media productions which takes one along prominent filming locations, showcasing these locations through the lens of films and series.

During such film tours, destinations and imaginaries of place become re-imagined, reconfigured and reproduced on site. Prior research conceptualized these cultural practices using terms like placemaking (Alderman et al., 2012), and more specifically, cinematic heritage (Schofield, 1996), both entailing the symbolic/and or material production of place. The current article delves deeper into this process in which places become transformed in the specific case of Edinburgh film tours, through the following research question: *How do film tours contribute to placemaking in Edinburgh?* Through an ethnographic analysis of four film tours in Edinburgh, it is argued that fictional narratives and geographies of film and TV are incorporated into film tours, and used to make statements about and revitalize existing notions of place identity in Edinburgh.

Prior research in the fields of cultural geography and media studies have, mostly from a social constructionist perspective (Couldry and Hepp, 2013; Crouch et al., 2005; Edensor, 2002; Urry and Larsen, 2011), shown how media (representations) are crucial in 'reshaping people's conceptions of place and space' (Leotta, 2016). However, as Connell (2012) and Alderman et al. (2012) point out, the *ways in which* places are socially and culturally constructed, represented and/or modified by film (tourism) are still not well understood (Connell, 2012: 1025). What are the specific mechanisms that contribute to the transformation of place? How does this transformation take place in the practice of film tours? In this article, we argue that the fictional character of films and TV series offers a key for understanding the role of film tours in placemaking practices. In other words, we examine how *the fictional* is performed during film tours and used to create new, or confirm existing, notions of place.

Empirically, this article critically reflects on the kinds of cultural and social imaginings of Edinburgh that are subsequently produced in film tourism. Previous research has emphasized tight connections between Scottish heritage industries and film tourism

(Martin-Jones, 2014), which has resulted in a dominant, ‘authorized’ way of imagining Scotland. Acknowledging the concerns that often surface in heritage debates regarding the question of whose heritage is included in dominant heritage practices (cf. Smith, 2006), this study explores possible tensions and variations in the way a sense of place is created through film tours in Edinburgh. In this article, we focus specifically on Edinburgh, but attention is also given to how constructed Edinburgh place identities are remarkably related to broader place identities, such as the national.

Theory

Prior research has conceptualized the phenomenological, social meaning-making characteristics of places, in addition to geometric and material conceptions of places as a mere part of space. It has brought forward the idea that places are inherently socially (re) constructed through the social world by social actors through certain discourses, texts and imagery (Agnew, 2011; Leotta, 2016). The social aspects of places are theorized in several fields of study (e.g. cultural geography, cultural studies and tourism studies) and under analogous terms, including social-spatial identities, social spatialization, and imaginative geographies (e.g. Edensor, 2002; Halfacree, 1993; Ross, 1986; Said, 1979; Shields, 1992b). Although these concepts highlight different aspects of the social properties of places, they all emphasize the ‘socially dominant ways of conceiving – cognitively, emotionally or aesthetically – and presenting of space’ (Phillips et al., 2001: 5). The emphasis here on dominant discourses underlines that the social construction of place is inherently political, as some social actors have more power in this process of construction, at the expense of other perspectives.

One way of acknowledging this is by looking at *placemaking* practices. The concept of placemaking has been theoretically developed throughout a range of disciplines (Alderman et al., 2012; Tuan, 1975). Placemaking generally refers to the (co-)production of places, encompassing both ‘physical interventions [in places, and] social practices [which involves] changes in thinking and doing’ with regard to places (Richards, 2017: 2). Placemaking therefore entails tangible and intangible components (Lew, 2017). The first aspect refers to the construction of ‘the physical design and appearance of a place’ (Lew, 2017: 455) and the latter to the creation of mental images (e.g. mindscapes and storyscapes) ‘in which place images and identities are created through storytelling and image creation’ (Lew, 2017: 455), in other words, a socio-cultural process in which place-based identities are co-produced (Richards, 2017).

The co-production of place identities involves many different actors, and there are many different outcomes as to what sense of place is shaped through these different co-producing actors. Urry’s (2002) seminal work on the ‘tourist gaze’ emphasizes the role of tourism practices in reconfiguring places. Tourism industries shape places ‘in visually suitable ways’ (Law et al., 2007: 144) which largely involve prevalent, dominating (media) representations of places, as they often align with particular (commercial) agendas to appeal to tourists. Consequently, tourists ‘[not only] internalize the gaze, but places and landscapes are disciplined in line with the visual fantasies and ideals of tourists’ (p. 144). Widespread imaginings and expectations of places are created by industries and tourists among other actors.⁶ Within the practice of tourism, these representative

spaces conflate with physical places in ways that ‘substitute and enhance each other in contingent ways’ (Urry and Larsen, 2011: 116), accumulating in what Urry and Larsen conceptualize as imaginative geographies (cf. Leotta, 2016; Said, 1979).

Placemaking is not an unequivocal process, and there is no ‘one’ tourist gaze or place imaginary. Instead, there is a full range of placemaking practices that happens at locations, for example, the production, hosting and attending of festivals; literature tourism; regular tourism (i.e. people on holiday just going for a visit to sites where coincidentally productions were filmed); and the performance of taking photographs (see Alderman et al., 2012). This is the case in Edinburgh, a city with thriving literature tourism industries; many annually well-visited festivals like The Scottish International Storytelling Festival, Edinburgh Festival Fringe and the Edinburgh International Film Festival, and various wildlife reserves, heritage sites and monuments, leading to a wide range of outcomes of produced place imaginaries.

In this article, we focus specifically on the role and significance of film tours, a subset within the broader scope of Edinburgh placemaking and tourism practices, and indeed one ‘actor’, we argue, that is crucial in the co-construction of place identities. This seems especially pertinent in Edinburgh, in which film tourism is well-established and booming, and has strong interconnections with heritage institutions. Film tourism is an increasingly popular leisure practice which forms the nexus of media and tourism practices (Beeton, 2016; Reijnders, 2016). The crux of this activity is that media products have become incentives for people to explore places, as people are enticed by imaginations of these places from popular television series and films.

Existing work on film tours shows the different ways in which places can be transformed within film tourism and some of the involved actors. From the fields of heritage and management studies, Schofield (1996) theorizes the conflation of representative and material space in film tourism through the concept of *cinematic heritage*, entailing how film tours actively reconstruct places “in [their] cinematographic past and present” (p. 333), since sense or idea of place is produced within film tours through the coinciding of mediated representations of film and TV with material reality. Schofield (1996) posits that “today’s city is largely the product of information passing understandings of places, enacted by different social actors involved who place their expectations (“gazes”) onto places. *Imaginative heritage* is a similar concept, addressing how fictional narratives from popular culture over time become an important part of local place identity (Reijnders, 2020).

Torchin’s (2002) seminal work on the Manhattan TV Tour in New York, United States, similarly deals with the balance between artificiality and authenticity in film tours, arguing how ‘. . . rather than offering a simulated, seamless entry into the fictive, the tour drags representational, cultural and historical files into each site and thus performs the spatial incongruities (“bloopers”) of each site’ (p. 247). In this performative process, real and virtual worlds are negotiated by the film tourist because of the spatial dissonance between ‘core authenticity and of pure simulacra’ (p. 247).

Recent studies emphasize how within film tourism a sense of place is also co-produced through embodied practices of visitors, guides and locals. These studies emphasize that cinematic representations are not merely projected upon a locality, but instead how local communities and visitors are actively involved in these imaginative processes.

For example, Alderman et al. (2012) discuss in their article the important role that the embodied practices of visitors and locals play together in co-creating Mount Airy, United States, into the fictional place of Mayberry. Moreover, Benjamin et al.'s work (2019) on the 2017 *Dirty Dancing* festival at Lake Lure, United States, uncovers the co-creation of place between tourists and organizers; namely, tourists play an important part by recreating film scenes and through their related social media engagement. Furthermore, Šegota (2018) argues how tour guides are crucial in transforming Dubrovnik's heritage within *Game of Thrones* (GOT) tours.

These studies excel in showcasing the performative process of place production, and how guides, tourists and sometimes locals are involved. Building on the valuable insights of these studies, the current article zooms in on film tours in Edinburgh, as one component in the co-production of place in film tourism, to explore in depth the role of fiction in transforming place, as this has not been made explicit in recent studies.

Methodology

The research enquiry is explored through an analytical ethnography of film tours in Edinburgh, an approach prominently used in prior research in which the analytical eye is turned towards analysing 'knowledge in action' (Anderson and Austin, 2012: 137), which implies an (inter-)active phenomenological production of meanings and understandings (cf. Pereiro, 2010). Concretely, this means that the tours (the way in which they were carried out, and predominantly the discourse they produce) were the subject of observation and analysis, respectively. This method of data collection allowed the first author to investigate the diversity of place meanings created within tours.

This research explores various film tours offered in Edinburgh that are centred around films or television series that have been (partially) shot there. Through purposive sampling (Bryman, 2012), using recommendations from mainstream tourism boards (VisitScotland, Viator and TripAdvisor), four film tours were selected based on their focus (cultural/themed tours focused on film and TV), location (in or in proximity to Edinburgh) and their availability at the time of fieldwork. This resulted in an ethnography of four popular, highly rated film tours in Edinburgh, offered through Viator, which focused on, respectively, *Outlander*, *Harry Potter*, *Trainspotting* and *Braveheart/The Da Vinci Code*. Variety was sought by including the independently run *Trainspotting* tour. The tours followed the format of being transported through filming locations under guidance of a tour guide. At some sites, additional tours were offered; these are included in the analysis. Each tour lasted approximately 4–6 hours, including the time travelling from one site to another.

The first author participated in every tour. This participant observation took place in March and June 2018 (over a total of 20 days) and resulted in a combined data set of extensive field notes of the film tours and photographic and audio recordings, which were typed out verbatim for analysis. The first author acted as participant observer, as she participated in the tours both as a film tourist and researcher. Tour guides and tourists were aware of her role as a researcher. The first author thus intervened both passively (observing), as well as actively (e.g. asking questions to guides and tourists).

The eventual sample has implications that are taken into account when interpreting findings, especially when inferring what kind of imaginings of Edinburgh are shaped within film tours. The selected tours were mainly focused on popular, lucrative productions, with a strong leaning towards historical epics, and offered by big tourist organizations, for example, Highlander tours (with the exception of the independently run Trainspotting tour). In addition, the selected tours took place mostly in peripheral Edinburgh, and included walks along heritage buildings. Thus, the kind of tour that has been analysed seemingly has implications for the kinds of imaginations that are shaped within film tours and their generalizability to other (film) tours in Scotland, or in the context of other placemaking and tourism practices.

For analysis, directed qualitative content analysis was deployed, indicating the process of systematically coding and identifying patterns in data (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). Pre-determined concepts derived from prior literature on cinematic heritage and placemaking served as the initial framework for observing the tours, and for analysing data gathered from observation (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005: 1281). Particularly helpful was Van Es and Reijnders' (2018) design of what constitutes a film tour; as such, the following topics were directional for observing and coding: basic elements constituting the tour; onsite practices (connections made between fictional and/or historical narratives, and the materiality of place); tourist interactivity and the wider contextualisation of the tour (Van Es and Reijnders, 2018: 508). Using Atlas.ti, the data were coded (open and focused, respectively) and further categorized. Any text that did not fit within predetermined topics was given a new code and subsequently categorized, allowing new themes to emerge (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005: 1281).

Analysis

Tagging along with the *Outlander* tour, visitors gather around in the cosy, 14th-century kitchen of the Callendar house, which featured in the second season of the series as part of the home of the fictional Duke of Sandringham. There is a Georgian fireplace; production props are on display, and a wooden table serves character Black Jack Randall's famous 'dark chocolate lavender fudge' for visitors. The guide explains that this kitchen is the place where characters Mary and Claire have dinner with the Duke of Sandringham, where the latter presents the head of the English Duke, announcing 'I kept my word. I lay my vengeance at your feet!' Here, the guide refers to one of the most memorable *Outlander* scenes to date. She continues discussing the history of the Callendar house; how the walls were painted a few shades darker than their original state, and how original benches were swapped for other models, to give a more intimate, older feel to the place for the series.

As a film tourist, one encounters here the material reality of the places where beloved fictional stories from film and TV series took place. This pivotal moment during the tour entails a material and symbolic transformation of place; the place is physically adjusted for filmic purposes, and the history of the kitchen is temporarily transformed according to the series' narrative. The Callendar kitchen illuminates some of the different ways in which imagined and material spaces conflate in film tours. The following analysis

presents three ways in which this process of transformation takes place within the practice of film tours in Edinburgh.⁷

Localizing fiction: connecting fictional narratives to materiality of places

As illustrated above with the Callendar house, the selected film tours are centred around spots around Edinburgh that derive a lot of their importance from having been used as locations in popular movies. Standing at these so-called ‘places of the imagination’ (Reijnders, 2011), guides point out connections between fictional storylines and aspects of the materiality of locations. A particular manner in which this happened during the tours is through what we in this article would like to label as ‘pulls’; when tour guides mention an isolated aspect of the fictional story which functions as a ‘hook’ for a story related to a specific spot. In this sense, fiction is ‘projected’ and subsequently localized on site through ‘pulls’. For example, during the *Harry Potter* tour, when at Alnwick Castle, the guide points at a seemingly mundane patch of grass, and explains how (arguably) one of the most famous scenes from *Harry Potter* was filmed there, namely the first flying lesson. This is followed by an elucidation of the infrastructure of the land surrounding the castle and how it has developed throughout the years. Points of reference within film scenes are used as ‘hooks’ to tell tourists something about the physical materiality, and its development, of the filmed location.

Often, tourists instigate, or help (co)-create the ‘pull’. For example, during the *Braveheart* tour, actor Patrick McGoohan is mentioned, prompting two tourists from the United States to ask about their Scottish surnames beginning with ‘Mac’, and to enquire about their ancestry, leading to a small discussion on the surname and the Scottish currently living in the United States. Another manner in which tourists are very pervasive, is through embodied ‘fan’ practices: for example, the act of taking photos on site, or taking selfies with a film-related location as the backdrop; or children (and sometimes adults) receiving ‘flying lessons’ on brooms at *Harry Potter*’s Alnwick Castle. These kinds of performances on the part of the tourists equally help in transforming the place, namely through instigating discussions with their questions about locations, and their embodied practices on site (cf. Benjamin et al., 2019).

Pulls enacted by tourists are often ‘mediated’ by guides, similar to what Šegota (2018) finds in her study on *GOT*-tour guides, who, in their positioning in terms of what kind of informational flows they will communicate to tourists, negotiate by balancing between encoding different kinds of ‘gazes’ (mediated or historical). This is dependent on, and in tandem with, possible demands and expectations of tourists, as well as the tour guides’ professional knowledge of, and personal stance on, both history and heritage places (cf. Šegota, 2018).

‘Pulls’ like these, both instigated and co-created by guides and embodied by tourists, transform place in subtle ways. Tourists comprehend that physical aspects of locations are crucial to developing productions and fictional narratives. As previous research on placemaking shows (Sampson and Goodrich, 2009; Stedman, 2003), certain attributes of physical environments supposedly give form to constructed social meanings and

constructions (Stedman, 2003: 679). For example, Alnwick Castle's stately entrance building associatively allows for a stately re-imagining of Hogwarts, and the enormous grass field in the courtyard fosters certain connotations of boundlessness, suitable for a fictional 'broomstick flying lesson'. During tours, landscape attributes are thus framed as essential, as they enabled the production of certain scenes in a particularly desired way suitable for fictional narratives.

Moreover, seemingly mundane aspects of landscapes acquire elevated status from both guides and tourists, because of their relation to filmed productions. As Brook (2000) states in her discussion of how a 'sense of place' is produced, (cultural) meanings imposed on settings matter a great deal in place production. This also apparent in how biographical information about original authors behind films or series is shared when passing locations that are related to these authors. Irvine Welsh (*Trainspotting*), J.K. Rowling (*Harry Potter*) and Diana Gabaldon (*Outlander*) were briefly discussed when passing places to which these authors are connected, for example, when passing a particular cafe where they'd written. These 'pulls' divert slightly from the 'fictional' ones, as these 'pulls' are autobiographical and thus based on real life. But again, a level of importance is attributed to these points in material space that at first seem mundane, but are framed to be significant and important as they have enabled and housed authors behind some of the most popular fiction to date.

'Pulls' may appear rather superficial, as they are discussed by tour guides without much contextualisation. Thus, they appear quite isolated and random. Scenes are simply briefly mentioned as one walks past the reality of the filmed locations. However, 'pulls' reveal an interesting insight, in the sense that their effectiveness relies heavily on, and readily assumes, tourists' knowledge of film and TV. Understanding the 'pulls' necessitates specific knowledge of films and shows filmed on location on the part of tourists. Film and TV are often the first point of reference for tourists when visiting places for the first time in real life. Especially within film tours, it is precisely this 'mediated worldliness' (Thompson, 1995) that often acts as a first incentive for people to visit places that have been featured within media. 'Pulls' placidly localize fiction, as particular points of reference from film and TV are 'projected' onto the materiality of the place, for the tourist to recognize, imagine, instigate and embody. The ways in which 'pulls' form a pivotal part of film tours highlights the growing pervasiveness of film and TV series in the tourist imagination, and provides an underlying sense that Edinburgh is a cinematically relevant city. This image is further solidified during the tours, which the following themes present.

Reality check: 'Real' versus 'Reel'

During film tours, guides and tourists not only draw parallels between cinema and material reality, but also underline possible differences between both worlds. Incongruity between fictional accounts of places and the presupposed 'reality' of places (both material and in terms of past events) are recurring themes during all of the selected tours. A strong dichotomy is performed by the tour guides, which produces a clash between what is considered 'authentic' and 'inauthentic' with regard to locations (cf. Buchmann et al., 2010). This was already evident in the Callender house example, where the intervention of television is emphasized, and where authentic space is made inauthentic for film purposes.

Illustrative is the strong focus on historical or spatial errors within films and television series narratives during the tours. In the *Braveheart/The Da Vinci Code* tour, numerous inaccuracies ('bloopers') from the film *Braveheart* are discussed, such as the use of kilts, which were worn in the film by the character of Wallace, a Lowlander, while in reality, kilts were only worn by Highlanders at the time. Similarly, in the *Trainspotting* tour, it is discussed how many lead characters have Glasgow accents instead of Edinburgh accents. From these examples, it becomes clear to the observing tourist that entire timelines have been altered, and local accents indicating certain geographic areas have been swapped, either for filmic purposes or in error. These errors entail small, subtle transformations of place within the mediated realm, and tour guides pointing them out provides tourists with supposedly truthful accounts of places behind their mediated appearance.

These findings align with Torchin's (2002) conclusions on how within film tours, spatial incongruities, or 'bloopers', are 'performed'. Instead of resolving discrepancies between fictional and physical worlds within the tour, space is constantly negotiated by 'the relationship between actual and virtual worlds' (p. 247) through the explicit display of these incongruities. In the specific case of screen adaptations of novels, some incongruities have to do with inconsistencies in the translation from the novel to film, conceptualized by Roesch (2009) as spatial or diegetic discrepancies. Here, the employment of the location in the film is different from the original employment of the location in the novel (p. 121), as is the case with, for example, *Trainspotting*.

Moreover, physical transformations due to film production, both temporarily and more permanently, are illuminated on site. For example, in the *Harry Potter* tour it is discussed how the production team temporarily altered the infrastructure of Alnwick Castle to film the well-known 'Whomping Willow' scene from the second instalment of the *Harry Potter* series. Moreover, large information signs and walls with posters relating to media productions are to be found on sites, such as *Outlander's* Blackness Castle, enacting a more fixed kind of placemaking.

Through pointing out traces of production, an incongruity between what is considered 'fiction' and 'factual' with regard to specific locations is established. What is striking in this regard is how this distinction made by tour operators seemingly functions as a something from which tour operators derive a certain appeal to authority, since they are able to pierce their way through the representations of a place. In the same vein, tour guides generally seem to derive authority from disclosing a vast amount of both cinematic and factual information about places to tourists (cf. Buchmann, 2010). By displaying and discussing historical and/or place-related knowledge, and mediating tourists' questions and comments, tour operators, but also tourists themselves, 'perforate' representations of place and provide 'hidden' knowledge behind these representations. As such, different kinds of knowledge regarding places are diffused during the tours, with presumably varying levels of status.

Deepening local knowledge: symbolic production of place within film tours

As cinema becomes constructed as a core characteristic of a place, new local histories are shaped: at particular places cinema becomes encapsulated into the local history and development of the place. For example, tour guides elaborate on how film and television

series have given an economic boost to specific sites. This is especially apparent regarding places where bigger productions were filmed which became huge commercial successes. In these cases, the lucrateness of the places, enacted by a film or series, is emphasized. For example, during the tour at Rosslyn Chapel, the tour guide discusses how *The Da Vinci Code* caused a 'revival' of the chapel as it made the chapel popular for visitors again (cf. Månsson, 2011). Similarly, during the Alnwick Castle tour, it is discussed that the castle has become economically viable since the Duke of Northumberland, who owns the estate, opened up the castle to filming and consequently visitors. In the same vein, the abundance of film and TV productions that had been partially filmed on site are highlighted. Consequently, filming productions become part of the historical development of the sites, and the sites are framed as particularly desirable to future production teams and visitors.

In alluding to economic successes, the attractiveness for crew, directors, and visitors, and the many productions that have been partially filmed on location, the film tours provide a sense of cinematic pride and underline the desirability and significance of locations in Edinburgh in the production of films and series. This inherently ties Edinburgh to the world of cinema and solidifies the city as cinematically relevant. Location filming becomes framed as an historical event in itself, and cinema history is integrated in the larger history of the city, thus offering a deeper understanding of the 'place myth' (Loukaki, 1997; Stokowski, 2002; Tuan, 1975) of Edinburgh.

Another way in which notions of place are symbolically reproduced through its film and TV history is by framing the history of the place 'in its cinematic relevance' (Schofield, 1996). Illustratively, *Braveheart* is identified by the guides as a 'Scottish story', though filmed mostly in Ireland. The main character, played by Mel Gibson, is discussed as being based on William Wallace, the late 13th century Scottish heroic leader of the troops during the First War of Scottish Independence. The Battle of the Stirling bridge, a pivotal historical moment in Scotland's battle for independence, is subsequently illustrated with referrals to scenes from the film, such as when Wallace is gathering his troops to the North of the bridge, and the dramatic collapse of the bridge. It is acknowledged and emphasized during the tour that the film presents a dramatized (and thus presumably, not entirely realistic) account of the battle, but it is nevertheless used to elucidate aspects from the actual battle in a convincing way. As Rojek (1997) similarly concluded, 'cinematic events are dragged onto the physical landscape [which is] then reinterpreted in terms of the cinematic events' (p. 54).

Similarly, during the *Trainspotting* tour, it is argued how *Trainspotting* is essentially a dramatic retelling of the story about the life of a 'junkie', alluding to Leith's heroin scene in the late 1980s. As the tour guide states, the film illuminates different aspects of the life of a heroin addict, such as reverting back to scamming to get money, and the process of 'going cold turkey'. The characters and storyline may be fictional, but the movie does succeed in bringing to life the 'real' story of the place. Real-life events and place narratives are being reproduced through the specific lens of fictional film and TV stories, whereby the synergy of fact plus fiction is more than the sum of the two.

Alternately, factual narratives regarding place are sometimes also used a framework in which to interpret parts of fictional stories from film and TV series, such as storylines, or characters' motivations. For example, during the *Outlander* tour, the guide discusses

the personality of the character of Jamie, describing him as a 'reluctant Jacobite that really just wants to live a peaceful life at home'. This characterization is contextualized with a discussion of the actual Jacobite risings that took place in late 17th century and the events that led to these risings, as well as the aftermath. These real-life events are framed as a sequence of circumstances that dictated how the character of Jamie eventually ends up being involved in the mediated version of the Jacobite risings. Another example is how during the *Trainspotting* tour, the character of Renton is characterized as essentially being 'the product of the late 80s Thatcherite regime' in the United Kingdom. Renton's erratic behaviour and actions in the film are related to and made understandable by explaining the socio-political tensions that were present in Edinburgh at the time.

At these moments during the tours, the realms of cinematic representation and 'actual' events and history temporarily coexist. As Tuan (1975) argues, 'a profound sense of place can be understood through experience, through art, education, politics' (p. 161), as 'it induces awareness of a place by holding up mirrors to our own experiences', thereby articulating certain experiences. Fundamentally, film tourism involves a process in which boundaries between 'fiction and history, and artifice and authenticity' (Karpovich, 2010: 14) become blurred. In this sense, place is being transformed within the practice of film tours through the interweaving of these different narratives, which offers tourists a synergetic experience of a place as seen through the lens of film and TV.

What is particularly striking is how the bulk of the 'factual' narratives that are disclosed during the tours contain canonical narratives related to national history (or authorised heritage discourse (AHD), Smith, 2006). Consequently, this leads to a rather selective identity narrative or performance of place that is created on the tours, namely one in which (1) cinematic fiction eventually becomes part of the socially constructed 'core' of Edinburgh, and the city becomes established as a cinematic city, as discussed above, and (2) in which shaped local imaginaries subsequently pertain in general more to national, canonical repertoires of Scotland, rather than local particularities that distinctly characterize local communities, neighbourhoods, or streets.

Such discussions on particular local buildings, neighbourhoods and streets, discussions which one might expect would cover local particularities in both downtown and peripheral Edinburgh where the tours take visitors, predominantly amount to canonical notions of Scottish national history, such as the history and continuation of monarchies, the Jacobite risings, and widespread socio-political origins. In this sense, the reality of a location is often equated with the canonical national history, on a par with what previous scholars (Brereton, 2012; Edensor, 2002; Martin-Jones, 2014; Tzanelli, 2007) have alluded to. The analysed film tours share their strong preoccupations with the past, with national Scottish heritage industries. The visions that circulate in those industries have traditionally relied on enticing connotations of a more 'Romantic' Scotland, underpinning the core brand proposition of Scotland as 'a land of mystery and legend' (Martin-Jones, 2014: 165), the attraction of 'castles, gardens, heritage, genealogy (and the) Romantic lure of the country side' (Martin-Jones, 2014: 165). In this sense, in Edinburgh film tours, Scottish widespread 'commercialized' canonical history is extrapolated to be representative of localities, shaping the way place and locality are experienced by tourists.

Consequently, groups of people that are part of contemporary demographics of Edinburgh are underrepresented in the place imaginaries that are formed during the

tours, as their histories are not necessarily aligned with the kinds of canonical histories that are predominantly discussed in film tours. This highlights the social and political processes that are embedded within place creation in film tours, which ‘reinforce individual identities and support [only certain] collective identities’ (Stokowski, 2002: 373). What is glossed over are the many people (and their histories) that make up contemporary demographics of Edinburgh⁸ that fail to be represented within the imaginaries that are constructed in the tours; local communities, such as the people of Leith, cultural minorities, people of colour, immigrants, especially Asian communities, expats, and the lower classes. As Alderman et al. (2012) similarly show, film tourism runs the risk of effectively marginalizing mostly people of colour and their histories and local attachments from place making processes.

An exception to the rule is provided in the *Trainspotting* walking tour. The fact that this example diverts from the other tours with respect to what narratives are shared, highlights how canonical history narratives continue to prevail within film tours in the city, and how less pervasive histories remain latent. On Kirke Street in Leith, the guide discusses the story of the people of Leith in the 1980s; how the close-knit community was wrecked by the Edinburgh council that started a post-war rebuilding project to ‘fix’ disappointing statistics, a situation in which a lot of the acute poverty found in Leith was masked by most of Edinburgh’s prosperity. Therefore, the story about the people of Leith, with its clear focus on a minority group that struggles in the face of larger governmental rules, provides an alternative set of voices. What is additionally interesting is how the Banana flats, a pivotal building in the *Trainspotting*-universe, have been cited as heritage by heritage authorities since 2017,⁹ which could be an indication of how media possibly contributes to the (re)shaping of the canon.

Conclusion

This article has focused on the set-up and cultural practice of four film tours in Edinburgh, analysing how these film tours contribute to placemaking practices. Prior research has shown the ubiquitous nature of film tours in contemporary cities. Less is known about how these film tours impact on placemaking practices and transform or confirm existing notions of place. More in particular, it is still unclear how the fictional character of films and TV series is discussed or performed during these tours and thus how the performance of ‘imaginative heritage’ (Reijnders, 2020) is able to enrich a sense of place among the tour participants.

Based on participant observation during four popular film tours, we conclude that the selected film tours are built up around a presumed conflation of imagined and material space, the reel and the real. Film tours are a way of ‘cultural work’ in which fictional narratives become heavily intertwined with both historical narratives and the materiality of place. This process takes place in three ways.

First, fictional narratives are explicitly connected to specific spots in and near Edinburgh. Through what we have labelled ‘pulls’, that is, mentioning an aspect from films or TV shows, be it an isolated reference to a character or scene, and connecting that aspect explicitly to a reference point within the physicality of the place, tourists’ imaginations are ignited and they are ‘invited’ to re-imagine fictional stories in the exact spots

that were featured in cinema. Pulls are performatively co-created by both guides and tourists, the latter through embodied practices such as posing for pictures or selfies. As such, narratives from film and TV are 'localized' on site. Second, place is transformed through film and TV by highlighting the traces of production on site and showing possible disconnections between the imagined world and 'real' Edinburgh. Here, incongruity between fictional stories and the presumed 'reality' of the place becomes the centre of discussion, which presumes there are 'truthful' accounts of places. Third, fictional and historical narratives are combined to create a synergetic image of Edinburgh as a rich 'cinema city'. History is used to provide further background to fictional narratives, while cinema is celebrated as a way to visualize the 'true core' of a place and its history.

What is particular interesting is how in the latter process, Edinburgh, and certain locations in particular, become further solidified as cinematically significant. Through solidifying Edinburgh as inherently cinematic, local place histories are created in which cinema becomes essential, accumulating in the construction of a strong local cinematic heritage.

Thus, places are constantly reconfigured through 'multiple layers of significance' (Torchin, 2002), that is, actual, historical, scientific, autobiographical, fictional and mediatized representations and narratives, that are inscribed in places (Van Es and Reijnders, 2018). What the current findings elucidate is the specific role of fiction in this multi-layered process of placemaking. Fictional storylines from TV and cinema are used to revitalize destinations, and to provide tourists with lively, telling re-imaginings of historical, political, social and cultural events in ways that spark people's imaginations, keeping people interested in, and tied to, these events. As such, it has potential to enact as a powerful factor in keeping particular cultural memories alive.

Through processes of placemaking, fiction eventually becomes part of the socially constructed 'core' of Edinburgh. Accordingly, the ways in which fictional narratives, 'factual' narratives and material space become intertwined within film tours, with well-known histories and heritage remaining as weighty factors, seemingly continue the proliferation of those representations of Edinburgh which are imbued with historical, nationalistic associations solidified throughout the 18th and 19th century, which have come to constitute the romantic touristic gaze of Scotland as a 'romantic dream landscape' (Edensor, 2002: 157). These findings conjure a similar apprehension that Edensor (2002) has expressed, namely how tourism can enact essentialist 'imperialistic commodities which decentre local identities and interpellate audiences in predictable ways' (p. 169). In the particular case of Edinburgh film tours as brought forward in this article, this translates to a concern that the kinds of imaginings that are constructed within film tours continuously run the risk of representing a fairly limited scope of mostly national, canonical histories (cf. Smith, 2006) and heritage narratives tied to national Scotland. This process glosses over the particularities of Edinburgh local life, and excludes particular socio-cultural groups in the city, especially immigrants, the lower classes, cultural minorities, people of colour, whose histories and heritage are not visible in these narratives that are represented within the tours (with the exception of the *Trainspotting* walking tour). This study reports on the possible problematic consequence of this, but does not further address the emerging issues on ethics and social responsibility of film tourism; this could be material for future research.

It remains to be seen how the conflation of imagined and material space plays out in, and relates to, other touristic, placemaking practices in Edinburgh, and more general, in placemaking practices in Scotland, or even other comparable cities across the globe. Taking these different cultural settings into account, fiction might fulfil a fundamentally different function within other (film) tourism instances or even other cultural contexts, entering in other kinds of interplay with cultural heritage narratives and tourism practices, and thereby possibly entailing different processes of configuring local and national heritage.

Due to the exploratory approach of this article, we focused mainly on the general patterns that could be found among the selected tours. The current sample contains four tours from very big, commercial tourism companies in and around Edinburgh, that mostly included peripheral locations and to a lesser extent, urban. The discrepancies between these two types of locations could also be a weighing factor in the kinds of imaginings that are shaped within the tours. Moreover, the nature and characteristics of the media products around which the tours were centred could be divisive factors, as well as the scope of the company to which the tour belongs. An analysis of such a wide variety of existing film tours goes beyond the scope of this article, but deserves closer scrutiny. As the current findings point towards, zooming in on the specificities of film touristic practices (where film, place, and tourism are at a unique meeting point) could improve our understandings of the presumed transformative function of fiction in shaping a sense of place and the possible ramifications of this in shaping local and national cultural identities.

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Notes

1. <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/scotland-in-the-world-how-others-see-us-in-film/> (accessed 4 June 2020).
2. <https://www.bfi.org.uk/sites/bfi.org.uk/files/downloads/economic-contribution-of-the-uks-film-high-end-tv-video-game-and-animation-programming-sectors-report-2015-02-23.pdf> (accessed 28 October 2019).
3. <https://www.visitscotland.org/binaries/content/assets/dot-org/pdf/research-papers/scotland-visitor-survey-the-highlands-2016.pdf> (accessed 28 October 2019).
4. <https://www.visitscotland.com/see-do/attractions/tv-film/> (accessed 4 June 2020).
5. <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place/filming/> (accessed 4 June 2020).
6. The dominant gaze presupposes a hierarchical process, as some actors have more power,

whereas other voices are excluded.

7. In the practice of film tours, these ways of place production do not occur isolated or linear.
8. <https://worldpopulationreview.com/world-cities/edinburgh-population/> (accessed 21 April 2020).
9. <https://www.scotsman.com/news-2-15012/leith-s-banana-flats-awarded-a-list-heritage-status-1-4354561> (accessed 28 October 2019).

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