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Places of the Imaginations. An Ethnography of the TV Detective Tour

This article considers the phenomenon of the TV detective tour, guided tours of the locations and settings of popular TV detective programs. What explains the growing popularity of these tours? The article proposes that the locations in question serve as physical points of reference to an imagined world. By visiting these locations and focusing on them, tourists are able to construct and subsequently cross a symbolic boundary between an 'imagined' and a 'real' world. To explain this process, a new concept is introduced: *lieux d'imagination*. This concept is supported and developed on the basis of ethnographic analysis of three popular TV detective tours: the Inspector Morse Tour in Oxford, the Baantjer Tour in Amsterdam, and the Wallander Tour in Ystad, Sweden. In all, 31 interviews were conducted with tourist office employees, tour guides, local inhabitants, and tourists; these interviews were supplemented with participatory observation.