

## Book review

T. Yamamura and P. Seaton (eds), *Contents Tourism and Pop Culture Fandom: Transnational Tourist Experiences* (Channel View Publications Bristol, UK and Blue Ridge Summit, PA, USA 2020) 264 pp.

Zafer Öter

Izmir Katip Çelebi University, Faculty of Tourism, Department of Tourist Guiding, Turkey

A number of authors around the globe contributed to this book in an effort to give clarity to a newly defined type of tourism, that of ‘contents tourism’ (Graburn/Yamamura 2020; Sabre 2016). The book’s editors have been working on the topic for a decade and, thanks to their efforts, this new tourism concept has become more accessible globally. Overall, contents tourism falls into the cultural tourism area, more specifically into the area of living culture/creative industries/literary tourism or, as the book states, into ‘popular culture’. The book offers a comprehensive analysis of extant literature on the term. Furthermore, it tries to explore further the dynamism in the process of narrative world development and expansion. Eventually, re-creation of contents across media formats via analysis of tourism practices draws the attention. One key contribution the book aspires to refers to the consideration of tourist sites as media. This book further contributes to academia as it clarifies the term ‘contents tourism’, broadens this term from the Japanese context to a global context, links literature and tourism from a ‘contentsization’ point of view, and focuses on media-related narratives in tourism. From a qualitative-research point of view, the authors have contributed to this growing field of contents tourism by building their argumentation on different qualitative methods, as the following analysis illustrates.

The structure of the book primarily develops in three parts. The first explores the contentsization of literary worlds and includes four chapters. Chapter 1, by Philip Seaton, discusses how novelist Jane Austen became an attraction of contents tourism by transcending literary tourism borders, as in the case of American fans. The author particularly explains Austen’s influence on local and national tourism in the United Kingdom. This chapter can serve as a guideline for destinations that may appeal to literary people and/or through narratives. In the second chapter, Maree Thyne and Gretchen Larsen identify contents ‘brandsapes’ by analyzing another eminent English literature figure, namely Charlotte Brontë. Interestingly, the authors merge physical and narrative worlds; in other words a contents brandscape and a place brandscape. This chapter provides useful tips to understand the new contents tourist. Another literary world example comes from Poland in the third chapter, where Aleksandra Jaworowicz-Zimny debates *Witcher* novels and games-inspired tourism. The chapter ends with a survey analyzing the primary data of 86 respondents that help us better understand young gamers as a contents tourist profile. The first part then ends with a chapter dedicated to *Heidi*, *Girl of the Alps*-related travel as induced by Japanese anime. Here the author, Takayoshi Yamamura, demonstrates how creators’

experience of transnational contents tourism makes it easier to reinterpret *Heidi*'s narrative world.

The second part of the book then seeks to discover how physical sites become 'sacred', tackles tourist behaviors at sacred sites of contents tourism, and focuses on the development processes of narrative worlds. It starts with Catherine Butler's chapter on a rural Britishness locus, the Cotswolds, and the link between the place and children's literature as in the case of the Japanese fantasy world. This chapter successfully elaborates on how a well-preserved local/rural lifestyle and material site develops as a niche destination despite being situated between strong popular tourist sites. This development owes much to cottage industries, fairytales, and other contentsization efforts. In Chapter 6, Shinobu Myoki explores *Yōkai* tourism in Japan and Taiwan. The author explains Japanese *Kai* (mystery) heritage, elaborating on three sites in Japan and one theme park in Taiwan. The seventh chapter, by Kyungjae Jang, relates contents tourism with religious imagination. It is quite fascinating to comparatively assess the duality of age-old religions with their pilgrimage rituals on one hand, and the new popular culture attractions with their fans acting in a semi-religious way about their relationships with popular cultural contents on the other. A vivid example given is *Star Trek* fandom, defined as a 'new cultural religion'. The eighth chapter, written by Akiko Sugawa-Shimada, examines theatre tourism from an unconventional angle, that of 2.5-dimensional performances. Virtual corporality is a research topic that has been developing since the early 2000s. This study area combines reality and fiction in media such as Japanese manga, anime, and video games. Such theatrical performances offer musicals and forms of plays based on these genres, and the author briefly explains characteristics of exceptional fans through qualitative research. The ninth chapter, penned by Ranny Rastati, is about Indonesian cosplay tourism. Here the author calls our attention to the generations and their special mindset, filled with narratives in their early ages. The author shares the insights from nine in-depth interviews that contribute to the discussion on cosplay tourism as part of contents tourism.

The final part emphasizes personal journey practices in an attempt to show the connection between fans' destinations and imaginaries. As such, it looks at contents tourism as pilgrimage and is divided into four chapters. The tenth chapter, written by Sueun Kim, tackles film-induced tourism and the case of Thai films. Thai films with Koreanness content support the contentsization of Korea as a destination, as proven by travel statistics. Chapter 11, by Christopher P. Hood, analyzes plane liveries as extraordinary sites of contents tourism. According to Hood, during international flights the planes carry special (non-standard) liveries and, by doing so, highlight the transnational nature of contents tourism. In Chapter 12 Stefanie Benjamin explores the case of New Mexico as a pilgrimage destination for fans of TV shows such as *Breaking Bad* (Visit Albuquerque 2020). The thirteenth and final chapter is written by Sue Beeton. In it she relates poetry to tourism metaphorically, and depicts how interior and exterior worlds match as a (contents) tourism experience. She provides some methodological insights into and explanations of auto-ethnography, a rarely used qualitative method in tourism science. The book ends with an informative conclusion written by Philip Seaton in which he envisions the future and discusses sustainable contents tourism in the 21st century.

Overall, the volume's authors seem to enjoy what they have written and their contributions are mostly innovative. The editors are even more motivated to further analyze and study the contents tourism domain, seeking to contribute as much as possible. Thus, proposing recommendations to further improve this book is not an

easy task. Still, it could perhaps be further enriched if the editors could bring more contentsization cases from cultures other than those mainly reflecting Japan and Far Eastern countries. Future editions could collect more transnational cases that will fill this gap in the contents tourism area.

## REFERENCES

- Graburn, N., Yamamura, T. (2020): Contents tourism: background, context, and future, in: *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 18(1), 1–11.
- Sabre, C. (2016): French anime and manga fans in Japan: pop culture tourism, media pilgrimage, imaginary, in: *International Journal of Contents Tourism*, 1(1), 1–19.
- Visit Albuquerque (2020): Film tourism, URL: <https://www.visitalbuquerque.org/about-abq/film-tourism> (accessed 14 September 2020).