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Television, Tourism and Rural Life

Dr Tom Mordue
Teesside Business School
University of Teesside
Middlesbrough
TS1 3PZ
Tel: 01642-342808
e-mail: T.Mordue@Tees.ac.uk

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Abstract

This paper analyses the relationship between dramaturgy, tourism and rurality. Through an ethnographic study of Goathland in North Yorkshire - the filming location for the UK television drama series ‘Heartbeat’ - the rural is shown to be a cultural performance that invokes certain lifestyle preferences that are both reliant upon and counterpoised to urban society. However, when urban viewers exchange the virtuality of television viewing for the corporeality of visiting the rural scenes that have become a familiar part of their cultural landscapes, the consequences are much more profound, nuanced and complex than the demarcation of positive or negative impacts reified in certain managerialist discourses. Moreover, the paper shows how the public and private spaces of the rural are being fundamentally transformed by the types of global consumption and mobility that ‘film-induced tourism’ represents.

Key words: performance, power, rurality, space, authenticity
Since 1991 Goathland has been the scenic home of the Yorkshire Television’s (YTV) ‘Heartbeat’, which is based on Nicholas Rhea’s ‘Constable’ novels about the life of a country policeman living in Aidensfield village in the 1960s. Still commanding figures of around £7.5 million UK viewers per episode, at its peak in the mid 1990s 16.7 million were regularly watching Heartbeat in the UK, and it has been sold to more than forty countries worldwide (Yorkshire Tourist Board 1996; TouristNet UK 2006). Heartbeat’s mixture of depicting quaint rural community life alongside 1960s nostalgia has been an obvious winner for YTV, and the series has brought a phenomenal upsurge in visitor numbers to Goathland from 200,000 per annum, prior to 1991, to around 1.2 million per annum once the programme achieved widespread popularity (Gilbert 1996). This has made it the most visited destination in the National Park with 61% of all holidaymakers (i.e. tourists staying at least overnight) and 26% of all day-trippers in the National Park visiting Goathland (NYMNP 2007). These figures assume an even more startling character when it is considered that the population of Goathland village is in the region of 450 people (Mordue 2001; HMSO 1991), and that day visits to the National Park itself declined from 12.67 million in 1991 to 7.79 in 1994 (NYMNP 1991; 2000). It is also noteworthy that the majority of visitors to the National Park have consistently fallen within the ABC1 social groupings whereas the perception of villagers is that Heartbeat tourists generally fit a lower social profile (Breakall 2004; Beeton 2005).

Given these developments, it is not surprising that there has been much disquiet in Goathland about the impact Heartbeat tourism is having on country village life. Indeed,
Beeton (2005: 76) remarks that ‘The TV series *Heartbeat* embodies all that is good and bad about film-induced tourism’. However, we need to be cautious about Heartbeat tourism impacting on the village and on rural village life in rather linear fashion, the issues are much more nuanced and problematic than that. This paper explores the problematic through ethnographic data gathered from field research and depth interviews undertaken with Goathland residents, tourists and a range of key informants between 1995 and 2004, and triangulates this with other research undertaken in Goathland over the same period. The analysis reveals how Goathland qua Aidensfield is constructed and consumed as the centre of Heartbeat Country and as a quintessentially ‘authentic’ rural village. More significantly, the paper critically assesses the ways in which these places and their different constituencies of consumers collide and coalesce in very real and symbolic ways.

The analysis also demonstrates that focusing on the often messy and contradictory interactions of people and place in a tourism context can reveal sets of cultural and political nuances that are deeply rooted, powerful and beyond the received wisdom of ‘managerialist’ approaches to tourism.

This wisdom is deeply coloured by managerialist assumptions – assumptions that take for granted the legitimacy and efficacy of established patterns of thinking and action. Knowledge of management then becomes knowledge for management in which alternative voices are absent and marginalized. (Alvesson and Willmot 2001: 1 italics in original).
Indeed, tourism managers are part of the social morass who, like other social actors, respond to as well as influence the multidimensional and multi-scaled relations that create tourist places. Thompson (2004: 597) on rural tourism puts it thus:

tourism and the people, places, and cultures that are part of it are not static or unchanging, but are social and historical creations and processes that need explaining both in terms of the extension of the national and global into the realm of the local as well as the extension of the local into the realm of the national and the global.

When the rural is subject to film-induced tourism these processes and related issues can be greatly intensified. As Hudson and Ritchie (2006: 395) say, ‘film tourism is a complex and dynamic concept … [which] depends on a number of factors outside the control of a destination’.

The paper takes on board all these insights and applies them by focusing on the circulation and reproduction of highly potent cultural meanings that originate outside the boundaries of Goathland but which converge there in the form of Heartbeat tourism to transform and extend it into a simulacrum of its traditional self. Indeed, Hudson and Ritchie (2006) list Goathland’s Heartbeat tourism as an important example of the increasingly global phenomenon of film-induced tourism whose various impacts are felt from the USA to Europe to Australia, Africa and the Far East.
THE RURAL MYTH AND THE DRAMATIZATION OF RURAL LIFE

The rural myth

Heartbeat relies heavily on a mythological framing of rurality that is both romantic and modern, which Humphreys (1995: 216) describes as:

the way that urbanized and industrialized England, even now, is *recreated as a rural nation*... It is, in short, the sense that the countryside is somehow special - the feeling that life is better, the people are kindlier, and the existence 'truer' there (italics in original).

This is by no means a uniquely English predilection, the western world generally ascribes its rural landscapes as being more authentic than their urban cousins (Bunce 1994). Moreover, Bunce (1994) shows that there is a shared Anglo-American ‘countryside ideal’ even though the vastness of North America produces a diverse sense of the rural whereby wilderness and pastoral aesthetics vie for the cultural heart of middle America. Indeed, by dint of its location and aesthetic attributes Goathland straddles the cultural cusp of the English ideal of (a rather tamed) ‘wilderness’ and the quaintly domesticated vision of a ‘typical’ English country village.

Anti-urban sentiments are integral to the construction of this mythic heritage landscape, just as they are prominent in traditional constructions of English identity itself (see Newby, 1979; Lowenthal, 1991; Cosgrove and Daniels, 2002; Urry 2002). At its
centre lies the country village, the focal point of an Arcadian vision which invariably pictures ‘true’ England in past tense:

That solid look of the village; the fact that the roofs and walls seemed to mingle naturally with the fields and the trees; the feeling of the naturalness of the inn, of the cross-roads, of the market cross - all these things were a very precious possession...in a real sense the Crown Jewels. These were the national, the normal, the English, the unreplaceable things (G. K. Chesterton, quoted in ‘Preservation of Rural England’, The Times, 30 April, 1931: 11; in Lowenthal, 1991: 213).

It is notable that the poor are absent from this rural utopia because the vision of heritage and inheritance that it constructs defies and transcends ‘mere’ socio-economic relations. Bunce (1994), however, reminds us that the actual upkeep of the character of ‘traditional’ country villages both in modern Britain and the US is a major preoccupation of the ‘exurban’ middle-classes who have moved out of the metropolitan centres into the not-too-distant countryside. Once ensconced, they are inclined to close the door on things urban as being in conflict with their aesthetic sensibilities and vested social interests that converge around strongly preservationist ideologies. Ironically, though, as more exurbanites chase the rural myth as a lifestyle attribute, it becomes stretched beyond its elitist roots, and the actual social, economic and visual character of the metropolitan countryside is redefined.

The middle-classes also dominate leisure and tourism in rural Britain where ‘[t]hose with professional-managerial jobs are twice as likely as those with manual jobs
to visit, and they are more likely to be frequent visitors’ (Urry 2002: 88). And because London dominates England’s cultural output, at the heart of the English rural myth is an aesthetic that draws upon images of relatively domesticated landscapes located in the south (Humphreys 1995; Lowenthal, 1991; Newby, 1979, 1987; Short, 1991; Shields 1991). By contrast, the landscapes of the north are associated with ‘wilder’ and ‘bleaker’ uplands, or with grimy working-class towns and cities that are scarred from the ravages of industrialisation (see Wiener, 1981; Shields, 1991). The rural north is, however, given value because of the cultural influences of nineteenth century romantics like Worsdworth and Turner, and because ‘things that are rural or ancient are at the very heart of southern English snobberies, even if they occur in the North’ (Horne, 1969: 38; in Urry, 1995: 205). Stereotypical constructions of the north have also been reinforced by many popular cultural outputs of the twentieth century that include, for example, the novels of D. H. Lawrence and modern ‘soaps’ like Coronation Street (Shields, 1991). Even today the people of the north are associated with sociality, emotional warmth, rugged leisure pursuits and a lack cultural sophistication or affectation. It would be a mistake though to think of these stereotypes as resulting exclusively from a southern English gaze, as northerners too commonly subscribe to them in order to assert their own cultural uniqueness (ibid.). Heartbeat, then, has all the cultural formulae to capitalise on these north/south/rural/urban/wild/domesticated projections, and, rather cleverly, laces them with a large helping of 1960s pop nostalgia.
Performing and staging rural life and rural tourism

Given the dramaturgical flavour of traditional and popular constructions of the rural, it is apposite to view critically the way the countryside is a stage upon which rural life and rural consumption are *performances* that can be judged against certain social rules, standards and identities. The use of performance as a metaphor for tourist practice has become a focus of attention in the critical tourism studies literature in recent years (see, for example, Adler 1989; MacCannell 1992; Chaney 1993; 2000; Edensor, 1998; 2000; 2001; Mordue 2005; Quinn 2007). Although this is a relatively new line of analysis it is rooted in social constructionism and underpinned by the seminal works of authors such as Blumer (1937) and Goffman (1959) on ‘symbolic interactionism’, which refers to how ‘human interaction is mediated by the use of symbols, by interpretation, or by ascertaining the meaning of one another’s actions’ (Blumer, 1937: 8). Performance, in the context of this paper, refers to the symbolic interactions, discourses and signifying practices intimately embroiled in the reproduction of space, habitus, group membership, power, and the display of “cultural capital” (Bourdieu 1984). This applies as much to local people as it does to tourists and tourism managers because the acting out of daily life by anyone involves performance in all public circumstances (Goffman 1959). Moreover, when tourists and locals occupy the same space the scene is set for a variety of performative conflicts and power struggles to arise (Mordue 2005; Edensor 2001; Quinn 2007).

A major strength of this approach is that it allows a means of understanding people who constitute themselves as social actors primarily through what they do and say
rather than as being categorized as members of predetermined groups like, say, tourists or residents, and so on. These commonsense categories are useful for identifying certain regularities and patterns in populations, but, as Edensor (2001) argues, they are really about describing roles adopted rather than social entities made manifest. Edensor (2001: 63) also remarks that ‘the coherence of most tourist performances depends on their being performed in specific “theatres”. In this case, the countryside is constructed as a theatre in which people perform rural leisure and rural tourism, and where rural residents perform as ‘country people’ who live a ‘country life’. Similarly, rural tourism managers will perform their roles acutely aware of their setting. Situating rural performances this way sensitizes the observer to the ways they are ideologically constructed and socially malleable. They are also interchangeable in that rural residents and rural tourism managers can and do consume the countryside much as tourist do much of the time (c.f. Fees 1996).

It is well established that film and television have phenomenal power to induce tourist visitation (Riley, Baker and Van Doren 1998; Beeton 2001, 2005). And Kim et al (2007) demonstrate that TV dramas in particular can significantly change the popular image of the places where they are filmed. They also argue that, even at an international level, this can lead to greater cultural exchange and understanding between ‘host and guest’ communities. The findings of the Goathland case support the first part of Kim et al’s thesis but demonstrate that resistance to tourism engendered by a popular TV drama series can be fiercely felt. More importantly, the Goathland case shows that when a relatively unknown rural location that resonates with symbolic values that are tied up with social status and national identity becomes a global media star the prospect of
sharing cultural understanding and meaning can quickly give way to dominant groups asserting socio-spatial superiority. Hence, Goathland’s residents attempts to mobilize a ‘politics of aesthetics’ (Duncan and Duncan 1997; Duncan 1999) in order to construct the countryside as a traditional English theatre upon which their rural lifestyles are rightly produced and performed privately beyond the gaze and ken of the urbanized public at large. Whether the cultural citizenship of that public originate locally, nationally or internationally, matters less than the consumer rights of middle-class rural residents and rural tourists who know how to navigate the signs and symbols that link the socio-economics of place with its performance.
RESEARCH METHODS

The substantive data presented here is derived from ethnographic research undertaken in Goathland between 1995 and 2004, in two phases. Between 1995 and 1998 field observations were made during twenty four separate visits to Goathland in order to assess how the area is valued and potentially contested by what Cheong and Miller (2000) call ‘the tripartite of brokers, locals and tourists’. Twenty three in-depth interviews were conducted with fifty five tourists, of which approximately half were vacationing in the area while the others were on a day-trip to Goathland. Two resident focus groups were held with twelve people, and six ‘key informant’ depth interviews were conducted with the local vicar, the Tourism and Traffic Officer for the NYMNPA, the locations manager for YTV, the local agent for the Duchy of Lancaster, the Goathland post-officer, and a local farmer who owned the Goathland Exhibition Centre and the Heartbeat Experience in nearby Whitby.

All interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed and interrogated via the software package HyperResearch. (see Mordue 1999 and 2001 for preliminary analyses of this field research). HyperResearch is a qualitative data management system that eases systematic coding of interview extracts which relate to a particular topic, issue or theme that can be given a name or code. It allows the researcher to interrogate interview transcripts and sections of transcripts in relation to each other and the context(s) within which the speaker has situated his or her comments. Various codes can be electronically selected against particular interviews, a group of interviews, or all the interviews, and the software can produce correlated ‘reports’ based on these codes from which the corresponding comments can be readily analyzed, related, compared, contrasted and
contextualised. Finally, the reports produced are cross-referenced ‘by-hand’ in order to doubly ensure the integrity, consistency and rigor of the data handling and analysis without over reliance on the mechanical process.

Between 2000 and 2004 eight more visits were made to Goathland in order to observe first-hand how issues relating to Heartbeat tourism had progressed over the period. Photographic and video records were made of tourist activity and spontaneous conversations with tourists and locals were annotated in field diaries. Furthermore, meetings were held annually over the period with the Tourism and Traffic Officer for the NYMNPA in order to update on the issues from his perspective. As a supplementary piece of research a telephone interview was held with the Senior Manager of ITV Yorkshire (formerly YTV), Leeds Studios, in October 2007 to discuss Heartbeat viewer characteristics because such data are not available in the public domain.

With regard to sampling, all respondents who took part in this research were either identified by networking or were met spontaneously through participant observation in and around Goathland. They were invited to express their views because of their willingness to participate, and because of the positionality of the information they could offer, as opposed to the ‘typicality’ or ‘representativeness’ of the sample of people themselves, as is usual in quantitative research (see. McCracken 1988; Geiger 1990; and Cook & Crang 1995, 2007 on ethnographic methods). Known as ‘theoretical sampling’, this approach is based on linking theoretical knowledge to knowledge of the empirical circumstance under investigation, from which the researcher gains ‘selective access to appropriate groups of people who may be concerned with, and/or involved in living through, the research problem and encouraging them to teach the researcher from various
perspectives’ (Cook and Crang 2007: 14). To achieve this in this particular instance, all tourists were approached and interviewed on fine days while taking a rest in the centre of Goathland (which ensured that interviews were relaxed, lasting anywhere from twenty to fifty minutes), the focus groups with local people were held in the village hall where refreshments were made available (these lasted one and a half to two hours each), and key informants were interviewed either in their places of work or at home (with each interview taking between forty to eighty minutes).

The interviews and discussions were underpinned by topic/issue schedules to ensure consistency, although they were sufficiently flexible and conversational to allow respondents autonomy in bringing up issues they thought important. As is usual in theoretical sampling, the whole process ceased when issues and opinions became repeated to the point of ‘theoretical saturation’ (see Cook and Grang 1995, 2007; Agrosino 2007), by which continuing to uncover and explore issues and opinions further with other people could confidently be deemed as unnecessary. The respondent comments cited here are taken from Mordue (1999 and 2001) for consistency of approach in relation to the way data is cited from other sources, and are presented to qualitatively illustrate bodies of local opinion that are supported, and therefore triangulated, by the findings of other research undertaken on Heartbeat tourism in Goathland between 1995 and 2003 (see Demetriadi 1996; NYMNPA and YTB 1997; Beeton 2005).

My own position in this research is that of a white, middle-aged male academic researcher and senior manager of a business school who lives in a semi-rural location. I have no direct affiliation with this community or any of its members. Furthermore, all
the research and analysis was done solely by me, with all original tape-recordings, transcripts and photographs being preserved for public scrutiny.
GOATHLAND QUA AIDENSFIELD

On visiting Goathland it is apparent that its spaciosly spread layout, its large village green and its position on a broad spur of the moors makes it an ideal location for filming. In terms of its social make-up, by the mid 1990s around half of its households were occupied by retirees and 60% of its population had lived there for less than twenty years (YTB and NYMNPA 1997). Indeed, the local vicar comments: ‘a lot of people have come here to retire. I haven’t met anybody yet who has actually been born and raised in Goathland’ (Mordue 2001). Throughout the twentieth century Goathland has been a popular meeting and resting place for holidaymakers, walkers and hikers who enjoy its moorland location. All the common land in and around Goathland is owned by the Queen (Duchy of Lancaster), and there are more than a dozen tourist hotels and bed and breakfast establishments in and around the village. On the edge of the village green there is a general store, an outdoor pursuits shop, a post office, a gift shop and tea rooms - all of which stock an extensive range of Heartbeat souvenirs (Beeton 2005). The village is also on the route of the North Yorkshire Moors Railway, established in 1971 as a private trust and tourist attraction which unabashedly lists Aidensfield/Goathland as one of its major stop-offs. The majority of people, though, visit Goathland by car and by coach.

Demetriadi (1996) reports that Goathland residents quickly came to resent Heartbeat tourism because of its encroachment on village life. This was not only about the increase in tourist numbers but about the ‘quality’ and the perceived lower social class of the tourists themselves. As a retired male resident puts it: ‘it’s the kind of tourism we’ve experienced in the last few years that has made the dramatic changes that everyone goes on about’ (Mordue 2001: 237). And from research conducted in Goathland in
2003, Beeton (2005: 103) found that ‘guesthouse and B&B providers lamented the loss of ambience and the ‘wrong type’ of visitor now coming to Goathland’.

At the same time there has been much marketing effort to persuade people to visit Goathland as the centrepiece of Heartbeat Country (see Beeton 2005). The following extract from a mid 1990s brochure provides a vivid example of this:

Heartbeat’s setting is true to the books (and the author still lives nearby). The majestic amber sweep of the North York Moors seems to fill the small screen and no less real are the challenges and characters faced by PC Nick Rowan (Nick Berry). This is hill country life head on - tough, unsentimental and faced with bluff Yorkshire humour.

‘Aidensfield’ is real life Goathland, home to the Aidensfield Arms and Heartbeat’s base camp. The cast and crew are often out and about in Helmsley, Pickering and Whitby plus special locations only tracked down on official Heartbeat Country Tours (Yorkshire Tourist Board 1996).

Descriptions such as this and sobriquets such as ‘Heartbeat Country’ invite tourists into an immediate, ‘real life’ consumption drama that can somehow bridge the fictional world of Heartbeat and the actual socio-geographic condition of the Goathland area, and sets the epistemological framework through which tourists negotiate and interpret experiences (c.f. Edensor 1998; Cooper 1994). To overcome mismatches between the ‘real’ and the imagined, it is axiomatic that tourism managers and entrepreneurs will stage manage places in order to satisfy the performative demands of the tourist (cf. MacCannell 1976).
This is especially the case when tourists are trying to breath empirical life into the scenes and fictions brought to them by televised dramas through visiting the places where they were actually filmed.

The stage management of Goathland for Heartbeat tourism has meant that its identity as a ‘traditional’ rural village and its media identity as Aidensfield are, visually, completely intertwined. The Goathland Garage, for example, bears the sign ‘Mostyn’s Garage’, as it does when used as a prop in the television programme, and displays 1960s vehicles as well as the series’ policeman’s motorbike in its forecourt. There is also the shop ‘Aidensfield Stores’ which again is left as it is when filmed, and which makes its living solely from selling Heartbeat paraphernalia and souvenirs to tourists. The Goathland Hotel becomes the Aidensfield Arms in Heartbeat when its exterior sign is changed. At virtually every corner of the village centre there is some reminder, through a souvenir or a sign, that you are in the heart of Heartbeat Country.

The dramaturgy of Heartbeat advertising material and the physical (re)figurations of Goathland itself, has meant that there has been a progressive de-differentiation between ‘back stage’ Goathland, the ‘real’ place where ‘real’ country people live, and Aidensfield, the fictional ‘front stage’ of Heartbeat and Heartbeat tourism (cf. Goffman 1959; McCannell 1976). According to Lash (1990: 11) de-differentiation is ‘the fundamental structuring trait’ of postmodernism, but, in this instance, it is underpinned by a rural myth that both Goathland and Aidensfield seem to conform to in equal measure, but which, in social terms, Goathland’s residents are destined to contest. On such issues, Hughes (1998: 19-20) notes that how places are represented as tourist attractions ‘engages with the affective attachments of residents to their own localities’. 
However, as already alluded to, we must be careful of privileging rural residents’ attachments to a place as unique and therefore asserting a dichotomy between residents and tourists that might not necessarily exist – at least not in the cultural consumption of the rural. Cloke (1993: 53), for instance, suggests that the underlying issues relating to the construction and commodification of the rural as a tourist playground ‘are equally applicable... to people wishing to “buy into” a rural lifestyle either in terms of residential status or the display of particular commodities’. Furthermore, Fees (1996) offers an interesting designation, ‘resident tourists’, to describe those who have made culturally cherished rural locations their home. They are ‘the immigrant[s] for whom the locale is a leisure backdrop to a “real” life lived primarily elsewhere – in the past, in the case of retired persons; in the present, in terms of commuters and of holiday/second home owners’ (ibid.:121). Given the profile of Goathland residents, this typology of consumption practices is applicable to the majority of them, and it also implies that there is little difference between the consumption motivations of Heartbeat tourists and those of Goathland residents. The materially important distinction lies within the separate spatial and temporal capabilities of residents and Heartbeat tourists to access the locale in order to perform their consumption dramas.

The view from inside: residents’ perspectives

That Heartbeat tourism quickly became an issue in Goathland is evidenced by the fact that in 1994 the Goathland Residents Association conducted its own ‘Goathland Residents Survey’ on issues relating to tourist congestion, whose findings were duly submitted to the National Park authorities as proof that something needed to be done.
Furthermore, numerous villagers’ and ‘traditional’ visitors’ complaints have reached the National Park over the years. Some residents have even advocated using toll gates around the village to manage Heartbeat tourist traffic flows while raising money for the general upkeep of Goathland (Mordue 2001). Such tactics, complaints and suggestions are far from being only practical reactions to physical problems, but are political strategies that are about formally enshrining a particular code of rural being, regardless of how accurately congestion problems and the like are presented. Indeed, both in 2000 and 2004 the NYMNPA Tourism and Traffic Officer stated that the underlying socio-cultural issues relating to who should consume the area and what type of consumption is ‘appropriate’ to it has gone on unabated, even though many of the issues regarding congestion etc. had been addressed through better management of tourists and traffic by then (ibid. and personal comment. 2004).

The National Park authority realised the political complexity of the Heartbeat tourism issue as early as 1992, and decided to embrace a strategy of public meetings by way of a series of open, two way discussions between the National Park and Goathland residents. The aim was to empower residents by including them as soon as possible in the Heartbeat tourism management process. However, this strategy failed because consensual agreements could never be reached amongst residents. As one resident describes:

I think the National Park has rather a problem. They come to these meetings and they say ‘what do you want”? And somebody will say ‘well we want a car park at the top end of the village’ and somebody else will get upset and say ‘no we don’t’. Nobody ever seems to have a concerted idea of what is wanted (ibid.).
Some residents were so suspicious and incensed by the newfangled tactic of the National Park that they would either boycott the meetings altogether or walk out of them in anger because their structure did not allow individuals to dominate proceedings. From this an impasse developed and the strategy broke down completely (also see Beeton 2005).

In an attempt to throw objective light onto the Heartbeat tourism issue, the Yorkshire Tourist Board, in conjunction with the North Yorkshire Moors National Park, commissioned a survey which culminated in a report entitled: *The Impacts of Filming on the Residents of Goathland*, which was published in May 1997. Unsurprisingly, it described the strength of local unhappiness on traffic congestion, increases in tourist numbers and the change in tourist type. Moreover, the authors acceded to the political nature of these impacts by balking at recommending so-called solutions to defined problems, instead saying that ‘these must be drawn up and agreed upon by all those involved in the village’ (page: 2). Although Beeton (2005) rightly proclaims this as a disappointing outcome of the report, it is telling - as is the findings that there is a cultural difference between some residents and some visitors which at least causes bemusement and at worst causes each side to be intolerant of the other. Most of the residents feel they have more in common with walkers and ramblers who appear to appreciate the local scenery than those who visit to see the location of a television series. Many residents feel that the traditional walking tourists are now put off by the crowds of visitors to Goathland (YTB & NYMNPA 1997: 61).
Although this statement is flawed in that it suggests that there is a two way intolerance between Heartbeat tourists and Goathland residents even though tourists were not surveyed for the report, it does indicate the class culture alliance, or, in Bourdieu’s (1984) schema, a similar rural habitus between residents and walkers who appropriate the countryside through a particular rural gaze (c.f. Urry 2002). As a corollary, Goathland’s residents tend to disavow Heartbeat tourists of the knowledge and capacity to enact ‘authentic’ rural performances themselves (Mordue 2001). One resident disparagingly describes Heartbeat tourists as day-trippers who

bring all their own food [and] sit out of one of the guest houses or a cafe, they eat their own food, [and] start coming in at 9.30 in the morning...We’ve monitored them going back at half past seven/eight o’clock. Now can you enjoy your village life if you are surrounded by cars, people playing football and transistor radios going? It’s murder (retired female; ibid. 244).

By contrast, ideal tourists are described by another Goathland resident as

people that stay in the hotels or small guest houses [and] take in the environment, they get on their boots and walk for miles or they take their car out and come back late in the evening. They explore the whole of the National Park and they spread themselves out thinly (retired male; ibid.).
These quotations not only show the dichotomy that residents uphold between the two tourist types, but reveal that Heartbeat tourists are subject to much local monitoring and surveillance. It is also evident that ideal tourists are complicit in monitoring the unwelcome presence and performances of their Heartbeat counterparts when a local guest house owner says: ‘our guests complaint about the tourists’ (ibid.). And Beeton (2005: 102) reports that while Heartbeat has brought a ‘lower class’ of visitors to Goathland, this has not diminished the ‘traditional customer-base of nature lovers’ who not only comment on Heartbeat tourists but ‘avoid them by visiting the moors’.

These sentiments fly in the face of the second guiding principle of the North York Moors National Park Authority (NYMNPA) which is to encourage greater use of the Park itself. Indeed, a recent review of all the National Parks Authorities found that they generally ‘could do more to encourage social inclusion, particularly through the second purpose of promoting enjoyment and understanding’ (DEFRA 2002). Arguably, Heartbeat does exactly that by reaching out to millions of people ‘outside the A, B, C1 social groupings who constitute the majority of Heartbeat viewers’ (ITV Yorkshire Studios senior manager). It also might be expected that a counterbalance to these sentiments might be found in the economic pragmatism of local business proprietors, other than accommodation owners, who should benefit materially from increased visitor numbers. The comment of one local shop owner (who lived in the village) demonstrates how this assumption can be very wide of the mark:

It sounds awful to say but there is a different class of people coming now… But it’s not that, it’s the fact that in towns nowadays there is so much accepted theft.
Supermarkets accept that they’re going to lose a certain amount of their stock. And it’s how people perceive it, they look on everybody in the same way as the big supermarkets and say to themselves ‘Oh they can afford it’, and there is an element of that (in Mordue 2001: 245).

A lack of empathy for the particular circumstances of small rural businesses among Heartbeat tourists is adjudged to be endemic because town people, especially people from large towns, are thought to have cultivated a set of values and practices that are as indifferent to rural amenities as they are to urban facilities.

These types of urban/rural dualisms seem set in the minds of residents, although a degree of qualified sensitivity apparently can be shown to the ‘plight’ of certain Heartbeat tourists by some. A female shop worker’s comment on coach tourists demonstrates this well:

I actually feel sorry for people who come on coaches... They get harangued by residents because they don't want them here. The coach companies sometimes only allow them fifteen to twenty minutes to actually look round the shops [and] take their photographs. We call them where I work the fifteen p people, all they have time to do is to spend fifteen p. Now that is not adding to the economy of the village really (ibid.).

The people who come into Goathland by coach are, in the main, of pensionable age and are either on a touring day-trip to Whitby and ‘Heartbeat Country’ or on vacation on a
national or regional tour which includes the area in its itinerary. Both the coaches and their occupants are universally maligned by Goathland residents because they are especially visible in their encroachment on the village, even if their stay is a short one. ‘Nobody wants a coach parked in their back yard and do we want a coach parked anywhere?’ said a local female shop keeper (ibid.). Given that so many Goathland residents are retired themselves, this lack of empathy is noteworthy.

Notwithstanding that there may be quite legitimate safety concerns regarding coaches coming into the village, there are several symbolic reasons why coaches are unattractive to Goathland residents. By their very nature coaches collectively package people into a mobile unit, and this is antithetical to what Rojek (1985; 1995) terms as the leaning towards ‘individuation’ in (post)modern society. Coach tourism also denotes working-class economies of scale consumption because it is people collectively dependent on a driver and possibly an ‘expert’ courier, and the passengers are therefore passive and lacking in the ‘cultural capital’ (Bourdieu 1984) to read the countryside for themselves and perform appropriately in it. Indeed, the Goathland Residents Association was formed in 1995 on an anti coach platform (Beeton 2005), and the NYMNPA Tourism and Traffic Officer comments that the villagers ‘have this fear of coaches and the sort of people coaches bring, their social class’ (Mordue 2001: 246). In addition, coach tours patently symbolize the commodification of Goathland by the fact that ‘the village is used by certain tourist companies...who advertise it as a ‘Heartbeat break’” (working male resident, college lecturer; ibid.).
Rural authenticity and Heartbeat Country

For some residents the private space of home is the last bastion of ‘country life’ left in Goathland as the area becomes discovered more by the public at large.

I stop in the house. I love to walk in the village but I don’t walk in the summer, I don’t enjoy it at all, or I might take the dog right up on the moors, but now cars have started going up on the moors (retired woman resident; ibid.).

A number of residents have even changed the way they use the private space of their homes to avoid the public intrusion by swapping their living rooms to the backs of their houses that face away from the village green. This is an attempt both to recapture a private country view devoid of people (see Cosgrove 1998 on the ‘landscape idea’) and to maintain the status of residents’ private living space as a ‘back region’ (Goffman 1959; MacCannell 1976) away from a penetrating ‘tourist gaze’ (Urry 2002) that stages their rural authenticity.

Another resident’s comment unintentionally reveals the ironies and the duality of this rural authenticity:

Tourism generally does have a long term effect on country life... Over a long period of time there becomes a different mix of people living in the countryside... People that are coming to see the countryside have really loved it and, like a lot of people who come to Goathland, eventually move into the countryside... Then you get outsiders moving in, and most people in the past were customers with a real
understanding of the countryside. But then you get it accelerated... You are watering down the countryside, this is my point, so that eventually you don't get the people who have a true understanding, you get a kind of suburban existence in the countryside (retired woman, in Mordue 2001: 246-247).

This statement clearly describes exurbanism, though she is careful to induce a distinction between Goathland residents as former tourists with a ‘true understanding’ of the countryside and the current crop of Heartbeat tourists as being ‘outsiders’. It also implies that exurbanism accelerated by Heartbeat tourism would be to the absolute detriment of the countryside.

A retired male resident takes this proposition a stage further by leveling charges of falsification and cultural incompetence at the performances of Heartbeat tourists.

Goathland isn't known as Goathland, to the point where people get on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway train at Pickering, they don't get off at Goathland because they're waiting for Aidensfield to come up... Well it’s only in their heads you know. You see them wandering around and they think well there's nothing here, why are we here? (ibid: 247)

In another extract, he links this to the way the Heartbeat drama series and the various advertisers sell a rural idyll to the masses that is, in reality, unavailable to them:
They are trying to encapsulate everything that everybody thinks about the countryside and they are trying to package it in the modern, contemporary way, [to] package an experience. The coach people [especially] are trying to package an experience and that's the thing that is causing the damage (ibid.).

On these terms, the promise of bridging or de-differentiating the divide between the real and the imagined fuels the demand for Heartbeat Country consumption yet undermines the integrity of the place itself. This signifies a distinct and escalating clash between the supposedly false representations and values of popular media and their consumers and the traditions of ‘real’ countryside and ‘real country people’. Heartbeat tourists once again are disavowed of the capacity to access this reality and coach tours are seen as particularly culpable because they are cashing in on the false rural hopes of the urban masses.

Scripting as spatial regulation

In the absence of being able to control tourist numbers, residents’ attentions became focused on how to direct and control tourists once they arrive in the village. This, however, raises seemingly intractable aesthetic issues which the local post officer, who bought his business after 1991, sums up by saying:

Nobody wants yellow lines, nobody wants fencing, nobody wants street lights...They don't want street lights because they don't want it to look like a city...I've even heard comments about the pavement, the footpath that's been put in
now, and people saying it gets more like a town every day because we've got a footpath (ibid.).

As a consequence, the most acceptable management strategies for most residents are less about crude physical rearrangements of space, bodies and motor vehicles than with educating and modifying the preconceptions of Heartbeat tourists themselves. The local vicar, for example, saw interpretation as a key means of influencing tourist attitudes and behaviour through providing more understanding of what he believes to be the authenticity of Goathland beyond Heartbeat. When asked if the general idea is to turn Heartbeat tourists into ideal tourists, the Vicar replied:

Yes. Explore and spend some time here, and obviously in the process spend some money, but primarily to explore, spend some time here and enjoy the place. We enjoy living here, a lot of us came here because we wanted to, because its a nice place to be and we’d like other people to find that same kind of enjoyment (ibid.).

The latter part of this comment reveals that residents buying into and consuming Goathland is akin to a touristic experience of it (cf. Fees 1996). Furthermore, the power of interpretation described here lies with its self legitimating reclamation of a ‘true’ natural and social past in order to retrieve certain socio-spatial distinctions in the present. This would provide something of a local antidote to the global simulations of Goathland both in the Heartbeat series and in the marketing material that promote it as the centre of Heartbeat Country. However, given that the majority of residents are relative newcomers
with, in their own terms, little real claim to some kind of innate connection to Goathland, their only legitimacy as arbiters of what is locally authentic lies with their rural ‘habitus’ (c.f. Bourdieu 1984) and their self-received cultural rights as owners of local property. The efficacy of interpretation in this context lies in the provision of a seemingly apolitical means of scripting tourists’ performances, but in ways which regulate and approximate local space with residents’ aesthetic priorities, ideals and, ultimately, class interests.

Viewing Goathland through the tourist gaze

What of visitors to Goathland, how do their predilections compare and contrast with those of Goathland’s residents? As alluded to, Beeton (2005) sets a clear distinction between traditional nature-loving middle-class visitors and the ‘lower class’ Heartbeat tourists - although she presents no evidence to support this assumption other than saying ‘the friction [between them] is evident, even to a casual observer’ (page 104). The research underpinning this paper suggests, however, that on close, qualitative examination this starkly dualistic distinction is problematic and that Heartbeat tourists are not so easily pigeon-holed. For example, without exception, all visitors spoken to between 1995 and 2004 proclaimed to be lovers or appreciators of the English countryside. For many, the North Yorkshire Moors was a prime example: ‘within twenty miles of here I would have thought is one of the nicest parts of England’ said a retired man from Stockton-on-Tees (in Mordue 1999: 642). Furthermore, as with residents, tourists tended to counterpoise the values of the countryside with those of modern urban life.
Where we live isn’t a community anymore. Crime has increased and there is a bigger feeling of insecurity from all sorts of directions. Being in the countryside does remind you of community and times gone by, it’s more permanent than the town, but I guess that is threatened more as well. I should think there is more of a community spirit here and it’s nice to be in a community even if it is for a visit. Having said that, I can’t be sure if this place is a real community because we haven’t spent enough time here - so we don’t really know (woman clerical worker from Newcastle-upon-Tyne; ibid.).

One of many interesting things about this comment is that while this woman appreciates the aesthetics of what appears to be a traditional rural setting, she is not at all convinced that the picture presented is one of a ‘real’ community. This is a point picked up by Beeton (2005) who, while advocating community planning, criticizes management approaches that tend to view communities as homogenous entities, and that in places like Goathland ‘one size fits all’ solutions can only fail because they fail to grasp the dynamism of the situation.

Many of Goathland’s tourists seem to be critically aware of the exurban factor and that conspicuous rural consumption can bring its own problems, as a male factory manager from Northampton reveals:

I think what spoils it is when you look over there where the Range Rover is parked outside the cottage. You’ve got the villages now with really nice cottages and you
see a couple of Range Rovers outside and that’s what is bringing the higher crime rate into the rural areas, because they assume that is where the money is (in Mordue, 1999: 642).

By contrast, a male student from Leeds sees tourism as the problem:

I wouldn’t like to live here myself. I wouldn’t mind being in a small village, but not particularly this village with thousands of tourists milling about. It’s perhaps too commercialised, too touristy, it takes away the atmosphere that Heartbeat gives you of the place (ibid.).

All visitors encountered over the period were keen to be seen as responsible guests rather than marauding tourists, but unlike the student from Leeds, most did not think Goathland was too commercialised. For example, when discussing car parking issues, most said they would have even welcomed greater parking charges as long as they were at an affordable level and were hypothecated towards the upkeep and maintenance of the village itself.

When asked about issues of public access to Goathland, set against the private spatial interests of its residents, visitors were adamant about their rights - seeing the village and its surroundings as a public good and as a space to be shared much like any other public space. Thus while the countryside is special culturally, as a political space it has no special dispensations in relation to its urban cousins. For many visitors, though, the cultural and political spaces of the rural are inseparable and mutually constituted. As
one proclaimed: ‘It’s part of the British heritage isn’t it, the Yorkshire countryside. It’s what makes Britain great, the country... I like to think we share it [Goathland] with them, the local people’ (male technician from Hull, ibid.: 643). The woman from Newcastle-upon-Tyne most forcefully expresses her opinions on such matters:

I don't know who lives here. Is it some tycoon from the London stock markets who has decided to buy a house here and has decided he's not going to let us Geordies or Yorkshire lads and lasses in here and he thinks he owns it? Well, it’s not his. It’s as much ours as it is his, only I can't afford the house. I can, and should, be able to walk around the road, and I mean that truly from me heart (ibid.).

With regard to what visitors hoped to find when they arrived in Goathland qua Aidensfield, responses were mixed. One woman from Teesside (occupation unknown) reveals:

I expected to come here and see it how you see it on the TV, you know. But things look different, there’s lots of things missing... It’s nice, I like the place [but] we expected it to be more or less exactly the same. It should be more sixties-like really... I [wanted] to see things like the police station and the Aidensfield Arms so you could go in and have a sit down (ibid.).

This woman’s disappointments and expectations were not expressly shared in discussions with most other visitors encountered, though like her many thought the village ‘quite
ordinary’, but ‘pretty’, without its Heartbeat connection. On the other hand, like the woman above, some would have preferred more interpretation to bring Heartbeat and Aidensfield ‘alive’, saying that a well planned, quite extensive visitor centre and car park outside the village could fill the dual role of satisfying their curiosity about Heartbeat while helping to manage visitor and traffic flows. None, however, thought that Goathland (minus Heartbeat) needed interpreting.

Some visitors, while conceding the novelty of Goathland’s Heartbeat connection, disagreed with the idea of providing more visitor oriented facilities and interpretation displays on any level, saying that the village should not be stage managed any more than it is now. A woman from Norwich (an executive officer in the Civil Service) expressed this position most clearly:

I don’t like heritage centres. I don’t like that sort of thing. I always feel when I go to places with a heritage centre that I am being exploited. I don’t want card board cut-outs of things that happened in the past that might not necessarily have happened like that. I like to see the scenery and come and see where the television people came but I don’t necessarily want it hyped up for me... It’ll be more interesting talking to some of the old people than seeing a lot of...designer words written on some sort of interpretation display or hoarding....That’s not what life is like is it, you don’t want to be managed (ibid: 643-644).
Critically, for her the tourist experience is not about being a simple viewer or part of a relatively passive audience, it is about participation and interaction, or the active performance of place through using one’s own judgment and cultural capabilities without being cajoled or manipulated by hidden intermediaries and ‘expert’ practices.
CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

This paper has shown that Goathland residents and Heartbeat tourists share similar constructions of rural life, and demonstrates that rural tourists and those who buy into a rural lifestyle cannot be considered as belonging to separate cultural realms. Neither can it be assumed that Heartbeat tourists come only from lower class urban backgrounds, as the comments of Goathland’s residents, and to a large extent Beeton’s (2005) observations, imply. There is nothing in this research or survey research done by the National Park itself to suggest that visitors to Goathland are significantly different in their social profile to visitors of the park more generally. The critically important issue raised in this research is that Goathland’s residents tend to see Heartbeat tourists as different and less rurally competent in these terms, and therefore are scripted as strangers in and to the countryside.

Yet, as the visitor from Newcastle upon Tyne alluded to, the materially differentiating factor between residents and tourists is that residents own rural space (in terms of property ownership), and as a consequence are more able to appropriate it culturally, temporally and discursively. Their property ownership does not, however, change the counterpoising fact that besides being home to 450 people, Goathland is also a public space within a National Park and its residents have no real claim to it as a private good. To protect their private (spatial) interests they have only cultural means at their disposal. Thus they use discursive tactics in public forums - like taking part in research, writing to the press, complaining to the National Park, trying to use interpretation in order ‘educate’ visitors etc. - to spread the message that Heartbeat tourism is incompatible with an authentic rural life. In this context, rurality, and any recourse to a rural heritage, is a
means of drawing performative barriers that translate materially into socio-spatial divides. Although these rural battles are fought in the realms of postmodern consumption, the issues chime with what Williams (1973: 124) famously said of the eighteenth century middle-class love and appropriation of landscape:

It is into this complex of territorial establishment that we must re-insert the self-conscious development of landscape and what is called ‘the invention of scenery’… For what was being done by this new class, with new capital, new equipment and new skills to hire, was indeed a disposition of ‘Nature’ to their own point of view… to make Nature move to arranged design.

Landscape is a visual framing of nature governed by, in the Foucauldian sense, a particular gaze and, as Cosgrove (1998) argues, a dominant set of ideologically rooted ideas. Rurality, however, is this and more. As Lefebvre (2004) says of social space generally, the rural is not a place on a map with clear physical demarcations but a set of relations, practices, imaginings and affectations that are lived and negotiated constantly by a range of social actors. The rural is variously performed and its scripting is a power play that, in nascent postmodern society, many interlocutors are able to author through their imaginings and actions. In this particular case, the main protagonists are residents, tv script writers, tv viewers, brochure producers, marketers, tourism businesses, park authorities, tourists and so on.

The Goathland case study supports authors such as Kim and Richardson (2007) when they say that film serves to ‘mystify places by imbuing them with myth and
meaning through drama’ (page 233). However, it shows they are only partially right when they say ‘it is not the objective reality of the place… but instead the meaning it represents that transforms places depicted in motion pictures to [become] symbolically meaningful tourist attractions’ (page 234), because places are performed culturally all of the time by various people, not just in films or through tourism, and their realities can never fixed objectively in space or time.

Given these performative complexities, when researching and thinking critically about the kind of new rurality that Heartbeat Country represents, care must be taken by researchers and managers when placing residents and tourists in relation to each other. While a distinct population in common-sense terms, Goathland’s residents do not represent an authentic rural community or single vantage from which tourism development can be objectively assessed, just as the appellation ‘local’ does not represent an undifferentiated social or ethnic community. The local responses here reveal that the impacts of Heartbeat tourism engage highly nuanced relations of power. Moreover, performance of local space is a homologous power play in which locals and tourists use their relative cultural and economic competencies to choreograph consumption and socially determine the appropriateness of the actors themselves. This praxis means that a spatial hegemony is being discursively brokered by residents (and seemingly many of their favored ‘guests’), which lauds their class interests as being synonymous with the interests of the countryside as a whole. At the same time non traditional voices that might raise issues relating to social access and a more inclusive cultural ownership of the countryside would be made less audible. In this rather privileged corner of northern England, Goathland’s residents are not just the beneficiaries or sufferers of tourist
impacts but are part of a wider social grouping who feel it is their cultural right to consume the countryside as a space purified and managed in their own image.

Management implications

These findings uphold the conclusion of Quinn (2007: 474) who says:

Locals are much more than passive subjects acted upon by tourists and related forces. They demonstrate agency, and are proactively and intricately involved in reconfiguring relationships and mobilities with and within place. Acknowledging this creates a series of research questions about both conceptualizing and managing local-tourist encounters, and about theorizing both locals’ and tourists’ experience of place.

An important practical response to this for academic research is to reveal how certain commonsense realities of place can in fact be social constructions loaded with ambiguities and contradictions. Informed practitioners acknowledging these complexities and trying to act upon them would, however, make the practical task of tourism management more complex. Arguably though, greater awareness of these issues raises the prospect that those responsible for managing rural tourism for sustainability – such as National Parks Authorities – could initiate more imaginatively effective ways to include urban voices alongside rural voices in negotiations of how, why and for whom, tourism is to be developed and managed in the countryside. As McGehee and Andereck (2004: 139) state ‘the most important goal must be to assure that varied voices of the
community are heard. For this to occur, the most appropriate and inclusive theory must provide the research foundation’.

As a starting point, the community of interest should not be automatically fixed as being rural residents in rural tourism research. Locals should be situated politically and socially to avoid conflating, and therefore romanticizing, their residential status with a received cultural sovereignty. Tourists need to be similarly located and not assumed to be outsiders impacting upon authentic communities and localities in simple positive or negative terms (see Cheong and Miller 2000). Indeed, such impact dualisms are rarely completed or uncontested outcomes of tourism but are part of the tourism process which can vary considerably in different places and in different contexts. Rural tourism, for example, is a generalised appellation that in reality covers myriad different circumstances that will vary considerably physically, structurally and performatively (Petrzelka et al 2005).

One generalization worth making is that tourism management anywhere is what Lefebvre (2004) calls a ‘spatial practice’ in that it invariably involves acts and interventions on, in and through, space. In places like Goathland, destination management is largely about managing the convergences and contradictions of global/local relations. Yet the positionality of the destination management process can place great limitations on its efficacy because it is only one power vantage point among many acting on, in and through a locality. Therefore, while many normative approaches in tourism management research are useful because of their overt practicability, executed and applied uncritically many can reproduce a chain of management practice that reinforces an all too neat ‘business as usual’, though more technically proficient, view of
the world. As Alvesson and Willmott (2001) warn of management studies generally, we must be careful of reproducing received wisdom \textit{for} management practice as opposed to producing knowledge \textit{of} management. Helping managers to locate their practices, and those of tourists and locals, in wider contexts reflexively and critically can do this. It can also be a sustainability goal of critical inquiry even though its horizons are less certain and ordered than many would wish.
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