Local Colour and Places on Screen

During the past couple of decades, location has been transformed from a purely practical issue and a type of tacit knowledge within film and television productions, lacking in academic interest and theoretical and methodological approaches, to a new and significant value within film and TV productions. Thus, locations represent production values, aesthetic values, economic values and political values, not only for the producers and broadcasters, but also for the external partners involved in and related to the production, for example the municipality, the city and the sponsors. We are experiencing a general transformation of interest within the screen industry from location as (purely) a place in which the actual story takes place and the series or film is shot, to *location placement* in film and television productions, in which cities, regions, nations, destinations and companies are using popular media formats to brand themselves and target their core markets (Beeton 2005; Roberts 2012). Locations and setting can be used by the producer to target their core audiences and attract attention, for example the American crime series *CSI* (2000–2015) using popular destinations as locations (Las Vegas, Miami, New York), or the television drama series *Sex and the City* (1998–2004) using New York as a significant and fascinating location for an international (female) audience. Parallel to this, we have a long tradition of public service drama and film representing nations (Higson 2011; Edensor 2002) as well as intra-national regions (Hedling 2010; Eichner and Waade 2015). To a great extent, this has reflected democratic values regarding identity, cultural heritage and nation/region building, and to

a lesser extent the economic and branding values seen in recent trends. Alongside this development, locations and places in a global market culture have generally attracted increasing interdisciplinary academic interest (Cresswell 2004), particularly as regards the role of the media (Urry and Larsen 2011; Falkheimer and Jansson 2006).

Studies of locations and places can be purely based on the film and television series as a textual element. Within film and literary studies, rich traditions exist for studying the meaning of the places in the narration, for example Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of *chronotope* describing the story's time/place constructions (Bakhtin 1981, 2006), or the concept *mise en scène* in film and theatre, describing the place in which the story takes place and the way in which this place is staged and designed for an audience, including visual composition, sets, props, actors, costumes and lighting (Bordwell and Thompson 2003; Gibbs 2002). Both concepts reflect the *diegetic settings*, 'the implied spatial, temporal, and causal system […] represented as being at least potentially accessible to a character' (Branigan 1992, 35). In our approach, however, we would like to expand the scope, since locations in film and television drama are not only a diegetic or narrative matter, they also relate to particular practical, cultural, economic and strategic conditions. Therefore, to fully understand the meaning of the places in relation to the Nordic Noir drama productions, it is important to consider the actual places, the policy and culture that influence the production and reception of the places in television drama series.

In this chapter, we will explore two general concepts that are significant for comprehending the Nordic Noir drama series as a cultural phenomenon. Firstly, we introduce the concept *local colour* and link its long tradition within art and history to the more recent ideas on *cinematic geography*. Secondly, we will relate this to the concept *prized content*, or the 'water cooler series', which is a common label for the popular television drama series that everyone is talking about when they meet at the water cooler or the coffee machine on an everyday basis. In this context, we draw on transnational television drama and concepts such as 'high end' and 'quality TV' and study how television drama has become a significant media product with strategic ambitions to brand a channel or develop digital platform and video-on-demand (VOD) solutions for producers, broadcasters and distributors in which the creative and artistic ambitions of the series as well as the production values are crucial in order to reach the strategic goals. From this background, in Chap. 3, we

introduce *location studies* as a new approach to the analysis of film and television series. We position this interdisciplinary and empirical approach within media production studies as well as the key notion of a particular cinematic geography (Hallam and Roberts 2014). In this context, we will focus in particular on television drama series, but the theoretical and methodological framework is also relevant for other audio-visual products such as film and documentary television series.

As regards television drama series, location as a concept has typically remained a practical term embedded in production practices, and no particular academic interest has been paid to this. However, in recent years, and alongside the interest in transnational series distribution and global media markets, the concepts of place and location in television drama productions have achieved attention among some researchers and critics, for example in relation to popular American television drama series in which the location, the actual city, plays a significant role in the show (Lavik 2014; Gjelsvik 2010; Weissmann 2012). In addition, this interest has been thoroughly explored in relation to the Scandinavian crime series and the Nordic Noir media brand (Forshaw 2010; Borg 2012; Waade 2013; Hansen and Christensen 2017). It is noteworthy, however, that in some contexts, locations are described as characters, as if they were protagonists and individuals playing a part in the story: 'city as character' (Sodano 2015, 22). Academics and critics cogitate the roles of the places in characterological terms in order to emphasise that the locations are far more than pure backdrops and settings for a story, but rather contribute in essential ways to the narrative itself, the imageries, the sounds and plots of the drama series. Additionally, the *seriality* of drama series allows relationships between viewers and characters to develop over long periods of time (often years), building a relationship that is strong, intimate and emotional and can be understood as a parasocial relationship (Mittel 2015, 127). Such a relationship also includes the places of the stories, causing the viewer to develop a personal association to fictionalised places that consequently become familiar and homely.

To facilitate a deeper understanding of the different roles played by places in television drama as aesthetic and narrative expressions as well as cultural, political and economic conditions and strategies, we will broaden the scope and study how landscapes and places within the visual arts and film have been reflected and theorised. A particularly interesting concept in this regard is the idea of *local colour*.

Local Colour in Art History

Local colour (or *colour locale*) is sometimes used as a concept in everyday conversations without any specific or definite meaning. In The Oxford English Dictionary, local colour is defined as 'the customs, manners of speech, dress, or other typical features of a place or period that contribute to its particular character' (The Oxford English Dictionary 2017). However, for many years local colour has been a core concept within art history and philosophy, and the term can be traced back to classic and romantic artistic ideals within landscape painting and pictorial art. The reason for bringing the term into the discussion concerning locations in contemporary television drama series is that it reflects in significant ways the particular aesthetic qualities of settings in drama series, and also the complex relationship between an actual, geographical place and the mediation of the place. It is interesting to note that local colour as a concept has travelled across disciplines and centuries; slightly different meanings have been assigned to it over time, the term has been discussed among theorists and philosophers, and, furthermore, the concept has reflected more general cultural, political and social ideals. Vladimir Kapor (2008a, b, 2009) discusses the concept's genealogy and explains how three related but distinct meanings have over time been assigned to local colour in art and literature. Firstly, local colour was related to French pictorial art in the seventeenth century, indicating 'a precise technical meaning relating to the theory of colouring and perspective in painting' (Kapor 2008a, 39). At this stage, only painting techniques and colouring were included. During the French Romanticist movement of the early nineteenth century, the concept developed into a representation of an actual, geographical place and came to include both spatial and temporal representations of remote settings. The notion of local colour in this context was defined as picturesque details that reproduced a distinctive and lively image of a country, region or bygone era, as well as 'the representation in vivid detail of the characteristic features of a particular period or country (e.g. manners, dress, scenery, etc.) in order to produce an impression of actuality' (Kapor 2008a, 41). Secondly, a different understanding of local colour in regard to Kapor's genealogy (2008a) is found in the American *local colour movement*, a 'group of regionalist prose writers who emerged after the American Civil War and left a body of critical reflections about their key notion and the poetics and movement in general' (Kapor 2008a, 41). In this context, the actual place constituted

more than the raw material for artistic and literary work; it also formed part of a political agenda to preserve the record of 'a changing or dying locale' (Kapor 2008a, 41).

Thirdly, local colour was a method to represent and reproduce the spirit of a particular place at a particular time. This is also what the term usually refers to today within the context of everyday conversations. Local colour is related to other terms such as nostalgia and narrative chronotopes in literature and, in both cases, places themselves, the topoi, are significantly interesting in specific spatial relations to particular periods. Svetlana Boym (2001) reflects on how nostalgia includes a utopia, a future ideal place and condition, based on memories and recollections of the past, a recollection filled with particular emotions and pictorial expressions. Bakthin (1981) developed a narrative theory based on how every story and literary genre include certain time (*chronos*) and place (*topos*) constructions. The author describes three basic chronotopes which refer to narrative meta-genres: the adventure fantasy chronotope, the realistic everyday chronotope and the gothic, grotesque carnevalesque chronotope. Bakhtin's idea was that the chronotope was not only a literary construction, but also a cognitive concept indicating how people in real life make sense of their experiences. This actual real life aspect forms part of the nostalgia concept, as well as of the *local colour* concept. They all act as cognitive concepts which influence the way in which we understand and make sense of places and spatial experiences, either actual or mediated.

Kapor's ambition in his work is not only to unfold the genealogy of local colour as a concept, but also to critically reflect the stereotypes and cultural implications included in the term. He points out two fallacies, a relativist fallacy dealing with stereotypes, and a referential fallacy dealing with a positivistic belief in the empirical existence of local colour among authors: 'Neither the cultural studies practitioner nor the postcolonial studies scholar needs to be reminded that 'spirit of the place' and 'spirit of the time' have more to do with culturally-shaped ethnic and historical stereotypes, sheltered by the 'illusory timelessness', than with anything inherent a given place or era' (Kapor 2008a, 42). Thus, local colour has to do with otherness and also represents a touristic and exotic view of certain places. Kapor points out that local colour, as a concept in the historical context, represents how 'the emerging liberal bourgeois culture found its own legible and unproblematic mode of representing otherness in fiction' (Kapor 2008a, 52). In this book, we develop the notion of local colour and relate it to contemporary television drama

series in general and the Nordic Noir series in particular. If we follow Kapor's ideas and study the emphasis on local colour in contemporary Nordic television drama series, this does not represent the 'emerging liberal bourgeois culture', but rather reflects a global trend of transforming places into commodities and cultures into marketable destinations. Thus, we will make yet another transformation of the term in addition to those described by Kapor in his work. The traps and fallacies that the author points out are still of relevance when we transport a concept originally coined within the scenes of art and bourgeois literature to a new scene, i.e. that of the television drama industry.

Local Colour in Film and Television Drama Series

The general as well as academic interest expressed in recent years in locations in the film and television industries is related to the value and impact that film location have on cities, destinations and nations in a globalised market culture. Places have become commodities, branded and consumed, and are seen as strategies to brand destinations and develop an experience economy (O'Dell and Billing 2005; Urry 2000; Knudsen and Waade 2010). *Location placement* as part of the branded entertainment industry has developed into branding and marketing strategies for companies, municipalities and nations. The special nexus between the local and the global, sometimes referred to as *glocalisation* and *trans-locality*, can be traced to Raymond William's work in the 1970s, but throughout the 1990s, the ideas of a local/global nexus was sparked and expanded in media studies (Moores 1993; Morley and Robins 1995). This trend continues up until today when localities form a naturalisation base underneath the global attention paid to television drama.

Local colour is related to setting and cinematic landscapes, and within film theory and media geography, these terms have been discussed. In order to develop local colour further and to study this in relation to television drama series, it is important to take these theories and ideas into consideration. The Canadian film scholar Martin Lefebvre (2006) distinguishes between *setting* and *cinematic landscape* in film and relates the cinematic landscape to the history of landscape imageries and landscape practices in art. The setting is related to the story and marks the place in which the story takes place. Settings depend on the specific genre; the crime story, for example, will include particular settings, whereas westerns and science fiction will include others. The cinematic landscape is

not necessarily related to the diegetic world, but the places and the landscapes direct the spectators' attention away from the story, causing them to gaze at and contemplate the places in themselves. 'Any strategy for directing the spectator's attention toward the exterior space rather than toward the action taking place within it (regardless of whether the strategy is motivated diegetically) can be attributed to an intention to emphasise landscape' (Lefebvre 2006, 33).

In his book *Place – a short introduction* (2004), Tim Cresswell asks a simple question that has been crucial to human geographers ever since the discipline was established: what is a place? This question is also relevant in relation to televisions drama series, but becomes even more complicated because we may be dealing with both fictional and factual places. Cresswell (2004, 7) outlines five fundamental aspects of place as meaningful locations: (1) *location* referring to the notion of 'where'; (2) *locale* which is the material setting for social relations; (3) *sense of place* being the subjective and emotional attachment people have to place; (4) *space* which is a more abstract concept describing an area, a volume or realm without meaning (distinguished from place that indicates a particular and meaningful place, a named place); and (5) *landscape* as a portion of the Earth's surface that can be viewed from one spot (for instance, the historical construction partly derived from a landscape painting in which the viewer is outside the landscape—in contrast to place). In relation to Martin Lefebvre's distinction between setting and cinematic landscape, setting refers to Cresswell's first two categories, namely location and locale. Cinematic landscape, on the other hand, refers to the last three categories: sense of place, landscape and space. The camera represents the privileged one spot viewpoint from which the viewer can cast a contemplative gaze at the landscape. Cinematic landscape can also be a more abstract space, such as for example a medieval settlement in the TV series *Vikings* (2013–) or the science fiction universe in the many *Star Trek* series. Furthermore, cinematic landscapes can represent a sense of place, either the character's particular and emotional relations to a certain place, for example a home, or the cinematic landscape's indications of the character's inner mood and emotions. Cinematic landscapes can also be used to activate the viewer's sense of place and their emotional attachment to the place, for example terrifying and horrendous places such as war zones and crime scenes. In other words, different conceptualisations of spatial experiences may be articulated on screen, but such considerations are still surprisingly rare in television studies in particular.

Panoramic views of landscapes and cityscapes have become conventional in opening shots, title sequences and transition shots ('breakers') in film and television drama. Furthermore, landscape panoramas are used to establish a certain mood or to illustrate a character's emotional condition. Occasionally, the landscapes have nothing to do with the story, but are merely used to show pretty or fascinating places, developing a distinct extra-diegetic layer. Examples of this are the place montages of specific towns in Denmark in each episode of *Rejseholdet/Unit One* (2000–2004) or the bay area breakers in *Fjällbackamorden/The Fjällbacka Murders* (2012–2013). The cinematic landscapes on screen activate a landscape gaze, a historically constructed gaze known from art history in which particular landscape imageries, motifs and perspectives produce a landscape iconography (Wells 2011). The historical landscape gaze was part of the bourgeois culture in the eighteenth century, in which nature was transformed into ideological landscapes. Nature used to indicate hard physical work, farming, harvesting, hunting and pre-modern ways of living, while landscape was related to contemplation, sublime experiences and cultured lifestyles. The landscape gaze was expressed within popular landscape paintings in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; it included an idealised form of landscape imagery and picturesque aesthetics, indicating a viewer in one spot outside of the landscape gazing *at* the landscape. Furthermore, the landscape gaze was articulated in other landscape practices such as garden art, garden walks, mountain routes, look-outs, landscape paintings and panorama photography. In contemporary culture, we recognise the landscape gaze from for example television drama, film, tourism and marketing communication (Urry and Larsen 2011; Wheatley 2016).

As regards television drama series, the notion of local colour has been used to describe the images, the atmosphere, the sounds and the colours of a particular place. Reijnders (2009) refers to local colour in his work on film tourism and the tourist's imagination of places related to the Swedish *Wallander* (2005–2013), the British *Inspector Morse* (1987–2000) as well as the Dutch *Baantjer* (1995–2006). Reijnders stresses how drama series may activate the viewer's tourist gaze by emphasising particular landscapes, buildings and areas that are recognisable to an international audience: 'The decor of the programmes is not chosen at random, but made up of well-known icons of local identity. The bell gables on the canal houses are a *pars pro toto* of Amsterdam. The same can be said of the wide fields and wintry fir forests of southern Sweden,

as well as the gardens and ancient streets and colleges of Oxford. This local atmosphere is intensified by the representation of stereotypical weather conditions' (Reijnders 2009, 176). The idea that such places— Ystad, Oxford, Amsterdam—are experienced not in person but mediated is closely connected to that which Milly Buonanno dubs *travelling narratives.* According to her, 'the current international flows of television drama' is 'doubly connected to the theme of travel, both because they 'expatriate' from their places of origin and because, at their destinations, they are encountered by individuals who through them can achieve an experience of imaginary de-territorialization' (Buonanno 2008, 108).

Eichner and Waade (2015) refer to local colour in regard to film and television drama series, and based on theories on culture, television drama, media policy and geography, they argue that local colour should not be limited to the touristic gaze at cities and landscapes, but also at language, economy and production conditions. In their definition of local colour they include aesthetic, political and practical dimensions. In general, local colour constitutes a complex circulation of images, representations, meanings and different levels of mediation related to the geographical place: 'Local colour in a film or television drama series includes elements of representing place (landscapes, iconic buildings, flora and fauna, etc.), language (standard language, vernaculars, etc.), cultural practices with a cultural proximity (manners, traditions, cuisine, etc.), social discourses and the 'spill-over' of narrative meaning into the real world (e.g. becoming a touristic commodity)' (Eichner and Waade 2015, 4). Thus, local colour not only has to do with how places are represented on screen, but also how the places inform and influence the way in which the producers of television drama series perform, practice and (re-)produce places in the production, both as tacit knowledge and as aesthetics and shared sensation. The practical dimension also includes how the audiences use, perform and practice places, for example when tourists flock to New York to attend a *Sex and the City* tour to get the chance to walk in the footsteps of the characters in their favourite television show. This links back to Lefebvre's cinematic landscapes, in which the ways in which we see, use and reproduce locations and landscapes relate to the landscape gaze, a gaze embedded in a particular historical and cultural tradition in which the different places and landscapes are characterised by specific iconographic meanings and emotions, and particular performative practices are seen as contemplation and recreation. For example, when rural areas, snow and polar landscapes are crucial in

the British television crime series *Fortitude* (2015–), the series activates what Russel A. Potter calls *the arctic spectacle*: the artic landscape gaze, an imagery and gaze known from art history and literature, in which the exotic otherness in the polar areas' particular colours, landscape formations, seasons and myths have been displayed (Potter 2007). The example is interesting in different ways, and we will return to the arctic gaze in Chap. 12. Here, it is interesting to see how the series' local colour is active on different levels: it represents specific places and languages, it indicates certain local cultural and social practices (for example nature reflected as a monster, climate changes as threatening cultural and social orders, etc.), and since the production is British, the artic landscapes and locations appear commodified and exotic in that they are made extreme for aesthetic, dramaturgic and narrative purposes. In this way, local colour becomes a significant value when it is observed and consumed at a distance, from outside of the actual place.

Places as Commodities in Transnational Television Industries

Contemporary theoretical and analytical approaches to television drama typically reflect genre conditions (Creeber 2004; Piper 2015), complex narrative structures (Mittel 2015; Dunleavy 2009), characters and audiovisual style (Butler 2010; Jacobs and Peacock 2013), from the point of view of authorship (Thompson and Burns 1990; Staiger 2004; Lavik 2015), as well as the production conditions, format trade and transnational markets of the series (Weissmann 2012; Chalaby 2016). As already mentioned, no direct attention has actually been paid to places and locations in this context, apart from a few interesting exceptions (Bignell 2012). The only two areas which have attracted interest have been the mise en scène and production design of the series and the cultural political ambitions to strengthen and maintain a national (in some cases a local or regional) television drama production in which the locations are reflected in more indirect ways (Redvall 2013; Johnson 2012; Chow 2015). In film and television productions as well as in theatre productions, different creative and practical professionals may be involved in the creation of place, for example costumers, set designers, location managers, light designers, cinematographers and carpenters. However, a third field of interest in production design has emerged in relation to film and audiovisual design, resulting in a new interdisciplinary field of study. This

may be assigned in part to the new digital technologies and possibilities for creating story worlds (Wille 2015; Waade and Wille 2016). However, careful consideration of the specific locations in television drama is still a fairly new phenomenon.

Film studies (as well as literary studies) have a long tradition of dealing with places and landscapes, and the close relationship between the cinema as an art form and the modern city and urban landscapes has achieved extensive academic attention (Lauridsen 1998; Koeck and Roberts 2010; Mennel 2008). Film noir and its relation to the modern metropolis is just one example among others (Prakash 2010); thrillers, crime dramas and melodrama are other genres that are often linked to particular (and sometimes actual) cities and genre-specific locations (we will return to this later). Thomas Elsaesser (2006) stresses the relationship between space, place and identity in European cinema, while Andrew Higson (2011), in his work on British film, shows how the country's history and geography are displayed, reflected and constructed through cinema. Charlotte Brunsdon (2006) refers to feature and documentary films when she analyses how London's underground is reflected on screen, and later she discusses critically the 'city discourse' as a recent cross-disciplinary trend (Brunsdon 2012). Generally, this indicates that places have played an important role within traditions of film studies for some time.

In countries with a strong public service broadcasting tradition, such as the Scandinavian countries, the UK, Germany and France, television drama series have been one of the broadcasters' flagships, both due to its brand value and to its influence on the citizens' national, linguistic and cultural identification, which are embedded in the general cultural political consensus within the countries (Agger 2005; Syvertsen et al. 2014; Syvertsen and Skogerbø 1998). Thus, in these contexts, locations play a significant role, since they represent and reproduce actual local and national places. However, it is not so much the places themselves that are reflected since they play a more indirect role in constituting the national culture. Within some countries, even the intra-national regions play a crucial part in the funding and structuring of the broadcasters; this is for instance the case in the Nordic region, the UK and Germany (Hedling et al. 2010; Eichner and Waade 2015; Blandford and McElroy 2011). Furthermore, in these regions a significant tradition also exists to support local film and television drama productions. This is part of the cultural democratic agenda in which local places, provinces and rural areas are

taken into account, both as regards representation on screen and production facilities and funding systems (Blomgren 2007).

Popular American television drama series have exerted immense influence on the global television drama landscape. They have paved the way for new quality standards, new approaches to storytelling and to production and distribution; but in particular, they have reached out to new and young audiences and markets, and changed the very understanding of what television is and how we watch television. Now, for very different audiences, series or serials may include so-called *prized content*: content that 'is so compelling that it suffers from interruption' (Lotz 2014, 13) and motivates what has now become known as binge-watching. However, Amanda Lotz stresses that prized content '*is not an aesthetic or evaluative distinction* accessed based on features of the show, but is distinguished by how audiences desire to experience it' (Lotz 2014, 13). Generally, this underlines three aspects related to our present discussion. Firstly, that serial content reaches a very diverse audience; secondly, that it *is* indeed a matter of content (however different that may be, perhaps even locative); and thirdly, according to Lotz, 'the significant audience' may not be millions of people worldwide, but rather a specific audience that may differ greatly from place to place. One significant aspect of this story is the development of digital platforms and VOD services, in which television drama series have been used in the strategic promotion and branding of channels and online services and in the effort to reach new segments and markets around the world. HBO and Netflix illustrate, in an excellent way, this change of viewing practice, by some dubbed 'the Netflix effect' (McDonald and Smith-Rowsey 2016). The global interest in new drama series has also influenced the market conditions for drama in more general ways, and in recent years, we have witnessed how many countries, producers and broadcasters outside the USA have invested in their drama productions in order to compete with the US series in obtaining a share of the market. Such drama producers have become serious players in the creative industry alongside the producers of films, bestsellers and video games.

However, place specific perspectives have been reflected in indirect ways, for example the impact of culture, languages and places as strategic and aesthetic qualities in transnational television drama series (Weissmann 2012; Straubhaar 2007; Mikos and Perotta 2011; Jacobsen and Jensen 2016). The ABC series *Lost* (2004–2010) illustrates this by showing how casting, language mix and locations in the series represent
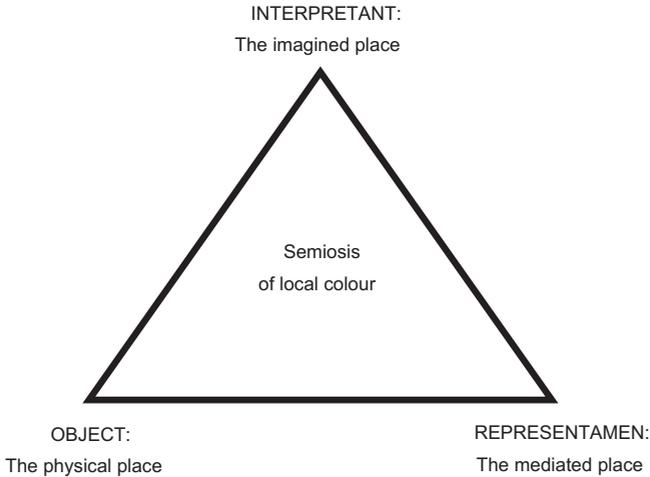
different places and continents, thus reflecting and attracting different markets and segments (Gray 2009; Abbott 2009). A more recent tendency is that the American producers and digital providers try to reach the European and Nordic markets by making co-productions and collaboration with local broadcasters, for example: HBO Nordic; HBO Europe; HBO's collaboration with European co-producers on *Game of Thrones* (2011–) when shooting in Ireland, Spain, Iceland and Croatia; and Netflix's co-productions with the Norwegian public service broadcaster NRK on the series *Lilyhammer* (2012–2014) (Sundet 2016) and Danish TV 2 on the third season of *Rita* (2015) (Nielsen   2016). The places represented in these examples reflect market concerns and strategic ambitions rather than places as locations.

The academic interest in transnational television drama series has created a new field within media studies dealing with global market conditions and screen industries, challenging the traditional ideas of television drama and broadcast TV as mainly a national and domestic phenomenon (Weissmann 2012; Moran 2009; Turner 2009). In contrast, the transnational approach considers these series as fundamentally transnational. The transnational characteristics include both the ways in which the industries operate, their production methods and the consumption and thought patterns of their consumers; and UK and US television 'is marked by an experience of being in between and at the same time part of two cultures' (Weissmann 2012, 6). The transnational television drama approach has to some extent been informed by theories and studies of quality television drama in which production values encompassed a *balance* of market interests and aesthetics (McCabe and Akass 2007; Jancovich 2003; Rothemund 2011). 'Quality TV' has been used as a trade name for certain HBO and AMC TV series, a cross-generic designation, a mark of quality and an aesthetic concept including high marketing budgets, but also to characterise ideals of democratic, cultural impacts and 'good television' (Nelson 2007).

The transnational television drama approach is interesting, both in regard to its understanding of locations in television drama in general and of the Nordic crime series in particular. Theories on globalisation and centre-periphery argue that it is no longer possible to conceive global processes in terms of the dominance of a single centre over the peripheries (Featherstone et al. 1995; O'Regan 1996). Hjort (1996) has drawn attention to the options of small nations concerning production strategies, and her distinction between 'opaque', 'translatable'

and 'international' elements is interesting in this respect, using 'cross filming', for example, as a concept expressing a convenient, often successful dual orientation towards audiences. The demands of the international TV market influence the local Nordic TV drama market, and the authors and producers have strived to achieve certain production values in order, for example, to win international prizes. Straubhaar (2007) argues that certain proximities are at play in the worldwide exchange of audiovisual content, including genre, value (e.g. ethics, religious beliefs, moral codes) and thematic proximity (e.g. gender inequality and immigration) across cultures. However, Nordic crime series travel worldwide to markets that differ both geo-linguistically and culturally from their origin, and therefore they may be better understood as fundamentally transnational. Thus, this *subtle internationalisation* of Nordic television crime series from within was prompted by the influence of the American and British TV industry on the producers when creating their production dogmas (Redvall 2011; Nielsen 2016; Jensen 2016). The increased interest in co-production and co-financing not only secures international funding, it also internationalises the content of the series. In general, the transnational television drama series approach includes a particular interest in the series' locations, however seen in more indirect and general ways related to the understanding of international dynamics of media markets and production, as well as cultural and digital globalisation.

In other words, our use of the concept *local colour* generally relates to: (a) representations of places, regions and landscapes on screen, (b) the political and economic conditions for how the regions are considered in culture and media production, and (c) the commodification of places and locations in global market cultures (Eichner and Waade 2015). Les Roberts' (2012) concept *cinematic geography* excellently contributes to such considerations of place representations, and his theoretical reflections and empirical studies of Liverpool on screen reflect all different relations between film production and the actual city in which the film was shot and produced as well as the place where the story takes place. Furthermore, Roberts aims to develop a methodological framework for studying locations empirically and relates the role played by the city in the stories and the imageries to the collaboration between the city and the production companies, the development of a local media industry, the branding value for the city as well as ordinary people's reception of the city based on the films. Following this broad framing of the

INTERPRETANT:

The imagined place

Semiosis

of local colour

OBJECT:

The physical place

REPRESENTAMEN:

The mediated place

Fig. 2.1 The semiosis of local colour in film and television drama series

concept of cinematic geography as well as the theories on local colour
we have presented so far, we argue that local colour as an analytical con-
cept includes three distinct and very basic semiotic levels (Peirce 1992):
the *physical* place (object), the *mediation* of the place (setting, cinematic
landscapes, literary space etc.) (representamen) and the *imagination* of
the place (the producer's/viewer's expectations and imaginations) (inter-
pretant) (see Fig. 2.1).

The idea is that the meaning of places, local colour and the various
spatial practices related to television drama series is based on the inter-
play between these three aspects. The actual, *geographical* place is the
location in which the series is shot, and it can also be the place where the
story is meant to take place; often series are shot in one place, but rep-
resent another actual place. Mark B. Sandberg, who has traced the idea
of locations throughout early cinema history, dubs this *place substitution*
(Sandberg 2014). The *mediated* places are the places we see on screen,
for example the opening shots and the title sequences where the viewer
can follow panoramic and/or high-angle views on places or landscapes,
the backdrops and settings of the action, or the 'travel cam' when the
viewer follows a car driving through a city or a landscape. The *imagined*
place is how we think of a certain place, based on what we know, what
we have heard and seen, what we have experienced and what we imagine

when we think of New York, Paris, Berlin or Fjällbacka, for instance. Hansen and Christensen (2017) refer to this type of imagination as *intertextual consciousness,* which is linked to the mediations of places, in their words *intertextual locations* (2015), and also to what we already know about the actual geographical place (perhaps from private experience, TV programmes or travelling guides). When the viewers watch drama series, prior understanding, knowledge and imaginations of the actual places will be activated: 'This is not Svalbard, it is Iceland!' or 'this so typically Miami'.

This three-part model was inspired by the French urban sociologist Henri Lefebvre's (1991) ideas of the spatial practices and production of a place as well as by the media geography approach (Jansson and Falkheimer 2006; Eichner and Waade 2015), which emphasises the dialogic reciprocity in the Peircian three-way model. Within geography research, the cultural meaning of places has for long been reflected and studied empirically, and in this context, the role of the media and how they reflect, produce and promote meaning of geographical places have been crucial.

Televisual Geography and National Representation

The geographic approach to cinematic geography includes: factual mediations, e.g. journalism, reality series and documentary series; fiction, e.g. film, television drama series, literature; and also new, digital and locative media, e.g. location-based technology such as travel apps, dating apps and interactive maps. The work of British geographer Tim Edensor (2002) on spatial and national constructions in popular culture and everyday life demonstrates this field of interest, and he uses the popular film *Braveheart* (1995) to illustrate how national identity is constructed and negotiated. Edensor's central idea is that the nation is a bounded space in relation to entities that jeopardise the 'integrity' of the national spaces, such as cultural globalisation, new supra-national federations and autonomy-seeking regions. The six different spatial categories that deal with national identity and imageries are listed as: (a) ideological rural national landscapes, (b) iconic sites, (c) sites of popular culture and assembly, (d) familiar, quotidian landscapes, (e) dwellingscapes and (f) homely spaces. What makes this theory interesting for us is that Edensor studies how national identity is constructed through geographical representations in popular media. Generally, the first three of his categories are more likely

to be accepted as national representations in so far as they are acknowledged and established as national visual signs, while the three last concepts have a much more compound meaning and can represent a nation, a region, a city, or something different, depending on the context in which they are used.

Edensor's first category is *ideological rural national landscapes*, and he sees rural England as a supreme example of how national identity is marked on screen. Jørgen Riber Christensen refers to this spatial construction of English nostalgia as 'deep England' (Christensen 2015). National identity, ideology and policy are constructed and expressed in certain visual, mythical and historic conceptions, and the landscape imageries play a significant role in this context: 'landscapes come to stand as a symbol of continuity, the product of land worked over and produced, etched with the past, so that "history runs though geography"' (Edensor 2002, 40). Many examples from film and television drama reproduce such ideological national landscapes, and these are important for genres such as period drama, melodrama and romance. The many adaptations of Jane Austen's novels can stand as one example, and in a Nordic context we may think of, for instance, the Danish adaptations of Morten Korch's village idyll (Bondebjerg 2005, 97) or the national romanticism in Alf Sjöberg's Swedish films (Wright 1998). Of course, the rural landscapes do not only act as national constructions, they can also be used for mythological, regional, local constructions and ideologies, depending on the genre, the plot and the cultural and political contexts. In fantasy television or film series such as *Game of Thrones* and *The Lord of The Rings* (2001–2003), the landscapes and locations emphasise the mythological and medieval-like settings. Felix Thompson proposes 'a general geographical disposition adopted by British television towards the hinterland' in British factual television programmes that may illustrate the ideological rural national landscape category. To him, the 'home hinterland' is an interior space that is neither suburban and domestic nor transnational, but rather a space characterised by ambiguity: 'such an "empty" space is open to the projection of anxieties as much as it is expected to give the reassurance of belonging in a homeland' (Thompson 2010, 65–66). In a Swedish context, Thompson's readings of televisual ambiguity have notable similarities with what Daniel Brodén calls 'dark ambivalences of the welfare state' in Swedish crime films (Brodén 2011), and McElroy's work on *Hinterland* (2013–) has a particular resonance in this respect.

Edensor's second category concerns *iconic sites*, i.e. buildings, places, monuments and sites that are established as symbols and icons of a certain city, region, or—in his case—nation: 'Typically these spatial symbols connote historical events, are either evidence of past cultures, providing evidence of a "glorious" past or "golden age" and attendance (Stonehenge, the Great Pyramids, the Taj Mahal)' (Edensor 2002, 45). Many film and television drama series use such iconic sites and rural national landscapes both to locate the story and the actions in establishing shots, and as cinematic landscapes and fascinating imageries. In disaster films, we often see such landmarks either blown up or destroyed by natural forces, such as blowing up The White House in *Independence Day* (1996) or the famous locative ending of *Planet of the Apes* (1968), where the astronaut finally realises that he is on Earth (and not a faraway planet ruled by apes) when finding The Statue of Liberty buried in sand. Edensor's two first categories are immediately recognisable, since they are established and acknowledged as national and geographical symbols, and you meet them everywhere in destination marketing, popular culture, fashion, commercials and so on.

The third category, *sites of popular culture and assembly*, also includes site-specific places, and the assemblies are defined as events 'where large numbers of people gather to carry out communal endeavours such as festivals, demonstrations and informal gathering' (Edensor 2002, 48). Outside of the community itself, these symbolic events are perhaps not as well-known as the first two categories. However, they are still popular places to visit for tourists and people in general, and they are often mentioned in films, novels, tourist guidebooks and television programmes. Edensor mentions specific sites such as Times Square in New York and *Djemaa el-Fna* in Marrakesh as well as general categories such as sports stadia, popular parks, promenades, show grounds, bohemian quarters and religious sites. The famous shootout scene at Chicago's Union Station in *The Untouchables* (1987) may be an obvious illustration, while in Nordic crime drama, the use of an actual ice hockey stadium as a place of social assembly in the Danish drama *Norskov* (2015–) may serve as a good example. It should perhaps be noted that a gradual transition is taking place between the categories, since some of the examples mentioned as iconic sites, e.g. Chicago Union Station, may appear as sites of assembly too.

The last three categories are more indirect and perhaps not so easily marked as specific places, because they work at a more unreflective level. *Familiar, quotidian landscapes* are exemplified, such as suburban housing

estates, the design of parks, pubs and street names, 'mundane spatial features of everyday experience' (Edensor 2002, 50) and are all important when constructing and sustaining national or local identities. These landscapes and places constitute the backdrop of everyday life, including domestic architecture, styles of fencing, garden ornaments, home decors, soundscapes, smell, fauna and flora. Some of these mundane spatial signifiers acquire national significance, and the author refers to the main streets of Middle America and the red telephone boxes in the UK as examples—both are popular imageries in magazines, calendars, postcards, films and television series. The Swedish wooden house (stuga) is a significant Nordic example of this phenomenon and is employed to a great extent in the television comedy drama *Welcome to Sweden* (2014–). The quotidian landscapes act as open and negotiable signifiers, changing over time and indicating different meanings in different contexts and countries. The most important feature of familiar, quotidian landscapes is that they 'stich the local and the national together through their serial reproduction across the nations' (Edensor 2002, 53). Thus, regional imageries of Middle America may be emblematic of a general national consciousness or, to a foreign viewer, appear as exoticised representations of a 'typical' American suburban area, which is richly exploited in the drama series *Desperate Housewives* (2004–2012).

The next category, *dwellingscapes*, relates to everyday practices as an 'unquestioned backdrop to daily tasks, pleasure and routine movement' (Edensor 2002, 54). The dwellingscapes, or taskscapes, are small-scale congregational sites such as crossroads, street corners, water coolers, stairs and diverse open spaces. Examples would be the countless scenes taking place at vending machines (that usually do not work) in American drama series, or Edensor's reference to Niels Kayser Nielsen's claim that moving your body through an open space is closely linked to a Norwegian identity (Nielsen 1999, 286). Finally, *homely spaces* are places of comfort, everyday common sense and practices, where the home may metonymically indicate different types of location ranging from house, land, village, city and country to the world. 'Home conjoins with a myriad of affective realms and contains a wealth of transportable imagery' (Edensor 2002, 57). As we will show in Chap. 6, in Nordic crime dramas, the home plays a very significant role and not always as a comfortable location; sometimes it is presented as a claustrophobic place where the homely atmosphere is disrupted by external factors, such as crime and general social issues.

In presenting local colour as an abstract and broad concept, Edensor and various place theories inspire our work with a specific, geographical approach to places and locations on screen. In fact, the six categories outlined above appear as specific varieties of local colour portrayals on screen.

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