

# Book review

## Contents Tourism and Pop Culture Fandom – Transnational Tourist Experiences

*Edited by Takayoshi Yamamura and Philip Seaton*  
*Channel View Publications*  
*Bristol*  
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*249 p.*  
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*Contents Tourism and Pop Culture Fandom*, edited by Yamamura and Seaton (2020), was published in 2020 as part of Channel View's *Aspects of Tourism* series. It is the first book that bridges the longstanding gap between Eastern and Western perspectives on popular culture-induced tourism, making a much-needed contribution to global scholarship in this area through this alone. Western research on popular culture-related tourism is still highly fragmented in nature, both in what it considers the perspectives it adopts and the fields within which it is conducted. Eastern research, to date, then lacks contextualisation within the transmedia and transnational aspect. Yamamura and Seaton thus propose “contents tourism” as a unifying framework, based on dynamic practices and experiences motivated by contents such as narratives, characters or locations where the narrative world is expanded through not only its adaptations in the media but also tourism practice. Through this, the previously often neglected and disjointed role of the actual content that unites fans receives the attention that is required to fully understand the role of popular culture for individuals and in the contemporary tourism landscape.

The introduction outlines developments and current challenges of popular culture tourism and introduces contents tourism as the underlying framework for the subsequent three parts. Part 1, “The Contentsization of Literary Worlds”,

considers the origin of many narratives worlds in writing and focuses on transmedia content development. Chapters on Jane Austen and *The Witcher*, for example, explore the development of narratives through various media representations and thus further “contentsization” and their subsequent impact on visitor profiles and destination development. Brontë and Nesbit are then used to examine the complexities between different narratives, author and place through brandscapes, acknowledging the complexities and challenges of exploring dual fictionalities within the real.

Part 2, “Tourist Behaviour at ‘Sacred sites’ of Contents Tourism”, then explores collective tourist experiences through performativity, often addressing the transnational aspect of popular culture tourism. Here, content and narrative are at the core of many international tourism sites and their design, emphasising the relevance of visitor practice and rituals. This adds a valuable perspective to existing, often site-focused, research where a certain location is frequently considered the main attraction and appeal – here, however, place characteristics have been found to often play secondary roles overridden by visitors’ interpretation of and engagement with the narrative, acknowledging the co-creational nature of contents and popular culture tourism.

Finally, Part 3, “Contents Tourism as Pilgrimage”, then looks at the connections between places and imaginations from individualised perspectives, expanding on the previous sections. The multiplicity of places as real, fictional and imaginary and the impact on experiences and perceptions, combined with

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perspectives on experience design and personal connections. This section of the book contributes significantly to our understanding of often highly involved fans and how the meaning that certain contents hold for them impacts the way in which sites, attractions, places and self are explored and experienced.

This book contributes greatly to our understanding of the role of popular culture and its contents for the contemporary global tourism landscape. Nearly all chapters include visitor voices or, at the very least, consider visitor behaviour in relation to their connection with content, narrative, characters and the multiple identities of places. It examines contents tourism under the umbrella of both meaning and practice, effectively transferring findings to managerial areas. As pop-cultural phenomena are participatory, social and community-focused, this is a much-needed contribution to the field. This, however, could have been expanded upon. Placing the popularity of contents tourism within a wider societal context and acknowledging its meaning for and contributions to individuals and their subcultural fandoms more explicitly would have added an additional dimension to the publication's aim to address the transnationality of the contents tourism beyond individual case studies.

The conclusion provides several practical implications and directions for future sustainable contents tourism planning and development; however, the future directions of popular culture and its contents have not been considered. It must be noted, though, that it was not the editors' aim to provide future directions and anticipated developments in this area. In summary, *Contents Tourism and Pop Culture Fandom* provides a fresh perspective that will hopefully decrease the fragmentation of existing related research while making especially Japanese research in this area more accessible to English-speaking academia. On a personal note, I am slightly disappointed in the lack of Harry Potter-related content despite the book cover featuring what appears to be the Hogwarts Express – but the conclusion suggests that perhaps there is something to look forward to?

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**Reference**

Yamamura, T. and Seaton, P. (Eds) (2020), *Contents Tourism and Pop Culture Fandom – Transnational Tourist Experiences*, Channel View Publications, Clevedon.